

Community Preservation Committee

April 9, 2012

Police Station Conference Room

Meeting Minutes

1. Call to Order

A special meeting of the Community Preservation Committee was called to order by Chairman Mike Dissette at 7:00 p.m.

2. Roll Call

In attendance were members Mike Dissette, Paul Healy, Jane Healey, Judith Grohe, Don Little, Bob Uhlig, Mary Lou Gagnon and Margaret Welch. Emily Wentworth was also in attendance.

3. Minutes

Paul Healy moved to approve the minutes of the March 27, 2012, meeting as submitted. Mary Lou Gagnon seconded the motion. The motion was approved with Bob Uhlig abstaining.

4. Presentations

Newburyport High School Entrance Enhancement

Marc Kerble, Superintendent of Schools

\$21,600

Marc Kerble reviewed the proposal to enhance the entrance to the high school. He said the English yews have deteriorated, along with the lawn. The Newburyport Historical Commission was asked for input on appropriate design elements, but the suggested ivy-covered trellises were not made a part of the plan. The scope of work has been revised and original request for \$21,600 has been reduced to \$10,000. The current plan is for the improvement of the lawn, which would be treated for two years with organic compost. There are no other plant materials in the plan. The funding would be used for an irrigation system and compost.

Inn Street Fountain Renovation

Newburyport Planning Office

Andy Port said the existing fountain does not meet health codes. He would like to replace it entirely, but does not yet know what the design of the new fountain would be. A public meeting is planned at which the different scenarios would be reviewed. An estimate for one option was \$150,000, while a modular design might cost \$50,000 to \$75,000. The cost of an interactive design would be higher and would also be more expensive to maintain. The most efficient fountain would be one that is not interactive and that re-circulates the water. He would like to install interpretive signage on the subject of urban renewal. Mike Dissette asked if the existing fountain could be made operative. Andy Port said that would be difficult, as there would have to be a means by which the storm water from Inn Street would be prevented from flowing into the fountain. He said that while the urban renewal work on Inn Street is important in the history of the city, the fountain is not necessarily worthy of being retained. Jane Healey questioned if the fountain could be considered a historic resource given the amount of change that is being proposed. Margaret Welch said the members of the Newburyport Historical Commission shared this concern; it would be a challenge to consider the project as historic preservation if the

fountain were not to be reused. She said the NHC would like the granite blocks to be incorporated into the new design. Bob Uhlig asked about the cost of the subsurface work. Andy Port said the cost is expected to be \$30,000 - \$40,000 due to the amount of piping. The vault and pump might be reused.

Custom House 2012 Building Preservation Project

Custom House Maritime Museum

\$95,585

Greg Colling described that work that has been done on the Custom House to date. He said CPA funding would allow the work to prevent water from infiltrating the building to continue. Some granite on the structure is in danger of falling and must be secured. The plans also include making the basement windows operable and replacing the ferrous metal fasteners that are corroding. Windows that were installed in 1972 have begun to rot and must be replaced. The scope of the next phase of work was originally for the re-pointing of the Water Street façade and was increased to include the re-pointing of the western façade at the time an application for funding was submitted to the Massachusetts Historical Commission.

Bill Harris said that after the building envelope has been secured, major federal grants could be sought for the maintenance and protection of the collection. Tom Kolterjahn, the NHC liaison to the Custom House, strongly supported the application, saying he has seen water streaming into the building and sections of mortar are missing from granite blocks. Ann Ormond said the building is a gem that must be made safe. James Shanley said the NRA voted unanimously to support the application.

Powder House Restoration Project

Newburyport Preservation Trust

\$8,000

Tom Kolterjahn said the work to restore the interior and exterior of the powder house began in 2003. The National Guard has installed a perimeter fence and landscaping work will begin soon. Students from the Nock Middle School will help to uncover the cobblestone walkway that runs around the powder house. A grand opening is planned for September and the structure will be a part of the Rails and Sails event at the end of that month. Funding is being sought for three interpretive signs. The signs would be like the ones in Brown Square. Mike Disette complimented Mr. Kolterjahn on the breadth of the funding sources he has used during his work on the project. Bob Uhlig said the estimate is for the manufacture of the signs and consideration must be given to the sum that would be needed to prepare the graphic content. Bill Harris, James Shanley and Greg Colling spoke in support of the project.

City Trees, Green Street and Nursery Project

Newburyport Tree Committee

\$47,000

Hugh Kelleher thanked the CPC members for their past support of the work of the Street Tree Committee. He said the committee has largely been able to restore the city's streetscape by planting 800 trees. The trees have mainly been small ones that require a great deal of attention.

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The committee would like to continue its work along Green Street by installing trees that are larger than the whips that were planted on High Street. The larger trees would make an impact on the streetscape more quickly. The committee plans to plant 50 trees at a cost of \$400 each. A second part of the application involves the creation of a tree nursery. The committee would be able to save money by buying small trees and maintaining them. The DPS would help obtain water and mulch for the trees in the nursery.

5. Discussion

Don Little asked about the NHC's opinion on three applications. Margaret Welch said the NHC supports the work of the Street Tree Committee. She said the NHC is happy with the work on the south side of the stadium and is not opposed to the removal of a portion of the north side. She also said the NHC encourages the reuse of the granite in the design of the new fountain and is concerned because the design would not be determined before the awards are recommended.

Don Little questioned signage being considered as a historic resource. Mike Dissette said signage helps the viewer understand the history of the city and preserves the context of a structure. Paul Healy said signage also helps to increase the appreciation of open space resources.

6. Adjournment

Paul Healy moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:35 p.m. Judith Grohe seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved. The next meeting of the Community Preservation Committee will take place on Tuesday, April 24 at 7:00 p.m. in the City Hall conference room.