

Community Preservation Committee

March 2, 2023

Via Zoom Webinar
Meeting Minutes

Call to Order

Katelyn Sullivan of the Planning Office announced the meeting would be recorded and broadcasted.

Chair Mike Dissette called a meeting of the Community Preservation Committee to order at 7:00 p.m. to deliberate recent presentations.

Roll Call

In attendance were Chair Mike Dissette, Vice Chair Jane Healey, Chuck Griffin, Jamie Gagnon, Joe Teixeira, Mark Rosen, Don Walters, and Joe Morgan. *Tom O'Brien not present.*

Director Andy Port and Katelyn Sullivan from the Planning Office were also present.

1. Welcome by the Chair

Chair Mike Dissette welcomed everyone and reviewed the process of deliberations for projects presented last month. Discussions among the Committee members and the voting. Any nonmembers of Public or applicants will be called upon should any questions or information be needed. Public may raise their hand to ask a question before the finished discussion on any project. Thanked the committee members for the work and time. He explained the number of meetings will be less throughout the year, and requested that the 3rd Thursday of each month be held in case something comes up and a meeting is necessary. He referred to packets which contain updates and answers to questions posed during presentations and can be discussed during deliberation of that particular project and suggested everyone weigh in with any thoughts on each application. Explained the funds available are more than the overall applicant requests, so there is no threat in exceeding the budget should all be recommended. The process for this meeting will include going through each project separately, voting, and at the end of the list they can look back and make changes if necessary. The final vote will take place at the end of the meeting with all decisions to fund or not fund or any special conditions, etc. Reminded them they can only recommend to the City Council which projects they have recommended for funding and the amount to be funded. The City Council will make the final determination to award funding.

2. Deliberations FY24 Applications for Community Preservation Funds

Total Requested from applicants \$1,078,583

a) First-Time Homebuyer Program Affordable Housing Trust \$250,000

Chair Mike Dissette opened the call for discussion on this project. He started by stating he was happy that the Affordable Housing Trust is interested, active, and experienced in this

and it sounds like a good direction to take to help people with properties otherwise not deed restricted with this disappearing loan.

Mark Rosen addressed his concerns based on research he conducted related to the requirements under Valuation Criteria defining the range of qualified households with very low, low, or low to moderate income. He questioned the project summary stating they plan to disperse money to those with up to 100% of the area median income which conflicts with what would be considered low income as Newburyport's median income surpasses that of the State median. He supports the idea but doesn't feel it fits the criteria to pass it for a vote.

VC Jane Healey responded that she too questioned the median income and was advised by the Coalition Technical Assistance that CPA funds can only be available to those meeting less than 100% so believe they are following the guidelines.

Katelyn Sullivan agreed with Jane and the programs can go up to 100% area median income and did confirm with Coalition allowable use of Preservation Funds. She also confirmed that Newburyport falls under the Boston area median income.

There was some discussion regarding the differing guidelines. Chair Mike Dissette and Director Andy Port advised the guidelines they have been using may be outdated and to follow the statute. Clarified the project meets qualifications to allow a vote.

Jamie Gagnon was concerned with the cost of the program and not being pervasive in the area, but would hear what the group has to say as he is new.

Chair Mike Dissette asked for a motion on this project for funding and amount.

Don Walters motioned to recommend approval of the project in the full amount of \$250,000. Mark Rosen 2nd.

Roll call conducted with all in agreement to approve with exception of Chuck Griffin who abstained as did not hear the full presentation.

**b) Atkinson Common Rock Tower Restoration
City of Newburyport Parks Commission & Department \$59,950**

Chair Mike Dissette opened for comments with none.

Chair Mike Dissette motioned for approval on the project and amount.

Chuck Griffin to approve as presented and full amount \$59,950 with Jamie Gagnon as 2nd.

Roll call taken with all in agreement to approve.

**c) The Perkins Art and Research Center
Historical Society of Old Newbury dba./Museum of Old Newbury \$210,251**

Chair Mike Dissette opened for comments.

Discussion was held to clarify what the actual funding was being used for and of any changes. There was some confusion on modification of the project to store the historic items and documents. Chair Mike Dissette explained there was some mention of the other work needed for the overall project, but the amount of the ask for CPC has not been updated or changed. The \$210,251 is specifically for the compact storage unit.

Katelyn Sullivan verified that confirmation was received that archiving historical documents would qualify the project for CPC funding.

Chair Mike Dissette motioned for approval and amount.

Chuck Griffin motioned to approve at full amount with 2nd from Joe Morgan.

Roll call with all in agreement to approve.

**d) Newburyport Custom House Masonry Repair Portico Roof
Christopher Silva \$150,000**

Chair Mike Dissette opened the call for comments with none.

Chair Mike Dissette called for a motion to approve and amount.

Chuck Griffin moved to approve in full amount with Mark Rosen 2nd.

Roll call with all in agreement to approve.

**e) Downtown Lighting Project
Department of Public Services \$69,377**

Chair Mike Dissette opened for comments and advised of the amended category as Recreation.

Don Walters requested clarification of whether the illumination of the new lights would be greater compared to the existing lighting and confirmed by Director Andy Port that the new lights would be brighter and currently have them along Merrimack St. Kim Turner clarified the wattage. existing 65 and new is 67. She also explained they will throw off more light and there will be a baffle to provide more consistent light facing the ground.

Joe Morgan questioned how this project falls under CPC funding and under which pathway and category as it seems more of an infrastructure project.

Chair Mike Dissette explained the amended version of the application in a reduced amount did 2 things. First it changed the category from Historic to Recreation due to not qualifying as historic where they are replacing not restoring. Second it reduced the scope to involve only those 3 areas considered the linear parks. Improving the use and safety of an existing park with these additional lamps, separate from any consideration the City may have for uniformity which is a larger project they are doing.

Director Andy Port confirmed there is a fair amount of latitude of recreation that go with that category, like fixtures.

Chair Mike Dissette called for a motion to approve and the amount.

VC Jane Healey motioned to approve in the full amount with Mark Rosen as 2nd.

Roll call taken with all in agreement to approve with exception of Don Walters who abstained.

f) Open Space Reserve Fund

City of Newburyport/Open Space Committee \$100,000

Chair Mike Dissette opened for comments with none.

Chair Mike Dissette called for a motion to approve and the amount.

Joe Teixeira motioned to approve in full amount with and 2nd from Chuck Griffin.

Roll call taken with all in agreement to approve.

g) Colby Farm Open Space Preservation

City of Newburyport/Open Space Committee \$51,000

Chair Mike Dissette opened for comments.

Jamie Gagnon clarified the project is for replacement of fencing on Low St.

Chair Mike Dissette confirmed yes, for fencing and location.

Chair Mike Dissette called for a motion to approve and the amount.

Mark Rosen motioned to approve for full amount with 2nd from Joe Teixeira.

Roll call taken with all in agreement to approve.

h) Tree Replacement

Friends of Newburyport Trees \$7,200

Chair Mike Dissette opened for comments.

VC Jane Healey advised that research has shown this is not eligible for funds due to involvement of street trees.

Chair Mike Dissette further explained the past funding for trees were for existing heritage trees, in parks, or in cemeteries or were historic. CPC has not had a straight tree replacement application until this one and the feedback received from the Coalition was that it is not eligible, unfortunately.

Chair Mike Dissette called for a motion.

Mark Rosen moved to not recommend the project due to not meeting CPC requirements with 2nd from Jamie Gagnon.

Roll call taken to not recommend due to ineligibility with all in agreement.

i) Mobi mats- Dune Preservation

Plum Island Taxpayers Association (PITA) \$6,657

Chair Mike Dissette opened comments.

Concerns were raised on whether the project met the criteria and clarification of control of the Mobi mats where the City is funding them. Also, how much of the general public will have access as it is located in a residential area.

It was suggested by Director Andy Port the possibility of recommending approval with condition of an intermediate agreement with City and applicant to ensure the City would have control over the matts so they are not relocated outside of Newburyport.

Rosemary Janco and Nancy clarified the matts were for Newburyport use and location was selected as it is an area with the heaviest traffic. They have agreed with the City that the residents would be responsible for the annual storing and placement of the matts. PITA would assist if they were unable to. The current mats being replaced were provided by PITA and will be relocated, but the new mats would be for 53rd street only and not moved. They reiterated the location is accessed by people from all over, not just the residents in the neighborhood.

Corinn Flaherty who lives in that neighborhood provided a history of the Mobi matts and explained there are 7 access points to the beach and prior funding wasn't enough to cover 53rd from getting matts so PITA stepped in and put in the existing ones. The dunes have built up and longer replacement Mobi mats are needed. 53rd St has one of the last remaining beach access points as 3 of the 7 are inaccessible due to tides and conditions. She also confirmed there are signs on the street to point out the public access.

Chair Mike Dissette added he agreed it is important to have the matts to preserve the dunes and provide access to the beaches. He added this project differs from others as it allows all city members to benefit from it.

VC Jane Healey confirmed research found that the project did qualify as a rehabilitating recreation.

Chair Mike Dissette called for a motion to approve and the amount.

Joe Teixeira moved to approve and fully fund the project with 2nd from VC Jane Healey.

Roll call taken will all in agreement to approve except Don Walters who responded no.

j) Bike Feasibility Study

City of Newburyport Parks Commission & Department \$5,750

Chair Mike Dissette opened for comments with none.

Chair Mike Dissette called for a motion to approve and the amount.

Mark Rosen moved to approve the project in the full amount with 2nd from Chuck Griffin.

Roll call taken with all in agreement to approve.

k) Cashman Multi-sport Courts Resurfacing

City of Newburyport Parks Commission & Department \$61,271

Chair Mike Dissette opened the call for comments with none.

Chair Mike Dissette called for a motion to approve and the amount.

Chuck Griffin moved to approve in full amount with 2nd from Mark Rosen.

Roll call taken with all in agreement to approve.

**l) Atkinson Common Tennis Court Resurfacing
City of Newburyport Parks Commission & Department \$49,557**

Chair Mike Dissette opened for comments with none.

Chair Mike Dissette called for a motion to approve and the amount.

Chuck Griffin moved to approve the project in full amount with 2nd from VC Jane Healey.

Roll call with all in agreement to approve.

**m) Woodman Park Accessibility Project
City of Newburyport Parks Commission & Department \$57,570**

Chair Mike Dissette opened for comments with none.

Chair Mike Dissette called for a motion to approve and the amount.

Chuck Griffin moved to approve the project at the full amount with 2nd from Mark Rosen.

Roll call taken with all in agreement to approve.

3. FY24 Obligations/Bond Recommendations

Chair Mike Dissette explained as a technical matter need to vote to recommend that the existing debt service be honored and paid for the Stadium Bond of \$122,880, Cherry Hill Bond of \$11,530, and Fuller Field Bond of \$48,750. Also, once the Market Landing and Bartlett Mall Bonds get out on the street the debt be serviced up to the amounts stated (shown on budget) of \$235,000 for Bartlett Mall and \$270,000 for the Market Landing Bond.

Chair Mike Dissette moved to recommend that the outstanding bonds and the “to be issued” bonds be recommended to be paid when due. Mark Rosen 2nd.

Roll call taken with all in agreement except Jamie Gagnon who abstained.

Chair Mike Dissette reviewed the budget also includes approval of the administrative costs which have increased from \$12,000 to \$14,000 for Coalition dues, note taking, and annual public hearing.

Chair Mike Dissette moved to recommend approval of the increase of administrative costs with 2nd from Mark Rosen.

Roll call taken with all in agreement to approve.

Chair Mike Dissette advised there is no need to vote on the full docket as each were individually voted. Any additional conditions across the board?

Chair Mike Dissette reviewed and confirmed that project life before calling for extension will be 24 months opposed to 12. which was voted on last year and approved. Quarterly reports and updates on status of projects will still be imposed.

4. Requests for Grant Extensions and Process for Extensions

Chair Mike Dissette referred to the packet showing the list of projects over the 12 months. He requested to extend these for another 12 months.

He moved to recommend to the mayor to extend additional 12 months to those listed in the packet with 2nd from Chuck Griffin.

VC Jane Healey explained she was curious about the historic structure survey update 2017, if still a project or not, and if should extend?

Director Andy Port explained they have not been able to get an RFP for consultants to get out. He advised they should be able to get one out there, the project has been on back burner. There was an understanding their office would assist but they haven't gotten around to that, yet. They have gone back and forth with the Historic commission on which structures to focus on and it got put on the back burner.

Katelyn Sullivan added they have been making progress on this project with \$30,000 in funds for this project as matching funds were received.

Roll call taken with all in agreement to approve extension.

3. CPA Application Review Process Update

Chair Mike Dissette called for volunteers to work with the Planning Office on changing the current process for new applicants. Some communities do a 2-step process which includes an early due date to send in the general summary and what they are doing for the project. Then the committee does research on just eligibility on the scope of work to vote which will be eligible to continue with the full application project. He explained he would like the Planning Office to work with a couple committee members on how best to amend the processes, suggest due dates to hold the first meeting on eligibility, and

then later discuss amending the process with the help of a subgroup and vote on the best process to go forward. Asked for volunteers to work with the Planning office on that.

VC Jane Healey volunteered along with Joe Teixeira.

5. **Other updates from the Chair or Planning Director (if needed)**

Chair Mike Dissette advised the Committee to leave dates open each month in the event a meeting is needed to assist the City Council.

6. **Approval of the Minutes from 2/16/23**

Chair Mike Dissette approved the minutes with Mark Rosen as 2nd.
Roll call with all in agreement to approve.

7. **Meeting Adjournment**

Don Walters advised he is leaving the Planning Board and the CPC; he said goodbye and that he enjoyed being on the committee.

He was given well wishes well and thanked for his time with the group.

Chair Mike Dissette moved to adjourn with all in favor at 8:38p.