

## **Community Preservation Committee**

March 24, 2021

Via Zoom Webinar

Minutes

### **Call to Order**

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

Mike confirmed Katelyn Sullivan will monitor for questions from members of the public and acknowledge any raised hands throughout the meeting. At the end of each presentation will invite questions from the public at that time you may select the option to raise your hand and wait to for Katelyn to acknowledge and allow you to ask your question(s).

### **Roll Call**

Committee members in attendance were Chair Mike Dissette, Vice Chair Jane Healey, Paul Healy, Don Little, Chuck Griffin, Mark Rosen, Glenn Richards, and Tom O'Brien, Don Walters Katelyn Sullivan from the Planning & Development Office was also present.

### **1. FY 2022 Application Presentations for Community Preservation Funds**

Chair Mike Dissette provided a brief summary of the purpose of the meeting. There are 13 applications submitted requesting \$1.5 million in grants, which is approximately 30% in excess of estimated available funds this year. The applicants have been divided into two meetings with 6 on the agenda tonight and the remaining 7 on the 4/28/21 agenda to allow all applicants to make presentations. Applications, materials, and letters of support have been reviewed by the Committee so there is basic knowledge on information provided. Presentations can be a summary of important points plus any additional information not submitted with the application. After each presentation questions will be allowed from the Committee members and then opened to public to for questions or comments. Each applicant is expected to have 10-15 minutes allotted for their presentations and comments.

#### **a) Lower Atkinson Master Plan Amendment Project Newburyport Parks Department & Commission \$3,850**

Presented by Lise Reid, Parks Director. She reviewed they currently have all but completed the Lower Atkinson Master Plan which was already funded by the CPC for \$25,000. This request is for additional funds to have illustrative elevations of the proposed Club House for their fund raising. As soon as this is funded it will take a month to complete the plan and then start the fund raising. They have writing grants as well as the Pioneer League on board to reactivate their Diamond Dreams program and help with fund raising to help improve the park. This is a really high priority project due to safety issue with a lot of traffic on Merrimack Street in that area. The final step of the Master Plan is very important to engage people in fund raising.

#### Comments/Questions from Committee:

- Mike Dissette asked where they are at with the prior funds awarded to the project.
  - Lise Reid advised the entire amount has been spent and then some with the Pioneer League funding an extra survey.
- Glenn Richards asked if there was coordination with the City Public Works related to the dangers of parking and traffic on that street. Recall other discussions in the City there were some tentative plans for improvements to the area to including crosswalks or lights.
  - Lise Reid confirmed that City Public Works were involved with meetings and coordinating all along. Scope of this project and amount needed is much larger than what was available.
- Glenn Richards questioned image submitted on parking location.
  - Lise Reid explained that the image shown is not the most current version; apologize for not sending the updated plan. She advised new plans are similar in where parking will be located and separate with planting strip. The Club House and playground will be moved to allow for parking.
- Mark Rosen questioned the Open Space option being checked off on the application as he didn't see how it applies here. Aside from that he has no problem with the application. If you read the criteria on Open Space, this really doesn't fit. Technicality, not a big deal.
  - Lise Reid explained it would be enhancing one of the City's Open Spaces.
  - Mike Dissette added as a general comment, that as a Committee, because that is self-categorized in the application at times it may be reviewed with the Committee deciding which categories best apply, as some are not be applicable and others fit multiple areas.
- Jane Healey questioned the fund raising; is it just for the Club House or the project in general and what are the plans for implementing the Master Plan when fund raising done.
  - Lise Reid fund raising is the next step which will involve grant writing, looking at trusts, and event fund raising with the Pioneer League. Almost \$3 million for this plan that was developed by their consultant. Talked to the Mayor's Office today about whether this can be broken into phases. The main goal is to address the safety issues which requires moving the Club House and playground. May fund raise in phases but do feel essential to Public safety.
- Don Walter questioned roles and responsibility of each organization involved and how much of the plan is collaborative vs dependent.
  - Lise Reid advised the area is City property where the Pioneer League has used for decades. Working on a license agreement with them. Feel they can do great things to raise money. In the past have had a casual agreement with them on annual meetings and they contribute between \$30-\$40k/yr. towards maintenance to the park. Feel very confident partnering with them.
- Mike Dissette opened to Public for questions. No questions.

#### **b) Bartlet Mall Frog Pond Improvements**

**Newburyport Parks Department & Commission  
\$186,035**

**c) Restoration of Swan Fountain at Bartlett Mall  
Newburyport Parks Department & Commission  
\$126,000**

Presented by Kim Turner, Chair of Parks Commission. She will combine her presentation to cover both item (b) and (c) from the agenda. Most critical goal of the project is to bring back the Frog Pond which includes cleaning up the water quality and restoring the Swan Fountain. She referred to slides provided in the application which provide a history of the Bartlett Mall as well as the fountain. The water has been stagnant for decades with current conditions including discoloration (green) and HAB which is toxic to humans and small animals. Several studies have been conducted with various suggestions to treat the issue. Goal is to stabilize the water's edge and consistent water level.

Edges of pond compromised. Stabilize with granite rock engraved with history of mall as well as names of donors, which will help with fund raising for the greater project.

Water source of either well system or input of unimpeded ground water through a boot system with a geo-synthetic liner included with project. Also an outflow system to help with circulation and aeration and prevent stagnation.

Currently working with team to execute a feasibility study using prior funds from the CPC. Current technology and experience within this group being brought to this project. Current thinking is to use encapsulation model (in place of dredging) to recreate as close to a natural engineered pond as possible and it being more of a permanent solution, not a band aid.

The process will include:

- Bathymetric Survey to extend out from the bottom of the pond to 30ft of the edge's slope (\$13,812)
- Water source which may involve either shallow wells or boot system to allow ground water (\$40,000)
- Edging stone for 1/3 of the pond's edges which includes granite blocks which can be engraved with history of Mall as well as for fund raising (\$132,023)
- Fountain Restoration includes remove, repair, clean, and repaint with quote coming from a local vendor (\$126,000)

Comments/Questions from Committee (includes both Mall projects for Frog Pond and Fountain)

- Paul Healy questioned the costs and if they include encapsulation of the pond? Seems encapsulation is big part of the success of this project. He also requested a copy of the Feasibility study to show progression.
  - Kim Turner explained it will not. The prior funds received will help design and price out the system through the feasibility study. Not sure of the cost of encapsulation yet. Still waiting for more information on the study. The funds being requested now will include the 3 items listed which will contribute to the larger design. These 3 things need to be done before the liner can go down. She advised they hope to have a copy of the Feasibility study by the next CPC meeting.

- Glenn Richards asked if the new swan fountain will be sourced through the new wells, if the overall plan dealing with the muck and wells has a good chance of working, and also questioned the permissibility or restrictions regarding the engraved stones and how the City feels about it.
  - Kim Turner responded in that yes the plan is to have the wells source the fountain and scientists they have consulted with believe the wells are the best path to take. She reviewed the primary use of engraving will be the history of the Mall on the stones.
  - Lise Reid added the City doesn't have a naming rights policy, but Parks Commission can develop their own policy on what they feel is appropriate.
  
- Jane Healey commented she is really excited for this plan as she lives in that area and uses that space. She questioned the cost of the work for the fountain restoration as the application notes just for cleaning and doesn't show plumbing. The price seems high. She referred to #3 and #5 of the proposal slide. She also questioned how confident the water experts feel the job will accomplish what it's meant to do in regards to aeration.
  - Kim Turner clarified that the vendor and Jeff Briggs confirmed fountain is operational and just needs to be cleaned and painted. Using a 4 coat paint process to protect and avoid decline seen in the past. There are some repairs as well, mostly hardware. She agreed the writing is a bit confusing and agreed to update it to avoid any miscommunication in the end. The water experts feel the fountain is sized well for the size of the pond and to be safe they are also considering some subservice aerators and circulators to increase aeration (included with current study)
  
- Don Walters had several questions including what the timeline is for the fountain with concerns about incomplete engineering study at this time for the water flow; confirmation of the Bathymetric survey as to where the 30ft is measured from; and a study of the stability of the blocks as well as the potential tripping hazards as they settle. Also concerned with timing of blocks being installed to avoid stock piling in the area.
  - Kim Turner confirmed the Bathymetric survey consists of the entire bottom of the pond and extending out 30ft from the water's edge to capture the slopes. She clarified part of the stone blocks would be used (if go with liner) to secure the liner. They are 20x30 inch; 6ft long granite blocks and shouldn't be moving. Also per application, hope to acquire amount of stone for 1/3 of the perimeter and study should be done in 4-5 weeks on feasibility. Once CPC decision is made will be ready to hit the ground running. She added they hope to have fund raising completed quickly to get the liner and avoid any delays of the stones being installed.
  - Glenn Richards asked if some part will remain beach like?
  - Kim Turner advised the plan is to have the entire perimeter stone to help stabilize.
  
- Don Little asked about why two wells are being suggested opposed to 1. He mentioned a study from 3 years ago suggesting the fountain is sinking and if there

have been any updates on that? Also, questioned the estimates of \$132,000 and \$126,000 and if they would qualify to go out to bid?

- Kim Turner replied that the wells are shallow and going by the expert's suggestion to accommodate the circulation of the water. She confirmed that they are looking into that study on the fountain sinking but does not have an update at this time.
  - Lise Reid advised anything over \$50,000 needs to go out to bid.
- Mike Dissette opened the meeting to the Public for questions. No questions.

**d) Atwood Park Lighting Improvements  
Newburyport Parks Department & Commission  
\$33,000**

Presented by Kim Turner, Chair of Parks Commission. Request for lighting improvement at Atwood park which is a ½ acre park in the heart of South End. Well used recreational area for the Public. They have done some renovations over the years to improve visibility in the park but there has been an increase of undesirable conduct/activity in the park since COVID. Neighbors have filed complaints. Believe lighting will help remedy this problem fairly inexpensively. Currently proposing 4 post lights spaced on main pathways as part of the initial plan. Parks Commission has approved these LED fixtures with contemporary spin on historic form that are durable and dark sky compliant. Total amount includes materials and installation.

Comments/Questions from Committee:

- Glenn asked to confirm location of Atwood Park; include section around School St? Also asked if any discussions have been made with Community members to confirm how they feel of these changes.
  - Kim Turner confirmed the area adding that Garrison Gardens is part of Atwood park and there have been some improvements such as the basketball court and plantings. She confirmed the neighbors came to them for help with the lighting. A meeting was held by the Parks Commission and advertised to the neighborhood for attendance as well.
  - Lise Reid added that an online survey was put out several years ago about adding lighting with majority in favor.
  - Jane Healey referred to the application packet to highlight the majority of the support is coming from the immediate neighbors on Atwood St.
- Don Little questioned the application summary noting vandal proof?
  - Kim Turner confirmed the product being vandal proof and have been used by the City for other areas.
- Mark Rosen questioned the nighttime noise issue and questioned if this is more a security issue opposed to recreational.
  - Kim Turner clarified it is due to activity rather than noise. Lighting will help deter the activity and people hanging out there at night.
- Don Walters recused himself from this application as he lives in the area.

- Mike Dissette questioned the technology of the lighting to confirm it allow for adjustment in event it becomes an issue in a home.
  - Kim Turner confirmed it can be adjusted.
- Mike Dissette opened the meeting to the Public for questions. No questions.

**e) Renovation of Nock Middle School Tennis Court  
Newburyport Parks Department & Commission  
Friends of Newburyport Tennis  
\$175,000**

Presented by Lise Reid, Parks Director. She explained she is working with the residents and schools as they initiated the request, which has grown since 2012, to develop the athletic field needs. There is a need for additional tennis courts in the City and to renovate the current two that are dilapidated and dangerous which includes repositioning them. Funds would be used to beautify and enhance the courts and will be available for the schools and public use. Additional, renewed and larger courts will benefit the school's Tennis team to allow normal timeframes for matches where they currently take two times longer than usual. The budget was provided by a consultant they have used and worked with before who is usually right on target. This will be a real enhancement to the City's recreational space.

Comments/Questions from Committee:

- Mike Dissette questioned what the School Department's position was on the use of this land. He also requested/suggested adding in bike racks to the design as well for those who may travel to the courts.
- Lise Reid explained they are in favor and it was approved at a School Committee meeting. Also received a letter from the Facilities Manager, Steve Bergholm stating they would love to have this project happen and will take on the maintenance once it's done. She was in agreement for bike rakes.
- Paul Healy and Glenn Richards both raised concerns over who would be in control of who gets to use the courts and what time of the day and conflicts that may arise between the Schools and the Public.
- Lise Reid advised she believes the School would as it is on school property. She also explained conflict already exists which adds to the need of more courts. Schools currently have a process in place where they post their schedules online, so outside of their schedule should be open to the Public, but can't say for certain. She commented that there is a precedence there as they manage the Skate Park that is on School property and it has been working out well. So there is a precedence for double jurisdiction there.
- Mike how are the Atkinson Common courts currently managed for access and if the new courts could be included with that process.
- Lise Reid advised the Atkinson Common courts are managed through the Parks department. We have a schedule separate from the School's. School has priority and we have then set their schedule early in the season, then rest of time is

open to the Public. A discussion could be opened with the School Committee and Parks Commission on including the new courts into this schedule.

- Jane Healey asked to clarify the proposal and amount to confirm it's designed to cover 5 courts; the renovation of the 2 existing courts and construction of 3 new courts. She questioned if the project would be less costly going out to a general contractor. Also, if this project would allow for a Boy's Tennis Team at the school.
- Lise Reid clarified that the design is for 5 courts, but only asking for construction of 2 courts at this time with it open to add to in the future. The courts would extend into the existing open space area at the School. This may encourage more use and exposure for a boys' team. She felt strongly and confident that the project would be best with a Design Engineer, Field Architect.
- Don Walters questioned the possibility of the redesign if it could include Pickle ball courts. Also, questioned if neighbors would need to be consulted when/if the remaining courts are added making it 5 courts.
- Lise Reid advised it is possible and people have been calling for it. There would have to be a Public discussion with neighbors to address any concerns. They have a pilot at Perkins Park and people are using those courts and when time comes to expand to the full 5 courts.
- Don Little wanted to comment about the cost and allocation of the funds. This application may only be approved for partial funding and what will they plan to do if that happens.
- Lise Reid explained she would move ahead with design engineering for construction documents for the projects. If any funds left over reach out to USTA to see if they can help with the funding from USTA and use any left over funding as a match. May come back to CPA in future for further funding. USTA declined funding in past due to way they were oriented due to court size not compliant with their standards, but this plan would comply.
- Mark Rosen questioned if money is available through the School Committee. Seems like a good idea to make this a project with the School Department as well.
- Lise Reid advised she is unable to answer that question at this time. She explained they had initially approached the Mayor Gayden W Morrill Charitable Foundation and they wanted to see more development before committing so CPC was the next avenue to take. Point taken with suggestion of including School Department.
  - Don Little referenced the School Committee Meeting notes that show the tennis courts as #12 on the list, which shows it is not on the top of the list to apply their money to.
- Glenn Richards asked to clarify the amount for replacement of the court. The reason it seems so costly is due to the repositioning of the courts to allow them to be resized, not just a surface redo?
- Lise Reid confirmed that was correct.

Questions/Comments from the Public:

- Kyle Hodsdon, Athletic Director of Newburyport HS reviewed currently have 45 girls on average with the tennis program. Major need for these facilities to expand the program and allow the matches to be more efficient, as well as enhancing the PE curriculum for the Middle and HS kids. If the schedule falls with the school, that would generally be used after school and seasonally. Plenty of time for Public use, especially after the season. He is very excited for this project and feels the Tennis community deserves this.

**f) Open Space Reserve Fund**  
**City of Newburyport- Open Space Committee**  
**\$100,000**

Presented by Mike Dissette as an Open Space Committee member. Annual basis request for funds to be reserved to the Open Space Reserve Account. It's a place holder and Savings account to get a place at the table for when opportunities arise for acquisitions on Open Space. Allows other team members to add to the pot to get an acquisition done. Example would be the Water Protection project in Newbury last year. Over the years have accumulated, what is currently \$629,900 in the fund and which waits for opportunities. Requesting to add \$100,000 to restore and grow that fund to have "real money" due to amounts involved with acquiring Open Space projects.

Comments/Questions from Committee:

Glenn Richards asked if he could explain what is being "watched" as it references in the application?

Mike Dissette explained he was unable to divulge as Green Belt has asked to stay aware and stay funded and it is a delicate dance to create the opportunity and seize it.

No questions or comments from the Public.

**2. Approval of the minutes 2/24/21**

Chair Mike Dissette motioned to approved.

Paul Healy motioned to approve with Tom O'Brien second.

Roll call conducted with all in agreement with Don Walters abstaining as he was not present for that meeting.

**3. Next meeting date: 4/28/21 7p.m. online**

Chair Mike Dissette confirmed next meeting set for 4/28/21 at 7pm, online. Hoping to have update on budget and amount to work with for this meeting.

There was no new business from the members at this time.

**4. Meeting adjournment**

Chair Mike Dissette called to adjourn the meeting.

Paul Healy moved and Tom O'Brien second.

Roll call conducted with all in favor.

Meeting closed at 8:29p.m.