



Town of Carlisle

MASSACHUSETTS 01741

COMMUNITY PRESERVATION COMMITTEE

Minutes

Zoom Meeting

Wednesday, June 14, 2023 6:00 p.m.

Members Present

Drew McMorrow, *CPC Chair and Recreation Commission Member*, Barney Arnold, *Select Board Chair*, Krissy O'Shea, *Historical Commission Member*, Helen Young, *Conservation Commission Member*, Sam Rottenberg, *Citizen-at-large*, Christine Johnson-Battista, *Affordable Housing Trust Member*

Members Absent

Addie Grady, *Planning Board Member*

Staff Present

Jennine Blum, *Administrative Assistant*

Others Present

Martha Feeny-Patten, *GPL Director*, Christine Stevens, *GPL Trustee Chair*, Kate Reid, *Select Board Chair*, Nathalie McCarthy, *Carlisle Mosquito Writer*

6:05 p.m. Drew McMorrow called the meeting to order.

Minutes Approval

Helen Young moved to approve the March 6, 2023 minutes as written.

Sam Rottenberg seconded.

All in favor (6 to 0).

Public Comments and Correspondence

None

Spring Town Meeting Recap

CPC Article 16 Motions – two passed, one withdrawn

Passed: Motion: Appropriate FY 2024 CPC Funds for the following: Community Housing (\$71,700), Historic (\$71,700), Open Space Reserve Funds (\$71,700), Administrative expenses (\$10,000), and the Community Preservation Budget Reserve account (\$465,750).

Withdrawn Motion 2: No motion will be offered under Article 16, Motion 2 as listed in the Warrant. The Community Preservation Committee has voted not to recommend the Gleason Public Library project to Town Meeting at this time.

Passed Motion 3: Appropriate \$300,000 from the Open Space Reserve Fund to the Carlisle Conservation Commission for the rehabilitation, preservation, and restoration of the Cranberry Bog Dam #1.

Fall Town Meeting

There will be another town meeting on Monday, October 16, 2023. The reasons for this are the following:

- It was recommended by the town governance/task force committee.
- There are a number of bylaws that people would like to see passed.
- The Environmental Sustainability Committee will have the town consider the adoption of the new stretch code.
- To consider the proposal to make the Town Clerk an appointed position rather than an elected position.
- With the Town Moderator's permission, the Select Board would like to present a conceptual design for the Fire Station expansion and renovation plans for the Police Station for the purpose of providing information and soliciting feedback.

Second FY 2024 CPC Grant Cycle

The fall Town Meeting presents another opportunity for the CPC to have another grant cycle. The CPC will have one project application or possibly several to vote on. The deadline for application submission will be July 31, 2023. Properly vetted project applications will be heard by the CPC in August through September to be prepared for the Fall Town Meeting.

Known Projects

Eligible/qualified projects

- **Gleason Public Library interior renovation.** The CPC is expecting a refreshed application.

Potential Projects

- **Central Burying Ground restoration.** The Historical Commission (HC) is in the early stages of discussion.

A proposal was submitted about ten years ago which didn't move forward. A fresh look will be taken at the project. The project will most likely include masonry work, specialized historic stonework, and reshaping trees. The historic stonework is likely to be the largest component of the project.

It was suggested that the HC connect with Jim Hall, Superintendent of the DPW, to possibly get involved with some of the nonspecialized work to reduce costs. It was also recommended that the Planning Board be consulted early on – a site plan might be required if there is a significant amount of stonework involved. This can be a contingency to the grant.

- **FOBs for Benfield Farms residents.** This request would be submitted by the Carlisle Affordable Housing Trust (CAHT).
- **Town-wide Hydrogeological study.** This request would be submitted by the CAHT to identify areas of town that would support affordable or denser housing. The grant request is near completion as they're also looking at other sources.

Non-eligible projects

- **The digitization of Historical Commission records** doesn't qualify for CPA funds.

CPA Funding, Second Cycle Publicity

- Distribute memo to all town departments (Drew will look for FY 2023 memo)
- Notice in Municipal newsletter
- Notice in Carlisle Mosquito

Motion

Helen Young moved to establish July 31, 2023 as the deadline for the fall cycle of CPA project application submissions.

Sam Rottenberg seconded.

All in favor (6 to 0).

Gleason Public Library Interior Renovation Project

Christine Stevens asked if the Trustees needed to physically resubmit their application. Drew stated that if nothing had changed, he felt the original application would be accepted for the fall cycle. Christine S. asked that the CPC inform the GPL Trustees if further action will be required.

Fundraising Status

About seven weeks ago, \$400,000 was approved from the GPL Endowment Fund for the project. Since then, about \$250,000 has been raised from grants and individual donations. The GPL fundraising campaign kickoff was on the afternoon of June 14th.

To date, the GPL has reached one-third of its goal \$1.9 million goal and if successful with its CPC application there will be an additional \$400,000 from CPA Funds – not quite halfway there.

Christine S. mentioned there is a lovely thermostat sign in the shape of the Gleason building and bookcase. Fundraising progress is represented by books on the bookcase shelves.

Question on whether to increase the requested amount

Drew has been asked by townspeople if the GPL will be able to raise \$1.9 million of the \$2.3 million goal. The Select Board has also asked if the GPL team will be asking for more funds with concerns that there might be pressure for the town to kick in funds from the operating budget to complete the project.

Since the previous CPC meeting, Drew and Kaitlin Waterson, GPL Trustee, and Treasurer, revisited the question of whether the GPL should increase the amount of money requested from CPA Funds. Drew expressed that he felt it wasn't unreasonable for the public to support one-third of the project cost (\$767,000) through CPA Funding and felt it should be discussed as a community. He reminded the CPC members that the funds will be replenished next year with about \$500,000 and there isn't a backlog of projects. He added that he wasn't sure if it would be harder to get approval at Town Meeting though. He asked how CPC members felt about this and expressed that this was a group decision.

Barney Arnold expressed concern because she had heard from enough people who felt \$2.3 million was a lot of money and they questioned whether the Town really needed to spend that much on renovating the library. She stated that perhaps this comes from a lack of understanding about what is being planned. She added that the GPL team shouldn't

make it too high so people will vote against it, but high enough so it has a good chance of succeeding. Barney asked Christine S. what the team's plans are to build a large constituency to support the project.

Christine S. stated that the GPL has plans for the following:

- A slideshow with photos that people don't normally see with a backstory and narrative to go with it. For instance, the mechanical room photo shows pipes going every which way, ceiling lights that require an electrician to change the light bulbs, and the shortage of desks for full-time library staff.
- A presentation of testimonials is planned for the fall where people express what the library means to them.
- Neighborhood meetings will be held, which proved to be successful for the Master Planning group and Castle Playground Project.
- An outreach campaign is being planned.

Christine S. stated that it's difficult to get mind share in Carlisle, but these methods have been successful before and so far, there is good momentum for support. The GPL team understands that \$2.3 million is a lot of money. They plan to educate the community on the changing needs. They're trying to keep ahead of the needs while people are still engaged with the library instead of trying to raise money for something past its prime which people might feel uninspired to support. They do not want to see the town left with another beautiful antique that doesn't serve a purpose.

When asked about reducing the project scope, Christine S. stated that there is no plan B and they expect to meet their target by the end of this calendar year.

Christine S. stated that personally, she feels that three-quarters of a million dollars is a lot to ask of the town, but she needs to confer with the other trustees. People might not support it if there are other funding requests totaling a large sum of money. She asked for guidance from the CPC and the SB regarding the amount of CPA Funds the GPL should request.

Drew stated that last year the CPA raised \$716,000 from assessments of which \$500,000 went to the Undesignated Fund which is now at \$1.6 million. He thinks the request for one-third of the project cost is within the town's means. The town is getting quite a bargain for three-quarters of a million dollars. It's one of the few municipal spaces and the only municipal space that has qualified for CPC funds which are subsidized by the state. It will be a more useful space and the town is only paying for one-third of the cost to get it there because you're raising a lot of money privately. He added that if the GPL doesn't raise enough funds, the town won't spend the CPA funds.

Christine S. mentioned that State Representative Simon Cataldo, who attended the kickoff, indicated that there might be more state funding available which the GPL is hoping to hear about soon.

Drew asked the members for their thoughts on the GPL asking for more funds (\$500,000 - \$700,000).

A number of members supported increasing the request for as much as \$750,000. The reasons for support included:

- There is fundraising fatigue in town and too much burden would be put on private donors.
- It's reasonable for the town to use CPA Funds to foot one-third of the bill.
- It's an iconic property, a beautiful building, essential to the character of Carlisle.
- All residents will benefit from this project.
- It's like a community space until another space is developed; it's a gathering space for kids as well as seniors.
- There is no downside to supporting this project and the belief is that it will be supported.

Barney stated that the CPC members are supportive of the GPL asking for a larger amount. She suggested that all parties should talk again about that before the application is due.

When asked which fund the money would come from, Drew responded that he sees the Historic Funds being used for the Central Burying Ground project if approved and the remaining Historic Funds would be used for the GPL project. The remainder of the funds needed would be drawn from the Undesignated Fund.

Community Support Demographics

When asked about the level of support from families with children, Christine S. replied that it's an important base but hard to quantify. The kickoff meeting was largely attended by families with children and there has been a lot of verbal support. The largest donors have been the older residents.

Christine S. was encouraged by a couple of members to think about who the constituents are who really care about this project and develop a plan to get them to Town Meeting to support the project.

Meeting with Select Board

Christine S. will request to get on the agenda with the Select Board to discuss the use of Undesignated Funds. Christine is hoping that all boards, committees, and commissions that have an interest in using CPA Funds will come together to discuss.

CPA Funding Source(s)

Drew proposed that the HC project have first dibs on the Historic Funds and the GPL project would use the remainder of those funds and then use Undesignated Funds.

Drew stated that he appreciated the HC's sensitivity to the idea that their projects might receive less support if the Historic Fund is empty. He indicated that other than this concern, the HC is very supportive. Krissy O'Shea confirmed that there was unanimous support by the HC to support the GPL project. The concern was the full depletion of the Historic Reserve Fund.

Christine S. agreed that the HC absolutely saw value in the project but not if it was using Historic Funds. She asked if the HC did any fundraising and that she hadn't been aware of any. Christine S. asked if the HC had other projects they wanted to apply for this fall or next spring. Krissy stated that there were none at the moment, but she was reluctant to speak more about this until after the next HC meeting the following week.

Christine stated that the GPL has an active application now and the idea of reserving the Historic Funds for another project for which no application has been submitted is problematic. Drew responded that we'll navigate that this fall and he reminded attendees that \$500,000 - \$700,000 per year will continue to flow into the fund. The CPC sees how valuable these funds are to the purpose of community preservation. There is a larger risk to the community to not spend the funds at the proper cadence because the suggestion might be made to reduce our tax burden. That would be a very inefficient use of taxpayer resources because the state is kicking in about 40% of the funds. Their special designated purpose has been so important to the vibrancy of life in Carlisle.

Community Preservation Plan

Sam Rottenberg is expecting to receive updates to the *Selection Criteria* mentioned in the old plan from the Carlisle Affordable Housing Trust by the end of the month. She encouraged the other commissions (Conservation Commission, Historical Commission, Recreation Commission) to get back to her as well. Sam speculated that it was unlikely that the Community Preservation Plan would be completed before the end of the month, which is also the end of her term. Sam will pass the plan along and graciously offered to help here and there after June 30th.

Sam inquired who could update the numbers for the plan appendices (D and E). Drew indicated that Town Accountant Kelly Beyer could provide the necessary data.

Drew acknowledged that Sam's valuable experience from years of serving on the CPC has been greatly valued and appreciated and that she will be missed.

Barney noted that a new Citizen-at-large will need to be appointed and the vacancy should be publicized.

More from the Carlisle Affordable Housing Trust

Benfield Farms key fobs. As a result of a complaint filed by a tenant with the State Architectural Access Board (AAB), the AAB directed property owner and operator, Neighborhood of Affordable Housing (NOAH), to fix the problem. The issue has yet to be resolved and the CAHT feels it needs to be resolved more quickly for the residents. Kate asked if previously granted CPA funds could be used to get a key fob system for Benfield Farms.

Kate stated that it's the CAHT's understanding that it is allowed to use CPC funds for rehabilitation to physically preserve housing property if and only if the property was originally funded by CPC funds which Benfield Farms was. Kate added that the CPA statute also states that rehabilitation is essentially a capital improvement to make the property functional for its intended use, such as improvement for accessibility and building code compliance which this request is.

At the time of the meeting, there was a thunderstorm which caused unstable internet connections for some participants making communication difficult. The CPC asked that Kate first address the request with Town Counsel to determine if it complies with the statute and grant agreement before the CPC responds. This topic will be further discussed at a future meeting.

Website Updates

This topic will be discussed at the next meeting.

Expiring Terms on June 30, 2023

- Sam Rottenberg
A new Citizen-at-large will need to be appointed.
- Drew McMorrow will resign after the fall CPC cycle.
A new member representing the Recreation Commission will need to be appointed.
- Christine Johnson-Battista will commit to another term on the Carlisle Affordable Housing Trust and the CPC.

Next Meeting

To be determined

Adjournment 7:21 p.m.

Documents Submitted Update

None