

The meeting was held on Wednesday 20 May 2009 in Newton City Hall, Cafeteria.

*Attending members of the Community Preservation Committee (CPC):* Joyce Moss, Nancy Grissom, Dan Green, Tom Turner, Steve Fauteux.

Program manager Alice Ingerson served as recorder.

CPC Chair Joyce Moss called the meeting to order at 7:05 pm.

#### 7:05 COMMITTEE BUSINESS & UPDATES

##### 15 April 2009 MINUTES

VOTE After members pointed out some grammatical corrections Dan Green moved approval of the 15 April 2009 minutes. Steve Fauteux seconded the motion. Minutes were unanimously approved

Alice Ingerson distributed copies of the final draft report and map from the Heritage Landscape Inventory project, and reported on the previous evening's community meeting to review that report. Only one member of the public had attended the review meeting.

Ingerson also informed the Committee that, in light of their increased emphasis on funding leverage, she had requested advice from the Law Dept. and Public Buildings Dept. about "phasing" private vs. public funds for a single project. The Law Dept. has indicated that a private donor can legally provide a privately funded design as an in-kind contribution, followed by a regular proposal for CP funding of construction based on that design. However, the Law Dept. has also urged the CPC to get detailed advice from the Public Buildings Dept. on the project management challenges created by a transition from privately to publicly funded phases. The particular example that has raised this question is the Angino Farm barn, for which exterior rehabilitation and remodeling were funded with strictly private funds. The Farm Commission and Newton Community Farm, Inc., have asked whether they might be able to shorten the timeline for rehabilitation of the barn interior by donating the design, then requesting community preservation funds for construction.

Ingerson noted that private funds may be easier to raise when they are dedicated to an identifiable piece of a project. Joyce Moss agreed that this was the case, though the identifiable piece is usually a building or part of a building or site, rather than a project phase. However, she did not want to make private fundraising easier if they led to overriding the public process usually applied to work on public buildings and sites. To ensure full public review, it would be preferable to fund design with public resources, and fund construction with private resources. She acknowledged that this might not be possible, since construction was usually the most expensive phase.

#### 7:20 FISCAL 2010 COMMUNITY PRESERVATION PLAN

The sense of the committee agreed to adopt a fall proposal deadline of 16 October 2009, with the goal of holding public hearing(s) on 18 November 2009, and the first CPC working session(s) before the winter holidays.

Ingerson pointed out that some other CPCs required pre-proposals, called "one-pagers" in Newton's *Proposal Handbook*, and then invited full proposals. The sense of the Committee was not to require one-pagers, but to encourage their submission as a way to alert the CPC to potential uses of available funds, obtain staff advice for a full proposal, and request initial opinions from the Law Department on funding eligibility.

#### HOUSING PRIORITIES

Joyce Moss reviewed suggestions from the fall hearings: to consider and support multi-site programs, such as the Newton Homebuyer Program, rather than individual, single-site projects; to align housing with the goals in the *Comprehensive Plan*, such as in village centers and other mixed-used, transit-oriented locations; and to fund feasibility studies or pre-development costs.

The sense of the Committee was that the CPC would welcome proposals that fit the first two priorities. Members agreed with Moss that CP funds might be used to pay for a plan for a site already controlled by the proposal sponsor.

At the fall 2008 hearings, the suggestion was also made that CP funds support efforts to reduce regulatory and zoning barriers to affordable housing. The Committee asked Alice Ingerson to request guidance from the state Dept. of Revenue on whether this would be an allowable use of funds.

Dan Green asked whether the CPC had ever taken the lead on a project to meet an unmet need, as long as any member directly involved in the project recused him or herself from voting on that project. Steve Fauteux, who is on the staff of the state Ethics Commission, stated that in such a case, the CPC member also could not sit at the table during discussions, or receive any compensation for advising the project sponsor. Alice Ingerson wondered how this had worked in the past, since she had heard that some individual CPC members had encouraged particular proposals. Nancy Grissom explained that a CPC member could encourage the submission of a particular proposal, but could not present or represent that proposal to the CPC in any formal sense.

#### HISTORIC RESOURCES PRIORITIES

The Committee agreed that proposals should be required to use the basic process outlined in the Secretary of the Interior's *Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties*, and suggested that Ingerson include her one-page summary of that process in the *Proposal Handbook*.

In response to a suggestion that Historical Commission approval be required for historic resources proposals, Commission member Nancy Grissom suggested that the Commission might not be comfortable with such a requirement.

Ingerson noted that the interdepartmental Community Assets Taskforce, which the CPC had recommended to the Mayor and Board of Aldermen, would play part of this role, by identifying eligible projects involving city-owned historic resources, and ranking them in priority order.

In response to a question from Nancy Grissom, Ingerson noted that the Newton Historical Society had a form and process for requesting letters of support for CP proposals, but that the subcommittee managing that process did not recommend citywide priorities or standards.

Joyce Moss drew attention to the suggestion from the fall public hearings, in the overlap between housing and historic resources: preserving existing smaller, older, and therefore more affordable homes. She felt that such homes often needed a lot of work, including deleading, after which they might not be so affordable after all.

Dan Green urged the Committee to avoid encouraging proposals and programs that helped mostly individual property owners. Joyce Moss agreed, noting that every owner of an older home would like to receive a public subsidy for work that could be characterized as preservation, restoration, or rehabilitation.

The sense of the Committee was not to identify such a program as a priority, but to consider proposals that somehow combined affordable housing and historic preservation goals, when and if they are submitted.

#### OPEN SPACE & RECREATION PRIORITIES

Of the suggestions made at the fall hearings, the Committee agreed that it made sense to consider proposals to acquire land that bordered existing open space, especially if it has important habitat or other ecological values.

Alice Ingerson noted that several suggestions had been made at the fall hearings to consider improving the quality of Newton's existing open spaces and waters, but that it was not clear whether ecological restoration was an allowable use of CP funds. The Committee directed Ingerson to request guidance from the Dept. of Revenue on this question.

Another suggestion from the fall hearings was a focus on linear open space and paths, especially linking existing open spaces. Ingerson noted that one potential such project, to donate a permanent public access easement to a private parcel that appeared to overlap one of Newton's aqueducts, had raised complex

questions about both ownership and custody, because the rest of the aqueduct appeared to be owned by the MWRA.

Dan Green agreed to encourage submission of a one-pager for this potential proposal, to clarify the issues involved.

Joyce Moss reiterated a point in the discussion outline, to require matching funds from other sources for rehabilitation of recreation land that had been acquired with CP funds, such as at Crystal Lake, to avoid concentrating CP funds too much at a single site.

Dan Green suggested that volunteer labor might count toward a matching funds requirement, particularly for parks and playgrounds.

#### DRAFT MISSION/VISION STATEMENT

The Committee reviewed Alice Ingerson's draft mission/vision statement. Members suggested that these drafts could be shortened, and that the mission statement should specifically mention the four resources fundable under the CPA.

The Committee accepted Ingerson's suggestion to combine the introduction/overview from the current *Community Preservation Plan* with the new funding priorities, to create a new shorter document called *Community Preservation Funding Priorities*, to be revised every 2-3 years, with community input. The remainder of the current *Plan* – a chapter on each of the four fundable resources – would then become a broader, longer document called *Community Preservation Needs & Possibilities*, to be updated only as needed (for example, to reflect current statistics). They asked Alice Ingerson to present a draft of the *Priorities* for review at their June meeting.

The small public audience at the meeting (Sharon Barrett and Peter Schilling, Newton Lower Falls; Maureen Meagher, Waban) asked how the Committee felt the fall hearings had gone, and whether they had been useful.

Joyce Moss felt the housing hearing was useful, and explained that the Committee had been wrestling with the results of the hearings all year, to push the funding guidelines forward.

Nancy Grissom felt the historic resources hearing, and all three hearings in fact, had gone well, and that it was useful to get the public together with the CPC for a broader discussion.

Dan Green felt the hearings had reconfirmed a lot of things he had already thought, but also brought up new ideas he hadn't thought about.

Audience member Sharon Barrett noted that she had recently submitted a one-pager for a potential proposal, and found it a useful exercise. As part of the process, she had read the Community Preservation Act and the CPC website in more detail than she had before.

Barrett and Schilling questioned the line from the existing *Community Preservation Plan* allowing funding to "Preserve and create linear open space as a resource for walking, bicycling, birding and other passive recreation activities as well as a safe and convenient link between parks, public transportation stops, and other destinations." They pointed out that transportation is not a fundable purpose under the Act, and that it might be difficult to draw the line between transportation and recreation.

Tom Turner felt that the relative importance of recreation vs. transportation had to be judged project by project, and could not be determined in the abstract or in advance.

Alice Ingerson noted that the CPA sets minimum thresholds and requirements for funding eligibility, but empowers local communities – through their CPCs to set standards for actual funding that exceed the minimum requirements. Newton's CPC, for example, had always encouraged proposals that not only met the requirements in the Act, but also met sustainability and smart growth goals.

Joyce Moss felt that these additional goals were appropriate, and were compatible with the *Plan's* goal to encourage walking and bicycling.

Chair Joyce Moss adjourned the meeting at 8:40 pm.