

City of Newton



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## **Community Preservation Committee**

### **APPROVED MINUTES**

**December 13, 2022**

The virtual meeting was held online on Tuesday, December 13, 2022, beginning at 7:00 P.M. Community Preservation Committee (CPC) members present included Mark Armstrong, Dan Brody, Eliza Datta, Byron Dunker, Susan Lunin, Robert Maloney, Jennifer Molinsky, Martin Smargiassi, and Judy Weber. Community Preservation Program Manager Lara Kritzer was also present and served as recorder.

Chair Jennifer Molinsky opened the Community Preservation Committee's public meeting and introduced the CPC members present at this time.

#### **Discussion on ideas and plans for CPA Program Outreach and Workshop**

Ms. Molinsky introduced the City's Community Planner Engagement Specialist Nevena Pilipovic-Wengler to the Committee and explained that she was here to discuss community engagement. Ms. Pilipovic-Wengler explained that she had talked with Ms. Kritzer about developing outreach opportunities for the Community Preservation Program and gave a brief presentation on her suggested process for that work. She explained that she often used a "POP" format in brainstorming which looked at the Purpose, Outcome, and Process for the outreach project. In this case, the Purpose was defined as wanting to make the program more widely known, increasing the diversity of its applicants, and developing an equity oriented process. She then reviewed the anticipated outcomes of receiving more diverse applications, having more diverse applicants, and funding more of these types of projects. She explained that this meeting would mostly be discussing the process that leads to these outcomes and suggested that the CPC take a relational, workshop approach to assisting new applicants in applying for funding.

Ms. Pilipovic-Wengler noted that the CPC's general outreach approaches included newsletters and updates. She proposed that the Committee consider a more relational, networked approach and emphasized connections between groups and individuals to reach out to new potential applicants. She also thought that it was always helpful to have a public information session as part of the process and reviewed a list of potential City groups that could be included in the process.

Ms. Pilipovic-Wengler next went on to discuss how to foster empowerment by creating a space for brainstorming and connecting with different resources. She pointed to the City of Austin's Neighborhood Partnering Program as a good example of how to empower new groups to take advantage of City resources. She explained that the Austin program funded smaller projects

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throughout the community and paired professionals with neighborhood advocates to develop and implement projects. She noted that the program often held site visits and meetings on site to consider ideas in the space that they were planning for.

She explained how the workshop could use sticky note brainstorming and work to connect applicants with resources in the community. She suggested that the CPC create a feasibility worksheet as a way to help applicants work through questions that need to be addressed for the application. Ms. Datta asked for more information on what would be included on the feasibility worksheet. Ms. Kritzer and Ms. Pilipovic-Wengler reviewed their ideas for the sheet and noted that it could also include information on what City staff should be contacted for municipal site projects and options for working with staff to complete projects. Ms. Pilipovic-Wengler suggested that the Committee consider asset mapping to show where completed CPA projects were located and what City resources were created by them that were available to the public. She also suggested that the Committee include questions that asked applicants to who they would need to talk to for permission to do projects on City properties, the depth of their projects impact on the City, and the labor needed to complete it. She saw the feasibility worksheet as a way to help applicants formulate the project and consider all of the elements that might need to be involved. She also suggested that the Committee share a sample of asset mapping to evaluate where there were resources and gaps. Ms. Pilipovic-Wengler also suggested an “account buddy” system where successful former funding recipients could partner with new applicants to help them through the process. It was noted that staff would also need to be part of this process to help identify resources and facilitate connections between the community and other departments.

A question was raised as to how the CPC might define diversity and equity. Ms. Pilipovic-Wengler encouraged the Committee to consider this question as it would help them in collecting data and defining their role in the application process.

Ms. Kritzer reviewed the potential timeline for the project. She suggested holding a further discussion on this project at the CPC’s January meeting followed by community outreach work in January and February. In either late February or early March, the CPC would hold the public information session with the workshop to be done in early/mid-April. Ideally, this could become an annual or bi-annual process with information sessions and workshops in the spring and fall. Ms. Pilipovic-Wengler also noted that the CPC could test drive a workshop with a smaller group of the CPC itself.

Ms. Molinsky thanked Ms. Pilipovic-Wengler for her work and noted that there was a lot here for the Committee to consider. She thought that the Committee should consider goals for CPA funds which went beyond their funding targets and that it would be good to create more awareness in the community on how the CPA program worked. She was also curious as to what smaller projects might look like. Ms. Lunin suggested that there were small potential projects at Webster Woods such as path work, trail marking and other general improvements.

Ms. Datta thought that the proposal was exciting and that it could be fun to work to get the word out about the CPA program. She noted that they could also support more feasibility studies which were often steppingstones for larger projects and noted that some ideas needed a little help to get underway. Mr. Dunker noted that many of the projects that the CPC saw needed permission from the City to get underway and asked how early in the process that would be needed. Ms. Weber

noted that in her experience, CPA funding was often the gap funder for larger projects. She asked if staff had any ideas on who else might be interested in coming in for funding and whether there were any large projects out there that might be coming in. Ms. Weber also raised a question about the sizing of projects and whether it was more advantageous for applicants to come in with larger or more fully developed proposals. Members agreed that the program should be open and invite applicants to come in to discuss ideas at any stage. Members also discussed whether considering the size or scale of a project and stating a minimum or maximum amount for CPA funding requests was outside of the scope of what they wanted to do.

Ms. Pilipovic-Wengler noted that the Neighborhood Partnering Program had a maximum amount that they would provide to projects out of their annual budget but not a minimum amount. She added that the program had also had a strong emphasis on pro-bono work and helped applicants to price out their proposal and/or find the right connections to discover that information as part of their regular work. She asked if there were types of projects that the CPC would say no to. Ms. Weber was not sure whether the Committee would say no without reviewing a project but noted that projects did need to meet the funding requirements for the CPA program. Ms. Molinsky asked if Historic Resource projects were more commonly smaller in scale. Mr. Armstrong answered that this had been true in the past and noted that the Auburn Street project had included some Historic Resource funds to preserve the original house as part of the large affordable housing development.

Ms. Armstrong noted that with more and better marketing, the program could become more equitable as the more individuals knew about the program, the more they could utilize it. He thought that they had leverage to expand the types of projects funded through the CPA.

Alice Ingerson noted that in 2007, the CPC had been warned to not fund Parent Teacher Organizations (PTO) directly when they came in to do improvements on area schoolyards. She noted that the PTO was not always aware of other City projects and that this had created some conflicts in the past when a City department said that a project was alright to do then would not support it when it came up for funding. She encouraged the CPC to make sure that projects did not get bogged down in these types of disputes and noted that there were more small projects completed in the program's early days.

Ms. Molinsky noted that they wanted to encourage equity and diversity and thought that this could be something that the Committee would want to consider. She stated that in light of several large projects that were expected to submit applications in the near future, looking at diversity in applications seemed particularly important. Ms. Weber thought that they might need help in identifying appropriate types of projects and suggested that they create a template for the types of projects that they wanted to see so that they could avoid having people apply for projects that the CPC did not want to fund.

Ms. Pilipovic-Wengler agreed that the CPC needed to consider these questions as well as the gray areas in CPA funding. To Mr. Dunker's point, she thought that some applicants might not reach out because they did not know who to call and that it was essential to build connections in the community if they wanted to expand the CPA program's reach. Ms. Molinsky agreed and stated that she was excited to help out with the future information sessions.

### **Review of Existing and Potential Future Projects**

Ms. Kritzer reviewed the Active Funded Projects Current Status report with members at this time, noting their completion status and the amount of funding used to date. In discussing the current status of the Athletic Field and Gath Pool projects, it was noted that both projects were winding down and that new applicants were anticipated for construction funds in the next few weeks. Mr. Dunker asked if the Committee would prefer to have the two projects submitted as one overall proposal or two separate ones. Mr. Armstrong thought that the projects should be submitted as separate proposals. Ms. Datta agreed but thought that they should be submitted at the same time if possible so that the Committee could consider the overall needs for Recreation projects. Members discussed how this could be done, noting that if the projects were at entirely different progress points, then they could be submitted at different times. Mr. Dunker stated that he hoped that the Parks and Recreation Committee would be ready to approve the final pool design in December and noted that the other projects were nearly ready as well. Mr. Brody agreed that the projects should be submitted separately but at the same time if possible. Ms. Molinsky asked whether the CPC could approve one bonding initiative for two separate projects. Mr. Brody asked staff to speak with City's finance and treasury staff to find out what they would advise.

Following the review of current projects, Ms. Kritzer explained that the Newton Community Development Foundation (NCDF) was expected to be submitting an application for Historic Resource funding to preserve and restore the Warren House, a partially affordable development located in the former Warren Junior High School. CPA funding was used to replace the roof and make other repairs in 2010 which had included a preservation restriction over the exterior facades. Members discussed the proposed project questioned why this was not an affordable housing project. Ms. Ingerson spoke about the 2010 project, noting that since only some of the units were affordable, it had made more sense to focus funding on the overall historic building than on the percentage of the units that were affordable.

### **Update on Dudley Road Estate potential project**

Ms. Kritzer explained that the City had been given an opportunity to purchase three parcels of land that extend from Dudley Road to Brandeis Road, adjacent to the Newton South High School. She reviewed the three parcels involved, which include two existing houses and a large undeveloped parcel and total just under 15 acres. The City had issued a Request for Expressions of Interest to find a partner to work with to purchase the parcel and create a development that incorporates open space and affordable housing and sets aside a portion of the land for municipal use. Nine responses were received and were currently being reviewed by the City.

Ms. Lunin thought that this was an excellent opportunity for the City and that it would be disruptive to develop the site. She was strongly in favor of the City and CPC's involvement in the parcel and hoped to see it developed in a manner that provides a greater benefit to the City. She stated that she had read the proposals and thought that they would need to decide the value of the site to the environment and the City. She thought that more creative solutions could be done on this site than a traditional development. Ms. Molinsky noted that the price of the site was based on what the owner was asking for and that the site still needed to be researched and appraised.

### **Review of Current Finances**

Members reviewed the most recent Finances at a Glance document at this time. Ms. Kritzer explained that the report had been updated to include the November fund distribution from the State CPA Trust fund. The City was receiving a 30.3% match of \$1,161,473 which was greater than the 20% match that had originally been budgeted.

### **Review of Updated Logo Design**

The Newton North High School Graphic Design students had provided an updated logo design with two options for the placement of the text and project boxes. Members reviewed the drafts and agreed that they preferred the second design which had the categories across the top and the title below. Members agreed that they were happy with this final design and expressed their appreciation to the Newton North High School students. Ms. Lunin moved to approve the second design as shown. Mr. Maloney seconded the motion which passed by unanimous voice vote.

### **Approval of October 11 Minutes**

Members had reviewed the draft minutes prior to the meeting. Ms. Lunin moved to approve the draft minute for the October 11 meeting as submitted. Mr. Armstrong seconded the motion which passed by unanimous voice vote.

### **Other Business**

Mr. Armstrong moved to adjourn. Ms. Lunin seconded the motion which passed by unanimous voice vote. The meeting was adjourned at 8:16 P.M.