

City of Newton



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Barney S. Heath
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Community Preservation Committee

APPROVED MINUTES

January 10, 2023

The virtual meeting was held online on Tuesday, January 10, 2023, beginning at 7:00 P.M. Community Preservation Committee (CPC) members present included Mark Armstrong, Dan Brody, Eliza Datta, Robert Maloney, Jennifer Molinsky, Martin Smargiassi, and Judy Weber. Committee Members Byron Dunker and Susan Lunin were not present for the meeting. 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. Mr. Maloney agreed to do the first review of the draft minutes from the meeting.

Discussion on ideas and plans for CPA Program Outreach and Workshop

Ms. Kritzer reminded members of the discussion at the last meeting on the future information session and workshop. Members began by discussing potential dates for the future information session and whether or not to hold it in place of a regular CPC meeting. Members noted that there were several projects that were anticipated to be submitted in the next few months and thought that the information session should be held at a separate time to make sure that there was enough time for the discussion. Members also agreed that a time in mid to late March would work best. Ms. Kritzer stated that she would take a look at the City's meeting calendar and send out a list of potential dates after the meeting.

Ms. Kritzer asked if the meeting should be held in person or virtually. Most members leaned towards a virtual meeting but it was noted that these types of discussion often worked better in person. Members discussed how information sessions and workshops could be done virtually using breakout rooms instead and noted that a virtual meeting would be easier for the general public to attend. Members also asked that someone from the Parks and Recreation Department be present for the meeting if possible to answer any potential questions from groups interested in proposing a recreation project in a local park. Ms. Kritzer stated that she would contact the Parks and Recreation Department to see if there was a staff person who could serve as the liaison for any public groups interested in requesting CPA funding for a City park or recreation area. Ms. Kritzer also noted that she had a list of contacts for other City organizations and groups that she would begin to reach out to for the meeting. Members asked Ms. Kritzer to share this list in case there were any contacts that members were already familiar with or could help out with outreach.

website www.newtonma.gov/cpa

staff contact Lara Kritzer, Community Preservation Program Manager

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Ms. Kritzer briefly reviewed the potential agenda before discussion moved on to the worksheet.

Review of draft Project Worksheet

A draft of the proposed project worksheet had been sent out to members for review prior to the meeting. Discussion began with the list of additional materials for review on the last page. Members thought that this list was too long and dense. Ms. Kritzer suggested revising it down to just a few general areas where materials were often needed in the final application. Members discussed whether the worksheet should mention the need for matching funds and whether there were projects that might be considered too small to apply for CPA funding. It was noted that the CPC did not have anything in writing to discourage smaller scale projects, but that in practice many of its funded projects were substantial ones. Members felt that projects needed to universally have some level of applicant effort put into them, whether that was in the form of donations or volunteer effort, and that that effort could be used in some situations as a match. It was noted that projects regularly used in-kind contributions of funding or time to match their CPA funding request. Members asked that a link be added so that applicants can see a copy of the application from the website.

Ms. Datta asked if the Committee should frame the size of the projects that it is looking to fund. She suggested that they could provide some ranges of funding for different types of projects and show what was needed for each one. They could then use that process to make a point of explaining when matching funds were typically required and add the nuance that the form might lack. She thought that this would be a way to address some of the hurdles in the process and the different funding processes along the way. Ms. Weber asked if there were any specific elements of the City Council portion of the process that they should address. Ms. Molinsky thought that the City Councilors wanted to make sure that they were doing their due diligence before a project was funded and noted some of the review processes that had been completed in recent years. Mr. Smargiassi asked if the Committee would want to highlight these processes in the worksheet or information sessions. Ms. Weber noted that they might want to highlight a few of them for information purposes during the information session.

Turning back to the worksheet, Mr. Armstrong thought that there should be a lower limit for CPA funded projects but did not think that they should only fund large scale projects. He suggested that perhaps the CPC would not want to fund projects under \$10,000 and agreed that they needed to develop a plan to convince smaller organizations to come in for funding. He thought that there were tremendous possibilities for projects in between the too small and very large scale ones seen in recent years. He noted that the South Burying Ground was an example of a small area that was in need of assistance and thought that there should be lower, more equitable lines of funding available. Members discussed whether or not to define the types of projects that could apply for funding. It was noted that smaller scale projects often required fuller funding and that matching funds were not always as much of a focus in those cases.

Ms. Weber added that there was also a question of ongoing maintenance for some of these spaces and projects. Members agreed that applicants also needed to be reminded when there were maintenance requirements included as part of the future of a project. Members discussed current projects and how they had fit into existing CPA funding categories and requirements.

Ms. Molinsky thought that the Committee would need to walk a fine line between inviting applicants to apply and actively seeking their applications. She suggested that they not put a bottom line for funding in writing so as to leave their options open.

Members reviewed the worksheet draft and made additional language changes at this time. It was noted that the dark boxes in the chart on the first page were confusing and needed to be better explained. Ms. Molinsky asked how the worksheet would be used in a virtual meeting and members discussed how it could be reviewed both in person and virtually. Ms. Weber thought that it would work best for groups focusing on a single project. It was noted that the meeting could also use jam boards to demonstrate ideas. Ms. Kritzer stated that this had been used for the Rezoning discussions and that she would talk to staff about how that had worked.

Review of Existing and Potential Future Projects

Members had a brief review of current and potential future projects at this time. Members asked staff to reach out to the New Art Center to find out whether or not they had decided to move forward with the purchase of the Church of the Open Hand. Mr. Brody noted that they were originally planning to have a decision on this by the end of 2022 and thought that it would be good for planning purposes to know whether that decision had been made.

Review of Current Finances

Members reviewed the most recent Finances At A Glance update at this time. Ms. Kritzer noted that the State had allocated the \$20 million in surplus funding that was allocated to the State Trust Fund at the end of 2022 and that this had raised the City's match to 38.5%. The additional \$314,006 that the City would receive in matching funds would be available for use by the CPC in FY24.

Approval of December 13 Minutes

Members had reviewed the draft minutes prior to the meeting and Ms. Molinsky had sent back revisions. Members reviewed some of these changes at this time. Mr. Maloney moved to accept Ms. Molinsky's revision and approve the December 13 meeting minutes as revised. Mr. Armstrong seconded the motion which passed by unanimous voice vote.

Other Business

Mr. Armstrong moved to adjourn. Mr. Maloney seconded the motion which passed by unanimous voice vote. The meeting was adjourned at 7:59 P.M.