

**MINUTES OF MEETING
COMMUNITY PRESERVATION COMMITTEE
March 23, 2020
Location: Online Meeting**

The Community Preservation Committee (the “CPC” or the “Committee”) convened a public hearing and regular meeting, duly noticed, on Monday, March 23, 2020 at 7:00 p.m. via the videoconferencing platform Zoom. CPC members present were Stephen Ober, Chair; Barry Tubman; Ken Newberg; Nina Danforth; Nathalie Thompson; Sue Zacharias; and Steve Wagner. CPC member Marcy Dorna was absent. Weston Affordable Housing Trust Chair Sarah Rhatigan and Historical Commission Co-Chair Phyllis Halpern were present. Friends of the Josiah Smith Tavern, Inc. President Adrienne Giske was present for a portion of the meeting. Weston Media Center Videographer Alanna Muldoon, resident Joseph Lembo, and CPC Administrator Tracey Lembo were also present.

PUBLIC HEARING

Steve Ober read a statement explaining the need for a meeting conducted by remote participation in light of the emergency orders issued by Governor Baker in response to the COVID-19 global pandemic and invited public comment.

PUBLIC COMMENT

- None.

PRESENTATIONS BY PROJECT SPONSORS SEEKING FY21 CPA FUNDING

Community Housing

- **Weston Affordable Housing Trust (“HT or Trust”)/Select Board (“SB”) – \$32,000 for Regional Housing Services Office & Housing Trust Staff Support (Support of Community Housing)**

Sarah Rhatigan indicated that she would be presenting a recurring request for CPA funds that the SB and the Trust jointly brought forward each year to fund community housing staff support for both the Town’s affordable housing activities and the Trust’s. Ms. Rhatigan reported that Weston, along with several neighboring communities, contracted with the Regional Housing Services Office (“RHSO”) to provide specialized affordable housing consulting services. Ms. Rhatigan described the Town’s longstanding relationship with the RHSO as critical to helping Weston navigate complex and ever-changing affordable housing rules and regulations.

Ms. Rhatigan noted that Town resident, former Trust member, and current RHSO employee Liz Valenta had been providing administrative and consulting help to the Town for the past 4 years and that the RHSO assisted the Town with monitoring, lottery, and other issues relating to deed restricted affordable units in Town. Ms. Rhatigan reported that the Town contracted with the RHSO to provide hours on an as needed basis and that the current \$32,000 request assumed fewer hours than the previous year because needs arising from the Warren Ave. project were not as great this year.

In response to Nina Danforth’s question, Ms. Rhatigan explained that the head of the RHSO was

responsible for managing relationships with tenants and landlords and assigning staff to particular projects. Ms. Rhatigan noted that even prior to recent economic events, the Trust had been advocating for a Town social worker with knowledge in housing insecurity and other financial issues (e.g., rent or heating assistance). Responding to Sue Zacharias' question about contracting for fewer hours with the RHSO, Ms. Rhatigan indicated that she would ask the RHSO if they anticipated additional work resulting from the current economic downturn (e.g., issues arising from non-payment of rent). In response to Ms. Danforth's question, Ms. Rhatigan reported that as of the date of the Town's Housing Production Plan, there were 124 rental units and 25 ownership units [on the Town's subsidized housing inventory].

Historic Resources

- **Weston Cemetery Conservation Preservation Initiative Phase III**

Noting that Historical Commission Co-Chair Phyllis Halpern was also attending the meeting, Steve Wagner indicated that he would be asking for help in funding the Phase III Cemetery Restoration Project. Mr. Wagner reported that in March Weston had lost resident Pat Siek who was a frequent volunteer and a big advocate for cemetery projects. Mr. Wagner stated that the first formal cemetery condition assessment had been completed in 2007, that Phase I consisted of a \$125,000 FY14 appropriation which primarily had been used for marker conservation at Farmers' Burial Ground, and that Phase II entailed a \$205,000 FY18 appropriation which had been used to conserve markers at Central Cemetery, to complete conservation of markers at Farmers', and to update the condition assessment report. Mr. Wagner reported that though Phases I and III were complete, there was a small amount of money remaining which DPW would use to supplement the current request if necessary.

Mr. Wagner showed before and after photos of markers conserved at Farmers' Burial Ground along with pictures of markers before and during conservation at Central Cemetery. Mr. Wagner praised the work of contractor Mike Gallagher of West Mill Restoration and consultant Ian Meyer and noted that Weston Media Center had produced a video of stone setting work at Central Cemetery.

Mr. Wagner reviewed the \$140,000 Phase III budget as follows: 1) \$117,000 for tomb restoration at Central Cemetery (costs estimated by Structures North); 2) \$10,000 for stone wall and gate work at both Farmers' Burial Ground and Central Cemetery; 3) \$10,000 for a consultant, preferably Ian Meyer, to manage the project; and 4) \$3,000 as a cushion. Mr. Wagner next displayed a photo of concrete blocks and timbers the Town was using to prevent further deterioration of the tombs along with documents prepared by Structures North Consulting Engineers describing restoration work at the 6 tombs. Finally, Mr. Wagner presented a summary of project costs for Phases I through III totaling \$470,000.

Responding to Ms. Danforth's questions, Mr. Wagner indicated that repairs would be made to several gates which, to the best of his knowledge, would be functional, that the project did not contemplate any restrictions on public access, and that funds to restore the Town's cemetery on Route 30 would be requested at a later date. Mr. Wagner noted that vandalism had not been a problem at Town cemeteries to date and expressed his support for increased public use and appreciation of these cemeteries.

CPA FUND STATUS

- **Review of CPA Fund Status and Proposed Appropriations and Allocations for FY21**

Mr. Ober indicated that he would present the high level summary of existing and projected CPA Fund balance which he typically reviewed at both the CPC's Public Hearing and at May Annual Town Meeting. Mr. Ober presented a slide showing a life to date look at the CPA Fund estimating a balance of just over \$3.1 million at June 30, 2020, a slide showing the components of revenue through FY20 including state match received with a one year lag, and a pie chart showing CPA Fund net appropriations including the principal portion only of committed debt service. Mr. Ober highlighted changes in bucket shares of net appropriations from May 2019 to the present as a result of the Josiah Smith Tavern Project as follows: 1) Community Housing decreased to 21% from 29%, 2) Historic Resources increased from 27% to 41%, 3) Open Space decreased from 31% to 27%, 4) Recreation decreased from 11% to 9%, and 5) Administrative remained constant at 2%.

Mr. Ober briefly presented a slide listing the 2 applications before the CPC for FY21 funding totaling \$172,000 which he indicated he would revisit. Mr. Ober then presented a slide which rolled forward the estimated \$3.1 million FYE20 balance to an estimated \$4.7 million FYE21 balance. Mr. Ober noted that as recently as December, the FYE21 Fund balance had been projected to be just over \$1 million. Mr. Ober attributed the difference to 5 projects (e.g., Recreation Paths/Sidewalks, 261 Merriam St. Historic Preservation Restriction, Case Estates Historic Preservation Restriction, Memorial Pool, and the Elderly Housing Committee's Brook School Expansion) which might still be included in FY21 numbers as Fall Town Meeting requests but which were not included in May Town Meeting numbers. Mr. Ober also noted that the current placeholder for FY21 state match was 27%.

Mr. Ober then presented a side by side comparison of the projected CPA Fund balance at FYE20 and FYE21 noting that the FY21 starting balance was approximately \$265,000 higher than what had been previously projected because Weston had received \$232,000 more in state match than anticipated and because investment income was \$33,000 higher than expected. Mr. Ober's last slide showed proposed bucket allocations and administrative allowance noting that proposed allocations in 2 buckets exceeded 10% of revenues since there were known expenditures (i.e., debt service) in those categories which exceeded the statutory minimum. In response to Barry Tubman's question, Tracey Lembo explained that the administrative allowance was set at 5% but that the Community Housing reserve was set at slightly more than 10% to avoid having to bring a warrant article to fall Town Meeting for allocation "catch up" (i.e., to achieve 10% statutory minimums) should actual state match exceed the estimate used in Fund projections.

MEETING

Committee Business

- **Projects Recommended to 2020 Annual Town Meeting (FY21)**

The Committee voted on pending applications to be placed on the warrant for the 2020 Annual Town Meeting as follows:

- 1) ***VOTE: Mr. Ober entertained a motion to support the appropriation of \$140,000 for the rehabilitation of historic Town cemeteries. Ms. Danforth made the motion, seconded by Ms.***

Zacharias. The motion was approved unanimously by roll call vote with Marcy Dorna absent.

- 2) ***VOTE:*** *Mr. Ober entertained a motion to support the appropriation of \$32,000 to support community housing including staff support and participation in the Regional Housing Services Office. Ken Newberg made the motion, seconded by Mr. Tubman. The motion was approved unanimously by roll call vote with Ms. Dorna absent.*

- **Proposed Annual Allocations and Administrative Allowance for FY21**

Mr. Ober entertained a motion to approve the following FY21 allocations:

- 1) *Open Space/Recreation – \$541,000;*
- 2) *Historic Resources – \$419,000;*
- 3) *Community Housing - \$290,000; and*
- 4) *Administrative Allowance - \$136,000*

VOTE: *Ms. Zacharias made the motion, seconded by Mr. Tubman. The motion was approved unanimously by roll call vote with Ms. Dorna absent.*

- **Addition to Proposed Annual Allocation for Community Housing for FY20**

VOTE: *Mr. Ober entertained a motion to approve an additional \$13,000 for Community Housing in FY20 in order to increase the Community Housing set aside to the statutorily mandated 10% of revenues. Mr. Newberg made the motion, seconded by Ms. Danforth. The motion was approved unanimously by roll call vote with Ms. Dorna absent.*

- **Warrant for 2020 Annual Town Meeting (FY21)**

VOTE: *Mr. Ober entertained a motion to approve the language in Articles 25, 26, and 27 of the Draft Warrant for 2020 Annual Town Meeting.*

Mr. Ober reminded the Committee that Ms. Danforth had suggested at a previous CPC meeting that all CPA articles should be subject to an individual vote at Town Meeting and not included in the consent agenda. Mr. Wagner agreed that all CPA articles should be discussed; Ms. Zacharias expressed her belief that CPA articles were not truly housekeeping items and noted that, given past challenges to CPA in Weston, it was important to highlight the program's worth. Mr. Ober agreed to communicate the Committee's sentiment to the SB.

Ms. Danforth made the motion, seconded by Mr. Wagner. The motion was approved unanimously by roll call vote with Ms. Dorna absent.

- **CPC Report for the Warrant Book**

VOTE: *Mr. Ober entertained a motion to approve the "CPC Report for the Warrant Book." Mr. Wagner made the motion, seconded by Ms. Danforth. The motion was approved unanimously by roll call vote with Ms. Dorna absent.*

- **Minutes of the March 9, 2020 Meeting**

VOTE: *Mr. Ober entertained a motion to approve the minutes of the March 9, 2020 meeting. Ms. Zacharias made the motion, seconded by Ms. Danforth. The motion was approved unanimously by roll call vote with Ms. Dorna absent.*

The meeting adjourned at 7:56 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Tracey A. Lembo
CPC Administrator

Appendix A

CPC Public Hearing and Meeting March 23, 2020 Document List

- 1) Community Housing - RHSO and Staff Support:
 - a. Application
- 2) Rehabilitation of Town Cemeteries:
 - a. Application
 - b. PowerPoint
- 3) CPC PowerPoint
- 4) Draft CPC Warrant Articles
- 5) Draft "Report of the CPC" for the Warrant Book:
- 6) Draft Minutes of the March 9, 2020 CPC Meeting.