

# COMMUNITY PRESERVATION COMMITTEE

## Public Meeting Minutes

October 27, 2020

7:00 P.M.

## Virtual Meeting

Pursuant to notice duly filed with the Town Clerk's Office, Concord's Community Preservation Committee held a virtual public meeting on Tuesday, October 27, 2020 at 7:00 p.m. using the Zoom meeting platform. Meeting ID: 867 7958 3030 Password: 183426

Committee members Tom Kearns, Peter Ward, John Cratsley, Diane Proctor, Judy Zaunbrecher, Paul Grasso, Burton Flint and Hester Schnipper were present.

Others Present: Matt Johnson, Select Board Liaison

Marcia Rasmussen

Liz Rust

Lee Smith

Christine Reynolds

The Chair called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m. by a roll call vote.

Everyone at the meeting introduced themselves and stated which board or committee they were the designee. Mr. Kearns explained how to public can use the raise hand function if they have a question or comment during the meeting.

### **Bruce Freeman Rail Trail**

Director of Planning and Land Management, Marcia Rasmussen presented the proposed project to the Committee. Ms. Rasmussen explained that the town is requesting \$25,000 for recreation and open space enhancement of the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail (BFRT). Ms. Rasmussen stated that this includes bicycle racks; additional landscaping, benches, fencing and other site furniture; signage for Concord on Tap and directional signs; and ensuring access to existing trails and open spaces. Ms. Rasmussen reviewed the past CPA funding allocations for the BFRT and how the funds were used. Ms. Rasmussen also reviewed how the CPA funds leveraged additional funding, and what those additional amounts were. Ms. Rasmussen provided specific examples of how the requested funding is planned to be used.

Ms. Proctor asked for clarification on the state funding and when the bridge over route 2 will be completed. Ms. Rasmussen stated that the bridge is supposed to be completed by fall 2021. Ms. Schnipper stated that this is a small funding request that will make the project even nicer. Ms. Proctor suggested possibly finding a way to publically thank the homeowners who provided easements for the rail trail. Mr. Ward asked about updates on the rail trail in other towns. Ms. Rasmussen stated that Sudbury has allocated their funding for the project, and that she does not have a status update on Framingham. Ms. Zaunbrecher asked if this is for the existing 2C portion of the trail and whether the presentation was in order of priority. Ms. Rasmussen stated that it is for the 2C portion and that it was not in order of priority. Ms. Rasmussen stated that signage is probably the most important. Mr. Cratsley asked about remaining funding from previous years. Ms. Rasmussen

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stated that all by \$6,000 has been spent, and she expects that remaining funding to be used by the end of the calendar year. Mr. Flint congratulated Ms. Rasmussen on this being project of the year and stated that it is the attention to details that this funding provides for and makes this project so great. Matt Johnson asked about fencing at Nashoba Brook and Ms. Rasmussen clarified the oversight. Ms. Zaunbrecher stated that there is a conservation restriction at Concord Park that does not allow bicycles. Christine Reynolds asked about the maintenance of the trail. Ms. Rasmussen stated that the town is in charge of maintaining the trail.

### **Wheeler Harrington House and Land**

Ms. Rasmussen presented the proposed project to the Committee. Ms. Rasmussen explained that the town is requesting \$20,000 to hire a consultant to conduct public outreach on the future use of the Wheeler Harrington House and Land. Ms. Rasmussen summarized the past CPA funding allocations of the property and how the funds were used. Ms. Rasmussen explained why a community engagement process is needed and how this will help to consider the future use of the property. Ms. Rasmussen explained that the town needs assistance in compiling information obtained to date, defining areas of concern for each town board involved, and identifying the range of potential uses for the site, and facilitating the conversation with the public. Ms. Rasmussen briefly mentioned the Ball Benson House and Barn and the possibility of using those structures on this site as an interpretive center.

Mr. Kearns asked if the goal of this is to complete the masterplan, and asked if they anticipate requesting additional funding for finishing the plan. Ms. Rasmussen stated that this will be a step in completing the plan and that they would anticipate returning for more funding as needed. Ms. Proctor asked how the town plans to facilitate broad community discourse on the future use of the property. Ms. Rasmussen stated that that would be the job of the consultant/facilitator that would be hired. Ms. Zaunbrecher asked if both the house and the landscape were listed on the National Register. Ms. Rasmussen stated that they are. Mr. Cratsley asked for examples of the community engagement they'd be looking to conduct. Ms. Rasmussen stated that the long range plan and the 2015 Housing Production Plan did a lot of public outreach, and provided some examples of the outreach. Ms. Rasmussen stated that the new online format of meetings will make this different and possibly more difficult than usual. Mr. Ward asked if there were any feedback on the use already. Ms. Rasmussen stated that the former tenants of the property maintained the house well, but that the trail system that connected this property to Main Street 3 years ago has changed the use of the property. Ms. Reynolds asked why the studies weren't done correctly and completed the first time. Ms. Rasmussen stated that the Historic Structures Report is great, the Environmental Assessment is okay, but that the consultant didn't bring all of the pieces together. She explained that there were issues with the project managers, and that they presented three possible scenarios that were not at all imaginative. Ms. Rasmussen stated that the final product was poorly executed, did not meet the proposal requirements, and the consultant was not given the last payment for the project. Mr. Johnson stated that there is an undeniable value in conservation and recreation of the property, but asked if the town had considered selling the house. Mr. Cratsley asked if the full \$40,000 for the roofing project will be returned to the CPC. Ms. Rasmussen stated that it would.

### **Housing Production Plan**

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Ms. Rasmussen presented the proposed project to the Committee. Ms. Rasmussen stated that the town is requesting \$30,000 to complete an update to the housing production plan, which is required to be updated every five years. Ms. Rasmussen explained that the plan outlines the community's current and future housing needs and identifies the community's strategy for developing affordable housing. Ms. Rasmussen summarized the chapters in which the plan incorporates, the three main sections of the plan, and how the plan is used by the town and many of its boards and committees.

Mr. Flint asked how the plan leads to these projects happening in town. Ms. Rasmussen stated that the plan helps to facilitate discussions, plant ideas, and identify sites for projects in town. Mr. Flint asked if the update every five years is a state law. Ms. Rasmussen stated that it is not a mandate, but it is required in order to protect the town from hostile/unfriendly development. Mr. Flint asked why as a regular reoccurring expense this isn't built into the town's budget. Ms. Rasmussen stated that this project directly supports the CPC and affordable housing in town and that's what the CPA funds are supposed to be used for. Mr. Cratsley asked who paid for the 2015 update and how much it cost. Ms. Rasmussen stated that the CPC paid for the last update, and that she would need to look up the amount. Ms. Proctor stated that she doesn't understand why this isn't built into the town's budget. Ms. Rasmussen stated that the town uses CPA funding because the funding is specifically used for community housing in town. Mr. Johnson suggested that the plan be less focused on meeting quotas and more focused on people and the needs.

### **Regional Housing Services Program**

Ms. Rasmussen presented the proposed project to the Committee. Ms. Rasmussen stated that the town is requesting \$25,000 towards the \$50,000 cost of the Regional Housing Services Program. Ms. Rasmussen reviewed the functions that the RHSO provides for the town and highlighted some of the RHSO's work this past year. Ms. Proctor noted that the work the RHSO does is so important to the town. Mr. Cratsley asked if this is the same amount of funding requested last year. Ms. Rasmussen stated that it is \$5,000 more, and explained that the number of units in town has increased and therefore the amount of work required has increased. Mr. Ward asked if we are one of the few towns that splits the expense between the town and the CPC. Liz Rust stated that except for the Town of Lexington and Concord, all of the other towns fund the RHSO fully using CPA funding. Lee Smith spoke in support of funding the program. Ms. Rasmussen stated that the town frequently overspends the hours allocated/funded and the CHDC often has to cover the additional costs incurred. Ms. Cratsley asked if the cost is essentially for staffing. Ms. Rasmussen stated that it is for staffing, rent, and office administration.

### **Affordable Housing Buydown**

Lee Smith presented the proposed project to the Committee. Mr. Smith stated that the Concord Housing Development Corporation is requesting \$500,000 in CPA funding for buy down opportunities and to be able to preserve units with expiring deed restrictions. Mr. Smith summarized the buy down program and how it works, and provided examples of successful buy down projects. Mr. Smith also explained how the funds would be used to preserve existing units when a situation arises and provided examples of this as well. Ms. Proctor asked how funds are used exactly. Mr. Smith explained that sometimes a buyer will come to them with a particular interest in affordable housing and will agree to sell the property for below market value. Ms. Proctor asked if the CHDC

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actually buys the house. Mr. Lee stated that sometimes they do, but oftentimes they add cash to the offer to bring down the property from 100% AMI to 80% AMI and lock in a permanent deed restriction at that rate. Ms. Proctor asked why the units at Emerson Annex aren't affordable in perpetuity. Mr. Smith explained that some of the older units weren't restricted in perpetuity, but they will discuss making a cash offer for a reduction in sale price with a restriction in perpetuity with these funds. Mr. Flint asked how long these funds will be banked. Mr. Smith explained that its unpredictable, and they do not know when these units will be placed on the market or another buy down opportunity will arise. Mr. Flint asked how they came up with the \$500,000 amount. Mr. Smith stated that they believe it is a reasonable figure given property values in Concord. Mr. Smith stated that even the \$500,000 likely wouldn't be enough to purchase a single family home without additional fundraising. Ms. Zaunbrecher asked how much it costs to buy down at Emerson Annex. Mr. Smith gave examples of past units. Mr. Cratsley asked about the 2012 buy down project. Ms. Rust explained that it was switched to a Junction Village project. Mr. Cratsley asked how hard it is for blended funding. Mr. Smith explained that the Concord Housing Foundation has been extremely generous. Ms. Rust also explained that they have used free cash from the town as well, and stated that the CHDC has depleted all of their funds and they do not have a revenue source. Mr. Ward asked about the newly created housing trust. Mr. Smith explained that they will be the future gatekeepers of funding, but they have not been set up yet to do so. Mr. Cratsley noted that the Trust has had a discussion with him about the CPC possibly funding the Trust in the future. Mr. Johnson asked how free cash funds are utilized by the CHDC. Mr. Smith explained that they need to request the funding from the Town Manager and/or the Select Board for a specific project. Ms. Reynolds asked how much of the \$1 million in free cash allocated has been spent. Ms. Rust stated that \$350,000 has been spent.

### **Staff and Technical Services**

Ms. Gill presented the proposed project to the Committee. Ms. Gill stated that the town is requesting \$40,000 for staff and technical services for the CPC. Ms. Gill explained that the CPC is allowed to use 5% of their funding towards staff and technical services and briefly explained the history of funding for this project. Ms. Gill explained what the funding would be used for and also explained how in both FY19 and FY20 there was not enough funding in the account to pay for these expenses. Ms. Gill reviewed the proposed budget and the costs of certain things including the annual dues for the Community Preservation Coalition, signage and staff salary. Ms. Schnipper stated that the project was very straightforward. Mr. Ward asked if the Committee ended up paying for legal support for Town Counsel's review of the projects. Ms. Gill stated that she believes their review fell under the warrant article, which in turn fell under the town's legal budget for town meeting. Ms. Rasmussen noted that this past year town departments have had to pay for some of their own legal expenses due to the Estabrook Road case. Ms. Zaunbrecher asked who ended up paying for the Town Counsel's review of the First Parish or Holy Family projects. Ms. Gill stated that she does not know who paid for that, but that she never received an invoice for it. Mr. Johnson stated that it sounds like the project is underfunded and that the \$40,000 may not be enough. Mr. Kearns stated that the Committee's signage program has been ignored the past few years and that they will work on that more in the spring. Ms. Proctor noted that these signs are important.

### **Other Business and Minutes**

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The Committee asked that draft minutes be sent to them in a word document format. Minutes will be placed on the next meeting agenda for review.

Ms. Proctor stated that she is grateful for the efforts by all of the presenters today.

With no further discussion, Ms. Proctor moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:21 p.m. Mr. Grasso seconded the motion and all other voted in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Heather Gill  
Senior Planner

Minutes Approved on: 11-10-2020

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Secretary