

# Community Preservation Committee

Minutes

June 16, 2020

**Members Present:** Ellen Preston, Hank McCarl, Jennifer-lee Levitz Aronson, John Feener, Bob Whitmarsh, Heidi Wakeman, and Barbara Silberman, Co-chair.

**Absent:** Pamela Tobey, Catherine Schlichte, Co-chair.

**Members of the public:** Tracy Mark.

Staff: Jaimie Corliss.

Meeting called to order 6:01 PM by Barbara S. with the following preamble:

This meeting is recorded by video and audio in accordance with state Open Meeting Law.

Consistent with the Governor's orders suspending certain provisions of the Open Meeting Law and banning gatherings of more than 10 people, this meeting will be conducted by remote participation.

If you are calling in on a phone you can press Star 9 (\*9) to request to speak. If you are watching on a computer or device there is a "raise hand" button that you can tap or press to request to speak. Please use either of these options during oral communications to be recognized to speak.

Attendance was taken by roll call.

## **Item # 1 Approval of minutes from April 17, April 21, and May 19, 2020**

**MOTION:** Hank M. moved to accept minutes for April 17, 2020. Seconded by Ellen P. Roll call vote: Jennifer-lee A. yes; John F. yes; Hank M. yes; Ellen P. yes; Barbara S. yes; Heidi W. yes; and Bob W. yes. Motion passes.

**MOTION:** Hank M. moved to accept minutes for April 21, 2020. Seconded by Heidi W. Roll call vote: Jennifer-lee A. yes; John F. abstain; Hank M. yes; Ellen P. yes; Barbara S. yes; Heidi W. yes; and Bob W. yes. Motion passes.

**MOTION:** Heidi W. moved to accept minutes for May 19, 2020. Seconded by Ellen P. Roll call vote: Jennifer-lee A. yes; John F. yes; Hank M. yes; Ellen P. yes; Barbara S. yes; Heidi W. yes; and Bob W. yes. Motion passes.

## **Item # 2 Application Review**

Barbara S. stated that a review will not be done on the three Stage Fort Park projects because she is still awaiting information from the Department of Public Works.

Annisquam Historical Society - Stage Coach – John F. stated he has questions about the matching funds being the cost of the repairs to the firehouse, which is already completed. Jennifer-lee A. stated her understanding is that the firehouse repairs were being shown as the

Annisquam Historical Society's contribution. Barbara S. shared questions and concerns, primarily related to the long term use, storage, and planning for the stage coach. John F. stated he agrees with many of Barbara's points and reiterated they need to address matching funds if the firehouse repairs are not part of this project. There was further discussion regarding matching funds. Jennifer-lee A. asked what is the amount required for matching funds. Barbara S. responded that there is no set figure, but some percentage of the project is expected.

Cape Ann Museum – Babson Alling House– Bob W. stated he believes this is a perfect use of preservation funds and is necessary to keep the property intact. It is a great opportunity. Jennifer-lee A. commented the application states the Museum is not completely sure what they are looking to accomplish with the property in the long term, but thinks they may have an idea of how the property will be used. Barbara S. stated this is a great application, but if the building is going to just sit there, is this the right time to be applying for CPA funds. She also has questions about lead paint and the funds being budgeted for maintenance. There was further discussion about the intended future use of the building. Barbara S. asked if there is an easement on the land and will it stay open to the public. John F. stated these are the types of projects that should require a deed restriction or preservation restriction since the use is currently unknown.

City Hall Restoration – John F. has an issue with the electrical upgrades being done with CPA funds since they are not going towards the preservation of documents or the building. He only supports the electrical upgrades that are clearly for fire suppression. He would like more information on how interior historical architecture will be preserved during upgrades. Hank M. agreed with John. Jennifer-lee A. stated fire suppression may also require improvements in IT and if that connection was clearer, then maybe it would be more relevant. Heidi W. and Ellen P. agreed. Bob W. stated it is important to protect what we have invested in thus far. Updated electrical systems are important in preventing unnecessary fires. Barbara S. questioned if they have an endowment fund to maintain the building. Her understanding is that the fire upgrades are tied into electrical and IT updates. She also has questions about easements and funding from the State that has not yet been approved. John F. would appreciate more clarification on the electrical work to be done and how it ties into fire suppression. Barbara S. commented that we are still currently paying a bond on the previous City Hall project. Jaimie C. added that bond is set to be paid off in 2025.

Gloucester DPW - Fitz Henry Lane –. Jennifer-lee A. is in support of additional public bathrooms wherever possible. Bob W. gave his support of the project. It is one of the most iconic properties around and it should be enhanced when possible. Heidi W. shared her support. Barbara S. stated this is on the National Register, meaning it is a significant structure, but there is no assessment of the building's condition or plan for making historical improvements. She would also like to see bids for the work.

William Wheat - Harbor Village Apartments – John F. commented that the application indicates that 25% of the housing will be available to households with 80% area median income and asked if that meets affordable housing criteria. He supports the development of additional housing. There was discussion regarding the location of the building. Bob W. added that the area is tough because of the water table. He continued by saying that it will serve an underserved population and is necessary. Barbara S. stated there are many permits still lacking to keep with the schedule outlined in the application and does not believe funding can be issued without further approval of the project as a whole. She pointed out there are some discrepancies within the application, including: it is not clear who owns the property and there is a line item for a construction

manager in the amount of \$100,000 despite the project timeline being only a few months. John F. stated they are only requesting 3% of the total budget. He added the Committee's focus should be on what the funding is requested for and permitting may not be pertinent to the funding request. Tracy Mark, Cape Ann Local Action, commented that the application states it will include 15%, but it is only by 10%. The inclusionary ordinance requires 15%. She asked if the rent for these units will be affordable do to market constraints anyway, as was the case with 15 Pearl Street. She also asked how many units would be added to the subsidized housing inventory, because application contradicts itself. Barbara S. stated she agreed that those are good questions and the Committee will work to answer them. She invited Tracy to attend future meetings when the applicants will be in attendance.

Ocean Alliance – John F. stated they are calling it historic preservation, but are replacing a historic riprap wall with concrete blocks. He is concerned about permitting from the Conservation Committee. He supports the work being done by Ocean Alliance, but does not feel this really fits the criteria of historic preservation. Hank M. stated the organization has done well with previous grants and would like further explanation on how this work preserves the structure. Barbara S. asked if it would be possible to repair the wall with the same materials. John F. responded yes, there are ways to repair and replace with a like kind. Using concrete blocks would be considered “armoring of the coastal bank”. Heidi W. stated her support for Ocean Alliance and understands why parking may be important, but asked if parking meets the threshold of historical preservation. Jennifer-lee A. asked if there is a way to fit this under recreation and if the project takes into account rising tides and water levels. Bob W. stated Ocean Alliance has a good track record with previous grants and they are scientists who probably have a good understanding of how to do this properly, but all questions should be brought forward. He added that, if the wall stabilization is going to protect the parking lot from rising water levels then it will inherently protect the building from erosion. Barbara S. agrees with concerns raised and believes the concrete wall seems a harsh intervention. A site visit will be required.

Cape Ann YMCA - Middle Street Housing – Heidi W. stated she is always in favor of affordable housing and the request seems a small percentage of the project total. Jennifer-lee A. shared the Gloucester Housing Authority's support of this project. She asked why senior housing is always only one bedroom, despite understanding that the focus is maximizing the number of units. Bob W. stated he supports affordable housing, but is not sure if this is the best location for these units. John F. stated they are requesting the funding now, but the project will not start until 2022 and unless it is needed for other funding sources it seems premature. Jennifer-lee A. stated that it is part of showing community support and explained how affordability is calculated in Gloucester. Barbara S. stated she is not sure why they are applying now, since there are so many hoops to jump through. There was further discussion regarding the timing. Jaimie C. added that this project is slated to be submitted to DHCD in 2021 and part of the application will be demonstrating a vested community interest.

### **Item # 3 Schedule Public Hearing**

John F. maybe schedule site visits prior to presentations. Barbara S. asked if we could schedule presentations for August.

#### **Item # 4 Project Updates**

Jaimie C. updated the Committee on the progress of the affordable housing project at 15 Pearl Street and stated the project is close to completion but will need an extension.

**MOTION:** John F. moved to extend the 15 Pearl Street project deadline to December 31, 2020. Seconded by Hank M. Roll call vote: Jennifer-lee A. yes; John F. yes; Hank M. yes; Ellen P. yes; Barbara S. yes; Heidi W. yes; and Bob W. yes. Motion passes.

Barbara S. stated the first housing lottery for the units at 15 Pearl Street did not have any Gloucester residents or veterans apply. However, due to delays in construction, a second lottery was performed to fill the units and resulted in one applicant who was both a resident and veteran.

#### **Next Meeting – July 21, 2020**

**MOTION:** Bob W. moved to adjourn. Seconded by Hank M. Roll call vote: Jennifer-lee A. yes; John F. yes; Hank M. yes; Ellen P. yes; Barbara S. yes; Heidi W. yes; and Bob W. yes. Motion passes.

Meeting adjourned at 7:20 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Jaimie Corliss