

**COMMUNITY PRESERVATION COMMITTEE
PUBLIC MEETING
MINUTES**

ROUND 4 – 2013 PROJECT PRESENTATIONS

TUESDAY, April 2, 2013, 6:00 PM
First Floor Council Conference Room
9 Dale Avenue, Gloucester, MA

Present: CPC members: Sandy Dahl Ronan, J.J. Bell, Co Chairs; Bill Dugan, Tom O'Keefe, Scott Smith, Karen Gallagher, Charles Crowley and John Feener

Absent: Stacy Randell

Also present: Debbie Laurie, Senior Project Manager

INTRODUCTION:

Sandy Dahl Ronan, Co Chair, opened the meeting with introductions and stated that this is Round 4 for the Community Preservation Act for 2013. She stated at the Committee's first public hearing there were eleven (11) Historic Preservation applications that were heard. There are nine (9) Open Space and Recreation applications which will be heard at tonight's meeting. With so many presentations to be heard, she asked that the presentations be contained to 5 -8 minutes. Question and answers and comments will follow each presentation. Deb Laurie will also follow up with site visit scheduling for members with applicants, if applicable.

The presentations were as follows:

Cape Ann Women's Softball League – Matto's Field Renovation project. CPA request - \$10,075.

Ms. Amaral, gave a brief history and back ground of the field and its history and who it was named after. She stated that well over a 100 visitors use the field on a regular basis for softball, soccer, etc. The field has not been maintained by the city and is in desperate need of repair in order to make it a safe playing field. The field needs filling and grading. She added that they have applied for Block Grant funds for the bleacher and score board. The organization has done a lot of maintenance and repairs at the field themselves over the years.

Denise Pascucci, member of the league for over 30 years reiterated that the field is widely used by the league and other activities. They need some help in making it a safe and usable field.

The question was raised why isn't the city responsible for the restoration and repairs. Mark Cole, Asst DPW Director was present and said that lacking funds for major repairs at any of the fields was extremely limited. General maintenance has been done, but no major repairs, which is what this entails.

Questions were also asked regarding fund raising. The league has tried with signage on the outfield fence four to five years ago, but was stopped by the school department. Also, the issue of retaining two more estimates for the work would be required. Patti said that she would pursue this.

City of Gloucester, Skate Park rehabilitation – Repair and restoration of the skate park located at O'Malley school. CPA request - \$65,000.

Mark Cole, of DPW, was presenting this project He stated that the skate park was formed in the 1990s and is extensively used by the city's youth and out of town visitors as well. He presented photos of the site which depicted the severely deterioration of the park surfaces and safety issues. The fencing is in need of replacement, some of the structures need repair or replacement, some of which could be repaired in house, and the transitions need to be done for safety issues. The DPW does not have the resources to do major repairs on any of their fields or parks; they budget approximately \$50,000 for all repairs, not including the general maintenance of

cutting grass, line drawing, etc. The fence could just be taken down and not replaced. Other skate parks do not have fencing around them. Bill Duggan of the Committee asked how he would prioritize the repairs. Mark stated that the fencing would be 1st, or if it were left open, he would put towards structures and seal the pavement. Lots of options. Also, a comment was made regarding the youth support. It would be nice to see them involved in the project. Karen Gallagher of the Committee, added that depending on funding, specific items would have to be identified before they could be funded.

Friends of Stage Fort Park and the Gloucester Rotary Club, - Stage Fort Park, A Walking Path. CPA Request - \$5,100.

Mr. George Roark presented the first part of the project. He showed an 1898 map of the Park and stated that the park actually starts at the canal and ends at Cressy's Beach. The project is to restore the path by resurfacing the gravel path about 325 feet X 10 feet from the green gate at the Visitor's Center to the intersecting paths towards the fort and ocean.

Dr. Wolfe also spoke for the project. He cited the Community Action Plan and a 1987 editorial. The path is not safe or inviting; it is a catalyst for the city and would enhance the park. Many organizations such as the Gloucester Rotary Club, Garden Club, Open Space and Recreation Committee, etc. all contribute to the enhancement of the park.

Mr. Feener, member of the Committee was concerned about the conservation commission permitting. The excavation, soil, erosion, etc. and the issue of making it handicap accessible. Mr. Roark said that the proper permits would be required and they are utilizing the services of Dan Ottenheimer, of Mill River Consulting.

Steve Kaity, of the Rotary Club, added that the club has contributed extensively over the years to the playground of the park with over \$200,000 worth of work and equipment, which included handicap accessibility. Again, Charlie Crowley asked why the City wasn't taking care of some of these improvements.

Susan Wolfe, added that the park is a neglected Gem for the city. Steve Kaity also stated that the Gloucester Rotary Club has maintained the band stand, visitor's center and the Betty Smith garden.

Gloucester Waterways Board/Harbor Master, for the restoration and rehabilitation of Hodgkin's Cove Landing. CPA Request - \$16,873.

Mr. Tony Gross, Chair of the Waterways Board, gave the presentation. He stated that the landing was overgrown with sumac, no parking and major dressing up of the park was needed to provide adequate access for the public. The board is charged with the maintenance of the landings. The conservation agent has looked at the site and with proper permits does not see any real issues with cleaning up the site. Signage, benches and continued maintenance will make this landing a welcoming place.

Comment was made that the Waterways Board has plenty of surplus in their existing budget; why do they need CPA funding. Mr. Gross informed the Committee that they had built up a surplus over the last few years, however, but due to full time staffing and some major project improvements, they only have about \$50,000 left.

He mentioned that the Open Space and Recreational plan has stated that the City's Public landings were a high priority. Other issues were addressed like joint funding, and what would the priorities be, given limited funds.

Lobster Cove Landing was also discussed. CPA request - \$5,020.

This landing is even in worse shape. The site has been recently re-surveyed and at one time there was an active boat ramp, which is now eroded away. Access for a small skiff, paddle boats, etc. could use this ramp. The Board would like to make this place more inviting with signage and have true public access. It almost looks like private land in its present state. Conservation stated that with a few granite steps the landing could be restored and would address the erosion issue.

Cressy Beach Restoration project, presented by Mr. Bob Ryan. CPA request - \$149,120.

Mr. Ryan introduced himself as a “concerned citizen” and that Cressy Beach was a “diamond in the rough”. He gave a brief history of the beach showing pictures starting from 1898. The now existing wall was built in 1936 to preserve the ball field, however, was probably the reason the beach has eroded. He continued to show pictures of how the beach looked and what it has become today, “a rock pile”.

The cause of the sand disappearing is called “wave reflection”, which is the sand actually pulling away from the beach and exposing the rocks beneath. Applied Engineering has assisted Mr. Ryan with this project and will also assist during the permitting process. It will take approximately 5000 tons of sand to be added to the beach to cover the rocks.

Mr. Feener brought up the issue of the beach not being a coastal barrier, but was a coastal bank, therefore, this project may not be able to get permitting. Mr. Ryan ensured the committee that all the property studies and permits would obviously be addressed before anything could be done. Karen also informed Mr. Ryan that the requested amount of \$150,000 is more than half of their budget; could this project be piece mealed? Yes, it could, Mr. Ryan suggested.

Magnolia Bike Club, Magnolia Bike Park. CPA Request - \$20,000. ??

Mr. Chris Pester, Treasurer for the club, gave an overview of the project. He explained what a “pump track” was and the clubs plans for the track. Various costs for the project were indicated; these amounts have changed since their initial application was submitted. They are obtaining and fine tuning their numbers. They indicated that at least 200 to 300 hours of maintenance will be given by the club to maintain and monitor the track.

Mr. Pester indicated numerous benefits to the Magnolia area and the city including economic and health benefits. Charlie Crowley of the Committee was concerned regarding the access to the Magnolia Woods and parking.

J.J. asked about their 501c process. They hope to attain their status by end of April.

Friends of the Gloucester Dog Park, agility center for the park. CPA request \$15,000.

Louise Grindrod, Chair, presented the Dog Park project. She asked if anyone has seen it lately. May 18th is the official opening day. They have raised over \$186, 000 in private donations and have had wide community and business support. They are requesting funding specifically for an agility area for the dogs. There are over 6000 dogs living in Gloucester, however only 1000 are licensed. They feel this would be a great addition to their park. All the dogs must have proper licenses to utilize the park.

Marie Demick, member, gave an overview of the construction to date. The committee and volunteers have put in long hours and donated many skills and time in developing the site.

John, CPA member, said that he would abstain from this project, as he was a member of the Dog Park Committee initially.

They indicated that the agility will be well constructed using aluminum, concrete pads, etc. and the construction will be managed. They were requested to obtain three quotes for the equipment and they said that they would address. All the maintenance and upkeep of the park will be done by the Committee and volunteers.

Essex County Greenbelt Association, Norcross Property acquisition – CPA Request \$150,000

David Santomena, Director of Land Conservation, presented the project. He began with showing the committee a map of the area and how it links to the Tompson Street property. An appraisal is being done as well as title survey. The CPA funds along with private donations are the only funds for this project. The State grant process has become too competitive, so they have decided not to apply. This parcel if acquired would

create better trails and linkage. There is much to be preserved on the land such as beaver pond, perennial stream, wetlands, habitat areas, etc.

David was asked if there is a plan B since funding from CPA is limited; he explained again, that this is dependent on the CPA funds and private donations. They have until the end of this calendar year to purchase site.

J.J. brought up the issue if the land was in threat of development, due to the category in which the CPA Committee would fund this project. He said yes, it is a real threat; they would like to proceed with this land acquisition as the same as Tompson Street, with the City holding the CR.

There was general discussion of site visits and what the format would be for the next meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 8:15 PM.

Respectfully submitted by
Deborah Laurie
CPA Senior Project Manager