

Gloucester Community Preservation Committee

Committee Meeting Report for August 25, 2010

Members attending: Stacy Randell, Sandy Dahl-Ronan, John Feener, Karen Gallagher, Dan Morris, Scott Smith, Bill Dugan, J.J. Bell, Ian Lane
Members absent: None
Staff: Matt Lustig, Community Development Staff

1. Minutes from the CPC meeting held on July 28, 2010, were accepted unanimously and without amendment. Moved, Ms. Gallagher; seconded, Ms. Randell.

2. Following the last meeting Mr. Lustig sent the CPC's questions about the applications to the various applicants. We received very good responses from all of the applicants, except Wellspring, which had submitted two applications.

Mr. Lane responded to questions about the Gloucester Historical Commission's request for funds to conduct a survey of historic resources. He said that a baseline survey is needed to determine which properties are historically significant and which are not. Past initiatives by the Commission have been criticized for lacking such a baseline survey or for using information that was sorely out of date. This survey is needed as a basic qualification for grant programs and matching fund initiatives. Mr. Lane is concerned about the estimated cost of preparing each property card. He said that some of the tasks that constitute the survey could be completed by high school history students and need not involve highly credentialed researchers.

3. An agenda item on which of the applicants should be invited to meet with the CPC and to respond to questions was deferred. The Community Development Director, Sarah Garcia, would like an opportunity to meet with the CPC to discuss her department's application for funds for surveys and preservation planning related to the north Gloucester woods and Dogtown. She is unavailable on Wednesdays. The CPC had no outstanding questions on the project, and so did not take up her offer.

4. The CPC previously agreed that funds should be obligated to pay for membership in the Community Preservation Coalition. The requisition is being processed by city staff and the funds have not yet been disbursed.

5. The CP Act requires that certain reports be filed with the state annually. Since no funds have yet been awarded for projects, these reports are pro forma and shall be filed by the city auditor via the state on-line financial reporting system.

6. After 37 years of service to the community, Mr. Dugan is retiring from the Gloucester Housing Authority (GHA). His last day as executive director will be September 10, 2010. The CPC discussed whether Mr. Dugan would be able to continue to serve on the CPC. The GHA selects the individual it wishes to have on the CPC; however, there is no requirement that the individual must be an employee of the GHA. So Mr. Dugan is authorized to continue serving on the CPC, so long as the GHA does not select someone

else to fill the spot. Mr. Dugan's successor in the post of executive director has been appointed, but he is not a resident of Gloucester, and may not serve on the CPC. The CPC congratulated Mr. Dugan and members expressed their hope that Mr. Dugan would continue to stay on the committee and support it with his especial expertise.

7. Mr. Lustig met with the city's chief financial officer, Jeff Towne, regarding bonding alternatives related to the City Hall project. Mr. Lustig provided a memo to the CPC that summarized the meeting, costs of a loan, and a couple repayment schedules.

There was a brief discussion of Recovery Zone Economic Development Bonds (the benefits and requirements are listed in the memo), but the conclusion of the discussion was that the City Hall project may not be eligible for this type of bond.

8. Now that the CPC understands the repayment schedule, it can determine what the best funding variant for the City Hall project is, what additional projects may be funded this year, and how future year funding will be affected by the outstanding bond.

An initiative to grant national landmark status to City Hall is underway and should conclude soon. Also, the City has applied for a National Park Service grant that would group several properties, including City Hall, under a maritime theme. Both initiatives would raise the profile of City Hall with respect to opportunities for federal funding.

Ms. Randell asked about the life cycle of the repairs that are proposed for City Hall. What is the expected period until the repairs and painting would have to be re-initiated. The CPC asked for a letter to be sent to the City Council and the mayor seeking a commitment to a long term maintenance program.

Mr. Bell presented a phased approach to the City Hall project that would allow major parts of the project (and the most pressing) to be completed under a 20-year bonding scenario. A straw poll was taken on this funding scenario. In general, the members supported the alternative. Several insisted that the CPC receive a positive commitment from the City regarding the long-term maintenance of the building. One member, Mr. Feener, declined to participate in the straw poll. Overall the City Hall project is viewed by the CPC as a strong, visible first project, and a jewel, but there were some concerns expressed about the limitations the bonding would have on future years.

9. The members briefly reviewed the remaining 12 projects and members expressed their opinions of each. The Wellspring proposals were not highly regarded and since the applicant has not responded to the CPC's questions about the applications, the members came to consensus that their projects should not be recommended for funding. There was no formal vote on this question.

10. The next meeting of the CPC will be on September 8 at 7:00 p.m. At that meeting the CPC will reconsider its previously proposed schedule of meetings (September 22 and October 13 and 27).

7. The meeting adjourned shortly after 9:00 p.m. on Ms. Gallagher's motion, Mr. Lane's second, and the CPC's unanimous consent.

Documents used during the meeting.

1. A selection of e-mails between Mr. Lustig and the applicants regarding the CPC's initial questions on the applications.
2. Memo, with attachments, from Mr. Lustig to the CPC, August 25, 2010, re: Follow-up to 4/21/2010 memo: Issuing bonds against CPA funds Community Preservation proposal materials, prepared and submitted by the applicants.
3. Notes from Mr. Bell on funding scenarios related to phased execution of the City Hall project.
4. Tables (2); June 25, 2010; City of Gloucester; Revenue and expenditure reports and an account level balance sheet.