

Gloucester Community Preservation Committee
Committee Meeting Report for September 21, 2010

Members attending: Stacy Randell, Sandy Dahl-Ronan, Karen Gallagher, Dan Morris, J.J. Bell, Scott Smith, Bill Dugan. John Feener joined the meeting around 8:30

Members absent: Ian Lane

Staff: Matt Lustig, Community Development Staff

Public: 16 members of the public attended the first hour of the meeting to comment on applications before the CPC and several remained through much of the CPC's deliberations.

1. The meeting began at 6:00 p.m., and for the first hour the CPC heard comments from proponents of each of the projects proposed for funding. Ms. Dahl-Ronan moderated the session, which ended precisely at 7:00 p.m.
2. The CPC commenced its regular meeting. Minutes from the CPC meeting held on September 8, 2010, were considered for approval. Ms. Gallagher moved to accept the minutes, amended per the suggestions of Mr. Lustig; Ms. Dahl-Ronan seconded; and the CPC unanimously agreed. Mr. Morris was asked to adopt the suggested amendments and resubmit the document.
3. Several members expressed their appreciation for the testimonies of the project proponents who spoke earlier. There was some discussion amongst the CPC members about particular projects, the timing of the awards, and other fine points of several of the applications.
4. Mr. Morris presented a spreadsheet in which one could enter total award alternatives to get projections of available funding in subsequent award cycles through fiscal year 2012. There was some discussion of bonding, the time it would take to issue a bond, and when that debt obligation would first be applied to the CP fund.
5. Next, the members each in turn expressed their preferences for funding the proposals. The differences of opinion between members were discussed. Much of the discussion focused on the three proposals that offer services, subsidies, and counseling to people at risk of losing their homes. The CPC strove to understand how the three programs related to one another and stood on their own merits, and which of the proposals were appropriate for support under the CP plan.
6. After straw votes on each of the applications, the CPC compiled a slate of recommendations, which is summarized in the table below.

Proj. No.	Applicant	Project Title	Cat	Rec. Amount
1	Community Development Department	Dogtown/ North Gloucester Woods Preservation Planning	Open Space	\$30,000
2	Gloucester High School, Jim Schoel	Wostrel Environmental-Adventure Center	Open Space Rec	\$10,100
3	Gloucester Development Team	Central Grammar Apartments	Historic Preservation	\$50,000
4	The Gloucester Adventure	Schooner Adventure Restoration: Windlass and Anchor Chain	Historic Preservation	\$25,000
5	City Hall Restoration Committee	City Hall Restoration- Completion of the Exterior Restoration	Historic Preservation	\$195,000* (\$2,635,931)
6	Gloucester Unitarian Universalist Church	Universalist Meetinghouse Restoration Phase II	Historic Preservation	\$30,000
7	Gloucester Historical Commission	Gloucester Street Survey Update	Historic Preservation	\$7,500
8	Historic New England	Beauport Window Conservation	Historic Preservation	\$25,000
9	Gloucester Housing Authority	Cape Ann Homeownership Center	Community Housing	\$20,000
10	Gardner Company	10 Taylor St. Condominiums	Community Housing	\$110,000
* 20 Year Bond @ 3.75%, approximately \$185,000/ year + one-time transaction costs of \$10,000-\$15,000			TOTAL	\$502,600

There was vigorous discussion of all of the projects. There were differences of opinion amongst the members about the merits of individual applications, strategies for funding a project in phases, and programmatic philosophy. By straw poll, only three applications (#1, 7, & 10) received unanimous support of the committee. Those three, along with #2, 6, 8, & 9 are recommended to funded in the full amounts requested. The consensus of the CPC is that these projects met the general and category-specific evaluation criteria, served broad public interest, served important community needs.

For Central Grammar School (#3), while the project has merit, the CPC was not willing to commit the full requested amount, \$125,000. The CPC declined to fund the part of the proposal slated for historic preservation. The amount recommended, \$50,000, could be used to as a match to leverage other funds, related to Community Housing.

For the Gloucester Adventure (#4), once again, while the CPC felt the project has merit, the committee was not willing to recommend funding the whole windlass/anchor project at this time. The amount recommended, \$25,000, would at least get the project started, and the CPC would be willing to consider the balance of that project under a new application in the future.

With respect to City Hall Restoration, the CPC found the project to be very worthy and time sensitive, but the CPC was not willing to commit to \$3,600,000 bond – which was originally proposed – at this time, given the balance of other CPA needs now and the funding constraints bonding that amount would create for the term of the bond. The CPC was willing to support a recommendation to fund the project at \$2,600,000. The 20-year level-funded bond would require about \$185,000 per year, plus transaction costs of approximately \$10,000 in the first year. The project is urgently needed now to address the rapidly deteriorating wood elements of the architecturally and historic building.

The CPC declined to forward a recommendation supporting the applications of Wellspring, for homelessness prevention, and Action, Inc., for a mortgage assistance program. The members expressed concern about a lack of “permanency” as to what the funding would provide. Members also had concern about whether the projects satisfied the definition of “support” in CPA legislation; and members were concerned about establishing a precedent of funding gray area projects.

The application from Wellspring for funds to put new windows and roof on part of their facility was not supported by the CPC. While that part of the facility is a National Register building, it has been significantly altered, and the project would not restore any period features. Given the other strong applications under the category of historical preservation, the Wellspring project was not supported.

Mr. Dugan moved to submit the slate (per the table, above) with the CPC’s recommendation for funding to the City Council via the mayor; Mr. Smith seconded. The measure carried; seven members voting in favor and one in opposition. Mr. Lustig was asked to prepare the documents for submission to the Council and he offered to send the documents to all members. The chairs would refine and sign the documents before sending them to the mayor.

7. The next meeting of the CPC will be on October 13 at 7:00 p.m.

8. The meeting adjourned shortly at 9:15 p.m. on Mr. Smith’s motion, Ms. Gallagher’s second, and the CPC’s unanimous consent.