



Community Preservation Committee (CPC)

Meeting Minutes

September 10, 2019

A. Call to Order

Meeting called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Chair M. Justin Barrett, Jr.

B. Roll Call

Present: Chair M. Justin Barrett, Jr., Clerk Dan Melnechuk, Tom Creonte, Bob LeBlanc, Loretta McClary, Amanda Thibodeau, Bill Doyle (arrived at 7:03 p.m.)

Absent: Vice Chair Erika Oliver Jerram, Sean Wilson

C. Minutes

Motion made by Mr. Creonte to approve the minutes from the May 14, 2019 meeting. Motion seconded by Mr. LeBlanc. All in favor. Motion passed.

D. New Business – Public Hearings

1. WATCH CDC: Daria Gere, Executive Director of WATCH CDC, submitted a proposal to see if the Waltham State Armory is an appropriate fit for affordable housing. It has been vacant since 2004 and it is now up for sale. They are requesting \$30,000 for a feasibility study. Mr. Creonte asked if the study is done, would WATCH be purchasing the property. Ms. Gere replied that they would be looking for an affordable housing developer to purchase it. Mr. Creonte expressed his concerns about converting it to housing since the building is on a small lot and parking would be an issue. The windows are also small. Ms. Gere replied that she is hoping that options will be recommended from the study. Ms. Thibodeau asked if they have approached the building owner and what the current sale price is. Ms. Gere replied that they have been in contact with him and the approximate sale price is \$3M. Mr. LeBlanc asked if they have given any consideration to zoning. Ms. Gere replied that they need to first go through the feasibility study. There would be approximately 25-30 units at \$500k - \$600k each with multiple funding to make the units affordable. Mr. Barrett asked who would conduct the study. MetroWest CDC gave them the estimate for the study, but they are open to other City contacts.

Mr. Barrett opened up comments from the public. Mayor Jeannette McCarthy is in favor of the proposal. She feels it would be a good reuse of the building. Mr. Barrett stated that Councillor Tom Stanley was here earlier and wanted it noted that he is in favor of the proposal. Resident Alejandro B. spoke in support of the study. Jennifer Van Campen, Executive Director of MetroWest Collaborative Development, noted that Lynn is proposing to convert their armory into 38 housing units for veterans. Hudson and Newton are considering converting their armories into affordable housing units as well.

Mr. Barrett asked for the public to stand in favor of the proposal: 37 in favor

Mr. Barrett asked if anyone is opposed to the proposal to please stand: 0 opposed

Motion made by Mr. Doyle to approve the request for funding for the study of residential units, using Administrative funds allocated for studies, seconded by Mr. LeBlanc. All in favor. Motion passed.

2. MetFern Cemetery: City Councillor George Darcy stated that the cemetery is in disarray. There are markers with a letter and a number for each person buried there (they do not have names on the makers). Some of the markers are damaged or are missing. The cemetery is located on the former MetState Hospital property, behind Mackerel Hill. The proposal is to reset all of the stones, repair and reconstruct those that are damaged or missing, and level the ground. All of the names of those buried there would be listed. The state owns the land and is in favor of the project.

City Councillors Kathy McMenimen and John McLaughlin spoke in favor of the proposal. Mr. Barrett noted that Councillor Tom Stanley also wanted to be recognized for being in support of the project. Alex Green gave information about a couple of the people who are buried at the cemetery.

Mr. Barrett asked for the public to stand in favor of the proposal: 37 in favor

Mr. Barrett asked if anyone is opposed to the proposal: 0 opposed

Motion made by Mr. Creonte to approve the project, seconded by Mr. LeBlanc. All in favor. Motion passed.

3. UMASS Field Station & Farm Acquisition Proposal: Mayor McCarthy asked Councillors McLaughlin, Darcy and McMenimen to attend tonight in support of the proposal. Mr. Barrett noted that Councillors Stanley and Logan are in favor of it. The City is seeking to purchase both sections of the UMASS property: The southern portion, which is the farm and buildings, and the northerly portion which goes from the Girl Scout property to Waverley Oaks Road. The parcel has been long identified in the City's Open Space Plan. Both parties have had the property appraised and the price was the same. She cannot disclose the appraised price, however Mayor McCarthy is seeking \$14M of CPA funds. The environmental experts from both sides will be meeting to discuss their results. Mayor McCarthy believes there would not be any evictions. The other potential options are to repurpose the property for a hospital or university. She feels the land should be preserved as open space.

Mr. Barrett stated that as of June 30, 2019, there is \$15M, in CPC's account. There is enough money in the CPA account to cover the mayor's request.

Mr. Melnechuk noted that he is a member of the Waltham Land Trust which rents a space at the farm. He contacted the State's Ethics Commission and was told he does not have a conflict of interest and does not need to recuse himself from this discussion.

Many members of the public spoke in favor of the acquisition.

Mr. Creonte loves the proposal and the site, but he is concerned about the amount of the request. Mr. Barrett stated that tax money will be deposited into CPC's account soon. He feels this is a once in a lifetime opportunity. Mayor McCarthy noted that if the City comes up with all of the money, restrictions won't be put on the land. If using CPA funds, open space restrictions will be placed on the property to preserve it as a farm. Mr. LeBlanc asked the mayor what her best guess of a timeline for purchase is. She replied that she would like to have it finished by the end of the year.

Mr. Barrett asked for the public to stand in favor of the proposal: 37 in favor

Mr. Barrett asked if anyone was opposed to the proposal: 0 opposed

Mr. Barrett closed the public hearing.

Motion made by Mr. Melnechuk to continue until the next meeting, seconded by Mr. Doyle. All in favor.
Motion passed.

A one-minute recess was called by Mr. Barrett at 9:26 p.m. The meeting resumed at 9:27 p.m.

E. Other New Business

Mr. Creonte asked if speakers can be limited in the time allowed to speak. The committee agreed to place a limit of 5 minutes.

Mr. Melnechuk stated that applications need to be submitted a minimum of one week before a meeting to allow time for the committee to review.

F. Old Business

1. Status of the Appropriated CPC Projects: Mr. Barrett reported that the Girl Scouts of Eastern Massachusetts has submitted their quarterly report and the Leland Home has four residents on the voucher program. There is not a waiting list at this time. The Music Hall submitted an invoice this week and they have \$21,000 remaining.

G. Next Regularly Scheduled Meeting

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, October 15, 2019 at 7:00 p.m. in the Auditorium of the Government Center, 119 School Street, Waltham.

H. Adjourn

Motion made by Mr. Doyle to adjourn, seconded by Ms. Thibodeau. All in favor. Motion passed. Meeting adjourned at 9:33 p.m.