



## Community Preservation Act Committee

Date: March 11, 2021

Time: 4:03 pm – 6:00 pm

Location: Conducted remotely due to Covid-19.

### Minutes

Remote Participation: Eugene Benson,  
Eric Helmuth,  
Jim Feeney,  
Leslie Mayer,  
JoAnn Robinson,  
Clarissa Rowe,  
Ann Woodward.

Not in Attendance: Pamela Heidell,  
Nick Mitropolous.

Also Attending Remotely: Julie Wayman.

Chair Eric Helmuth welcomed everyone at 4:03 pm. Helmuth explained that due to Covid-19 the meeting was conducted remotely and read through the Town's disclaimers about remote meetings.

### Review and Approval of Meeting Minutes

- 1) Eric Helmuth asked for review and approval of the minutes of January 27, 28, February 3, and February 16.
  - i. January 27, 2021,
    1. Eugene Benson was not in attendance
    2. Answer to Charlie McCabe's question on Page 2 about whether there will there be a lighting conduit at Hurd Field was, "Yes"
    3. Clarissa Rowe moved to approve as amended, Leslie Mayer seconded.
  - ii. January 28, 2021:
    1. Clarissa Rowe moved to approve, Leslie Mayer seconded.
  - iii. February 3, 2021
    1. Clarissa Rowe moved to approve, Ann Woodward seconded.
  - iv. February 16, 2021
    1. Foot of the Rocks: Eugene Benson asked for new written description of the project

2. Leasing Differential Program: Ann Woodward clarified her point on this application: "The ability to use the funds for a market rate apartment is beneficial for the resident and the landlord."
  3. Change start time to 4pm and not 7pm.
  4. Leslie Mayer: page 2 "committed" to "committee"
  5. Clarissa Rowe, moved to approve as amended, Ann Woodward seconded.
- v. Role call vote to approve
1. Eugene Benson: Abstained Jan 27+ Feb 3 but accepted the motion of approval for minutes of Jan 28 and Feb 16.
  2. Leslie Mayer: Yes
  3. Clarissa Rowe: Yes
  4. Ann Woodward: Yes
  5. JoAnn Robinson: Abstain
  6. Eric Helmuth: Yes

### **Discussion of FY22 Recommended Projects**

- 1) Eric Helmuth reviewed the funding summary and the presentation to Capital Planning, including priorities and challenges of funding projects moving ahead. Consultations went well, Select Board and Capital Planning voted unanimous support, Finance Committee did not vote on the spot but all were supportive of the work of the committee.
  - i. Change in the budget – reduced the Drake Village to \$251,793 to pay for only the eligible projects and not the door locks.
  - ii. Clarissa Rowe noted that the revenue estimate is conservative given that the state revenues for this year are up by 2/3 in the first quarter of this year, the state revenue figures were delayed, and the state revenue figures in November were not for a full year.
  - iii. Fund balance is expected to be \$667K going into FY22, along with the unused appropriations from several projects. The committee could have nearly \$3M for FY23 applications.
  - iv. Eric noted funds available for housing projects will likely be a total of \$752K for FY23.
  - v. Julie Wayman clarified that the state match in November came in at 28.6% of FY2020 tax revenue or over \$400K, far above the original estimate of \$175K. The state match is being accounted for in the estimate for the end of year CPA fund balance.
  - vi. Jim Feeney clarified that the tax surcharge revenue is not overly conservative and will likely be close to the estimated amount.
  - vii. Eric Helmuth estimated that the Town could receive another \$200K from the state match for FY23.
  - viii. Eugene Benson suggested: "Estimated total for FY23 applications" at the bottom of the CPA funding spreadsheet.

- 2) Eric Helmuth asked the committee's opinion on committing any of the excess funding to housing in some form, whether to the CPA housing reserve or ask Town Meeting to make an appropriation to transfer CPA funds the new Affordable Housing Trust.
- i. The purpose of the trust is to give more flexibility to funding projects, like HCA, without going to Town Meeting as they would have to do with us.
  - ii. Money would have to follow CPA eligibility but the committee could put additional restrictions on it. The Trust needs to create an action plan but they do not require funding for it.
  - iii. Eric Helmuth reported that Charlie Foskett liked the idea and thought CPA providing seed money may also give the Trust credibility with Town Meeting.
  - iv. Right now, CPA funds seem to be the only funding source for the Housing Trust, along with \$175K of prior Symmes money. The Trust would not use CDBG money and can raise money and gifts. Would also likely use a Real Estate Transfer Fee were Arlington to adopt one, which could be \$4-\$8M/year.
  - v. Trust is for flexibility but could be for CPA: help developers (not necessarily limited to HCA) for financing for new housing. Could be used for pre-development costs, subsidies, home-owner assistance. Do we want to consider doing this, realizing it is early and that we could put restrictions on it?
  - vi. Thoughts?
    1. Leslie Mayer thinks this idea makes some level of sense since for a second year in a row the committee has received no real housing applications and the only request this year was whittled down. Some validity in keeping our commitment in funding housing annually. If this helps make sure housing gets seed money it makes sense.
    2. Clarissa Rowe: makes sense with some conditions. Need to write conditions down and make sure they are followed since that was not the case with the Arlington Emergency Tenant Assistance Program. We need affordable housing in this Town. The Housing Authority has not been a big generator of projects and HCA is somewhat overextended now, though they are doing wonderful work. I think it is worth a try.
    3. JoAnn Robinson: Do we have to do this before Town Meeting and include it with the proposal or can we think about it? I do not yet understand the housing trust ins and outs and am not sure on the deadlines.
      - a. Eric Helmuth noted the committee could vote and bring it to Town Meeting, though the committee should communicate with the trust. Eric Helmuth asked what kind of contract the committee would be interested in seeing?
    4. Eugene Benson asked what rental conditions were not met in AETAP? Clarissa Rowe reported that the committee requests that the rental assistance be used for people below the federal limit of 50% and that CDBG money spent first.
    5. Eugene Benson is not sure putting money in the Housing Trust rises to the same level of need (as the need for the AETAP) at this point since there is no project. He likes the idea of the Affordable Housing Trust Fund and would consider a

- proposal if they needed more rental assistance. Ultimately he questioned if this is the right time to do it though in other years they can put a proposal.
6. Based on information from the Department of Planning and Community Development, it is not clear there is an additional need for rental assistance.
  7. The committee reviewed the memo from DPCD about the emergency tenant assistance and speculated if people were hesitant to reach out to the Town vs. HCA since HCA seems to still have such a high-level of need for rental assistance.
  8. Ann Woodward noted that she is very happy the Town is getting a Housing Trust but is not sure of the status of the entity. She would like a conversation about affordable housing and the many funding opportunities available.
  9. Clarissa Rowe questioned how the Arlington Housing Authority fall into the affordable housing conversation, noting that some would like to replace their buildings and that the AHA operates separately from the Town.
  10. Ann Woodward: Towns decide how to recapitalize, which can be a costly endeavor.
  11. Leslie Mayer: AHA has a seat at our table but have not joined us at our meetings.
  12. Eugene Benson: Could the Chair reach out to AHA and ask them to appoint someone else if the appointee is unable to join?
  13. Leslie Mayer: we appreciate the engagement and would like that again.
  14. Ann Woodward: if you need money, right now people could apply to both CPA and the Housing Trust, which does not seem like a good strategy.
  15. Leslie Mayer: that is what we are doing now. It needs to be more clear.
  16. The committee discussed wrapping up the variety of funding streams: CDBG, CPA, and Housing Trust into a larger housing discussion.
  17. Eric Helmuth: automatically put CPA money into the Housing Trust since the purposes are parallel – others a specific project. Remembering the reason the housing trust is flexibility, less flexible by time. We don't know if we were to do
  18. Clarissa Rowe will touch base with HCA on the need for tenant assistance and HCA's needs next fiscal year.
  19. Eric Helmuth suggested the committee could put it in the pipeline to Town Meeting and could always move "no action". He inquired what the committee saw as negatives to providing seed money now.
  20. The committee discussed the timeline for the creation of the Trust.
  21. Eugene Benson: Town would feel urgency to appoint trustees and get the fund going, assuming we wanted to send some money there we are inclined if in existence by July 1.
  22. Leslie Mayer agreed that it is a good idea to keep the Trust in front of Town Meeting and not forgotten about. It could help to know CPA wants to make sure it moves forward and some action is taken.
  23. Eugene Benson is hesitant:
    - a. Does not seem reasonable to go outside normal application process as compared to the other year.

- b. If do not have anything to spend it on it may be better off in CPA where we have a bigger pool where people can draw from next year. I recognize the flexibility but that is why I'm torn.

- 24. Clarissa Rowe would like to see Ann Woodward as a trustee on the housing trust fund.
- 25. Ann Woodward is torn. She could understand providing the funding contingent on org structure, process, and eligibility and other CPA guidelines.
- 26. Leslie Mayer: Could put it into the trust fund but not comfortable if it is ready to be accepted.
- 27. Eric Helmuth noted that this idea to provide funding to the Trust came up indirectly after being asked to consider it in place of the Drake Village project if that project were to be eligible for CDBG funding. He added the committee would have always had a public process but would not have a hearing.
- 28. Clarissa Rowe reiterated that the process with the Housing Trust is not clear yet but that they when it is as the Town has a big housing need.
- 29. Eric Helmuth questioned whether the Town would have a Fall Special Town Meeting but that is not yet known.
- 30. The committee has decided to table the idea of providing funding to the Housing Trust at this time.
- 31. Affordable housing
  - vi. Ann Woodward is comfortable with unrestricted since we have a solid balance.
  - vii. Jim Feeney: cumbersome possibly since we already have a balance

### 3) Jason Russell House

- i. The committee discussed whether geothermal is the right decision to heat the house. The committee trusts this applicant and believes they have tried but been unsuccessful in receiving an independent assessment as the industry is too busy. The applicant was told air to air would be cheaper to install but twice as much to operate it and they cannot afford to pay that operating cost. Geothermal would increase but they could manage it. Eric Helmuth proposes leaving the request as it is.
- ii. Clarissa Rowe agrees with Eric Helmuth. The applicants have done their due diligence and the Jason Russell has been underfunded for years. This would allow them to stay open and make more money.
- iii. JoAnn Robinson agrees.
- iv. Ann Woodward agrees.
- v. Leslie Mayer agrees.
- vi. Jim Feeney noted that he provided the applicant several contacts in this industry and finds it amazing that the industry is stretched too thin to get back to them. Geothermal is probably still going to be more expensive however we can pay for subsidizing a lower operating cost. He is excited to champion a geothermal project, it fits in with the Net Zero plan for the Town, will result in onsite energy use reduction. Supporting this application is championing something with good principles.

- vii. Eugene Benson agrees with what was said but hopes they have the budget to run the operating. Suggests including a few lines in the report to Town Meeting about this project fitting in with the Town's Net Zero plan.

#### 4) Foot of the Rocks

- i. Eugene Benson would like the new written description of the project. Eugene is ready to vote on all other projects.
- ii. Jim Feeney noted he will get appropriate parties and lead them forward.
- iii. JoAnn Robinson agrees with Eugene Benson but feels confident with Clarissa Rowe, Jim Feeney, and others that it will go down the right track.
- iv. Eugene Benson: The Town Manager owning the project alleviates one concern but still wants to see the new written description and concept that is funded.
- v. Jim Feeney noted that he believes the first phase of this work is preliminary, requiring visioning and understanding the site challenges. This phase may include developing proofs of principle and concept but likely will not yet include construction. It is likely that after feasibility there will be a second request for CPA funding for design and community engagement.

Eric Helmuth made a motion to adopt the budget as displayed on the screen in the amounts displayed. Leslie Mayer moved, Clarissa Rowe seconded.

#### Role Call Vote:

- Eugene Benson, yes for all except Foot of the Rocks project, abstaining because I don't think there is an adequate description or budget to vote one way or the other on this project.
- Leslie Mayer: Yes for all
- Clarissa Rowe: Yes for all
- Ann Woodward: Yes for all
- JoAnn Robinson: Yes for all
- Eric Helmuth: Yes for all

#### **New Business**

Leslie Mayer reported that AHA Executive Director John Griffin and Recreation Director Joe Connelly are talking about the Placemaking Grant of which the committee had been previously informed. Also, bids for Res Phase II came in and are looking favorable. Need to meet to determine the Add-Alts.

Jim Feeney added that across the board, Town bids have been under budget.

Leslie: Only three bid on the Res project.

Jim: over 11 bids on the Hardy Playground.

Clarissa Rowe moved to adjourn, Eugene Benson seconded.

#### Role Call Vote:

- Eugene Benson, Yes

- Leslie Mayer, Yes
- Clarissa Rowe, Yes
- Ann Woodward, Yes
- JoAnn Robinson, Yes
- Eric Helmuth, Yes

The meeting adjourned at 5:24 pm.