

**COMMUNITY PRESERVATION COMMITTEE
TOWN OF NEEDHAM, MASSACHUSETTS**

**Minutes of Meeting
March 9, 2022**

LOCATION: Virtual, Committee members and members of the public attended remotely

PRESENT: Peter Pingitore, Chair, Artie Crocker, Vice Chair, Joe Barnes, Rick Zimbone
Robert Dermody, Laura Dorfman, Jeanne McKnight, Reg Foster, Chris Gerstel

ABSENT: Cecilia Simchak

STAFF: Kristen Wright

P. Pingitore called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and completed a roll call for Committee members and staff, the results of which are noted above. P. Pingitore reviewed meeting rules and disclosed that the meeting, which was conducted via Zoom in accordance with Governor Baker's emergency order regarding Open Meetings, was also being recorded.

CHAIR'S UPDATES

P. Pingitore and R. Zimbone met with Town Finance Director, Dave Davison, to discuss long-term financial planning for CPC funds, particularly in light of anticipated requests from Needham Housing Authority over the next several years. Options discussed included funding the Emery Grover project partially through debt, increasing the percentage of funding allocated to the community housing restricted account, and assessing Park and Recreation projects and the possibility of postponing projects to future funding cycles.

P. Pingitore and A. Crocker met with the Select Board. R. Zimbone also attended via Zoom. The overall takeaway from this meeting includes:

- The Town can work with the CPC to provide funding for the tennis court project (FY23-07).
- The Board expressed strong support for going forward with the boat launch (FY23-09) despite the fact that the Conservation Commission review is still pending.
- The Board was very supportive of Housing Authority requests for Seabeds-Cook existing conditions property surveys (FY23-01) and Linden Chambers redevelopment (FY23-02). The Board would like to know how the resignation of the Housing Authority's Executive Director would impact the funding request for the executive director's salary (FY23-04).
- The Select Board was not in support of Militia Heights acquisition (FY23-03), primarily due to concerns about the Housing Authority's operational bandwidth to continue managing delivery of services and existing redevelopment projects if it were to take this project on as well. Also, the Charles River Center expressed a strong interest in acquiring the property to develop housing for its constituents who are primarily disabled and often low income.
- The Select Board is fully supportive of the Emery Grover project (FY23-05) and would like to see the CPC fund it at the full \$6M. If the CPC chooses to fund a lesser amount then the Town will likely have to make up the difference through debt.

- The Select Board is supportive of the Needham Community Farms growing bed expansion (FY23-11) and would like more information regarding the Farm’s financial projections.
- The Select Board is in favor of increasing the CPC allocation for the community housing reserve from 11% to 22%.

DISCUSSION OF APPLICATIONS

1. FY23-03 – Needham Housing Authority (Purchase of East Militia Heights Drive Property)

This request is for \$1,500,000 under Community Housing to purchase twelve three-bedroom bungalows situated on 3.5 acres of land. The Housing Authority (HA) seeks to amend its application to increase the request to \$1,826,000, reflecting the most recent appraisal, and to amend it such that if there is any money left over from the purchase of the property that money may be used towards renovation/repair. As the warrant article has already been published and does not include a request to allocate money towards renovation, the NHA will withdraw its amended application. The NHA Board only just received a letter from Charles River Center (referenced above) expressing its strong commitment to purchase the property and has not yet had time to digest and consider its response.

2. FY23-01 – Needham Housing Authority (Property Existing Conditions Reports; Property Survey)

This request is for \$123,632 under Community Housing for existing conditions property surveys with respect to renovation of four buildings at Seabeds Way, six buildings at Capt. Robert Cook Drive, and the redevelopment of the sixty High Rock Estates bungalows into sixty duplexes. R. Foster reports no new updates.

3. FY23-02 – Needham Housing Authority (Pre-Development Design Costs, Linden-Chambers Redevelopment)

This request is for \$1,386,000 under Community Housing to prepare preliminary design required to obtain zoning relief and complete other due diligence for redeveloping the Linden-Chambers property. R. Foster reports no new updates.

4. FY23-04 – Needham Housing Authority (Funding for NHA Ass’t Executive Director Position)

This request is for \$97,500 under Community Housing to support 50% of the cost of a two-year position during the MRI’s pre-development period. R. Foster reports that they found a qualified candidate and extended an offer.

With respect to the resignation of the current Executive Director, the plan is to work with the Department of Housing and Community Development to hire a search consultant to bring an interim Executive Director on board.

5. FY23-05 – Emery Grover Renovation Project

This request is for \$6,000,000 under Historic Preservation for the comprehensive renovation of the Emery Grover School Administration Building. B. Dermody shared that the applicant is prepared to present at the public meeting next week.

6. FY23-07 – High School Tennis Court Improvements (Design)

This request is for \$50,000 under Recreation for a design and feasibility study with respect to improvements to the High School Tennis Courts. B. Dermody reports no new updates.

7. FY23-09 – Boat Launch

This request is for \$285,000 under Recreation for the construction of a new boat launch to improve access to the Charles River. The project is expected to be taken up by the Conservation Commission on March 24. Otherwise, R. Foster reports no new updates.

8. FY23-11 – Construction of Growing Beds Available for Seasonal Rental

This request is for \$200,000 under Open Space and Recreation for the construction of 150 raised growing beds at the Community Farm. P. Pingitore reports that J. Leghorn is going to consider a possible scenario of funding the project over two funding cycles and will provide additional information in that regard.

PLANNING FOR PUBLIC HEARING

P. Pingitore discussed how to allocate time for presentations and public comment to keep the meeting to 2-3 hours in length. Applicant presentations will be limited to 5 minutes and comments/questions to 3 minutes. Questions will be answered at the end of the warrant article presentation. Community members will also be asked to share their thoughts and opinions regarding funding priorities for the CPC going forward. Committee members discussed the importance of balancing hearing length with providing community members ample opportunity to be heard. Possibilities included asking for written questions to be submitted in advance so they could be addressed as part of the applicant presentations.

MEETING MINUTES

None presented.

ISSUES NOT REASONABLY ANTICIPATED BY THE CHAIR WITHIN 48 HOURS

None.

ADJOURNMENT

A. Crocker made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:01 p.m. Mr. Gerstel seconded the motion. The roll call vote was as follows: **Barnes:** aye, **Crocker:** aye, **Dermody:** aye, **Dorfman:** aye, **Foster,** aye, **Gerstel,** aye, **McKnight:** aye, **Zimbone:** aye, **Pingitore:** aye. Motion passes 9-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Lauren Spinney
Administrative Coordinator