

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

**Minutes of Meeting & Public Hearing
March 13, 2024**

LOCATION: Hybrid Meeting and Public Hearing, Charles River Room, PSAB, 500 Dedham Avenue, Needham and via Zoom

PRESENT: Laura Dorfman (Co-Chair), Paul Dawson, Jeanne McKnight, Reginald Foster, Dave Herer, Maureen Callahan, Keith LaFace

REMOTE: Joe Barnes (Co-Chair)

ABSENT: Jim Rosenbaum

STAFF: Lauren Spinney, Cecilia Simchak

L. Dorfman called the meeting to order at 7:04 p.m. and completed a roll call for members of the Committee and staff, the results of which are noted above.

PUBLIC HEARING

L. Dorfman moved to open the Public Hearing regarding the FY2025 grant applications currently pending before the Committee. D. Herer seconded the motion. Motion carries by unanimous consent of all members present.

J. Barnes joined the meeting remotely.

L. Dorfman provided an overview of the Community Preservation Act and its application in Needham.

FY2025-01: NHA LINDEN STREET REDEVELOPMENT (CONSTRUCTION)

L. Dorfman provided a brief overview of the project and introduced Reginald Foster, Chair of the Needham Housing Authority.

The Needham Housing Authority is seeking \$5,500,000 in CPA funding for construction costs associated with the redevelopment of 72 existing units and the creation of 64 new units of affordable housing at its Linden Street location.

The NHA's site, situated across the street from the High Rock Middle School, is eleven acres. About half of that is occupied by the Linden Street Development, consisting of eighteen buildings constructed in the early 60's and late 70's. The 72 studio units are severely undersized, lack accessibility features such as elevators, and are not climate friendly.

The NHA has been working with its development consultant, Cambridge Housing Authority, and its architect, Bargmann Hendrie + Archetype, to create a design to replace the 72 worn out studio units with 128 new one-bedroom units and 8 two-bedroom units. It will be completed in two phases (1A & 1B) to minimize the amount of temporary tenant relocation. The design is for a four-story

building with elevators. This new footprint means that there will be 50% more greenspace on the site with a new landscaping plan. Total estimated cost for the project is approximately \$84M. The CPC previously recommended, and Town Meeting approved, a \$1,368,000 grant for predevelopment costs related to this project. That, combined with the \$5.5M currently requested, represents about 7.3% of the total.

There were no comments or questions from the public.

FY2025-02: NEEDHAM HIGH SCHOOL TENNIS COURTS (CONSTRUCTION)

M. Callahan provided a brief overview of the project and introduced both Stacey Mulroy, Director of the Park and Recreation Department, and Jonathan Charwick, registered landscape architect from Activitas.

The Needham Park and Recreation Department is seeking \$1,440,000 in CPA funding for improvements to the Needham High School tennis courts, which are in a state of disrepair. The project involves replacing the four existing asphalt courts and adding four additional courts, all constructed with post-tension concrete. The plan also involves new landscaping, new equipment, perimeter fencing, median walkways, and installation of a shade structure.

These improvements will allow all of the high school teams to practice together at the school. This will free up neighborhood courts as the teams are currently practicing separately at Mills and Newman. Additional courts will also allow the school to host tournaments which require a minimum of five courts. The total estimated cost of the project is \$2,600,000.

Public Comment:

Drew Lawrence (218 West Canton Street, Boston) is the boys' tennis coach. Orienting the courts north-south would be more desirable than the current proposed plan. It is preferable to have junior varsity and varsity teams be able to practice together at the high school. They struggle to get spectators with teams split at separate courts, and they are competing for court time with pickleball players and town programming. The high school teams often run late because they have so few courts. They are unable to host individual tournaments with less than 8 courts. Wellesley, Westwood, Newton-North and Brookline all have 8 courts.

J. Charwick stated that the orientation of the courts in this proposal was the result of requests by DPW for improved access for emergency vehicles from the roadway behind the courts.

Derrek Shulman (11 Mary Chilton Road, Needham) is the junior varsity girls' coach. He affirms what Drew Lawrence stated previously. The girls are at a competitive disadvantage practicing separately from the varsity team because the varsity coach doesn't get to see them. The current situation also impacts their ability to do certain drills and practices. It is unfortunate and embarrassing when other teams come to Needham and have to do multiple bus drop-offs and wait 1.5-2 hours longer for matches to finish because there aren't enough courts.

Frank Flynn (47 Mellen Street, Needham). It would be a bad investment to fail to orient the tennis courts north-south, which is standard.

Alice Dembner (23 Henderson Street, Needham). This would be terrific and an important resource, not only for student athletes, but also tennis enthusiasts such as herself. It is currently difficult to get a court due to both pickleball and the high school courts being out of commission. She has been going out of town to find courts.

Peter Pingitore (146 Hillcrest Road, Needham). To what extent has the Park and Recreation Department engaged neighbors regarding this proposed plan?

Jeremy Chao (96 Maple Street, Needham) is a youth tennis instructor for the Needham Park and Recreation Department. He personally attests to the urgency of implementing the project. The increasing enrollment and enthusiasm for tennis in town is incredible. The condition of the high school courts is becoming a safety issue due to all of the cracks and inconsistencies of the surface.

S. Mulroy reported that there is no plan to line the high school courts with pickleball lines. There are pickleball lines at the Mills courts and the Commission is considering standalone pickleball courts as a future capital project.

Ardian Rapi reported that they have not met with neighbors yet, but all neighbors are on notice of an upcoming Planning Board meeting scheduled for next week. Additionally, there is no plan to add lighting to the tennis courts.

Written comments and questions were submitted to the Committee via email and may be viewed as part of the meeting packet available on the Town of Needham website.

FY2025-03: DEFAZIO COMPLEX FENCING IMPROVEMENTS

J. McKnight provided a brief overview of the project and introduced Ed Olsen, Superintendent of Parks and Forestry.

The Needham Department of Public Works and the Needham Park and Recreation Department are jointly seeking \$417,000 in CPA funds for replacement of fencing fabric and hardware around and within the DeFazio Complex. This complex was gifted to the Town of Needham as part of the Field of Dreams project 15 years ago and the Town must protect the investment that was made. It is a highly utilized outdoor sports and recreation complex, serving high school athletics, youth sports and Park and Recreation programming, among others.

The infrastructure is strong, but the fencing fabric and posts are bending, peeling, curling and showing signs of disrepair. The Town received a detailed estimate from Argus Construction, one of the Town's on-call vendors. If the grant request is approved, the project will be put out to bid and any money not spent will be returned to the CPC.

A written comment was submitted to the Committee via email and may be viewed as part of the meeting packet available on the Town of Needham website.

FY2025 CPA RESERVE ALLOCATIONS

The Community Preservation Act mandates that at least 10% of annual property tax surcharges and state distribution funds be spent on actual projects, or be allocated for future projects, in three CPA special reserves: Community Housing, Open Space, and Historic Resources.

To ensure the Town remains compliant with this statutory requirement, the CPC's practice has been to appropriate 11% of the estimated revenue for each special reserve. Since FY2022, the CPC has elected to appropriate 22% of the estimated revenue for the Community Housing special reserve. The CPC took this action for a number of reasons, including anticipated requests for funding from the Needham Housing Authority.

A summary of the estimated CPA revenues and proposed special reserve allocations for FY2025 may be viewed as part of the meeting packet on the Town of Needham website.

There were no questions or comments from the public.

J. McKnight moved to close the Public Hearing at 8:15 p.m. The motion was seconded by M. Callahan. The roll call vote was as follows: **J. Barnes** (aye); **M. Callahan** (aye); **R. Foster** (aye); **P. Dawson** (aye); **J. McKnight** (aye); **D. Herer** (aye); **K. LaFace** (aye); **L. Dorfman** (aye). Motion carries 8-0.

MEETING SCHEDULE:

The next meeting will be March 20, 2024 at 7:00 p.m.

MATTERS NOT REASONABLY ANTICIPATED BY THE CHAIR 48 HOURS IN ADVANCE:

None.

ADJOURNMENT

L. Dorfman moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:17 p.m. The motion was seconded by P. Dawson. The roll call vote was as follows: **J. Barnes** (aye); **M. Callahan** (aye); **R. Foster** (aye); **P. Dawson** (aye); **J. McKnight** (aye); **D. Herer** (aye); **K. LaFace** (aye); **L. Dorfman** (aye). Motion carries 8-0.

For more information, the meeting materials are available at:
<https://www.needhamma.gov/Archive.aspx?AMID=&Type=&ADID=12396>

Respectfully submitted,
Lauren Spinney, Administrative Coordinator