

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

**Minutes of Meeting
January 8, 2025**

LOCATION: Hybrid Meeting - Charles River Room, Public Services Administration Building, 500 Dedham Avenue, Needham, and via Zoom

PRESENT: Dave Herer (Chair), Maureen Callahan (Vice Chair), Paul Dawson, Adam Block, Marshall Davis, Reginald Foster, Keith LaFace, Betsy Millane

ABSENT: Jim Rosenbaum, Cecilia Simchak

STAFF: Lauren Spinney

GUESTS: Gloria Greis, Mark Gluesing

D. Herer called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and noted that all members were present, with the exception of Jim Rosenbaum.

FY2026-01 NEEDHAM HISTORY CENTER & MUSEUM: ONGOING COLLECTIONS STORAGE UPGRADES

D. Herer introduced Gloria Greis, Executive Director of the Needham History Center & Museum (NHC&M), and Mark Gluesing, Board Member.

This application seeks \$65,000 for storage upgrades to the Needham History Center and Museum's ongoing collections under the CPA category of Historic Preservation.

In 2012 the CPC provided \$25,000 to contract with an archivist/collections manager to set up processes for cataloguing and rehousing Needham's historic artifacts on appropriate software. In 2018 the CPC provided an additional \$25,000 to continue that work.

The instant request is for \$67,712. The NHC&M is using donated shelving from the high school library to store the archived collections. As the collections have been organized into appropriate archival containers, they take up more space and the current shelving is not appropriately sized to store the containers efficiently. The NHC&M proposes purchasing heavy-duty modular shelving that comes in various sizes and will be able to accommodate 8-12 boxes per shelf rather than 2. This will significantly increase the amount of material they can store within the same general shelving footprint. Additionally, NHC&M has paintings and framed works that are currently stacked in piles. They propose purchasing vertical racks that will allow them to store these works appropriately, with adequate support and buffers.

The NHC&M has a capital reserve budget for projects like this, but due to leakage issues with the roof they had to spend money on roofing repairs and paint in the same year.

This project is one of preservation. All historic preservation projects must adhere to the Department of Interior's Required Standards for Managing and Preserving Museum Property.

Directive 4.1.12 of the DOI Standards mandates that a museum provide storage space large enough for existing museum collections... facilitate safe access to all objects through the efficient use of storage systems... house museum collections in appropriate containers and use appropriate museum-quality materials that provide a protected and stable environment... and use materials and methods that protect museum collections from damage while the objects are being stored... The NHC&M has been moving towards a stable environment and appropriate storage material, but they have not yet reached the standard of space and accessibility. This project is meant to address that.

In terms of public benefit, the NHC&M is a non-profit public charity, not a private museum. Its mission is to make its assets publicly available and facilitate research. Admission is free. Programs that are not specifically fundraisers are presented for free. Each year, it hosts a school-day program for every third-grade class.

The Historical Commission will revisit and reaffirm its prior determination that the NHC&M's assets are relevant and historically significant to the Town of Needham. G. Greis will notify the Committee following the vote at the Commission's next meeting.

UPDATES ON FY2026 PROJECTS

Applicant presentations have been scheduled as follows:

- | | |
|---------|---|
| 1/22/25 | FY2026-02 Trail Signage Improvements
FY2026-06 Action Park/Pickleball
FY2026-07 Eliot School Grounds
FY2026-09 Bay Colony Rail Trail |
| 2/5/25 | FY2026-04 Preservation of Seabeds/Cook
FY2025-05 High Rock Homes Land Use Study |
| 2/12/25 | FY2026-03 Charles River Center/East Militia Heights |

FY2026-02 Needham Conservation Department & Commission: Trail Signage

Improvements. This application seeks \$104,000 for upgraded trail signage, markings and maps on Town-owned protected spaces and trails under the CPA category of Recreation.

M. Davis asked if this project can be phased over multiple years. D. Herer suggested that phasing the project could make it more expensive given that a large portion of the cost is the contractor fees.

FY2026-03 Charles River Center: East Militia Heights Development. This application seeks \$3,500,000 for construction costs associated with the development of 86 affordable housing units, including 43 units of special needs housing, under the CPA category of Community Housing.

M. Callanan reported that she and B. Millane conducted a site visit. The existing buildings have

been taken down. The applicant provided artist renderings of the new buildings in its due diligence responses. The plan is to provide a combination of housing for people with disabilities and people with low income. There will be a community room. There will be trails that will also be available to the public. B. Millane stated that this project will support an underserved population and if CPA funding is not awarded it will have to be put off for a year or more. In an effort to manage the applicant's expectations, M. Callahan shared with them that it will be difficult for the CPC to fully fund every application this cycle in light of the number of requests and the amounts requested.

D. Herer agreed that it is clear there will not be enough money available this year to fully fund all of the housing projects. He shared that the Committee is exploring all options for creative approaches to funding and has requested a meeting with the Finance Department to discuss same. The Committee will also discuss funding questions with Emily Achtenberg, Affordable Housing and Finance Consultant. The Town will not finance a bond for non-Town entities.

R. Foster suggested the Committee submit any additional questions for this project prior to February 12 so the applicant can address them during their presentation. R. Foster would like information regarding the project's readiness to proceed in terms of zoning. A. Block suggested the Committee ask the applicant to reach out to Lee Newman and determine its plan for zoning conformity (i.e. friendly 40(b) or zoning bylaw change), as this will effect the timing of the project.

FY2026-04 Needham Housing Authority: Preservation of Seabeds Way & Captain Robert Cook Drive. This application seeks \$5,600,000 for construction costs associated with the preservation and redevelopment of affordable housing located on Seabeds Way and Captain Robert Cook Drive under the CPA category of Community Housing.

D. Herer reported that he and A. Block have yet to have a formal site visit, but he viewed the properties on his own. It is pretty straight forward that there is a need for repair to the exterior. Eligibility is not a question. Availability of funds may be. One interesting aspect is the relationship between the Seabeds-Cook project and the Linden Street Redevelopment project. Also of note is the recent decision of the Massachusetts Supreme Court upholding the constitutionality of the MBTA Communities Act.

R. Foster explained that the Linden Street project requires both construction funding and 20-year operating funding which includes annual subsidies per unit to provide affordability. The \$5.5M in CPA funds appropriated by Town Meeting last year fills the construction funding gap. They think they can get the rest of the construction funding from the application that is being submitted February 27, 2025. However, there is not enough funding to maintain the level of affordability that the NHA and the Town wants for the 136 units at Linden Street. A strategy for maintaining that affordability is to free up Faircloth subsidies from Seabeds-Cook by repositioning those properties and putting the Faircloth subsidies into the Linden Street project. Last year, the NHA thought it could do that without having to apply for the same tax credit financing that the Linden Street project is applying for, but there was a lawsuit against HUD that eliminated the program the NHA was relying upon to reposition Seabeds-Cook, which resulted in a construction funding deficit for the Seabeds-Cook project. The Seabeds-Cook project has to move forward in order to liberate the

Faircloth subsidies that are needed to operate the Linden Street project.

R. Foster further shared that Supreme Court upheld the constitutionality of the MBTA Communities Act so the Town has to come into compliance with the Act or the NHA will lose at least \$1M from the Linden Street project, if not more.

FY2026-05 Needham Housing Authority: High Rock Estates Affordable Housing Land Use Study. This application seeks \$150,000 for a land use study and community engagement process in connection with the redevelopment of affordable housing at High Rock Estates under the CPA category of Community Housing.

R. Foster shared that he met with the Massachusetts Housing Partnership consultants on the question of eligibility. They gave useful advice and will prepare a memorandum for Town Counsel's review on that issue. It is possible that the NHA will need to adjust its application to meet eligibility requirements. L. Spinney will send the NHA's due diligence responses and MHP's memorandum to Town Counsel when available, and schedule a meeting with Town Counsel, the NHA and CPC chairs.

FY2026-06 Needham Park & Recreation Department: Action Park & Pickleball Courts (Design). This application seeks \$300,000 for design costs associated with construction of an action sports park and pickleball courts under the CPA category of Recreation.

A. Block would like more detailed information regarding the project cost/budget.

D. Herer asked that CPC members submit any additional due diligence questions to L. Spinney by Wednesday, January 15.

RETROACTIVE ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS OF CPA FUNDING

D. Herer compiled a list of ten projects that might be appropriate for installation of plaques acknowledging the contribution of CPA funds and asked Committee members to add to the list if they feel additional projects are warranted. CPC members will visit the various sites to determine if an acknowledgement already exists.

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

None.

UPCOMING MEETING SCHEDULE

CPC meetings will be held on January 22, February 5 and February 12.

ADJOURNMENT

A. Block moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:07 p.m. M. Callahan seconded the motion. Motion carries (8-0).

For more information, the meeting materials are available at:

<https://www.needhamma.gov/Archive.aspx?AMID=&Type=&ADID=13408>

Respectfully submitted,

Lauren Spinney
Administrative Coordinator