

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

**Minutes of Meeting & Public Hearing  
March 12, 2025**

**LOCATION:** Hybrid Meeting – Charles River Room, 500 Dedham Avenue, Needham, and via Zoom

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

**ABSENT:** Jim Rosenbaum

**STAFF:** Lauren Spinney

**GUESTS:** Gloria Greis, Debbie Anderson, Anne-Marie Bajwa, Phil Crean, Edward Olsen,  
Stacey Mulroy

---

D. Herer called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. Committee members, staff, and guests were present as noted above.

**CHAIR'S UPDATES**

None.

**PUBLIC HEARING**

D. Herer opened the public hearing at 7:02 p.m. and reviewed the hearing guidelines.

**FY2026-01 Needham History Center & Museum: Collections Storage Upgrades**

D. Herer introduced Gloria Gries, Executive Director of the Needham History Center and Museum.

The Needham History Center and Museum requests **\$46,712** for on-going collections storage upgrades under the Historic Preservation designation.

This project will aid in the preservation of the NHCM's collections by increasing storage capacity and making the material more accessible to staff and the public. CPA funds are needed to pay for heavy-duty modular shelving, racks, cases and dehumidification equipment, as well as shipping, assembly and disposal of materials.

NHCM is currently using donated shelving from the Needham Public Library, but the size of the shelving is incompatible with the archival containers. This has led to inefficient use of space with archival containers stacked on the floor, impeding access to the objects and limiting the ability to use them for teaching and exhibits. This project will also move NHC&M closer to its goal of full compliance with the Department of the Interior's Standards for Managing and Preserving Museum Property, which requires a museum to provide adequate storage space, facilitate safe access to

objects through the efficient use of storage systems, protect collections from damage, and provide a protected and stable environment.

In terms of public benefit, NHCM provides museum tours, elementary classroom visits, public programming such as lectures and book discussions, in-person research visits, and responds to requests for information from residents, students, news organizations, town boards and committees. NHCM does not charge for research or programming. Admission and access to the museum's collections are free.

*Public Comment:*

Jeanne McKnight, 100 Rosemary Way, in support of the project.

**FY2026-02 Needham Conservation Department: Trail Signage Improvements**

M. Davis introduced Dave Herer, Chair of the Conservation Commission, and Debbie Anderson, Director of Conservation.

The Needham Conservation Department and Conservation Commission request **\$104,000** for trail signage and improvements under the Recreation designation.

This project aims to enhance use of Needham's 25+ miles of trails in 11 locations across town by improving visibility, safety and user experience through uniformity in the appearance of trail signage and maps and incorporating new technologies like QR codes. The concept for this project stemmed from the Trails Master Plan, which was funded by the CPC and completed in 2008. CPA funds will be used for the purchase and installation of new aluminum signage, pressure treated signposts, kiosks, and trail improvements such as bridges, bog walks and trail steps. This project will also leverage numerous volunteer hours to assist in its implementation.

*Public Comment:*

Bruce \_\_\_\_, Precinct A, in support of the project.

Josh Conlon, 22 Oakhurst Circle, in support of the project.

Jeanne McKnight, 100 Rosemary Way, Needham Land Trust Board Member, is in support of the project.

**FY2026-03 Charles River Center: East Militia Heights Development**

M. Callahan introduced Anne-Marie Bajwa, President and CEO of Charles River Center, and Phil Crean, Project Manager from the Planning Office of Urban Affairs.

The Charles River Center requests \$3,500,000 for construction costs associated with the East Militia Heights Development under the category of Community Housing.

The mission of this project is to provide inclusive housing and a full spectrum of supportive services to empower individuals with disabilities to live independently, achieve their personal goals, and actively participate in their community. There is a shortage of housing for individuals with autism and intellectual disabilities who could live on their own, but need a flexible array of staff supports to be able to do so.

This project seeks to create 86 new units of affordable housing for households earning at or below 30% to 80% of Area Median Income by redeveloping 3.5 acres of land at 59 East Militia Heights Drive into an integrated campus-style housing and education complex with a community center, outdoor recreation space, and walking paths. Approximately half of the units will be designated for individuals with autism and intellectual disabilities requiring less than 30 hours of staff support per week. In addition to housing, CRC will provide these residents with comprehensive wrap-around services to support their goal of living independently within the community. Five of the units will be set aside for CRC staff (earning at or below 80% AMI) who will provide after-hours support to residents, on an emergency basis. The remaining units will be available to the general public as traditional affordable housing units.

The total estimated cost is \$49,976,479. Project financing will consist of federal and state low income housing tax credit equity from investors, Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities subordinate debt, a permanent loan, a sponsor loan, DOER/MassSaves funds, and CPA funds. CRC created a website for this project that has a FAQ section and will provide updates.

*Public Comment:*

John Hession, 51 Ellicott Street, CRC Board Member, in support of the project.

Phil Robey, 12 Fletcher Road, CRC Board Member, in support of the project.

Rich Neckes, 36 Gay Street, Needham, previous CRC Board Member, in support of the project.

Nathalie Blitz, 127 Noanett Road, expressed concern that the project does not serve disabled individuals with more significant needs. Ann-Marie Bajwa explained that CRC is not permitted to operate a group home or provide 24/7 care at this property because it would violate the CMS final rule that creates campuses where people are presumed to be on a campus in an institutional nature. CRC has other group homes that provide 24-hour care, 13 of which are in Needham. Per the Department of Developmental Services, CRC may only provide 30 hours of flexible staff support at the Militia Heights development.

**FY2026-04 Needham Housing Authority: Preservation of Seabeds-Cook**

A. Block introduced Reginald Foster, Chair of the Needham Housing Authority.

The Needham Housing Authority requests \$3,525,000 for construction costs associated with the Preservation of Seabeds Way under the category of Community Housing.

This project seeks to preserve 46 affordable public housing units at the Seabeds Way property for households with incomes at or below 80% AMI. The development was built in 1982 and consists of four two-story buildings containing 46 one-bedroom units. Due to insufficient federal funding the property still has original building systems and finishes, antiquated electrical and fire systems, deteriorated entryways, patios and balconies, worn out kitchens and bathrooms, poor ventilation and accessibility issues.

CPA funds will be used for critical upgrades to preserve the property, including building envelope, replacement of windows, roofs, siding, concrete stairs, railings, ramps and outmoded building systems that affect tenant safety. This project enables the repositioning of housing at Seabeds Way from the Section 9 federal public housing program to the Section 8 program, which allows the NHA to transfer freed-up public housing rental subsidies to the Linden Street redevelopment project.

Total estimated cost is \$20,816,901. The NHA anticipates contributing approximately \$2M to the project, including \$1.1M from the developer fee the NHA will earn from the Linden Street Redevelopment Project and a program loan from capital funds from HUD.

*Public Comment:*

Jeanne McKnight, 100 Rosemary Way, asked a clarifying question regarding the number of units and phasing of the Seabeds Way and Captain Roberts Cook Drive projects.

Oscar Mertz, 67 Rybury Hillway, in support of the project.

Kalpana Shah, 168 Linden Street, opposes the project due to current uncertainties at the federal level and the possibility that federal funding cuts may result in unanticipated needs that could benefit from future CPA funding. R. Foster clarified that the only funding source that may be at risk of federal cuts is the HEAR program; however, Massachusetts already received its allocation of HEAR funding from the federal government.

Holly Clark, 1652 Central Avenue, spoke to clarify Kalpana Shah's statements.

Paula Dickerman, 20 Burnside Road, in support of the project.

Jan Soma, 106 Marked Tree Road, in support of both community housing projects.

Ross Donald, 25H Chambers Street, is in support of the project but expressed concern over the level of tenant participation, relocation issues, and project phasing.

**FY2026-06 Needham Park & Recreation Department: Action Park & Pickleball Courts**

P. Dawson introduced Stacey Mulroy, Director of the Needham Park and Recreation Department.

The Needham Park and Recreation Department requests **\$300,000** for the design of an action sports park, pump track, and pickleball courts under the Recreation designation.

The Town engaged an engineering firm to conduct a feasibility study of Mills, Hillside, Cricket, and Claxton fields as possible locations for these amenities. After conducting site visits, meeting with neighbors and convening a working group, Claxton Field was determined to be the best location, situating the action park and pump track at the quarry and the pickleball courts along Central Avenue across from the transfer station. CPA funds will be used to engage an engineering firm to begin working on project scope, design, and cost. This project will include a sound study and additional parking.

*Public Comment:*

Josh Conlon, 22 Oakhurst Circle, in support of the project.

Paul Pasquarosa, 27 Edgewood Street, in support of the project.

Erika Hession, 211 Highgate Street, in support of the project.

Holly Clark, 1652 Central Avenue, supports the project, but cautioned that infrastructure must be considered in the planning and design (i.e. parking, sidewalks).

Bradley & Caleb Molyneaux, 47 Mayo Avenue, in support of the project.

Paula Dickerman, 20 Burnside Road, in support of the project.

**FY2026-07 Needham Park & Recreation Department, Department of Public Works: Eliot School Grounds Renovation (Design)**

P. Dawson introduced Edward Olsen, Superintendent of Parks and Forestry, and Stacey Mulroy, Director of the Needham Park and Recreation Department.

The Needham Department of Public Works requests **\$69,960** for the design of the Eliot School Grounds Renovation project under the Recreation designation.

Eliot Elementary School was rebuilt in 2003, at which time the field and playground structure were also completed. It has a total of 1.5 acres of outdoor recreational space. Eliot serves approximately 450 students and is also utilized by the Needham Extended Day Program, Needham Baseball/Softball, Park & Recreation summer camp, and neighborhood families. The fields are showing signs of age due to poorly draining subsurface materials which impact the health of the turf and make the fields more expensive to maintain. The playground is past its useful life and presents maintenance challenges due to wood fiber migration. There is also a lack of accessible and sensory playground equipment. CPA funds will be used for an overall assessment of Eliot's outdoor recreational spaces and to create solutions for the field, playground, basketball court and

walkways. The project will also address the drainage pipe under the fields and connect the walking pathway with the aqueduct trail

*Public Comment:*

Matthew Lees, 4 Crane Street, in support of the project, but expressed concern that construction vehicles be mindful to not damage Crane Street, which is a private road and was just regraded and resurfaced by residents.

A. Block moved to close the Public Hearing at 9:02 p.m. Maureen Callahan seconded the motion. The vote was as follows: D. Herer (aye); M. Callahan (aye); R. Foster (aye); P. Dawson (aye); A. Block (aye); M. Davis (aye); K. LaFace (aye). Motion carries (7-0).

**FY2026-05 NEEDHAM HOUSING AUTHORITY: HIGH ROCK ESTATES LAND USE STUDY**

After additional consideration and after speaking with an attorney at the Department of Revenue, Town Counsel determined that a study like the one being proposed for High Rock Estates cannot be funded as “creation” of community housing because it does not create any actual housing.

A. Block moved to reject the Needham Housing Authority’s initial eligibility application for the High Rock Estates Land Use Study on the advice of Town Counsel. M. Callanan seconded the motion. The vote was as follows: D. Herer (aye); M. Callahan (aye); R. Foster (nay); P. Dawson (aye); A. Block (aye); M. Davis (aye); K. LaFace (aye). Motion carries (6-0).

**CONSULTATIONS WITH FINANCE COMMITTEE AND TOWN FINANCED COMMUNITY HOUSING OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE (T-CHOC)**

D. Herer shared that he and M. Callahan met with T-CHOC regarding the FY2026 community housing projects and T-CHOC did not provide much feedback on either.

There was robust discussion with the Finance Committee regarding FY2026 projects. The only significant question was with respect to the \$5.5M FY2025 CPA grant awarded to the Needham Housing Authority for the Linden Street Redevelopment project. Given that the NHA anticipates using \$4M for Phase 1A of the Linden Street project and the remaining \$1.5M for Phase 1B, which is not yet scheduled, a Finance Committee member asked if the \$1.5M could be clawed back and redeployed to the Seabeds Way project this year. D. Herer suggested that there are a few reasons why this is not feasible, including the fact that the grant agreement has been executed, there is not sufficient time to coordinate that effort for the upcoming Town Meeting, and the uncertainty of NHA’s funding sources for Linden Street.

**MEETING MINUTES**

A. Block moved to approve the minutes of February 12, 2025 and February 26, 2025. M. Davis

seconded the motion. The vote was as follows: D. Herer (aye); M. Callahan (aye); R. Foster (aye); P. Dawson (aye); A. Block (aye); M. Davis (aye); K. LaFace (aye). Motion carries (7-0).

**ISSUES NOT REASONABLY ANTICIPATED BY THE CHAIR WITHIN 48 HOURS**

D. Herer shared suggestions and considerations for funding deliberations at the next CPC Meeting on March 19, 2025.

**ADJOURNMENT**

A. Block moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:52 p.m. K. LaFace seconded the motion. The vote was as follows: D. Herer (aye); M. Callahan (aye); R. Foster (aye); P. Dawson (aye); A. Block (aye); M. Davis (aye); K. LaFace (aye). Motion carries (7-0).

For more information, meeting materials are available at:

<https://www.needhamma.gov/Archive.aspx?AMID=&Type=&ADID=13598>  
<https://www.needhamma.gov/Archive.aspx?AMID=&Type=&ADID=13599>

Respectfully submitted,

Lauren Spinney  
Administrative Coordinator