COMMUNITY PRESERVATION COMMITTEE
TOWN OF NEEDHAM, MASSACHUSETTS

Minutes of Meeting
May 13, 2020
Zoom Meeting
Recording available online: https://youtu.be/m5tU4ikpDr8

PRESENT:	Peter Pingitore – Chairman, Artie Crocker – Vice Chairman, Joe Barnes, Chris Gerstel, Rick Zimbone, Robert Dermody, Laura Dorfman, Paul Alpert
STAFF:	Carys Lustig, Staff Liaison, Kristen Wright, Recording Secretary
GUESTS:	Dan Gutekanst, Superintendent of Needham Schools Henry Haff, Sr. Project Manager, Needham Building Design and Construction Department

Mr. Pingitore completed a roll call for all members of the Committee and members of staff and the results of the roll call are noted above. Mr. Pingitore called the meeting to order at 7:31 PM via a Zoom Meeting. Mr. Pingitore reviewed the rules of the meeting that was being conducted remotely and online inline with Governor Baker's order regarding Public Meetings. Mr. Pingitore covered meeting ground rules for the meeting.

Chairman's Updates
None presented.

Emory Grover Update – Superintendent of Schools
Mr. Pingitore welcomed the Superintendent of Needham Schools Dr. Dan Gutekanst. Dr. Gutekanst presented a brief history to the committee regarding the Emory Grover project.

Dr. Gutekanst presented the steps and outcomes of the School Committee's feasibility study for the Emory Grover project. The Committee review a presentation of options that are the result of the feasibility, in which all options would be located within the current Emory Grover site. Due to the nature of the existing Emory Grover building, there are some historic considerations, and if the project were to move forward with a historic preservation option, the School Committee and the Town may approach the Community Preservation Committee for some funding for the design and construction of this project. Dr. Gutekanst highlighted that the option that the Town determines is the best option for the community is the project they would like to move forward with. Mr. Pingitore thanked Dr. Gutekanst for his presentation and discussed the type of considerations that the committee should think about when considering supporting the Emory Grover project with Community Preservation funding. Mr. Pingitore opened the floor for questions and comments about the update Dr. Gutekanst presented.

Mr. Alpert asked what level of funding this project would require from the CPC. The projected total is currently listed as $11 million. Mr. Alpert stated that the only portion that would be eligible for CPC funding would be those funds that were related to the historic preservation of the building. Mr. Alpert asked if the amount has been earmarked for this project was direct from the feasibility study and how the amount was identified, by a percentage or direct line costs, for the preservation of the façade. Ms. Lustig asked Mr. Pingitore if he would recognize Mr. Henry Haff the Emory Grover Project Manager for the Town of Needham. Mr. Pingitore invited Mr. Haff to join the meeting. Mr. Haff stated that not only the direct costs of maintaining the façade under historic preservation, but also all aspects of the building that provide access to the historic building, such as egress entries, elevators, and restrooms.

Mr. Haff stated that 50-60% of the project could be attribute to the historic preservation portion of the project according to the architect. Mr. Pingitore asked that this percentage would not be applied to the entire project, including the addition that will be added. Mr. Haff stated that using the precedent that was used when funding of the new Town Hall, many things including handicap accessibility, viable means of egress, adding a sprinkler system, adding modern electrical and telecommunications into he building, not just the façade would be eligible under the Community Preservation Act. Mr. Alpert stated that Mr. Haff would suggest that 50-60% of the project cost could be found eligible for CPC funding, which would total approximately $15 - $18 million. Mr. Haff stated that when considering what was determined eligible throughout the state, that 50% could easily be found eligible, but when considering other metrics, the $11 million amount is probably more realistic. Mr. Haff will ask the designer for a more detailed listing of items they thought would be eligible for CPC funding. Mr. Pingitore asked Mr. Haff if he knew what percentage of the Town Hall project was funded by CPC funding. Mr. Haff stated he believed it was in the range of 75% of the total project cost.

Mr. Barnes stated that he is glad to see the Emory Grover project move forward and shared gratitude for Dan and his staff for making use of the current building for as long as they have. Mr. Barnes stated and Dr. Gutekanst agreed that the focus of the School Committee is not necessarily the prettiest or most welcoming option, but to get the renovation completed to continue to service the community at large. Mr. Barnes asked about the remote parking at the Steven Palmer building and the shared parking at the current School Administration Building with Saint Joseph Elementary School. Dr. Gutekanst stated that the current parking lot is not currently shared with Saint Joe's for parking, but they do use it for morning drop-off but their overall need for parking has decreased. Dr. Gutekanst added that depending on the availability of the parking at Steven Palmer, parking may be available for both School Administration and St. Joe's in the future.

Mr. Crocker what is the cost of demolition for the first option. Mr. Haff stated that the cost of demolition including abatement is approximately $500,000 range. Mr. Haff added that the cost of the projects included the temporary housing of the School Administration staff at the Hillside Elementary building. Mr. Crocker asked for more understanding as to why renovating this building in the current site is a better option than moving permanently to the Hillside Elementary Building, as an example, especially with the state of the world as it currently is. Dr. Gutekanst stated that it is a challenge to discuss future Town construction during a time like this and further mentioned that there is a second feasibility study wrapping up that is looking at Pollard Middle School, High Rock Middle School, and Mitchell Elementary. Dr. Gutekanst stated that each of these sites is a large project for the Town and the Schools and therefore it was important to have an understanding about what funding was needed for the Emory Grover building. Dr. Gutekanst added that there is an agreement between the Town and the School Committee that once the Hillside School is not longer of viable use for public education, the property would be returned to the Town. That being said, in the future the Hillside School is currently indicated as temporary space for School Administration, and potentially as swing space for any of the earlier mentioned school projects. Dr. Gutekanst stated that the three options that have been presented are the best options moving forward.

Mr. Dermody asked what the square footage of the existing Hillside building is comparison to the current Emory Grover building. Dr. Gutekanst stated that Hillside is currently double the size of the current Emory Grover building. Mr. Dermody asked if the new options allowed for enough space for the School Administration to operate their services. Mr. Gutekanst stated that all three options would achieve that goal including adding a large meeting space for the entire staff to meet as well as move the IT department into the building which is currently located at Broadmeadow Elementary School.

Ms. Dorfman asked about the parking space indicated in option 3 as it appears to have an underground parking area but has the least amount of parking listed. Dr. Gutekanst stated that there is a second page that lists an additional 16 spaces. Ms. Dorfman asked if there was enough parking for the use of this building. Dr. Gutekanst stated that for the day to day operations this is ample parking however if there were to be a large training or meeting held at the building, which they are hoping to accommodate, the remote parking will be necessary.

Mr. Gerstel thanked Dr. Gutekanst and Mr. Haff and is in support of upgrading the building to support the great school system in Needham.

Mr. Zimbone stated that there is not a question that the building is needed and has been needed for quite some time. Mr. Zimbone stated that currently 40% of the project, or $11 million, is identified as potentially being funded by the CPC. Mr. Zimbone asked how the 40% allocation was determined as only $1 - $2 million would go directly to the preservation of the historic façade of the building. Mr. Haff stated that he would have to go back to architect to determine why the figure was listed at 40%. Mr. Haff stated that when looking at the preservation of the building that it would not only pertain to the façade but the entire envelope of the building to get it up to contemporary codes which would include bracing the walls, reconstructing the roof and window, but he will need to come back with a more specific number. Mr. Zimbone asked about the zoning issues that were identified on each option, and if the zoning restrictions have been discussed. Dr. Gutekanst stated that there have been some preliminary discussions, but nothing formally has been discussed regarding zoning. Mr. Zimbone stated that in order to support this project they will need as much detail as possible so the best discussion and decision can be made, especially in terms of how the Town will be moving forward in funding all projects that come before them.

Mr. Pingitore stated that in past projects, proponents have often asked the architects to present to the Committee and advocate for why the funding is proposed in such a way. Mr. Pingitore asked if the architect has performed an analysis of each option for each funding source and identified why they have identified it in such a way. Mr. Haff stated that it has not been completed in the level of detail that the Committee is asking for. Mr. Pingitore stated that there was approximately 2,000 square foot delta between option 1 and option 2 and asked if this was due to inefficiencies that exist by working within the current building and performing more of a remodel instead of a complete tear-down and re-build. Mr. Haff stated that there were inefficiencies especially in terms of the attic as well as keeping the existing chimneys, and there would be about a half a level difference between the addition and the existing structure, which will require stairs that take away from the overall usable square footage. Mr. Pingitore asked if there were analysis for future maintenance between maintaining the existing building compared to an entirely new building. Mr. Haff stated that maintaining and older building may be more to maintain but a detailed analysis has not been completed. Mr. Pingitore asked if the height of the building will be taller if we remodel compared to if there was an entirely new building and asked what, if any, impact this could have on abutting neighbors. Dr. Gutekanst stated that they have not had a conversation with the neighbors yet, however the L-shaped portion of the building will mirror the construction of the St. Joe's building, so it may appear more dense but would not stick out any further than the back of St. Joe's property. Mr. Haff stated that the current building is non-conforming, and the addition would be at the same level, but any new construction would be constructed under the new by-laws and conform to the height restrictions.

Ms. Lustig asked when the School Committee would be applying to the CPC for consideration and would the School Committee be looking for funding for both design and construction or just construction for this project. Mr. Gutekanst stated that they would apply for both design and construction, and the initial thought would be to apply to be on the floor for fiscal 2021 Town Meeting.

Mr. Pingitore thanked Dr. Gutekanst and Mr. Haff for presenting to the Committee tonight.

Mr. Dermody asked who determines what is fundable according to the Community Preservation Act and what is not. Ms. Lustig stated that this Committee determines what is eligible, however decisions of the Committee can be brought to court as has been noted during the discussion of our current applications for churches in the community. Ms. Lustig stated that eligibility is at the discretion of the Committee and if someone disagrees then it would be up to the courts. Mr. Dermody stated that it has come up a number of times that an architect has determined what is eligible or a proponent has a lot of detailed information that can help the Committee make a determination and would like to talk about the overall process further. Mr. Dermody shared that only using prior projects as precedent may not be best practice for future projects. Mr. Pingitore agreed that this would be matter for future discussion.

Ms. Dorfman asked if they were to rebuild the building but replicate the façade, would that still be under consideration. Ms. Lustig stated that the precedent would be the Town Hall where they utilized the structure and remodeled the interior and exterior. Ms. Dorfman asked if they demolished the building and rebuilt it, but they replicated the look of the historic building would it still be eligible. Ms. Lustig stated that option 1 is not eligible for CPC funding. Mr. Alpert stated that the Planning Board had a similar presentation from the School Committee, but it had more detail. Mr. Alpert stated that option 1 had a completely modern façade.

Mr. Barnes asked what, if any, impact funding this project would have on any future projects we might have the ability to fund. Mr. Pingitore stated that this will all be a part of the considerations that the Committee will make when discussing this, and any other projects.

Mr. Zimbone stated that the assumption that the School Administrative Building needed to be in the center of Town, and that is a large assumption to be made by Town Meeting especially if more space becomes available. Mr. Pingitore stated that if CPC funds any part of this project then this Committee would have to defend the funding to the Finance Committee and Town Meeting.

Ms. Lustig stated that there is not yet an application for funding in front of this Committee and that at this stage the School Committee was looking for a little bit of feedback to determine what their next steps are and to move forward with their applications of funding, for whichever option they decides to pursue.

Mr. Crocker asked to hear from the Town’s Finance Director about how the current state of the world is impacting the overall Town’s funding. Ms. Lustig stated that the Finance Director should be at the June or July meeting.

Mr. Zimbone stated that the Committee should look at the overall picture in terms of projects funded by the CPC and complete that analysis. Mr. Pingitore stated that he agreed, and it should be a conversation for the Committee. Mr. Dermody stated that the information will be helpful, but it is also important to note this Committee can only act on applications that are submitted.

<u>Liaison Updates</u>

FY2020-01 First Baptist Church - Front Porch Preservation & Restoration

This request is for $126,233 for the restoration and preservation of its historic and street facing front porch under Historic Preservation.

Liaisons – Mr. Dermody and Mr. Zimbone

Mr. Dermody stated that he had a conversation with Reverend Daryn, and she was happy to report that everyone in her community is still healthy and that her finances have not change due to the pandemic. Ms. Dorfman asked if they received any of the PPP monies. Mr. Dermody stated that he did not ask specifically about receiving funding as well as they are still committed to their portion of the funding of this project.

FY2020-02 First Parish Church – Steeple Preservation

This request is for $75,000 for the preservation of its historic steeple (Bell Tower) under Historic Preservation.

Liaisons – Mr. Dermody and Mr. Barnes

Mr. Barnes stated that the First Parish Church has had a financial impact and have received money from the CARES funding. Mr. Barnes stated that they can still commit $25,000 to the project.

FY2020-03 Needham Community Farm – Growing Bed Area Expansion

This request is for $6,000 for the expansion of a growing area of the Community Farm under Recreation.

Liaison – Mr. Gerstel

No updates were presented.

FY2020-04 Needham Conservation – Trail Identification – *Design*

This request is for $6,000 for design funding to design a cohesive trail identification system with signing for all trails in Needham under Open Space and Recreation.

Liaison – Mr. Pingitore

No updates presented.

FY2020-06 Needham DPW & Park and Recreation – Claxton Field Light & Skin Renovation

This request is for $101,500 for design funding to design field light improvements as well as evaluate the conditions of the field skins under Recreation.

Liaison – Mr. Crocker

No updates presented.

FY2020-07 Needham DPW & Park and Recreation – Resurface Synthetic Track at DeFazio

This request is for $160,000 for construction funding to resurface the track at DeFazio field under Recreation.

Liaisons – Ms. Dorfman and Mr. Alpert

No updates presented.

Mr. Pingitore stated that Mr. Zimbone put together some suggestions about what terms we should ask for from proponents prior to our meeting with Town Council. Mr. Pingitore would like to move this discussion to the next meeting.

Approve Minutes

Mr. Crocker made a motion to approve the April 15, 2020 minutes and Mr. Gerstel seconded. The roll call vote was as follows: **Alpert:** abstain, **Barnes:** aye, **Crocker:** aye, **Dermody:** aye, **Dorfman:** aye, **Gerstel:** aye, **Zimbone:** aye, **Pingitore:** aye. Motion passes 7 – 0 – 1.

Any other issues not reasonably anticipated by the Chair within 48 hours

Mr. Pingitore stated that the Moderator will be appointing him to the CPC after election. The committee shared their excitement in the Moderators appointment and congratulated Peter on the appointment.

Ms. Dorfman stated that she will be sharing this report with the Historic Commission.

Adjournment

Mr. Dermody made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:27PM. Mr. Gerstel seconded the motion. The roll call vote was as follows: **Alpert:** aye, **Barnes:** aye, **Crocker:** aye, **Dermody:** aye, **Dorfman:** aye, **Gerstel:** aye, **Zimbone:** aye, **Pingitore:** aye. The meeting adjourned at 9:27PM

Respectfully submitted,

Kristen Wright
Recording Secretary