

Canton Community Preservation Committee

Minutes of meeting –March 20th, 2023

In Attendance: John McSweeney, Shaun Chu, Kendall O’Halloran, Lisa Lopez and John Leonetti

Absent: George Comeau, Melissa Mayer, and Kathy McCormack

Armando Center Meeting Room, 92 Pleasant Street

Co-Chairman Shaun Chu called the meeting to order at 7:02pm.

1) Public Comments: There were no public comments.

2) Kathy Butters and Allyson Podgurski from the town accounting office attended the meeting. The treasurer of the CCPC recently resigned and the other committee members were looking for help understanding the reports and budget situation. Ms. Butters gave an in-depth explanation of the financial reports from the MUNIS system that are sent out each month, usually around the 25th of the following month.

Ms. Butters explained that the reports are by fiscal year, rather than calendar year. Looking at the most recent report from February 2023 (attached): the CPA administration heading includes revenue accounts and expense accounts. 246 is the CPA department code. An additional number at the end explains which specific account is being addressed. 2460 is administration, 2461 is open space, 2462 is historic, and 2463 is housing. Credits are listed as negative numbers. Administration accounts include debits and credits, while project categories are all expenses.

Ms. Butters went on to explain where CPA funds come from and the projected estimates for next fiscal year. She also let the committee know that a change should be made going forward in terms of how the administrator writes the warrant articles for town meeting. In the past the warrant article included the CPA State Coalition required reservation of 10% of the projected CPA income to each of the buckets, and also a further section of the motion directing all other funds to the unreserved/undesignated fund accounts. This last step is unnecessary, as any funds not appropriated automatically go to the undesignated fund account and including it on the warrant makes it look more complicated and confusing.

Various members of the committee expressed a desire to get a regular report with this information condensed. Ms. Butters offered to populate and send the report differently so it shows up on one page with overall numbers.

Based on questions from committee members, Ms. Butters went on to explain how the town budget is based on estimates, rather than funds already collected. In contrast, when it comes to CPA funds the state budget/match is based on actual funds from the previous fiscal year.

When Ms. Butters and Ms. Podgurski were done Administrator Neff explained the reports and formulations she is using to track the Canton CPA financials. Based on current tracking the CPA has approximately \$1 million available for projects in FY2024, but seeing as how the committee did not accept project proposals for FY24, those funds will roll over into FY25. Combined with projected revenue from FY25 the CCPC can expect to have approximately \$2 million available to fund projects for the next cycle.

3) Co-Chair John McSweeney moved to accept the minutes of the meeting of February 13th, 2023. Lisa Lopez seconded the motion, and it passed 4-0 with 1 abstention (Co-Chair Shaun Chu).

4) The Warner Trail Study was funded in Fiscal Year 2022 with \$50,000. Later, the project also received a \$50,000 grant from another source, and the upcoming expiration date on those funds necessitated them being used first. The project is now complete and none of the CPA funds allocated for the project were used.

Kendall O'Halloran made a motion to close the Warner Trails Study Project and return the funds to the CPA accounts. Ms. Lopez seconded the motion and it passed 5-0-0.

5) Ms. Lopez shared feedback on the current Community Preservation Plan from Kevin Shea, who is the Housing Coordinator for the Housing Trust.

Mr. Shea shared that the Housing Production Plan needs to be incorporated. Additionally, he noted that the survey results/data suggests a fundamental misunderstanding of how CPA-funded housing works and what the requirements are by a large percent of participants. The committee discussed this issue and reaffirmed that education is needed, and discussed why the survey data might have been slightly skewed because the vast majority of survey takers were homeowners, as opposed to renters.

Co-Chair McSweeney will be discussing this topic with the Housing Authority and he will confer with Ms. Lopez and combine their edits.

Feedback on the current plan from various committees and boards will be on the agenda for April as well and all committee members are asked to speak with the boards/committees they represent about this before that meeting.

6) Administrator Neff reminded the committee that CPA law requires the Committee to host a yearly public forum to get community input/feedback on the Community Preservation Plan. This meeting must be advertised in the newspaper at least 2 weeks ahead of time.

It was noted that last year the survey/forum/focus groups that were run counted as public outreach. As the Committee hopes to have the new plan written by mid-summer, Administrator Neff expressed that this year's meeting should be held in April or May. The Committee expressed that it should be part of a regular meeting, as opposed to a stand-alone event, as past meetings of this type have had low attendance and didn't last very long. The Committee decided to schedule this meeting for June so there is plenty of time to prepare and it can be advertised at the Canton Heritage Festival.

7) The Committee discussed the Property Owner Form which has been created. The Committee is comfortable with the form in its current state, but confirmed that this is not something all applicants must fill out. This would be an accompaniment to a full application only if the applicant is notified by the administrator that it is required for their specific project. The Committee approves of this being the procedure.

8) 2 pre-application have come in from the Canton Public Schools for funding in FY25. One for lights on the field at the Gibson School and the playground at the Kennedy School. The committee appointed John Leonetti and Ms. O'Halloran as co-liaisons to the school contact for these projects.

The next meeting will be on Monday, April 24th at 7pm.

Co-Chair McSweeney made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:37pm. The motion was seconded by Ms. Lopez and passed 5-0-0.