

COMMUNITY PRESERVATION COMMITTEE
MINUTES
January 12, 2021

A regular meeting of the Community Preservation Committee (CPC) was held on Tuesday, January 12, 2021 at 6:00 pm via remote participation through Zoom. Present were Chair Bart Hoskins, Vice Chair Carole Hamilton, Mickey Northcutt, Ed Moriarty, Deborah Greel, Mark Pattison, Joy Livramento-Bryant, Bob Callahan and John Boris. Also present was Jane Guy of the City of Salem Department of Planning & Community Development.

Mr. Hoskins stated that the purpose of this meeting is to review Step 1 applications to determine eligibility for CPA funds. The CPC will not be getting into detail on the merits of any of the projects.

Public Comment

Annie Harris, Executive Director of Essex Heritage, located at 10 Federal Street, Suite 12 in Salem, stated that they are a non-profit affiliated with the National Park Service, and that they are required to match the funds they get. Essex Heritage owns and operates Bakers Island Light Station, which is on the National Register of Historic Places. There are six structures there and they are applying for the Oil House, which was built in 1893 to house flammable materials for the lighthouse. She stated that the slate roof is failing and the nails are rusting and giving away. She noted that the entire roof needs to be removed and rebuilt. She added that the site is open to the public, unlike the rest of the island, and the public is encouraged to visit. Currently, access is limited to landing craft for tours, which are paid tours, and which helps underwrite the education programs. She added that kayakers can also stop on the island.

Tim Jenkins stated that he would like to support funding for saving the cupola at 5 Broad St. He stated that it is a marvelous building of the same designer as the Immaculate Conception Church and the Plummer Hall. The building is of the finest materials – Belgian brick. He stated that it is a tragedy that the building was allowed to decay to the point that the cupola, which is integral part of building to provide ventilation pre-HVAC, to the extent that it has. He stated that the building has tons of broken windows and the basement is flooding and it is in tragic shape. He noted that the City currently still owns it. He stated that the practice to always rely on capital funding to fix and maintain buildings that the City owns has got to change. He stated that for the taxpayers to pick up these costs because the City is not staying ahead of maintenance is tragedy. He noted that it is proposed to be sold to a private developer to create 16 housing units. He stated that he supports the maintenance of cupola, but hopes city officials can try to maintain what we have. He stated that Pioneer Village is another case. He added that he also supports the Salem Athenaeum application, and even though it is a membership library, it is open to anyone in Salem to join and the basic membership is affordable. He encourages anyone who is interested in our history, our literature, our literary past and scientific past to walk in and see what is available as it is a unique institute in Salem – the second oldest private library in the country. He encouraged CPA funding be made available to fix the cupola and try to get ahead of maintaining our city's wonderful structures.

Caroline Watson-Felt stated that she is the Executive Director of the Woman's Friend Society at 12 Hawthorne Boulevard. She stated that the organization oversees the running of Emmerton House (Joseph Fenno building). She stated that it is an affordable housing building for single women who are working, in school or in transition. She stated that it is important to note that

major improvements, or restoration or any kind of large-scale maintenance of the building is not funded through the affordable rental rates or membership dues. Those rates cover day to day management of the building and the society. She stated it is a Federal style building and noted that the window project will help control heating costs, as well as safety/security measures, which will help keep the rents affordable. She stated it is an important downtown building that they would like to see restored to its original beauty and that any funding needed for major capital improvements and restoration really has to come through grant funding and major donor gifts.

Review and Vote on Determination of Eligibility Applications Received

City of Salem, Park & Recreation Dept. - New Pioneer Village 2026, 85 Memorial Drive

Patricia O'Brien, Executive Director of Salem Park and Recreation, stated that she understands that the activity is eligible under recreation, but was curious if it was also eligible under historic resources. She stated the structures are over 50 years old, which they intend to try to save a couple of them and rebuild the others. They are still in the planning phase. What they are creating is going to be about history.

Mr. Hoskins stated that if the local historical commission identifies it as historic, that would be sufficient.

Ms. Guy agreed that if it is not on the State Register of Historic Places, it will need to go before the Salem Historical Commission to deem it an historic resource.

Mr. Moriarty stated that, while projects can be multi-eligible, in this case, he did not think it was eligible as historic, but that there are ample attributes under recreation in terms of uses, structures, trails, recreation use of land and programs.

Elizabeth Peterson stated that four structures will be making the move to the new site.

Mr. Jenkins stated that his understanding is that this is the oldest historic interpretive site; so it is quite unique.

VOTE: Mr. Moriarty made a motion to find the proposed project is eligible, to be submitted under a CPA funding application under Recreation: Rehabilitation/Restoration. Ms. Hamilton seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion so carried.

Essex Heritage - The Oil House at Bakers Island Light Station, Bakers Island

VOTE: Ms. Hamilton made a motion to find the proposed project is eligible, to be submitted under a CPA funding application under Historic Resources: Rehabilitation/Restoration. Mr. Boris seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion so carried.

Woman's Friend Society – Window Restoration at Emmerton House, 12 Hawthorne Blvd.

VOTE: Mr. Northcutt made a motion to find the proposed project is eligible, to be submitted under a CPA funding application under Historic Resources: Rehabilitation/Restoration. Ms. Greel seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion so carried.

Salem Athenaeum – Rehabilitating and Restoring the Historic Salem Athenaeum, 337 Essex Street

Mr. Callahan stated that, in reading the application, it indicates preservation, but that he cannot see where air conditioning, HVAC system and elevators are preservation. He stated that he also did not see how there is public access unless one is a member. He wondered if it meets the qualifications.

Mr. Hoskins stated that once the CPC gets to the funding discussion, there is always discussion about accessibility to the public. He noted that sometimes there is access by arrangement or limited hours. He stated that if there is some kind of public access, it generally can get to the debate on funding. He noted that HVAC is to preserve the historic documents that require good climate control to keep them from deteriorating. The historic resource may be the contents of the building, in addition to the building.

Ms. Greel stated that she believed the lowest membership amount is \$90, which may not be affordable for some families. She wondered if the opportunity to make it more accessible, if it will be opened up more to the public. She added that she would like to see the numbers of people who use the building.

Mr. Pattison stated that during the last discussion, they assured us they were open a certain number of days per week open to the public for certain programs, not by membership.

Mr. Northcutt stated that he felt the proposed project was clearly eligible, but it will be up to the applicant to make the case on the merits of the full application.

MOTON: Mr. Northcutt made a motion to find the proposed project is eligible, to be submitted under a CPA funding application under Historic Resources: Rehabilitation/Restoration. Ms. Greel seconded the motion.

Mr. Moriarty stated that he felt if an applicant is inherently, by its structure, membership and organization, private, and if it has a membership fee, if the members have shares in the organization, or if public has to be invited with regular business hours, he feels it doesn't meet the standard for being considered. He was in agreement that he did not see how an elevator or HVAC is preservation or an improvement, unless the HVAC is zeroing in on a particular chamber of library that is protecting valuable books. He did not feel every book in the library requires HVAC and therefore he did not feel it meets the standards.

VOTE: The motion was voted on. Voting in favor were Mr. Northcutt, Ms. Hamilton, Ms. Greel, Mr. Pattison, Ms. Livramento-Bryant and Mr. Hoskins. Voting in opposition were Mr. Moriarty, Mr. Callahan and Mr. Boris. The motion so carried.

5 Broad Street LLC – 5 Broad Street Residences, 5 Broad Street

Mr. Northcutt stated that he did not feel the project was eligible for support for affordable housing. He stated that it is one unit of affordable housing. Typically, when a project is permitted the Planning Board, in practice, asks for a percentage of units to be affordable. He stated that there is no subsidy and the cost of that affordability is born by the developer. He stated that he did not feel it was eligible, but that even if it were deemed eligible, he felt it would set a terrible precedent to give public dollar subsidy for one affordable housing unit, particularly where the developer is buying the property from the City of Salem. He stated that this is a public property being sold to a private developer, coming in and asking the same city for subsidy to create market rate housing. He stated that he felt the same applies to historic resources, noting it is an old school being turned into condos. He stated that he felt that the CPC should not be putting any money toward into a cupola in a building that is being sold to create market rate, high end, probably in one of the nicest neighborhoods in the city. The units will command very high dollar amounts. He felt it would be an outrageous precedent to put one dollar toward market rate housing. He stated that it is one unit out of sixteen and he did not feel that makes it eligible at all, noting it is a Planning Board requirement to get their permit. He stated that the luxury units subsidizes the cost of the one affordable unit. He did not want to give market rate developers the indication that they can come to this board to get public money for something they are obligated to do as part of zoning.

Mr. Hoskins stated that the principal thing they are coming for is the cupola restoration.

Mr. Northcutt acknowledges the historic nature of this building, but felt the cost of fixing the cupola will enrich the owners of the condos, not the public in any way. There is no access. They are literally private condos. He stated that he found it offensive.

Ms. Guy stated that she believed that the City appraised the property and is required to get the full appraisal amount for a sale and that this was a way that the City could get the full appraisal amount.

MOTION: Mr. Northcutt made a motion to find the project not eligible for CPA funding.

Mr. Northcutt stated that he felt it would be an outrageously terrible policy to put in one dollar of CPA funds toward this project because of the nature of how it is being sold.

Mr. Moriarty stated that he was in agreement with Mr. Northcutt. He stated that he felt the applicant within the context of the application is inherently disqualified in applying under either housing or historic. He noted that it is a sale of public property to a private developer for a de minimis opportunity to involve one unit of affordable housing. He felt funding is inappropriate and inconsistent with the purposes of CPA and the housing crisis inflicting the Salem, the North Shore and the entire Commonwealth.

Ms. Hamilton stated that she was in disagreement. She stated that before the CPC is an application for eligibility and to restore the cupola is an eligible activity, but felt it is not under housing creation. She stated that she did not disagree with Mr. Northcutt on the merits, but felt that cupola restoration is an eligible activity, but whether the CPC decides to fund it is debatable.

Mr. Hoskins stated that he was uncomfortable making a judgement that it is ineligible without knowing more, which will be discussed at a full funding application debate. He stated that if it meets the eligibility criteria for Historic Resources, he felt it should get a fair hearing. He noted that there will be lots of questions and concerns that could affect prioritizing and funding.

Mr. Callahan stated that he was a firm believer that main idea behind CPA is for the public good and that he did not see a public good in this project. He was concerned about setting a precedent. He stated that he does not argue that the building has historic value, but it will be private property. He stated that providing CPA funding could open up applications to every house on Chestnut Street. There are hundreds of houses in Salem with unlimited historic value, but very few are there for the public good.

Mr. Pattison noted that the property is not just another home in Salem; it is an institution structure, which is a different piece of Salem and different qualities.

Ms. Guy noted that anything that is not publically owned would require a preservation restriction.

VOTE: The motion that the project is ineligible under both Community Housing and Historic Resources was voted on. Mr. Northcutt, Mr. Moriarty, Ms. Greel and Mr. Callahan voted in favor. Ms. Hamilton, Mr. Pattison, Ms. Livramento-Bryant, Mr. Boris and Mr. Hoskins voted in opposition. The motion did not carry.

VOTE: Mr. Northcutt made a motion to find the proposed project is eligible, to be submitted under a CPA funding application under Historic Resources: Rehabilitation/Restoration. Ms. Hamilton seconded the motion. Mr. Hoskins, Mr. Callahan, Ms. Livramento-Bryant, Ms. Hamilton, Mr. Boris, Mr. Northcutt, Ms. Greel and Mr. Pattison voted in favor. Mr. Moriarty voted in opposition. The motion so carried.

VOTE: Mr. Moriarty made a motion to find the proposed project is eligible, to be submitted under a CPA funding application under Community Housing: Preservation or Rehabilitation/Restoration. Mr. Callahan seconded the motion. There were no votes in favor. All votes were in opposition. The motion did not carry.

Mr. Boris departed from the meeting at this time.

House of the Seven Gables Settlement Association – House of the Seven Gables Campus Fire Protection Installation, 115 Derby Street

Ms. Greel noted that her husband is on the Advisory Board of the Gables, which is not a paid position.

Pilar Garro, Director of Development, stated that they are typically open year around and that they free to Salem residents and they provide public programs and offer education. She stated that they are noticing with COVID that their security is at risk and fire protection has risen to the top of their project list. The campus has seven historic hours and Colonial Revival gardens. They have fire protection in the Visitors Center. They also have fire protection in the Turner-

Ingersol Mansion, but it is very old and could be part of this project. The other houses they are interested in installing fire protection is the 1655 Retire Becket house, the 1750 Nathaniel Hawthorne birthplace, and the 1682 Hooper Hathaway house. She noted that the artifacts and collections within some of the houses are also very integral to our story.

Mr. Hoskins asked if this is for fire suppression systems or alarms.

Ms. Garro stated that it is specifically fire suppression.

VOTE: Mr. Callahan made a motion to find the proposed project is eligible, to be submitted under a CPA funding application under Historic: Preservation. Ms. Hamilton seconded the motion.

Mr. Moriarty stated that although this is one of the finest examples of architecture, in terms of history, public benefit, and the intersection of history, architecture and immigration, doesn't mean that anything and everything this applicant asks for from this board shall be granted because it is historic and beyond dispute a gem in the history of Salem. He stated that he felt it is maintenance and repair and fire suppression is simply an improvement over present technology. He stated that he felt it is incidental to the operation of all buildings to be open to the public, whether or not it is old or the contents contained. He stated that this is something that is required in terms of building codes. He stated that as much as he admires the House of the Seven Gables and is in awe of Nathaniel Hawthorne, it doesn't mean it is qualified. He stated, of course it preserves, but there needs to be a line and felt this is clearly maintenance and repair and he did not think, because it is an important historical structure, that a fire system is therefore preservation.

Ms. Guy stated that although it was not funded, the CPC did find the fire system at the Phillips House eligible.

Ms. Hamilton stated that she felt it is clearly as eligible as anything the CPC has funded under the definition of protection of personal or real property from injury, harm or destruction. She questioned what is more destructive than a fire.

Mr. Moriarty questioned what is more routine maintenance than simply preventing a fire in compliance with the code.

VOTE: The motion was voted on. Mr. Hoskins, Mr. Callahan, Ms. Livramento-Bryant, Ms. Hamilton, Mr. Northcutt, Ms. Greel and Mr. Pattison voted in favor. Mr. Moriarty voted in opposition. The motion so carried.

Other Business

Approval of Minutes – 12/8/20

MOTION/VOTE: Mr. Callahan made a motion to approve the minutes of 12/8/20. Ms. Hamilton seconded the motion; all were in favor and the motion so carried.

Funding Availability Update

Ms. Guy stated that there has been no change.

Next Meeting(s):

Ms. Guy stated that the next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, February 9, 2021, which will tentatively be to review any additional Step 1 eligibility applications received.

There being no further business, Mr. Moriarty made a motion to adjourn. Mr. Callahan seconded the motion; all were in favor, and the motion so carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Jane A. Guy
Administrator