

COMMUNITY PRESERVATION COMMITTEE MEETING

Thursday, November 9, 2023; 6 pm; Town Hall; 1820 Court Room; in person & Zoom

Members attending in person: Bill Keohan, Chair; Karen Buechs; Betty Cavacco and Bill Fornaciari, Historic Commission. John Mahoney, Select Board (Zoom).

Absent: Birgitta Kuehn, Planning Board; Russ Shirley, Plymouth Housing Authority. There was no representative from the Conservation Commission as former chair, Randy Parker resigned.

Other Attendees: Pat Adelman, LWV, Chair of Precinct 12; Ginny Davis and Susan Ferrari-Dwyer, LWV Observer Corps; Matt Tavares, Chair of Precinct 2; mid-way through the meeting Kevin Canty, Select Board. Al DiNardo, Town Meeting Rep, Pct. 17 (Zoom). Fred Thys, Plymouth Independent Press.

Minutes of September 21, 2023 meeting approved.

Chair Keohan reminded the committee that the warrant for the Spring Town Meeting closes on December 20, 2023 at 4 pm.

Community Preservation Coalition presentation: Guest, Stuart Saginor, Executive Director.

Saginor has been the Director for 17 years. The Community Preservation Coalition has 21 members. There are 8 members from CPC communities, 7 at large members and one representative each from Mass Audubon, Citizens Housing and Planning Association, Inc.; Trust for Public Land and Mass Affordable Housing Alliance. He encouraged Plymouth citizens to apply if there is an opening.

Coalition Services: Technical assistance, Website, Email newsletter, CPA advocacy and legislation, Ballot Measures (adoption, changes), Training Sessions, Webinars and Workshops. These services are supported by membership dues from CPA communities.

The Coalition contact information; www.communitypreservation.org

[Technical Assistance Hotline 617-367-8998](tel:617-367-8998)

Over half of the municipalities in the state have adopted the CPA for a total of 196 cities and towns. 70% of Massachusetts residents belong. Zero communities have revoked.

CPA Accomplishments 2002 – FY2022

Over \$3.15 billion raised and 15,000 projects approved.

Historic Preservation: 6,700 appropriations made.

Open Space: 34,204 acres preserved.

Outdoor Recreation: 3,300 projects funded.

Affordable Housing: 26,000 units created or supported.

CPA Revenue Sources:

1. Local Surcharge Revenue – 1.5% property tax surcharge
2. Annual Trust Fund Distribution

3. Interest

Statewide CPA Trust Fund: what are the revenue sources?

1. State Registries of Deeds - \$50/\$25 fees on documents filed statewide.
2. State Budget Surplus Funding— which requires advocacy of the coalition.

Figures for these amounts for Plymouth can be found on the CPA Coalition website under Data Bank.

There has been a sharp decline in the revenue CPA trust fund for November 2023. The reason is collections for the CPA Trust Fund have fallen by 30% year-to-date. Surplus for 2023 is down because sale of houses sold is down and people are not refinancing because of high interest rates. Legislature has dropped CPA Surplus Funding because it has spent \$250,000,000 for emergency shelters. The Coalition is advocating at State House for additional revenue for the CPA Trust Fund.

What are the requirements for the Community Preservation Committee:

Hold at least one public hearing per year.

Update Community Preservation Plan. Keohan interjected that this is always part of the yearly revised application to the CPC.

Review CPA account balances and spending to ensure compliance with the Act.

Prepare and approve CPA budget.

Make project recommendations.

The CPA Budget: Must be Housing 10% ; Open Space & Recreation 10%; Historic 10%; Administration 5%.

Administrative Account Common Uses:

Administrative staff to support CPC.

Professional help for appraisals, consultants, legal assistance, general studies.

Due diligence on project recommendations.

Advertising for public hearing.

NOT for project expenses.

Who is Eligible for CPA Funds?

Government entity and 501c3 nonprofit.

Caution: Non-incorporated entities/ Individual homeowners.

Privately-owned historic buildings (Commercial or Religious Institutions).

Cambridge and Springfield are two communities that have granted funds for some historic private home facades.

Keohan gave an example of the restoration of the 1679 Paul Revere Bell in Plymouth Unitarian Church. The church bell actually belonged to the Town of Plymouth and there was an easement to get to the belfry to the bell. The bell and door and stairs to the bell were restored with CPC funds. Cavacco reminded those present that Community Development Funds can help homeowners with rehabilitation. She suggested a meeting of CPC and Historic Commission be arranged. Forniciari shared that some residents have concerns about the Historic District being expanded and they will not be able to afford the repairs or restorations.

The Community Preservation Committee does not have to recommend a project just because it's eligible. Questions to ask: Does it fit your CPA Plan? What are the other applications that cycle? Is the project "ready for Prime Time"? Is the applicant seeking other funding sources?

Should the CPC avoid demolitions? Yes, but it is not always avoidable, like the demolition of the cabins at Hedges Pond Recreation Area because of contaminants and disrepair, Article 9G in the 2023 Plymouth Fall Town Meeting.

Is There a Public Benefit? Massachusetts' "Anti-Aid Amendment"

Any expenditure of **public funds** must be used to advance a **public purpose**.

Common Strategies: Preservation Restriction, Public Access Requirements, Repayment of Funds Upon Sale of Property.

CPC and Housing Crisis in Massachusetts and Current Pressure for the CPA to Fund More Housing Projects

The Community Housing category is often quite complicated, and is very expensive and requires local commitment with intentional planning.

Keohan and Cavacco both suggested a housing summit meeting involving Plymouth Housing Authority, Habitat for Humanity, Coalition for the Homeless, Plymouth Area Coalition etc. State and Federal Grants are sparser. Forniciari mentioned that the proposed article for Spring Town Meeting on Accessory Dwelling Units (ADU) should help with housing.

Allowable Uses of CPA for Outdoor Recreation

Capital work on dedicated recreational land, including: Community Gardens, Trails and Bike Paths, Non-commercial youth and adult sports, Parks, Playgrounds and Athletic Fields. Examples in Plymouth are the Trail Path along the bed of the former train tracks and the present restoration of Stephens Field.

Restrictions: No maintenance or operating expenses, no stadiums, no indoor recreation facilities, no sidewalks (except if they are within dedicated parkland), and no artificial turf on fields.

Allowable Uses of CPA for Historic Preservation

Listed on the State Register of Historic Places or determined by the local Historic Commission to be significant in the history and archeology, architecture, or culture of Plymouth.

OLD BUSINESS

Government Service Administration (GSA) Sale of the Plymouth Gurnet Light House

The Select Board and Town Manager have not approved going forward to bid on this land. It would be too expensive to maintain the seven acres of land as the bluff is eroding rapidly and restoration would be on going.

A heated discussion followed regarding the hiring of an administrative assistant for the CPC. Keohan expressed that a part-time town employee would be adequate. The needs of the committee vary from 4 or 5 hours a week to perhaps 15 to 20 in the weeks preparing for Town Meeting. Cavacco argued that the Town Manager had requested that \$25,000 of the CPC administrative funds be used to hire a part time administrative assistant for the CPC. Mahoney via Zoom agreed that the committee had voted to hire a part time administrative assistant, but had never voted on an amount of money. Keohan said he would invite Derek Brindisi, Town Manager, back for the November 30th meeting of the CPC.

Post Fall Town Meeting Articles Status: 2023

Article 9(A) Affordable Housing: Habitat for Humanity	(IHC* preparing Grant)
Article 9(B) Affordable Housing: Plymouth Housing Authority	(IHC preparing Grant)
Article 9(C) Historical: Center for the Arts	(IHC preparing Grant)
Article 9(D) Historical: Pilgrim Hall	(IHC preparing Grant)
Article 9(E) Open Space off Rocky Pond Road/Grassy Pong	(IHC preparing P & S)
Article 9(F) Open Space off Rocky Hill Road	(IHC preparing P & S)
Article 9(G) Recreational: Hedges Pond Buildings Demolition	(David Gould)
Article 9(H) Recreational: Reduce Borrowing Stephens Field	(Lynne Barrett)
Article 9(I) CPA Estimated Revenue 2024: Account set up	(Lynne Barrett)

*In House Counsel (IHC). David Gould, Director of Marine and Environmental Dept. and Lynne Barrett, Director of Finance Dept. for the Town of Plymouth. These are the parties overseeing these articles.

NEW BUSINESS

CPA Applications for the Spring 2024 Annual Town Meeting.

Keohan mentioned again the closing of the warrant was December 20, 2023 AT 4 PM. Canty spoke up and corrected Keohan, informing him the Select Board on November 1, 2023 voted to close the warrant on December 12 at 4 PM. All attendees were taken by surprise. No one was aware of the change. Nothing had been emailed to committees or Town Meeting Members of the change. *(I followed up checking the website on Friday 11/10/23 and Monday 11/13/23. The closing of the warrant was still posted December 20 at 4 PM. I called Canty. A day later Canty informed me the Select Board decided not to change the date. It was causing too much confusion. The Select Board would vote at the next meeting.)*

Application from the Plymouth Area Coalition with a request of 3 million. This organization helps displaced persons find housing. The building to be renovated is located on 149 Armstrong Road, Industrial Park and is the former Bartlett Consolidated Building. The plan is for 27 family units, office/educational space. It is on the Gatra Bus Route. A site visit is being planned for the CPC.

Application from the Marine and Environmental Department/David Gould, Director, with a request of 3 million, to create a new fish ladder for the alewives/herring and rebuild Jenney Pond. Gould will be attending the CPC November 30th meeting to describe the project.

Two more applications for affordable housing are expected from Redbrook and Habitat for Humanity.

A motion passed to pay the fee of \$7,900 to join the Community Preservation Coalition. The next two meetings for the CPC are scheduled for November 30 and December 7, 2023.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:33 pm.

PDF Community Preservation Coalition Presentation by Stuart Saginor, Executive Director, is available by contacting Ginny Davis at rowshaman@gmail.com

Ginny Davis

LWV Observer Corps