

Community Preservation Committee

Meeting Minutes for 10/29/2025

YouTube Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0FM3T-aqkts>

Meeting Opening and Attendance [00:00:03]

- The Community Preservation Committee meeting was opened at 9:15 AM on Wednesday, October 29, 2025, at the Bubbly Trailer.
- Attendance roll call confirmed presence of members: Tom Dixon, Jesse Dutra, Neville Richen, John Schafer, Joseph Topham, Eleanor Antonietti, and Madam Chair Linda Williams.
- Agenda corrections noted: a bus request amount corrected from \$45,000 to \$40,000
- The agenda was approved unanimously with the correction.

Discussion on Funding and Budget Figures [00:01:42]

- Wisconsin Trust Phase Three project discussed with estimated funding around \$4 million, likely rising to \$4.7 million including interest.
- Seven hundred thousand dollars (split across bonds and overhead) expected to be deducted upfront:
 - \$350,000 allocated to the first bond (already spent).
 - \$350,000 allocated to the second bond (currently being spent).
 - No funds allocated yet for the third bond as it has not been reached.
- The administrative overhead is about 5%, roughly \$200,000 to \$300,000, with some funds remaining due to the absence of an assistant administrator.
- Undesignated reserves were discussed as stockpiled funds accumulated over years, mainly from unspent administrative budgets and conservative spending policies set by "Ken" to cover unforeseen contingencies or potential town meeting revocations of funds.
- Estimated undesignated reserves are approximately \$1 million, though exact figures were *not specified*.
- Designated reserves are linked to specific categories such as historic preservation, open space, recreation, and affordable housing; unused funds in these categories roll back into their respective reserves but not above 10%.
- The interest earned on these reserves is rolled back into the total fund.

Historic Preservation Funding Requests and Clarifications [00:08:38]

- Stasha Trust Phase Three Preservation of Sanity Lighthouse requested \$263,249.00

- A review was conducted to remove ineligible salary, fringe, travel, and indirect costs from Mass Audubon's application:
 - Salaries removed: ~\$47,201.00
 - Fringe benefits removed: ~\$21,598.00
 - Travel expenses removed: \$236.00
 - Indirect costs removed: ~\$27,157.00
- Adjusted eligible amount estimated around \$62,550.00
- Mass Audubon has yet to provide a full breakdown or amendment to their application—response *not received* at the time.
- Discussion about prioritization and the eligibility of full funding ensued, with some committee members favoring partial funding or hold decisions pending further details.
- Preservation restrictions (legal protections ensuring preservation of historic properties) were a critical concern—projects must have such restrictions either pending or in place before funds are granted, per Community Preservation Act (CPA) and committee policy.
- The Nantucket Preservation Institute and similar organizations were discussed regarding historic preservation restrictions, public access, and previous funding phases.
- The importance of public access to historic properties was reiterated as a prerequisite for funding, especially for exterior work, while interior work without public access was generally ineligible.
- The committee debated whether interior rehabilitation could be funded under historic preservation, referencing precedent projects that included exterior work only.
- The drainage and stormwater issues affecting historic buildings were discussed as related but separate from CPC-funded preservation work.

Remaining Historic Preservation Applications and Funding Concerns [00:21:09]

- Discussion about the Landmark House and other proposals surfaced, focusing on:
 - The completeness and quality of submissions.
 - The necessity of preservation restrictions.
 - The importance of public access and exterior work only for CPC funding.
- The committee generally agreed to put a hold on some projects pending clarification of preservation restrictions and public access.
- Emotional support was expressed for certain projects, acknowledging significant prior investments and preservation efforts, but tempered by policy and funding constraints.
- The Nantucket Historical Association (NHA) was heavily debated:
 - NHA has received substantial funding over multiple years and manages numerous historic properties.
 - Concerns raised about their fundraising capacity and whether continued CPC funding was appropriate given their resources.
 - Some members advocated for deferring funding this year to allow other projects to proceed.
 - Others emphasized the importance of completing ongoing projects to protect prior investments.

- The NHA's large, ongoing mill restoration project, requesting approximately \$2.8 million, was questioned for feasibility and phasing.
- Suggestions were made to explore taking a bond to finance large projects, allowing phased payments over time, a strategy used previously for other major projects.
- The need for clearer phasing plans, fundraising details, and cost breakdowns from the NHA was emphasized before final funding decisions.

Open Space and Recreation Funding Requests [00:42:03]

- Safe Harbor for Animals requested funding but was considered premature and not recommended for funding this cycle.
- The rain garden project was discussed as an example of innovative open space with multiple functions, but funding was deferred pending further planning.
- The ice rink project, though widely supported in spirit for its community value and use, was found ineligible under current CPA guidelines because indoor recreational facilities are not fundable.
- The committee discussed the potential to send a letter to legislative representatives advocating for amendment of the CPA to allow funding of indoor recreational facilities in the future.
- The Land Racket Club project was debated concerning its funding request of approximately \$577,000.00 (revised from \$725,000).
 - Questions arose about what costs were included, particularly for landscaping buffers and contingencies.
 - The committee expressed discomfort with large contingency amounts and requested more precise cost breakdowns.
 - Partial funding focused on landscaping buffers was considered important and potentially fundable.
- The Little League Fields project was discussed:
 - Fields are over 30 years old and require significant maintenance including fencing, bleachers, and field adjustments.
 - The committee requested a breakdown of what costs could be deferred or removed for a reduced funding request.
- Mass Audubon's adjusted budget was confirmed at approximately \$64,931.00, pending clarification on salary and fringe benefit components.
- Salary costs within project budgets were contentious; some members emphasized that salaries for specialized project management may be allowable, but general salary costs are generally discouraged due to slippery slope concerns.

Summary of Current Funding Figures and Outstanding Questions

[01:06:13]

Category	Amount (Approximate)	Notes
Total estimated budget	\$4.7 million	Inclusive of interest and overhead
Bonds (first and second)	\$700,000	\$350k each, first bond spent, second in progress
Administrative overhead (5%)	\$200,000 - \$300,000	Some funds remain unspent
Undesignated reserves	~\$1 million (not precise)	Stockpiled for contingencies
Historic Preservation (with question marks)	\$3.67 million	Includes projects with pending info
Land Racket Club (revised)	\$577,000	Pending cost breakdown
Mass Audubon (adjusted)	\$64,931	Pending salary/fringe clarifications
Little League Fields	\$719,000 (estimate)	Pending itemized cuts
Safe Harbor for Animals	Out for now	Premature funding
Ice rink	Out (not eligible)	Indoor recreation not allowed

- Several projects remain with question marks pending additional information:
 - Remain historic project: pending historic preservation restriction and feasibility.
 - Nantucket Historical Association (NHA): fundraising potential and phasing.
 - Land Racket Club: detailed cost breakdown for contingencies and landscaping.
 - Little League Fields: itemized budget and deferrable items.
 - Mass Audubon: clarification on salary and fringe costs.

Process and Next Steps

[01:10:26]

- The committee agreed to send official requests for additional information and amendments to project applicants through the office—not individual commissioners or project managers.
- Emphasis on centralized communication to streamline responses and avoid delays.
- The office will coordinate follow-up with project managers and applicants.
- The committee acknowledged that additional meetings will be necessary to finalize funding decisions after receiving supplemental information.

Bond Financing Explanation

[01:11:04]

- Bonds have been used previously to fund large projects where upfront cash was insufficient, allowing repayment over 10-20 years.
- Examples include past funding for fields and trust projects.
- The current bond rating of the town is strong, enabling favorable conditions for borrowing.

- Debt service for bonds affects annual budgets but allows access to necessary capital for large preservation projects.
- The committee discussed the possibility of using bonds again for the mill restoration project to avoid project delays.

Scheduling and Logistics

[01:14:25]

- The committee reviewed upcoming members' availability for further meetings.
- Conflicts noted due to vacations, town meetings, and trainings.
- A consensus was reached for a follow-up meeting on Wednesday, November 6 or 7, 2025, at 9:00 AM, pending venue availability.
- Remote attendance options discussed to accommodate members with scheduling conflicts.
- The office will confirm room availability and send meeting invitations.

Meeting Adjournment

[01:29:39]

- The meeting was adjourned at approximately 10:47 AM after thorough discussion covering budget updates, project eligibility, funding priorities, and scheduling.
- The committee acknowledged significant progress in reviewing applications despite outstanding questions that require further follow-up.

Key Insights and Conclusions

- Budget constraints are significant, with approximately \$4.7 million available but multiple competing large requests exceeding that amount.
- Historic preservation funding is heavily regulated by the need for preservation restrictions and public access, especially restricting funding to exterior work.
- Salary and fringe benefits in applications are scrutinized, with allowances for project management but reluctance toward general salary funding.
- Large projects like the Nantucket Historical Association mill restoration may require bond financing to manage costs over time.
- Some requests are deferred or placed on hold pending further clarifications on budgets, restrictions, and phasing.
- The committee is committed to a transparent, methodical process involving additional data collection, follow-up meetings, and community input.
- Legislative advocacy may be pursued to expand CPA funding scope, particularly for indoor recreational facilities.
- The meeting underscored the complexity of balancing community preservation needs with fiscal responsibility.