Community
Preservation
Committee

Meeting Minutes for 12/16/2025

YouTube Link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pMGLzJEr0LA

Meeting Opening and Preliminary Technical Issues

Meeting Opening and Attendance:

- The Community Preservation Committee (CPC) meeting opened at 9:03 AM on November 5th at 131 Pleasant Street.
- Roll call was conducted with members present: Tom Dixon, Jesse Dutra, Neville Richen, John Schafer, Tim Soverino, Joseph Topham, and Madam Chair Linda Williams.
- No members were present via Zoom.
- Quorum was established.
- The agenda was approved unanimously.

Fund Requisitions and Ratifications: [00:01:14]

- Requisitions from the previous meeting were ratified without objections.
- A new fund requisition was presented for Interfaith, amounting to $19,240.89 from FY26 funds, and was approved unanimously.
- The Chair provided an update on funding balances for various CPC categories.

Funding Balances Overview: [00:01:58]

- Open Space: $382,967 available, the largest reserve.
- Housing: Zero balance due to consistent expenditure.
- Historical Preservation: Approximately 82 cents remaining, likely a rounding artifact.
- Undesignated Reserves: $2,697,684.03, a substantial amount.

Explanation of Undesignated Reserves:

- These reserves accumulated over the first 10 to 15 years of the CPC's existence, reflecting initial caution about the committee's longevity and funding sustainability.
- Early on, CPC received 100% matching funds, later reduced to 80%, and further reduced as more towns opted in, lowering match percentages to around 10-20%.
- To hedge against potential funding cuts or emergencies, the committee set aside $100,000 to $200,000 yearly into these reserves, as there were fewer applicants and surplus funds.
- Currently, no new funds are being added to these reserves due to increased demand and decreased matching rates.

Clarifications and Committee Discussion on Reserves: [00:04:53]

- Committee members clarified that spending down the undesignated reserves is possible, if necessary, as a base of around $2 million assures adequate funding capacity.
- The undesignated reserve functions somewhat like a mini endowment.
- The large reserve allows the committee to be financially stable and responsive to unexpected needs.

Discussion on Updated Funding Amounts and Adjustments: [00:06:51]

- Committee reviewed updated funding figures for various projects and subcategories.
- Several amounts had been adjusted since the last meeting, requiring clarification and confirmation.
- Members accessed updated spreadsheets via email and printer copies for accuracy.

Project Funding Adjustments: [00:09:37]

- Remaining balances for several projects were discussed:
  - Historic Preservation: ~$2,636,147.52 total requested after adjustments.
  - Parks and Recreation (Parks & Rec): $359,503.79 remaining needed.
  - NISDA (an open space-related project): $346,755 requested.
  - Candle Factory project: $267,274.52 requested.
  - Old Mill project: $570,000 requested.
- Some projects had reductions in requested amounts based on updated bids or revised scopes.
- The total historic preservation requests plus open space and other funding requests were tallied.

Discussion of Specific Projects and Funding Decisions: [00:19:07]

- Safe Harbor for Animals funding was deferred until the next year due to premature timing.
- NISDA was noted as an open space project and could potentially be supported with reserve funds.
- The committee discussed the condition of fields at NISDA and the importance of funding for maintenance and improvements, including the upper and lower fields.
- It was noted that funding half of the $359,503.79 needed for fields is feasible given the open space reserves.

Discussion on Bonding Proposal for the Old Mill Project: [00:25:00]

- A member proposed bonding the $2.2 million Old Mill project to avoid annual allocations of $500,000 over 4-5 years and to complete the project more rapidly.
- Advantages of bonding discussed:
  - Potentially lower annual payments (estimated ~$175,000) compared to yearly $500,000 allocations.
  - Bonds could leverage finances and free up funds for other projects.
- Concerns raised about:
  - Increasing town debt and impact on voters' acceptance.

- The existing large bonds for affordable housing.
- Uncertainty about bond terms, interest rates, and financial impact without input from finance director.
- Some committee members preferred phasing the project over bonding due to economic volatility.
- It was agreed that bonding discussion is premature without detailed financial analysis and input from the town finance director.

Counterpoints on Fundraising Capabilities and Project Needs: [00:30:55]

- Debate over the Whaling Museum's fundraising abilities versus actual needs due to the high cost and complexity of maintaining historic properties.
- Some members emphasized the iconic and critical nature of the Old Mill project as part of Nantucket's heritage, recommending preservation priority.
- Concerns expressed about fairness and precedent in funding large historic projects versus other deserving applicants.

Next Steps in Bonding Discussion and Voting Protocol: [00:41:00]

- The Chair proposed seeking detailed information from the town's finance director Brian Turbitt regarding bonding options, interest rates, and impacts before making decisions.
- Members agreed to fund current year requests as presented and revisit bonding discussions later.
- Consensus to keep the Old Mill funding phased for now, with potential bonding discussion in future meetings.

Nantucket Historical Association (NHA) Project Update and Timeline: [00:48:27]

- NHA representative described current structural challenges with the Old Mill, including instability and the need for scaffolding.
- Phase 1 work (scaffolding and internal stabilization) is underway, expected to continue through spring.
- Full project completion estimated to take approximately 2-3 years, depending on funding and phasing.
- NHA plans to use CPC funds as leverage for additional donations.
- Committee members expressed confidence in continuing phased funding and monitoring progress.

Funding Decisions for Other Projects: [00:52:00]

- The committee agreed on fund allocations for several projects including:
  - Sconset Trust: $263,249.00 fully funded.
  - Community Service Landmark House: $152,870.00 fully funded.
  - Hospital Thrift Shop: $135,000.00 fully funded.
  - First Congregational Church: $194,800.00 fully funded.
  - Remain project: $341,199.00 funded after reduction.
  - Town Preservation Institute (West Monomoy Neighborhood Survey): $140,000.00 fully funded.
  - Historic aerial scanning project: $40,000.00 fully funded.
  - NISDA: $346,755.00 funded with conditions regarding public access and preservation easements.

- Whaling Museum (Candle Factory): $267,274.52 funded.
- Old Mill: $570,000 from regular budget plus $145,000.00 from undesignated reserves for a total of $715,000.00 funded.
- Affordable Housing: $400,000.00 funded.
- Safe Harbor for Pets: $0 funded, deferred.
- Linda Loring: $94,267.63 fully funded.
- Little League Fields (parks and recreation): $359,503.79 funded with part from open space reserves.

Additional Funding and Administrative Matters: [01:06:00]

- The committee discussed the administrative budget ($200,000) and bonding payments for two existing bonds ($350,000 each).
- Total funding commitments approximate $3.97 million for current projects, excluding administrative and bond servicing costs.
- The Chair will review final figures with the finance director for accuracy.

Project Fund Usage and Monitoring: [01:10:00]

- Discussion about unspent or returned funds from previous projects, estimated around $100,000.00 total.
- The committee emphasized the importance of requiring projects to start within two years of funding approval, per contract terms, to ensure timely use of funds.
- Ongoing projects with delayed starts are being monitored and supported by the committee.
- The committee noted the need for improved communication with project managers and entities to track fund usage and returns.

Next Meeting and Project Assignments: [01:15:00]

- The next regular CPC meeting is scheduled for November 18th.
- New projects, including a rain garden for Nantucket Lighthouse School, are being contracted and will be discussed at the next meeting.
- Members were encouraged to indicate interest in project assignments ahead of the next meeting.

Administrative and Procedural Improvements: 01:17:00]

- Members discussed the need for a consolidated meeting packet containing all correspondence and documents posted on the town website prior to meetings to reduce email traffic and improve transparency.
- The CPC office is expected to have a public access area with conference room and workspace for committee members and public review of records.
- The Chair expressed being overwhelmed with workload and requested additional administrative support to manage increasing demands and documentation.

Meeting Logistics and Attendance: [01:22:00]

- The committee confirmed meeting times and member availability for the November 18th meeting.
- Some members may join via Zoom due to travel or scheduling conflicts.
- The Chair encouraged members to communicate availability in advance to ensure quorum.

Meeting Adjournment: [01:25:00]

- The meeting adjourned at approximately 10:28 AM by unanimous consent.

Key Insights and Conclusions:

- Financial Health: The CPC maintains strong undesignated reserves ($2.7 million), primarily accumulated from early years with high matching rates and low project demand, providing flexibility and fiscal stability.
- Funding Strategy: The committee opted to fully fund most projects within the current budget, deferring complex financing options like bonding until more detailed financial analysis is available.
- Old Mill Project: Recognized as a critical, iconic historic preservation project, it is to be funded in phases totaling $715,000 this year, with ongoing discussions about potential bonding to accelerate completion.
- Project Monitoring: The committee enforces a two-year project start requirement to ensure accountability and timely use of funds; ongoing efforts to track and recover unused funds are underway.
- Administrative Needs: Increased workload and document management challenges highlight the need for improved administrative support and better information sharing via official packets and online resources.
- Future Planning: The committee plans to revisit bonding options with input from the finance director and to consider policy development for funding mechanisms in upcoming meetings.

Quantitative Summary Table of Key Funding Allocations:

Summary Table: Job Advertisement vs. Committee Expectations

Aspect	Posted Job Ad	Committee Expectations	Status/Notes
Job Title	Administrative Assistant	Administrator	Committee rejects “assistant” title
Supervisor	Municipal Housing Director	Directly accountable to CPC Chair & Vice Chair	State and committee oppose housing director supervision
Hours per Week	19 hours (part-time)	Approximately 30 hours with flexible scheduling	Committee insists on ~30 hours
Pay Rate	$30.90 - $42.48 per hour	Negotiated pay rate based on workload	Posted rate lower than expected
Duties	Clerical support, agenda prep, liaison, records, grant monitoring, office ops	Similar but with greater autonomy and responsibility	Committee wants clear administrator role
Posting Location	Town website only (not in newspapers)	Town website + newspaper advertising	Committee paying for newspaper ads
Application Deadline	March 30, 2026, 4 PM	Agreed timeline but pending repost	Committee wants ad removed and corrected

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Terminology/Definitions:

Term	Definition
CPC	Community Preservation Committee, responsible for allocating funds from the community preservation surcharge.
Undesignated Reserves	Funds set aside from previous years' surplus to provide financial stability and flexibility.
Bonding	Issuing municipal bonds to finance large projects upfront, repaid over time with interest.
Historic Preservation	Funding category aimed at maintaining and restoring historic buildings and sites.
Open Space	Funding category for acquiring, preserving, and maintaining recreational and natural land areas.
Phasing	Breaking a large project into smaller stages funded over multiple years.
Preservation Restriction	Legal easement placed on a property to ensure preservation and public access.

Summary of Action Items and Follow-Ups:

- Chair to consult with Finance Director Brian Turbitt regarding bond options, interest rates, and fiscal impacts related to the Old Mill project.
- Continue phased funding of the Old Mill project with current allocations.
- Monitor and enforce project start timelines and fund usage with project managers.
- Improve administrative support and document management, including posting comprehensive meeting packets on the town website.
- Prepare for next CPC meeting on November 18th with new and ongoing project discussions.
- Consider policy development on bonding and funding mechanisms for future CPC cycles.