

Community Preservation Committee

Meeting Minutes for 2/17/2026

YouTube Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x81gV61AGq0>

Meeting Opening and Preliminary Technical Issues

- There are quick exchanges confirming participants' presence and audio connection.
- The meeting is identified as the Community Preservation Committee (CPC) meeting scheduled for February 17, 2026, at 10:18 AM, located at 131 Pleasant Street.

Roll Call and Quorum Confirmation [00:03:32]

- Roll call confirms attendance: Tom Dixon, Neville Richen, John Schafer, Tim Soverino, Joseph Topham, Eleanor Antonietti, and Madam Chair Linda Williams.
- Quorum is established.
- Agenda approval motioned and seconded; unanimous approval given via roll call vote.

Administrative Items and Requisitions Review [00:04:12]

- Minutes are on hold as they require review of the recording for accuracy.
- No current correspondence or guest attendees.
- Discussion of requisitions:
 - Some payments to South Church are pending, with conversations ongoing among committee members.
 - Closure block requisition is noted as a ratification item, but its status is uncertain; further review with finance is needed.
- Motion to approve all six requisitions made and seconded: approved unanimously by roll call vote.

Project Site Visit Report: St. Mary's Catholic Church [00:06:21]

- A site visit conducted before Christmas revealed significant preservation work funded by CPC.
- The project includes restoration of both the church and the rectory.
- The work is described as "beautiful" and "stunning," with particular praise for the extensive dental work on the building, noted as unusually elaborate for the area.
- Contractors involved include Steve Hollister and Ben Moore; landscaping by Tommy Hanland.

- The project combines Victorian and Queen Anne architectural styles.
- The committee expresses interest in nominating the project for preservation recognition due to its complexity and quality.

Staffing and Office Space Update [00:08:13]

- A letter thanking Glenna Stokes for her invaluable service was prepared and mailed; her assistance during the transition is acknowledged.
- Discussion on consolidating staffing:
 - Proposal to replace two part-time positions with a single full-time role (~30 hours/week).
 - Wage set at approximately \$45/hour with flexibility based on workload.
 - Job description updated and reviewed internally, awaiting final tweaks and approval.
- Office location considerations:
 - Current lease has remaining term (up to five years) with favorable rent due to philanthropic status, but early termination is possible.
 - The committee prefers a standalone office space within town limits for independence and accessibility.
 - Potential alternative locations include fairgrounds or other town-owned properties, final decision pending availability of suitable standalone space.
- Digitization initiative:
 - Desire to digitize archival documents currently stored in a full basement to reduce physical storage footprint by at least half.
 - Digitized records would facilitate easier retrieval of historical funding documentation.
- Operational constraints:
 - Equipment and supplies (e.g., paper, ink) must be independently procured due to state regulations prohibiting shared resources with other departments.

Maintaining Committee Independence and Structure [00:13:17]

- The committee emphasizes the importance of maintaining an “arms-length” relationship with town administration to preserve independence and avoid conflicts of interest.
- Most Massachusetts CPC/CPA committees operate with staffing accountable to the chair and vice chair, not the town planning board or housing authority.
- Close ties with the housing authority exist, but the committee seeks to avoid administrative overlap to maintain clear governance.
- The committee’s autonomy is viewed as critical to its mission and effectiveness.

Hiring Process and Transition Support [00:14:45]

- Glenna Stokes has offered to assist in training the new hire, potentially as a subcontractor, ensuring smooth knowledge transfer.
- The new employee will also work closely with town administration staff (Brian).
- Committee members will be involved in hiring decisions despite the town’s formal control of the recruitment process.
- Formation of a subcommittee or advisory group for hiring is discussed but not yet decided; formal posting and procedural requirements would apply if formed.

- The committee chair and vice chair will oversee coordination with the new hire and be responsible to the full committee.

Space Availability and Lease Details [00:16:10]

- The existing office lease is favorable, but committee members are exploring alternatives to have a dedicated, standalone space within the town for operational efficiency and accessibility.
- The committee currently pays the lease from its allocated funds (5% of annual CPC funds) and is not reliant on town subsidies for this cost.
- The new Downey Flake development will not provide mixed-use office space for the committee; it includes restaurants and housing but no town office space.
- Given the lack of alternative nearby spaces, staying in the current leased space remains a viable short-term solution.

Upcoming Committee Actions and Meeting Conclusion [00:18:12]

- The next meeting will focus on assigning project managers to reduce workload pressure on current members and improve project communication.
- Letters of allocation will be sent to project contacts post-town meeting vote, including polite notices for unfunded applications encouraging future submissions.
- Acknowledgement of member Tom Dixon uncertain future attendance; expressions of appreciation and goodwill shared.
- Motion to adjourn at 10:30 AM is made, seconded, and passed unanimously by roll call vote.
- Meeting officially adjourned with an invitation for members to email questions as needed.

Key Insights and Conclusions

- Committee operations are currently challenged by staffing transitions and office space limitations, but proactive steps are underway to streamline roles and improve infrastructure.
- The St. Mary's Catholic Church preservation project stands out as a significant success, highlighting the impact of CPC funding on historic structures featuring complex architectural details.
- Maintaining committee independence from town administration is a strategic priority, ensuring clear governance and accountability.
- The committee is committed to modernizing record-keeping through digitization of archival materials, which will enhance efficiency and reduce physical storage needs.
- The hiring process for new staff will be collaborative, involving committee leadership with support from outgoing personnel for a smooth transition.
- Lease arrangements are currently manageable within CPC's budget, but efforts to secure a more accessible standalone office space continue.
- Future meetings will focus on operational improvements, including project manager appointments to distribute workload and improve stakeholder communication.

Quantitative Data Summary

Item	Details	
Meeting Date		February 17, 2026
Meeting Location		131 Pleasant Street
Staff Proposed Hours		~30 hours per week
Proposed Hourly Wage		\$45/hour
Lease Term Remaining		Up to 5 years with early termination option
Number of Requisitions Approved		6
Digitization Impact		Expected to reduce physical storage footprint by 50% or more

Terminology and Roles

Term/Role	Description
Community Preservation Committee (CPC)	Local committee managing preservation funding and projects
Glenna Stokes	Outgoing staff member acknowledged for critical support and training offer
Steve Hollister	Contractor involved in St. Mary's preservation project
Ben Moore	Contractor contributing to restoration work on St. Mary's
Tommy Hanland	Landscaping contractor for St. Mary's project
Brian Turbitt	Town administration staff working with CPC

Summary Timeline

Timestamp	Event/Topic
00:00:00	Meeting begins; technical difficulties addressed
00:03:32	Roll call, agenda approval, quorum confirmed
00:04:12	Review and approval of requisitions; discussion of pending payments and ratifications
00:06:21	Report on St. Mary's Catholic Church project site visit
00:08:13	Staffing update; new position proposal; office space considerations
00:13:17	Emphasis on committee independence and governance
00:14:45	Hiring process details and training support by Glenna Stokes
00:16:10	Office lease status and potential new spaces discussed
00:18:12	Planning for next meeting's project manager assignments; meeting adjourned

This summary captures all key points, decisions, and discussions documented in the provided transcript, adhering strictly to source content without extrapolation.