

**Northampton Community Preservation Committee Minutes
March 3, 2021**

Time: 7:00 pm
Place: Remote Online Meeting

Brian Adams	✓
Linda Morley	✓
Julia Chevan	✓
Chris Hellman	✓
Jeff Jones	✓
Martha Lyon	✓
Dan Krassner	✓
Jack Finn	✓
Vacant - Planning Board Rep	
Sarah LaValley - staff	✓

Brian called the meeting to order at 7:02 PM

General Public Comment

None

Approval of Minutes

Chris move to approve the November 18, 2020 minutes. Seconded by Jeff, the motion carried unanimously by roll call vote.

Chair's Report

Brian noted that the Broad Brook Coalition's annual report was impressive, especially in a challenging year. Many of the Greenway areas in which BBC partners with the City were acquired in part with CPA funds.

The March 17 meeting is geared toward public comment, and Brian encouraged people to attend to speak about projects submitted for funding.

Meetings with Applicants for CPA Funds

Historic Northampton, Shepherd Barn & Damon House

Laurie Sanders, co-executive director, spoke about the project, a balustrade replacement on the Damon House, and work to further technical assessments of the Shepherd Barn to allow it to be opened to the public. Artifacts being stored in the barn are being assessed to determine which should be returned for display. A previous CPA award funded additional work in the barn to make other spaces more accessible and create storage. The new project will also address drainage. A MassCultural Council grant will match the CPA funds if the grant is successful. Martha noted that existing \$170,000 in funding is planned to implement the recommendations of the study, and asked if that will be enough. Laurie replied that it probably will not be, but that some costs, like bathrooms, are not a good fit for CPA funds.

PV Habitat for Humanity, Broughton's Meadow Small Homes

Amy Landry, Habitat for Humanity, stated that the homes on Burts Pit Road are planned to have small footprints, and are working with ideas from a recent design competition. Three units will be built on a shared driveway, with a zero net energy goal. The budget is based on previous development experience, with a soft second mortgage to allow for some cash flow to Habitat for the project. Ownership will be limited to those earning less 80% of area median income (AMI) and usually serves individuals or families that are 60% AMI.

Linda asked about a homeowners association fee. Amy replied that this will go towards liability insurance, driveway and stormwater system maintenance and long-term repair needs, and will be put in escrow if possible.

Brian noted that these homes will bring the total Habitat homes in Northampton to 26, and asked if there are plans for more. Amy stated that the former state hospital properties on Burts Pit Road and Laurel Street provide possible opportunities. Jeff asked if any of the other adjacent units will help contribute to Habitat's costs. Amy replied that water and sewer line installation will not be a cost for the Habitat project.

Lilly Library, Stair Repairs

Adam Novitt, Director, stated that the project will replace two interior structural walls below the stairs that are in very poor condition and prevent the entrance from being used. Exterior cladding and interior walls suffered from water intrusion; through freeze/thaw cycles mortar became damaged. Brian asked about room for contingency due to the low budget. Adam replied that the Library worked closely with a contractor to develop the estimate

Planning & Sustainability, Affordable Housing Fund

Wayne Feiden, Director of Planning and Sustainability, stated that funding is available to create affordable housing through the Community Development Block Grant program, but predevelopment costs are not an eligible expense. Valley CDC and others prefer to have shovel-ready sites, but finding funds for this work is challenging. Wayne provided an overview of sites identified so far; former State Hospital properties on Burts Pit Road and Laurel Street, and a parcel on Woodland Drive. Funds will be used for due diligence prior to acquisition, and soft costs following. Chris stated that he plans to ask for additional reporting information for discretionary funds. Wayne stated that he is always happy to report back on a prior grant, but that things can sometimes change during development.

Planning & Sustainability, Historic Preservation Plan

Wayne stated that the last version of this is nearly 30 years old. This will be an up-front assessment that will be incorporated into the comprehensive plan. This is an opportune time to look at historic character and regulatory structure; an increase in teardowns has begun to be seen. Brian asked about a detailed budget. Wayne stated that hiring one firm would be the likely path, and some elements, such as bilingual or targeted outreach, may be separate. Chris noted that a previous request for a similar project was not funded and had a smaller budget. Martha stated that changes in the community over the past few years have underscored the need to be proactive, and that historic preservation will play an important role in the City's changing economy. Wayne added that there is changing discussion about how to look at and integrate heritage landscapes into planning and make tools work together.

Planning & Sustainability, Mill River Greenway Beach

Wayne stated that the property is between the Chartpak Dam to the south and the City Greenway to the north. It provides access to the river and has issues with misuse and overuse. The Leeds Civic Association (LCA) encouraged the City to acquire to create opportunities to address issues. The budget is based on the assessed value, and this will decrease if an appraisal comes in less. The budget includes cleanup and management; LCA will partner with the City with affirmative management responsibilities. Martha asked about the Chartpak property. Wayne stated that the Chartpak property is already used for water access, and this won't increase the City responsibility for the overall Greenway. A City acquisition with a donation could be considered if management and the dam were able to be addressed. Invasive species will be dealt with in the future in resources allow.

Review and Approve Council Order, Historic Northampton Small Grant

Martha moved to approve the Order as presented by staff. Seconded by Linda, the motion carried unanimously by roll call vote.

Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 8:56 PM.