



**Town of Watertown**  
**Community Preservation Committee**  
Administration Building  
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**Committee Members**  
Elodia Thomas, Chair  
Jonathan Bockian  
Jason Cohen  
Bob DiRico  
Dennis J. Duff  
Mark Krackiewicz  
Allen Gallagher  
Maria Rose  
Susan Steele

**Draft Minutes:** Thursday, May 28, 2020, Remote Zoom Meeting, 7:00 - 9:00 PM.

**Committee Members Present:** Elodia Thomas, Chair; Jonathan Bockian, Bob DiRico, Jason Cohen, Dennis Duff, Allen Gallagher, Mark Krackiewicz, Maria Rose, and Susan Steele.

**Others Present:** Lanae Handy, Jennifer Goldson, Avery Wolfe, Leo Martin, Councilor Feltner, Councilor Palomba, Councilor Piccirilli, Gideon Schreiber, Michele Waldman, J. Grimsby, Libby Shaw, and others.

**1. Call to Order**

Elodia Thomas, Committee Chair, called the meeting of the Community Preservation Committee to order at 7:00 p.m.

- 2. Chair Statement** - Elodia opened the meeting with a statement regarding Governor Baker's order to suspend certain provisions of open meeting laws. She encouraged public participants to sign up for Notify Me to stay informed about the committee's progress.

Elodia reminded CPC members she was unanimously re-elected chair at the February meeting and plans to continue in that role, doing everything possible to keep the CPC on track with its mission and schedule.

**3. Acceptance of February 27, 2020 Minutes**

Allen moved to accept the February 27, 2020 minutes. Jason seconded and there was no discussion. Dennis voted present and Susan abstained.

**4. FY2021 Budget - CPA Fund Appropriation and Transfer**

Allen made a motion to request the Town Council appropriate and transfer funds from the Fiscal Year 2021 Community Preservation Funds, (the total = \$2,600,000) as the follows: 5% (\$130,000) for the administrative expenses of the Community Preservation Committee, 10% to the affordable housing reserve (\$260,000), 10% to the historical preservation reserve (\$260,000), 10% to the open space/recreation

reserve (\$260,000), and 65% to the undesignated fund balance (\$1,690,000). Jon seconded.

Jon had a question about whether the 5% and dollar amount were alternatives. Allen, Lanae, and Elodia clarified that the percentage is fixed, while the dollar amount is an estimate pending the state match.

Members unanimously voted to appropriate and transfer CPA funds.

## 5. JM Goldson Presentation

*New Schedule* - Jenn Goldson reviewed the next steps including a revised schedule and engagement plan necessitated by the pandemic, with the hope of keeping things on track despite the pause in engagement. Going forward, Jenn proposes reviving the project website to promote engagement with new online tools. Apart from launching the new website, Goldson will co-host a webinar. After the close of engagement on July 9<sup>th</sup>, JM Goldson will summarize engagement for the committee's review. Next, JM Goldson will prepare the first draft of the preservation plan. Following the August meeting, JM Goldson would revise the plan based on the committee's feedback and prepare for the Public Hearing.

*Website and Engagement Update* - Avery spoke about the website's current configuration and the tools available. She described the new tools that would be available on the revived website. Avery continued with the ways people are visiting sites, including directly, social media and email—bulk email being the least effective.

JM Goldson will record a video in lieu of the 2<sup>nd</sup> forum. The video would be used to prompt community engagement and questions for the Q&A style webinar. Avery encouraged committee members to make outreach commitments to market the video and new website tools.

Avery presented that nearly 400 people responded to the survey. Of those, the Asian and Latinx communities were underrepresented when compared to the population of those communities in Watertown. Jenn asked if there are ambassadors to those communities who can be contacted. Further renters and low-income residents were underrepresented in comparison to town demographics. Lanae asked what percentage of respondents answered the demographic survey questions. She also mentioned that she had reached out to managers of inclusionary zoning developments requesting they send information about the survey to their residents.

Avery also went over focus group results by CPA category. Some of the guiding principles mentioned most included a desire to fund projects that serve the most people as well as those that involve partnerships and/or foster collaboration.

Going forward, Susan thinks it would be interesting for people to make presentations specific to CPA categories to promote public education. Maria followed up on Susan's comment about website conversation threads. Maria suggested using questions from the committee discussion worksheet to start a conversation on the website. She was also glad the schedule planned keeps the September Public Hearing date and likes the webinar idea.

Elodia noted it's a huge concern that the engagement website has had very low registration numbers. She believes it's imperative to get people to register. Further, she emphasized the schedule is tentative as obtaining CPC meeting dates may be difficult to obtain with the current limit to one meeting per night.

*Goal and Guiding Principles Worksheet* - Jenn Goldson then went over the attached worksheet about goals and guiding principles. She asked if there were questions. Jon asked about considering an emergency rental request before September's hearing and in advance of having an approved plan and application process. In response, Elodia read from an email from Stuart Saginor on responding to emergency rental assistance.

“As you know, CPA is not set up as a program for emergencies. It was created to be a funding source for long-term capital needs for quality-of-life projects that normally don't make it into the regular city budget. The normal Federal, State and City budgets are the ones that take care of everyday needs, both recurring and those of an emergency nature.” (See attached entire email response).

Jennifer Goldson pointed out there is no legal reason why the CPC could not allocate funds to rental assistance, it's more a policy decision. She referred to the statute, noting while the law doesn't require a plan before accepting applications, she is not advocating it's good policy to jump the gun.

Dennis had questions about collaboration; “what would be an example of partners, entities and organizations? Could applicants collaborate with bordering towns and focus on town space as opposed to DCR?” He worries that buying property with a building on it for open space projects. Dennis is concerned these properties would be more expensive and dilute buying power.

Jason wants applicants to demonstrate the capacity to conduct projects, with an experienced project manager and plan for maintenance beyond project completion. He also believes it's important that initial CPA projects greatly benefit the town and are not seen as squandering taxpayer funds.

Mark thinks projects should serve a range of ages and generations and likes the idea of a sliding scale—with projects providing the greatest benefits requiring less in matching funds.

Bob questions funding projects on private land and state land. He would like to stay away from those projects.

Susan would separate open and recreational space, prioritizing threatened open space or space likely to be developed, while Jon doesn't see a need to separate them.

Maria wondered about open space projects that would preserve habitat but not be open to the public. “Is there anything like that in community?” Elodia said she couldn't think of any.

Other comments included, desire for local preference on housing projects by Dennis. Susan favors projects that make a longterm commitment as opposed to emergency funding or direct support housing projects. Elodia agreed the emphasis should be on creating housing because rental assistance doesn't address the core

problem. She believes there's a need for local preference for municipal employees and better negotiation on inclusionary zoning. Allen also favored local preference, while Jon was concerned about exclusion through a local preference. Most members supported funding projects that housed people with the greatest need.

Many members expressed an interest in only funding historic projects on privately owned property if there is public access and a historic restriction. Jon believes a historic restriction is sufficient and doesn't believe there is a need for access to the interior if CPA funds were simply used for the exterior and not the interior.

Jenn noted the next step would be a revision of the goals and guiding principles based on all of the feedback. Any further comments were to be sent to Lanae by 6/2/20 and JM Goldson would have a revision within a week. The video and new website would be done by 6/11/20.

## **6. Adjournment**

Dennis made a motion to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Allen and all were in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 9:45 PM.

## CPC Worksheet:

### Potential Application Evaluation Criteria and CPA Goals

#### Watertown Community Preservation Plan

May 21, 2020

*Prepared by JM Goldson LLC for Discussion Only*

We've drafted potential CPA application evaluation criteria and CPA goals based on the community input collected to date. The purpose of this worksheet is to catalyze a discussion about potential goals and evaluation criteria for Watertown's Community Preservation Plan, and to receive feedback from you – members of Watertown's CPC – before seeking further public input.

Please complete this worksheet prior to our next meeting on May 28<sup>th</sup> and have it handy so you can refer to your responses when we meet. We will not collect this worksheet – we developed it to help you prepare for the meeting. At the meeting, JM Goldson will lead a discussion activity based on this worksheet and your responses.

These potential evaluation criteria and goals are based on community feedback from the public forum held on January 29, 2020, the focus groups held in March 2020, results and feedback from the project website, and preliminary results from the community survey.<sup>1</sup> At your next meeting, we will review the community feedback received to date; describe how the criteria and goals will fit within the plan/application; and discuss next steps for soliciting further community input.

#### Evaluation Criteria


A set of standards against which the CPC will compare project applications to determine whether or not they align with expectations and goals.

<sup>1</sup> The survey was launched on January 29, 2020 and is live through the end of May. Responses submitted through May 14, 2020 were taken into account when developing these draft goals and criteria. Similarly, responses submitted on the project website through May 14, 2020 were taken into account.

#### How this worksheet works

**Question Prompts:** respond to the question in the space provided.

**Strikethrough:** cross out words, phrases, or an entire goal or criteria that you think should be removed or changed. Please provide explanation as appropriate.

**Add a star** : mark goals or criteria that you think are particularly important and should be prioritized.

**Blank Space:** add comments or recommended changes in the space provided below each goal or criteria. Please provide explanation as appropriate.

Projects with these general attributes will be given priority for CPA funding:

1. Demonstrate a broad community benefit and/or community-building, including opportunity for and likely public use.
2. Involve collaboration between multiple partners, entities, or organizations.
3. Benefit particularly vulnerable or systematically marginalized populations, or underserved areas.
4. Incorporate components of two or more CPA-eligible categories.
5. Include other sources of funding for at least half of the total project costs, including volunteer labor or material donations.

Question 1: do you think half is the appropriate threshold? Should it be higher? Lower? Should there even be a threshold?

6. Demonstrate alignment with goals and priorities identified in other town planning documents.
7. Demonstrate public outreach and support.

Question 2: sometimes projects that align with CPA and town goals will not be supported by the public majority (or at least vocal majority). How do you think the CPC should weigh or address this kind of conflict?

8. Support the rehabilitation of underutilized and deteriorated properties or adaptively reuse existing buildings.
9. Prevent harm or destruction of existing community resources.
10. Further the goals outlined in the CP plan.

Question 3: Are there any other criteria that you think should be added?

Question 4: How do you think these criteria can best be used and weighed to inform the CPC's funding decisions? How do you envision that process – do all criteria have equal weight? Do some have more weight than others? Do you only consider these criteria if you receive more projects than you can fund at once or do you use these criteria always?

## Goals

A set of conditions the CPC aims to achieve regarding CPA funding.

### Funding allocation:

Ten percent of annual CPA revenue must be allocated for each of the three eligible categories (Historic Preservation, Open Space & Recreation, and Community Housing). The remaining 70 percent may be allocated to any funding category, and up to five percent can be spent on administrative costs.

1. The CPC will set aside the permissible five percent each year for administrative costs, such as:
  - a. Community Preservation Coordinator position
  - b. Updates to the Community Preservation Plan every five years
  - c. Studies, analyses, or other planning initiatives to better understand needs related to CPA and/or inform the CPC's funding decisions, as deemed necessary
  - d. Other administrative costs as necessary

Question 5: do you think the CPC should set aside the full five percent for administrative costs each year? Why or why not?

Question 6: do you think the CPC should set aside funds each year for emergency or time-sensitive projects? If so, how much?

Question 7: do you think the CPC should set target allocation goals by category? If so, what should those targets be?

Question 8: are there any other funding goals that you think should be added?

### Goals by CPA-eligible category:

*Specific project ideas, areas or sites identified, and other community input will be included in the Plan's appendices.*

### Open Space & Recreation:

1. Prioritize the acquisition of underutilized, vacant, or deteriorated properties to preserve and create new green space in Watertown, such as pocket parks, community gardens, rain gardens, or other green infrastructure – especially in underserved areas.
2. Strategically support the preservation of properties under development threat for open space and recreation opportunities.

3. Support partnerships for the creation and enhancement of shared green spaces, such as with bordering municipalities, the Perkins Institute, the Oakley Country Club, Mount Auburn Cemetery, and DCR.

Question 9: how do you feel about using CPA funds for projects on state land? This is a policy discussion – state property is eligible for CPA funding. \*This question also applies to goal #7

9A: What about private entities?

4. Create and improve access and accessibility of existing parks, playgrounds, and green spaces for public enjoyment and passive recreation opportunities.
5. Preserve and rehabilitate existing parks, playgrounds, and athletic fields for sustained and improved use.
6. Create new trails and paths for walking and bicycling and improve connectivity between existing trails.
7. Create new recreational opportunities along the Charles River, including non-motorized boating access.
8. Support recreation needs for a diversity of demographics and lifestyles such as dog parks, play areas for children, sports fields and courts, designated walking areas, designated bicycling areas, water recreation, areas for senior recreation, and benches and picnic areas.

Question 10: based on feedback from the community that access and recreation opportunities should be offered for most if not all green space in the community, goals have been combined for the open space and recreation categories. Do you think they should remain integrated or should goals be separated out for open space and for recreation? Some communities have chosen to have one chapter (and set of goals) for open space & passive recreation and a separate chapter for active recreation. Is that a better approach

10A: How do you feel about this notion of providing public access opportunities for essentially all green space? Should this be a specified goal.

#### Community Housing:

1. Fund the creation of affordable and community housing units that will help address the greatest documented housing needs as identified through the most recent housing needs assessment, housing production plan, or other housing study.
2. Prioritize the acquisition and adaptive reuse of underutilized, vacant, or deteriorated structures and properties, especially historic properties, for the creation of affordable and community housing.
3. Prioritize the conversion of existing market-rate housing units to income-restricted affordable and community housing units.
4. Preserve long-term affordability for existing income-restricted housing units.
5. Support community capacity to connect income-eligible households to housing assistance resources, implement local housing initiatives, and continue local planning, education, and advocacy to promote achievement of local affordable housing goals.
6. Expand local resources available for direct rental and/or homebuying assistance to income-eligible households.

Question 12: how do you feel about using CPA funds to directly support income-eligible individuals or families?



Question 13: do you think it is important for a portion or all units created using CPA to be counted on the Subsidized Housing Inventory (i.e. should they be limited to households making at or below 80 percent AMI)?

1. Support the acquisition and preservation of underutilized, threatened, or abandoned privately-owned historic resources that do or can provide demonstrable public benefits.

Question 14: are there any other community housing goals that you think should be added?

2. Preserve, restore, and rehabilitate historic municipal properties and monuments.
3. Support the preservation of privately-owned historic resources that are or will be open to the public.
4. Improve public access and accessibility to historic resources.

Question 16: are there any other historic preservation goals that you think should be added?

On Fri, Apr 10, 2020 at 1:06 PM Stuart Saginor <[stuart.saginor@communitypreservation.org](mailto:stuart.saginor@communitypreservation.org)>

**Cc:** Elodia Thomas <[Elodia.h2otown@gmail.com](mailto:Elodia.h2otown@gmail.com)>

wrote:

Hi Tony:

Good to hear from you, and I'm glad to see that folks in Watertown are looking to help residents in need during this crisis.

As you know, CPA is not set up as a program for emergencies. It was created to be a funding source for long-term capital needs for quality-of-life projects that normally don't make it into the regular city budget. The normal Federal, State and City budgets are the ones that take care of everyday needs, both recurring and those of an emergency nature.

That being said, there is something covered by the CPA legislation that can be helpful with the current situation, and that is the ability to provide rental assistance to income-eligible residents. A number of communities are looking at partnering with local housing organizations right now to help renters who are in need. But the process to approve these proposals would need to follow the normal CPA appropriation guidelines which require a recommendation by the CPC followed by approval of the City Council. There is no provision in the CPA legislation to do an emergency appropriation that bypasses the normal procedure, as CPA was not set up to be that type of program.

We do recommend that cities looking at these programs find a qualified housing organization to run a rental assistance program. It's complicated and you need professionals to do it; most cities are not equipped to run these programs on their own. There are many state and federal guidelines that you have to follow, and the devil is in the details.

Best,  
Stuart