

Plymouth Community Preservation Committee Minutes for Thursday June 29, 2023

The CPC met at 6:00 pm at 1820 Courthouse with video option.

In attendance were: Bill Keohan – Chair, Karen Buechs (via video), Betty Cavacco, Allen Hemberger, Birgitta Kuehn (via video), John Mahoney, Randy Parker, Russ Shirley and Mike Tubin.

This meeting is the CPC Annual Public Meeting where the Committee discusses the application process for Open Space, Historic, and Housing, and answers questions regarding eligibility and addresses public comments.

The Committee welcomed new member Betty Cavacco.

The Committee thanked former committee member Joan Bartlett, Vice Chair, for her 20+ years of dedicated public service to the CPC and to the Town of Plymouth.

The agenda was adopted as presented.

The Minutes from 5/25/2023 and 6/8/2023 with no Executive Sessions were reviewed and approved as amended with one comment from Randy for 6/8/2023.

Comments from Committee Members

Russ, Mike, and Randy provided information about the application process for their respective areas of expertise, Housing, Historic, and Open Space & Recreation, respectively.

Betty said that changes to Housing applications are needed.

John said that the Committee should be more open to presentations by applicants.

Birgitta said that the Planning Board should be included in the CPC application process.

Public Comments Regarding Housing, Historic, and Open Space

Connie Melahoures, President, Plymouth Taskforce to End Homelessness, said that contrary to recent Select Board statements the CPC isn't responsible for submitting housing applications. Stakeholders and advocacy groups are responsible for submitting applications for affordable housing. The Town has had recent opportunities to purchase properties for affordable housing (e.g., Oak Street School and 130 Court Street), but the properties were instead sold to developers.

George McKay and Peter Brown (President of Pilgrim Hall) said more needs to be done with Pilgrim Hall, particularly the leaky roof.

Karen suggested that CPC should limit the number of times an applicant can apply for CPA funds.

Steve Lydon asked for clarification about the application process. Mr. Lydon said that presentations should be part of the application process.

Lyn Spencer via video expressed support for CPC.

John Mahoney, Select Board representative to CPC, said a site visit should be conducted for Gurnet Light which is currently available at no cost to qualifying organizations.

Derek Brindisi, Town Manager, said that the Town submitted a Letter of Interest to the U.S. General Services Administration regarding acquiring Gurnet Light. The Town received a letter of acknowledgement from GSA.

Karen, Birgitta, Allen, and Bill read aloud sections of the CPC application for the record and for public comment.

Kevin Canty, Select Board, said CPC application deadlines should be adjusted to avoid conflict with the different warrant periods. CPC application deadlines should be moved a few weeks sooner for both Spring and Fall Town Meetings. The CPC Chair agreed.

Pat Alderman said that CPC housing applications should not be turned over to housing authorities. CPC housing applications should stay with CPC so they can be voted on at Town Meeting.

Connie agreed that CPA funds for housing should stay with CPC and not given to housing authorities.

Derek Brindisi said Town departments should be involved with CPC applications.

Anthony Mayo asked when the new CPC application will be released. Bill said the new application will be released in July. The CPC application is available on the Town website.

Evelyn Strong, Finance Committee and Affordable Housing Trust, said that CPC should combine with the Affordable Housing Trust with its housing funds. This is what Duxbury and Kingston do according to Ms. Strong.

Kevin Canty, Select Board, said that if no housing applications are submitted or approved for a given year then CPA funds for housing should be turned over to the Affordable Housing Trust without a Town Meeting article.

Steve Lydon asked about the structures at Hedges Pond and storage inventory at the Water Barn. Bill said that the Town controls those properties and contact Town departments for information.

Betty asked where the next CPC meeting will be held and said it should be at Town Hall. Betty made a motion that the primary location for CPC meetings is Town Hall. Russ seconded the motion. The motion passed with six in favor (Randy, Bill, Allen, Betty, John, and Karen) and three against (Russ, Mike, and Birgitta).

Old Business

There was no Old Business

New Business

There was no New Business

Executive Session

There was no Executive Session

The meeting adjourned at 8:32 pm.

####