

MINUTES OF MEETING  
COMMUNITY PRESERVATION COMMITTEE

March 14, 2022

Location: Online Meeting

The Community Preservation Committee (the “CPC” or the “Committee”) convened a regular meeting, duly noticed, on Monday, March 14, 2022, at 7 p.m. via the videoconferencing platform Zoom. CPC members present were Steve Ober, Chair; Nina Danforth; Nathalie Thompson; Steve Wagner, Leslie Glynn, Marcy Dorna, Neil Levitt, and Barry Tubman. Recreation Commission Chair Eric Rosenthal, Recreation Commission member Adam King, Recreation Commission member Maija Cirulis-Gooch, Recreation Director Christopher Fitzgerald, Recreation Assistant Director Sharon Locke, Regional Housing Service Office (“RHSO”) employee Elizabeth Valenta, Affordable Housing Trust Chair Sarah Rhatigan, Elderly Housing Committee Chair Tom Timko, Finance Committee member Bharath Venkatraman, Weston Residents Virginia and Stephen Brooks, Weston Resident Elly Pendergast, Weston Media Center Videographer Jim Tremble, and CPC Administrator Cheri Amour Mahan were also present.

Steve Ober read a statement explaining the need for a meeting conducted by remote participation in light of the emergency orders issued by Governor Baker in response to the COVID-19 global pandemic, noted that the meeting was being recorded, and invited public comment.

**Public Comment**

None.

**Application for FY2023 Annual Town Meeting:**

**Memorial Pool Application**

Recreation Director Christopher Fitzgerald, along with Recreation Commission members Eric Rosenthal and Maija Cirulis-Gooch, presented an update on the Memorial Pool renovation project.

Following discussions at the last meeting regarding the funding eligibility for the filtration system, Mr. Fitzgerald referred to the minutes of the October 26, 2020, CPC meeting in which the design fee proposal was presented to the CPC and approved unanimously. Mr. Fitzgerald also referred to a legal opinion from 2017 for a similar project. Town Counsel had approved the project as eligible and Chris shared his view that this could serve as a point of reference for justifying funding for the filters.

Mr. Fitzgerald discussed membership trends for FY16 through to FY21 (excluding FY20 when the Pool was closed due to COVID). There was a slight decrease during FY16-FY19, but the numbers picked up after the center reopened in 2021.

In response to a question regarding the different membership types from Barry Tubman, Mr. Fitzgerald clarified that the resident family membership covered each individual within the family as one unit. Just over 300 family memberships were sold in FY21. Upon a request at the

last meeting, Mr. Fitzgerald shared that the residents purchase the majority (84%) of memberships. A graph displaying the number of residents (members and day pass users) who used municipal pools within surrounding towns in 2019 ranked Weston at 24.8%.

In response to a question about the difference in the cost between day pass users and members, Mr. Fitzgerald noted that there were cost increases in 2021. A family membership increased from \$250 in 2019 to \$275 in 2021, and the day passes increased from \$5 in 2019 to \$10 in 2021 per person for Weston residents. The goal is to convert users with multiple day passes to membership.

Ms. Gooch displayed a graph demonstrating the revenue history since FY15 (excluding FY20). Revenues have been declining at about 15% annually before the COVID; however, there was a notable spike during the pandemic. If improvements are not made to the pool, revenues will continue to decline. Ms. Gooch also described two revenue projection models over ten years. One would see a 25% membership increase, a 20% uplift in guest fees, and an increase in concessions, while a more aggressive model mirrored a 50% increase similar to Needham's. Ms. Gooch indicated that the actual result would likely fall between both models based on these projections, likely with increased membership fees just below 25%. Mr. Rosenthal also added that the membership fees for non-residents are charged at a much higher rate than for Weston residents, with a goal to promote the pool as an asset for community members.

### **Questions/Comments:**

Nina Danforth asked whether the pool could cover its expenses each summer based on the revenue projections. Ms. Gooch responded that the membership fees alone do not cover the operational costs currently, although it's difficult to measure accurately given the Pool usage by Town camps and how that revenue is captured. The revised models have cost factored in for extra resources for the additional amenities. Mr. Fitzgerald clarified that the annual operating cost for the pool is estimated at between \$275k and \$300k, with pool revenues covering approximately 80% of those costs. In recent years, costs have increased while revenues have dropped, so the coverage rate of pool revenues has gone down, although Mr. Fitzgerald expects that the numbers will get better with the planned improvements.

Leslie Glynn asked about sustainability plans for the pool. Mr. Fitzgerald advised of current sustainable measures such as closing the pool during the winter, utilizing groundwater, and installing an electric water heater unit for the new hot water showers. Ms. Glynn provided recommendations to improve the existing sustainability goals, such as installing solar panels for the roofing and utilizing organic chemicals for the pool, among others, and highlighted that some of these measures would be more cost-effective while alleviating maintenance costs. Mr. Fitzgerald provided some details on the energy usage relating to the pool.

Mr. Ober observed that the incremental net revenue and expenses would range between \$50k and \$150k annually with the improvements made, suggesting that the investments would be worthwhile and justifiable financially. Ms. Gooch clarified that the incremental cost for the new amenities was included to demonstrate the outcome of the total contribution versus the baseline-only gift.

Ms. Gooch also noted that a rough back-of-the-envelope calculation was done to look at the project's capital cost vs. the net present value of the net increase in revenues minus expenses over a 20-year time frame, in which the base case estimate reflected a \$1.3M net present value amount while the best-case estimate was a \$2.3M net present value amount. Per Ms. Gooch, these calculations indicated that these were responsible investments that should be recovered while benefiting the community.

Neil Levitt requested clarification on the 5% annual escalation construction cost applied across three years, whereas the project completion date was 1.5 years. Mr. Fitzgerald clarified that this was an older estimate, and the revised one was previously circulated. Mr. Levitt indicated that the Permanent Building Committee ("PBC") highlighted that they were not in receipt of this revised document. Mr. Levitt noted that the PBC expects to see the construction documents for review at its upcoming meeting.

Ms. Danforth argued that she was uncomfortable approving CPC funding for the filtration system, given that this mechanical item will need replacing in the future. Ms. Danforth believes this should be a broken-out cost of the overall project to be borne by the Town budget, rather than the CPA Fund.

Steve Wagner highlighted that funding may be justifiable given that the filters are now included in the larger renovation project. However, he has concerns regarding other items that should be funded by the Town and not by the CPA Fund, for instance, the siding of the filter building and whether this is an allowed expense. Ms. Glynn suggested looking at the project from the angle of whether the CPC would be comfortable with CPA funding just the pool equipment and filters.

Mr. Fitzgerald displayed the current budget as of January 19, 2022, which costs \$225k for the filtration equipment. Ms. Glynn asked whether cost escalation was included in the budget for bidding purposes. Mr. Fitzgerald noted that the final design estimates are expected to be in hand by Wednesday for the PBC meeting and feedback will be provided at the next CPC meeting on March 21, 2022.

### **Brook School Addition-Building E**

Tom Timko updated the CPC on the meetings with the various parties involved in the project. There was a meeting recently with the Brook School Apartment residents who shared concerns about the anticipated disturbance that is likely to occur during the construction process. A meeting was also held with the Finance Committee, and they took no position concerning the article for Town Meeting. The meeting with abutters is scheduled for tomorrow, March 15, 2022, to provide an overview of the project, answer questions, and discuss any concerns they might have. The biggest takeaway from the resident meeting was for the residents to be educated about the design phase of the project and the intended outcome; however, there will be another resident meeting towards the end of March or early next month.

### **Question/Comments:**

In responding to a question, Mr. Timko clarified that this would be the first formal meeting with abutters. Ms. Danforth stated that she was unaware of this meeting and requested an invitation. Mr. Timko also advised that the meeting was listed as a public meeting on the Town's calendar.

Ms. Glynn recommended a modular build process to alleviate some of the disruptions, among other concerns relating to the onsite construction.

Ms. Danforth asked whether approval was granted for building on the tennis court site. Mr. Timko advised that the original feasibility study proposed this site as one of the options; however, the tennis court overlaps some of the wetlands and riverfront area, which may result in severe conservation issues, which may outweigh moving or losing the tennis courts. Mr. Timko believes there are serious issues with the tennis court location option. Another concern for the residents was accessing the vistas and views, which would not be ideal for the tennis court site.

Stephen and Virginia Brooks expressed disappointment with the lack of community involvement to date and advised that there is a lot of opposition within the neighborhood. One concern was the per-unit cost of between \$450k and \$550k per unit for a one-bedroom unit. Elle Pendergast suggested distributing letters to inform the area about future meetings. In response to a question from Mr. Ober regarding the communication process, Mr. Timko explained that the July 15 meeting was posted via the community notice board, and a few active members assisted with providing a list of abutters' information. Comparisons were made to the communication process used around the 0 Wellesley Street project. Moving forward, letters and other means of communication will be used in addition to the Town's notice board.

Ms. Brooks referred to the 2018 feasibility study, which outlined detailed information regarding the project, and suggested recirculating this to the neighborhood for review and feedback. However, Mr. Timko highlighted that the study is outdated and was previously withdrawn due to several factors affecting project readiness.

Mr. Ober asked Mr. Timko to confirm whether the project is now in a state of readiness. Mr. Timko shared that, in his view, the project is "fully baked" and ready for the next phase of the design. The current process proposal is expected to generate a viable outcome regarding the best option for siting and the approach to be undertaken. The Town can then decide how it wishes to proceed.

Ms. Brooks commented that 30% of the units in Brooks School Apartments are occupied by someone affiliated with a Weston resident; therefore, the concern is whether the cost will justify the benefit to the Town of Weston and its taxpayers. Mr. Timko acknowledged the point about Brook School Apartments and Weston affiliations and highlighted that according to state law, only the initial renting cycle can be promoted primarily to Weston residents. Such a limitation cannot be done after the initial renting cycle has ended. Mr. Timko clarified that the funding model would be similar to the one used for Building D in building any new units. The cost to the Town budget (and related tax bills) will be relatively minimal and funded through the bond issues between Brooks School Apartment and the CPA Fund.

Mr. Wagner underscored the importance of effectively communicating with the residents and abutters to reinforce the project's significance and perceived benefits to the community and elderly housing. The Town's website and social media can be used to promote and educate people about the project. The developers of 0 Wellesley Street also may be able to offer some guidance on the community outreach process.

### **Public Hearing Meeting**

Mr. Ober highlighted seven (7) applications for funding consideration at the March 21 Public Hearing and asked for final comments from the Committee on each application.

**RHSO and Case Park:** Both requests should be relatively non-controversial and ready for presentation to the Town.

**669 Boston Post Road:** Mr. Wagner advised that the appraisal is expected to come this week, after which a discussion with the owners will follow. A concise presentation will be prepared for the next meeting and questions will be addressed. The overall expectation is that there should be no significant concern about this application.

**WAHT:** Overall, the Committee was comfortable with the WAHT project except for a few areas requiring further clarification.

**Merriam Village Building Preservation:** Mr. Ober noted that Town Counsel responded to the question about the siding replacement confirming its eligibility for CPA funding. Mr. Ober read a portion of the correspondence from the Town Counsel and advised that it would be circulated to the rest of the Committee. However, the Committee continued to have questions about eligibility for CPA funding.

**Memorial Pool:** The Committee remains unclear regarding CPA eligibility for certain elements of the project, such as the filtration system and the siding replacement, and the Committee is anticipating the submission of formal construction documents and, ultimately, the procurement of a bid in hand. The support of the PBC is pending the receipt and review of the construction and bid documents. The Committee emphasized the importance of these updated documents and the PBC's support to moving forward at this time with this project.

**Brook School Apartments:** The Committee discussed the project's readiness and continues to feel that substantial groundwork and community outreach are needed.

### **Minutes of January 24<sup>th</sup> and February 7<sup>th</sup>, 2022 Meetings**

***VOTE:*** *Mr. Ober entertained a motion to approve the minutes of the CPC meeting on January 24<sup>th</sup>, 2022. Nathalie Thompson made the motion seconded by Mr. Levitt subject to one minor correction.*

***The motion passed unanimously by roll call vote.***

The minutes of the meeting on February 7<sup>th</sup>, 2022 will be presented for approval at the next meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 9:40 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Cheri Amour Mahan  
CPC Administrator

**Appendix A**

**CPC Meeting  
March 14, 2022  
Document List**

- 1) CPA Applications for FY 2023 Annual Town Meeting:
  - a. Memorial Pool Application
    - i. Application
    - ii. PowerPoint
  
  - b. Brook School Apartments-Building E
    - i. Application
    - ii. PowerPoint
  
  - c. 669 Boston Post Road
    - i. Application
  
- 2) Minutes for January 24, 2022