

Town of Lenox

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Community Preservation Committee (CPC)

**September 11, 2017**

**7:00 p.m.**

**MINUTES**

**Members Present:** Chair Tony Patella (TP), Community Center; Vice Chair Tom Delasco, Planning Board; Cathie May (CM), Housing Authority; Al Harper (AH), At Large; Olga Weiss (OW), Historical Commission; Channing Gibson (CG), Board of Selectmen; Joe Strauch (Conservation Commission)

**Absent w/ Notification:** Frederick Keator, At Large; Gene Chague, At Large

**Staff Present:** Gwen Miller, Land Use Director

**In Attendance:** Michael Nathan, SBA; Chris Raymond, Lenox Resident; Kate McNulty Vaughan, three other guests (unsure of names)

**Approval of Minutes**

The minutes of January 9, 2017 and May 15, 2017 were approved.

**Other Business**

AH noted the Town still had a number of projects open. He requested that the Town put in formal extension requests going forward for projects such as the Town Beach and the Library Steps.

He also noted that the CPC plan does not have up to date projects. GM said she would update the list.

**Phase 1 Applications**

The Committee discussed the Phase 1 applications as follows:

**1. Frelinghuysen Morris House and Studio (Historic Preservation)**

The Frelinghuysen Morris House and Studio seeks \$12,500 to restore the prominent veranda on the historic structure listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2016.

CG noted it was nice to see a new applicant. AH stated he felt the applicant should move forward to Phase 2 and emphasize the public benefit of this project. CM and OW also supported moving the project forward. CG moved to approve Phase 1; TD seconded and all agreed.

**2. The Mount (Historic Preservation)**

The Mount seeks \$75,000 to restore the terrace on the main house. CG noted the Mount is one of the nicest places in the Berkshires; JS noted the terrace is in every picture of The Mount. AH described the

mansion as iconic that should be preserved. JS moved to approve the Phase 1 application. AH seconded. All agreed.

### **3. Trinity Church (Historic Preservation)**

Trinity Church is seeking \$41,000 of the total cost of the project, which is estimated to be between \$83,000 to \$90,000. The focus of this project is the West Wall, facing Kemble Street. The wall will be repointed and restored.

TP noted there have been news items regarding the grant of Community Preservation funds to churches. TD stated precedent has been set in Lenox as CP funds have been granted to Church on the Hill. AH recused himself from this discussion as his wife is a member of the congregation and they are donors to the church. OW described the property as iconic and moved to encourage Trinity Church to proceed to Phase 2. CH seconded, all but AH (abstaining) approved.

### **4. Stockbridge Bowl Association (SBA)(Open Space and Recreation)**

The SBA requested \$250,000 to dredge critical areas of the lake in the outlet and behind the island; draw the lake level down 5 ½ feet in the winter to freeze and kill the roots of the invasive Eurasian Water Milfoil.

JS noted reading about project overages in the newspaper. CM noted the concerns highlighted in the recent newspaper article are new, but the SBA was not approved last year and the concerns which caused members to not approve the funding request for Town Meeting had not changed, as the Bowl is in another community. OW took exception, describing the Bowl as a common resource and suggested the Committee consider some amount to recommend. CM reminded the group they were only considering Phase 1. TP stated Phase 1 is not a decision to fund, but a chance to review in light of Phase 1 criteria. AH stated his mind was not changed, and that he doubted the absent members would not have changed their mind either. CG found the project met the Phase 1 criteria, and felt it would be in the spirit of regionalism and cooperation to move the request along to Phase 1. CG moved to bring the application to Phase 2 of the process. TP, OW and CG voted in favor; JS, TD, CM and AH voted no. The motion failed to carry.

Mr. Nathan asked to speak; he stated that 1,908 Lenox residents used the Bowl this summer and that the Town pays for all the boats coming in to be cleaned, and that the Town of Lenox has contributed nothing toward the use and management of the Bowl. He likened it to if Lenox had to allow students from every town into Lenox School and received no payment or reimbursement for educating those students. He said the over runs on the project had to do with a rare species of snails, and were the result of complying with Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program guidance. Ms. Raymond said that if the Committee considered the Frelinghuysen-Morris House and Studio to be public, the same should be considered of the Stockbridge Bowl. She also said that if Frederick Keator was present, he would support the SBA request. Mr. Nathan stated that every lake photograph in the Lenox Open Space and Recreation Plan is actually of Stockbridge Bowl, and that the high school crew team utilizes the Bowl.

AH suggested the BoS should consider providing assistance to the Town of Stockbridge. OW supported this. TD stated that he was uncomfortable providing funds to a private home association seeking public funds; CG asked if the Town of Stockbridge making the application would have made a difference. TD and AH concurred it would have.

## **5. Town of Lenox**

### **a. Land Acquisition**

In the Phase 1 application for land acquisition, the Town had not yet identified the property it sought. CG noted the Town was seeking to acquire more of the Peters property to provide permanent, public access to Post Farm and expand Mountain View cemetery. A cost was yet to be identified.

TD moved to bring Phase 1 for this land acquisition to Phase 2. JS seconded, all were in favor.

### **b. Bog Bridging**

The Town of Lenox seeks \$200,000 to install bog bridges around Baker's Pond.

CG said this was a very general application and was unsure if the Kennedy Park Committee would be ready in time for the Phase 2 deadline. He described the ongoing effort to refurbish Baker Pond, and noted this trail project would improve usability. He suggested that the applicant be the Kennedy Park Committee. AH suggested the Town thoroughly vet the application. TP asked CG if the Town had reviewed the OSRP and if the bog bridging at this location fell into the list of priorities. AH hoped the Phase 2 application would have very detailed cost.

### **c. Community Garden**

The Town of Lenox seeks \$20,000 for a pilot community garden.

GM noted community gardens are in the OSRP; and that a few community residents had come to her interested in launching a community garden in Lenox. For residents living in the Curtis or Turnure Terrace, a community garden would provide space to grow fresh vegetables. The two preliminary sites identified in the Phase 1 application were not very good sites; TP recommended the Town have detailed specifications on the location, partners and management of the garden for Phase 2. He also suggested the Town work on grant opportunities with somebody such as Berkshire Bank. JS recommended Mass Audubon. OW suggested the lawn of the Community Center. CG moved to accept the Phase 1 application so that the proposal could move forward to Phase 2. OW seconded. All voted in favor.

### **d. Shared Use Path Feasibility Study**

The Town of Lenox seeks \$25,000 for a shared use path feasibility study to identify necessary actions and cost to create a shared use path like the Stowe Recreation Path or Ashwilticook Path around Lenox and connecting to similar paths in Lee and Pittsfield.

CG said the Board of Selectmen strongly believe this goal of the OSRP to link Open Space and Recreation properties to other parts of town is very important, and described the shared use path as a necklace linking places together.

TP suggested the Town think carefully about stakeholders and who will implement the action plan. TD hoped it would be a smart plan, noting the difficulty in achieving the shared use path from the high school to and along Housatonic Street to Lenox Dale. TP moved to bring Phase 1 forward; AH seconded; all voted in favor.

#### e. Housing Trust

On behalf of the Housing Trust, the Land Use Director submitted a request for \$500,000 for Housing Trust activities in support of the 2017-2021 Housing Production Plan.

GM explained the HPP had been adopted by both the Board of Selectmen and Planning Board, and now awaited approval from the Department of Housing and Community Development. She said while the plan highlights housing need in Lenox, it also outlines fifteen (15) strategies to produce housing for low to moderate income households in Lenox over the next five years. She described some of the efforts, which include empowering the Housing Trust financially to produce, acquire and preserve housing units in Lenox: buy-down programs, in which the Trust would gift half a purchase price and secure an affordability restriction on a home; rehab efforts; and new home construction working with partners such as Habitat for Humanity, Berkshire Housing, CDC of South Berkshire or Construct.

AH stated he thought this Phase 1 application was a good first step, and would like to see more detail in the Phase 2 application. He said it would be important to highlight the charter and responsibilities of the Housing Trust, and to differentiate between the Housing Trust and the Lenox Housing Authority.

AH moved to bring the Housing Trust Phase 1 application forward; CM seconded and all approved.

TP adjourned the meeting, noting the next meeting of the CPC would be Monday, November 13<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 p.m.