Town of Lenox

Community Preservation Committee

January 25, 2020 @ 7:00 p.m.

Meeting minutes

**Documents made available:**

* Meeting agenda
* Meeting minutes from December 7, 2020
* Current CPC account spreadsheet
* Material from applicants

**Members present** Tony Patella (TP), Tom Delasco (TD), Frederick Keator (FK), Chuck Koscher (CK), Mark Smith (MS), Olga Weiss (OW), Catherine May (CM)

**Members absent:** Max Scherff; Neal Maxymillian

**Approval of Minutes, 12/7/20:** Approved subject to amendments

**Point of Order:** TP asked how the Committee would like to proceed; had suggested breaking up meetings into multiple evenings.

FK recommended they hear from the three applicants present tonight, and then vote on award decision at a subsequent meeting.

TD had suggestion—hear from applicants at next two meetings and have a third meeting for committee to make decisions.

The group agreed to this format.

**Phase 2 Application Discussion and Presentations**

St. Anne’s

Tom Romeo and Sean Wilson presented the application from St. Anne’s Church requesting $100,000 for masonry restoration. This project will complete major restoration and renovation to the exterior of St. Ann’s church. Through photographs, Tom Romeo explained how the issues with the exterior were impacting the interior of the historic church building. Total cost of the project will be approximately $500,000 with additional funding being provided from loans ($300,000) and direct fundraising ($100,000). The work will include cleaning and repointing all four facades of the historic stone church, repairing cracks in the cornerstone, recalking all mortar joints, and repairing the original slate roof to eliminate leaking. A local construction firm has prepared a scope of work and will provide the labor, materials, equipment, and supervision for the project. An architect from the Diocese of Springfield will be available for consultation as needed. Work will commence in the second quarter 2021 and should be concluded by year-end.

TP clarified how some of the work would be done, referencing recent restoration work completed at the Registry of Deeds building in Pittsfield. He also asked for clarification regarding the budget and timeline.

Charlene Rosen was in attendance and asked Tom Romeo and Sean Wilson how the church raised funds, noting a concern she had heard from a Farmer’s Market vendor about the cost to participate in the Farmer’s Market. They clarified that St. Anne’s had the Farmer’s Market play a nominal fee for use of their outdoor space and the high cost did not come from the Church but perhaps from the market itself.

Lenox Library

Katie O’Neil, Director of the Lenox Library, presented the Phase 2 application requesting $100,000 for the structural stabilization of the Lenox Library Dome Room. She explained the library had received the findings from the recently completed engineer study and had concrete knowledge about what repairs and renovations are needed. She shared pictures from the study showing the issues the restoration would address. She noted that the Town is seeking other funds as well to help fund the full project, including funds from the Massachusetts Cultural Council and the Massachusetts Historical Commission. The finished project would include restoration of the plaster ceiling in the dome room as well.

CK asked how much the Town still paid each year for the purchase of the library building. TP said in $124,000 to be completed in 2024.

FK asked where the other funding would come from given the scope and scale of the project. KO said she is working with Town Manager Christopher Ketchen on this; there are funds from the Lenox Library Association, and it’s possible the Town could bond funds for the project or request funds from the General Fund.

Both CK and FK indicated they thought such a large project and cost needed broader community discussion and input.

KO said this project would be going to the Permanent Building Committee for further discussion as well.

Affordable Housing Trust

Marybeth Mitts presented the Affordable Housing Trust’s request for $200,000. She explained the work the Trust has done, is doing and plans to do in the future. She explained the Trust will continue to provide emergency rental assistance in response to the Covid-19 pandemic, provide first-time homebuyer grants to income qualified home buyers, purchase properties to sell subject to deed restrictions to income qualified home buyers, provide local match for a housing rehabilitation and renovation program funded by the Department of Housing and Community Development’s Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), and pursue opportunities to purchase renovated properties at auction through the Attorney General’s “Receivership” program. She noted the Trust needs to have funds available in its account to continue current activities and pursue new programs and opportunities.

CK asked how much the Housing Trust had received from CPC in the past; FK referenced the Housing Trust’s most recent account statement and noted the group received CPC funds in FY12 ($10,000), FY13 ($15,000), FY19 ($250,000) and General Funds: $120,000 in FY11 and $100,000 in FY19.

Both Kate McNulty Vaughan and Charlene Rosen of the Housing Trust were present and made comments supporting the Trust’s request.

**Next Meetings**

The group decided to hear the remaining two applications on February 2 at 7:00 p.m. and have the third meeting with all the applicants on February 10 at 7:00 p.m.