

Town of Lenox
Community Preservation Committee

January 31st, 2022

Meeting Minutes

Via Zoom

Members present: Tom Delasco (TD), Frederick Keator (FK), Olga Weiss (OW), Mark Smith (MS),

Members absent: Neal Maxymillian, Chuck Koscher

Others present: Christopher Ketchen, Town Manager; Marybeth Mitts, Lenox Aff. Housing Trust, Charlene Rosen (Lenox Affordable Housing Trust), Kate McNulty Vaughn (Lenox Aff. Housing Trust) Charlie Adams (Pennrose), Becca Schofield (Pennrose), Susan Wissler (The Mount), Earl Persip (The Mount), Ute DeFarlo (The Mount)

1. Approval of Minutes:

There were no minutes available.

2. Presentation of Applications (to be updated upon application receipt)

TD proposed the Committee go through the projects by order of complexity, starting with The Mount.

- a. The Mount, \$125,000 toward the restoration of the envelope of the Mount's gatehouse building.** Susan noted that the total project is \$800,000 and like other projects funded at The Mount, the town's portion is a small amount toward the whole. She also noted the project is shovel ready with the contractors hired and ready to roll.

OW noted that the Mount is a true asset locally and nationally, and that is a unique testament to the work of a woman. She said it is the perfect time for the CPC to support this effort. Olga also noted the Mount is generous with the town and keeps their beautiful grounds open for free to the public. She said they have always presented logical projects and found this to be more of the same. TD seconded OW's remarks.

FK made a motion to take \$125,000 from the Historical unreserved balance. OW seconded. There was a roll call vote

TD: aye, MS: aye, FK: aye, OW; aye. The motion passed.

b. Lenox Affordable Housing Trust, \$150,000

TD introduced the request from the LAHT for \$150,000 from the Community Housing "sleeve". He suggested the application highlighted things the Trust has already done or are in the midst of doing already. TD asked again if there was something the CPC funds would go toward specifically. Marybeth Mitts made some remarks in response. She noted she had not had the fund balance prior to the application. She said these were activities they hope to do and are targeted toward home ownership. But in looking at the fund balance, she thinks it is secure: they have about \$332,000. This is plenty to do with what we have on board. She asked to table the LAHT application this evening, in an effort to meet with the Trust and then either amend it or withdraw it. TD asked why they would table it instead of withdrawing it. Marybeth Mitts said they may withdraw it. TD explained he wasn't quite sure how to handle this procedurally. FK suggested by

tabling it they could come back with a revised requested downward, but a new request of more than before would require a new application. He also noted he would like an additional meeting to learn more and talk about it. The Committee accepted the request to table the application.

c. Pennrose, LLC, request for \$975,000

TD asked for a quick project update, OW wondered how things were going with the abutting neighbor, The Marriott hotel. Charlie Adams said the site plan tweaks to work with the neighbor won't change the financing of the project and that what the CPC has before them won't materially change.

OW asked if there is anything happening that would delay the project. Becca Schofield said that getting approval in March instead of February will still set up their request for tax credit financing.

MS believed Frederick had gotten into the large request last time; and there was some discussion of phasing the distribution. He would like to know how that would work. He is in favor of the project and wants to see it go forward.

FK questioned last time if they needed the town's money upfront, or if a commitment could be sufficient since the town doesn't have those funds in hand but that the town could split the distribution over two years. Charlie Adams confirmed this could work.

MS said that makes sense. He wondered how it would actually work. Would we approve the application for this request, and then have another vote? Or how would this be structured?

FK suggested a few different ways: we could set a dollar amount and have contingencies with x amount of dollars being released Year 1, x amount Year 2, etc. We could take their application and bring it down in scale for this year and have them come back in future years and ask for more funds. We don't want to see funds going toward something that won't happen—like to pay for drawings or professional fees. Could we table this application as well, so we could meet and talk about how we can better address this and work with Pennrose? Would like to have a meeting to discuss these things. The Town Manager, Selectboard and Finance Committee have said they would be willing to participate.

Charlie Adams described a way they would be comfortable structuring the grant from the CPC. Becca agreed this would be a good next step, explaining they will be grateful for the local commitment. The state looks for a local commitment for the tax credit application; it makes them competitive. FK asks what the timeline is for the tax credit application? Charlie Adams said the town meeting timeline and July 1 availability will be fine for their timing to apply for tax credits. It will take 6 months from receipt of the credits to get to closing.

TD suggested they table the application until the 14th (of February) and can all come back after some informed discussions with the Town Manager and Selectboard. Becca asked who the point person will be for scheduling. TD deferred to Chris Ketchen; who said this is a hugely important project to the Selectboard. TD suggested forming a subcommittee of the CPC with the Town Manager and members of the Selectboard. CPC will be represented by FK, MS and TD. Marybeth said she would be there too.

MS confirmed that the Town Manager will set up some subsequent meetings with everybody.

FK moved to adjourn. KMV asked if they were taking questions from the public. TD said not at this time. All were in favor via roll call.