**COMMUNITY PRESERVATION COMMITTEE**
**TOWN OF NEEDHAM, MASSACHUSETTS**

**Minutes of Public Hearing**
**March 9, 2011**

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| **Present:** | Jane Howard – Chairman, Mark Gluesing – Vice Chair, Janet Bernardo, Bruce Eisenhut, Reg Foster, Lita Young |
| **Absent:** | Carol Boulris, Mike Retzky |
| **Town Staff:** | Patricia Carey, Staff Liaison<br>Nicole DiCicco, Recording Secretary |
| **Guests:** | Pamela Allen, Needham Housing Authority<br>John Comando, Town Meeting Member<br>Gail Davis, Town Meeting Member/ League of Women Voters<br>Paul Durda, Town Meeting Member<br>Claire Fusano, League of Women Voters<br>Lisha Goldberg, League of Women Voters<br>John Grugan The Charles River Center<br>Kate Fitzpatrick, Needham Town Manager<br>Susan McGarvey, League of Women Voters<br>Maria McTernan, The Charles River Center<br>Sheila Pransky, Town Meeting Member<br>Karen Price, Town Meeting Member<br>Gerald Riley, The Charles River Center<br>Joan Smith, Town Meeting Member |

The meeting convened at 7:35PM in the Webster Room of the Public Services Administration Building (PSAB).

**<u>PUBLIC HEARING</u>:**

**<u>FY 2011-3 Preservation of Historic Documents</u>:** Town Manager Kate Fitzpatrick reviewed the project request, outlining the list of items found in the 1902 time capsule from Town Hall. The items have all been reviewed by a preservationist, and he recommends that the paper items be relaxed and flatted, the acidity leveled, and then placed in Mylar envelopes. They can be digitized for viewing, or be put into displays at times. Ms. Fitzpatrick stated that the original request of $20,000 was based on estimates but now that all of the items have been reviewed by a preservationist, the estimated cost is now $7,500. Ms. Howard opened the discussion to the audience for questions. No questions were presented, so Ms. Howard asked if the CPC had any remaining questions. Mr. Gluesing asked if the cost of scanning had been included in the final cost. Ms. Fitzpatrick informed the Committee that all steps necessary for the preservation of these artifacts had been included in the funding request.

**FY 2011-1 Charles River Center Group Homes Energy Improvements:** Gerald Riley and Maria McTernan, representing the Charles River Center, outlined their project proposal, to replace the windows and doors at the three oldest group homes, Salamone House, Stott House and Mountain House. Three bids have been sought, and the lowest is $110,000, from the contractor who did the replacement work at the group home on Webster Street, a project recently funded with Community Preservation funds. The Charles River Center continues to look at alternate funding sources. Most energy saving grants are not awarded to non-profit group homes, but two possible opportunities were found and the Charles River Center has submitted applications. If approved, one grant would provide $25,000 and the second grant would provide $15,000. It is anticipated that the energy savings would be similar to the Webster Street home, estimated at an 18% savings. Ms. Howard invited questions from the audience. John Comando asked if the Charles River Center had a capital project plan. Mr. Riley noted that it did, but did not receive funding for capital improvements. Ms. McTernan noted the efforts put into fundraising, but that most donors chose to donate towards programs and not towards capital improvements. Sheila Pransky asked if the Charles River Center paid any type of contribution in lieu of taxes to Needham. Mr. Riley said that the Charles River Center did not pay a contribution in lieu of taxes. Mrs. Pransky asked if the units were considered affordable housing, and how many units they had. Mr. Riley noted that the Charles River Center had 9 group homes with 53 units in Needham and that all individual units were part of Needham's inventory for affordable residences. Ms. Bernardo asked if additional information on fundraising could be provided. Ms. McTernan listed the annual appeal, special events, and grants as the major sources of privately raised funds. All of these sources are directed to specific uses, and typically not for capital improvements. Mrs. Pransky asked if the CPA-funded boiler replacement project was at these three group homes last year, and Mr. Riley noted that was correct. It was suggested that the Charles River Center provide information on other capital projects to show that CPA funding was not the only source for capital improvement funds. Ms. Bernardo noted that the request was for a range of $110,000-$140,000. Mr. Riley asked that the specific request be for $125,000 which would cover the estimates received, and allow for a contingency for unforeseen issues. Since payment of bills is approved by the Town Manager, any unused funds would not be available to the Charles River Center. Mrs. Pransky noted that the $125,000 was about half of what was annually placed in the Community Housing "bucket." Gail Davis asked if CPA funds in other communities had been awarded to the Charles River Center. Mr. Riley noted that the Charles River Center has group homes in other towns with CPA and each of those communities has provided funds to at least one project each. Mr. Gluesing noted that the Charles River Center had been awarded a total of $70,000 in prior years from Needham's CPA. Mr. Riley noted that the contractors that have done the prior work have most likely donated part of the funds for the projects by reducing their rates.

**<u>FY 2011-2 Needham Housing Authority Redevelopment and Expansion of Linden/Chambers/High Rock Properties</u>:** The Executive Director of the Needham Housing Authority Pam Allen made a presentation that outlined the current layout and conditions of the properties and facilities in the High Rock/Linden/Chambers area. The proposed study would create a Master Plan for all of the property, and recommend improvements that would not only increase the available living space, but create appropriate homes and accessibility. Mr. Eisenhut asked how many of the new High Rock Homes units were occupied. Ms. Allen stated that the 20 rental units are occupied, and 19 of the 20 affordable units have been sold at 80% AMI. Ms. Bernardo noted that the rental units were owned by Needham Housing Authority and HUD, and that the Town of Needham did not own affordable housing units. Ms. Allen noted that the Housing Authority has applied to have 60 units to become federally funded, and that they are utilizing American Re-Investment Act funds to update the kitchens, baths, roofs and walkways to meet the criteria.

As there were no other questions, Ms. Howard closed the public hearing at 8:30 PM.

**<u>Review and Input from Board of Selectmen and Finance Committee</u>:** Ms. Howard, Mr. Gluesing and Ms. Carey attended meetings with the Board of Selectmen and the Finance Committee. Ms. Howard presented the three project proposals and sought input from the two boards. Neither board had any major concerns about the three projects. Once the CPC has voted on their recommendations, both boards will address the projects again and determine on their recommendations to Town Meeting.

Ms. Howard noted that the Board of Selectmen discussed the legislation that would amend the CPC to clarify the wording for recreation purposes. The Board of Selectmen supports the changing of the wording.

**<u>Committee Vote of Projects</u>:** It was the consensus of the Committee that there was adequate information available to them to discuss and vote on the three project proposals tonight.

**<u>FY 2011-3 Preservation of Historic Documents</u>: Mr. Eisenhut made a motion to recommend approval to Town Meeting to authorize $7,500 to the Town Manager for the preservation of historic documents from the Town Hall 1902 time capsule from the historic preservation reserve. Ms. Bernardo seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously.**

**<u>FY 2011-2 Needham Housing Authority Redevelopment and Expansion of Linden/Chambers/High Rock Properties</u>: Mr. Eisenhut made a motion to recommend approval to Town Meeting to authorize $50,000 to the Needham Housing Authority for the creation of a Master Plan for the High Rock/Linden/Chambers parcels from the community housing reserve. The motion was seconded by Ms. Bernardo.** Mr. Gluesing noted that he supported the concept of expanding availability of housing within existing land, and in some instances underutilized land. **The motion was approved unanimously.**

<u>**FY 2011-1 Charles River Center Group Homes Energy Improvements:**</u> **Mr. Eisenhut made a motion to recommend approval to Town Meeting of $32,000 to the Charles River Center for the replacement of windows and doors at Mountain House from the community housing reserve, with the right for the Charles River Center to return in subsequent years to request funding for the other group homes. Mr. Foster seconded the motion.** Mr. Foster noted that he had seconded the motion to allow for a discussion. Mr. Foster noted that the concept of asking organizations to seek matching funds was a worthy discussion, as the state contribution to the CPC funds were decreasing. Mr. Eisenhut felt that the Charles River Center shouldn't be an annual "budget item" in the CPC budget. He was concerned that the request was about half of the annual appropriation to the "bucket." Ms. Bernardo noted that both the Charles River Center and the Housing Authority were private organizations and that the Housing Authority actually received more federal and state funding than the Charles River Center. Ms. Young noted that the CPC was voting on the worthiness of a project and that it was up to Town Meeting to make the determination on whether to appropriate the funds or not. She asked if the project was deemed not to be worthy? Ms. Howard reminded the CPC that the Charles River Center was waiting to hear if they would receive two grants, totaling $40,000. Mr. Gluesing stated that the Charles River Center did significant fundraising for their budget, so that the CPC was not their only funding source. He noted that the Housing Authority was working towards a large project, so he was not comfortable with recommending $125,000 for the Charles River Center. He suggested an amount of $80,000 that would allow the Charles River Center to make the most needed changes, and if they received the two grants, the full project would be able to be completed. **Mr. Gluesing made a friendly amendment to the motion, changing the recommended funding total to $80,000 from the community housing reserve. Mr. Eisenhut seconded the motion. Mr. Eisenhut made a friendly amendment to his motion, adding a requirement that a deed restriction be required for a term approved by Town Counsel, and Mr. Gluesing seconded the amended motion. The original motion, with the two amendments, was unanimously approved.**

<u>**Next Steps**</u>**:** Ms. Carey will notify the Town Manager and the Finance Committee about the votes taken tonight, so that they may proceed with their discussions and votes. She provided the draft sections from the Town Meeting warrant with the CPC warrant articles. The first debt payment for Town Hall from CPA funds is shown in the Operating Budget article, and is deducted from the total to be authorized for CPA in a later article. Mr. Eisenhut asked how long the debt service was for, and Ms. Carey stated it was 20 years. Karen Price asked if the CPC's report to Town Meeting could be sent out prior to the League of Women Voters warrant meetings. Ms. Carey said the report is typically finished before the meeting, but that it went out with a general mailing to Town Meeting members. She will ask about having the packet go out prior to the LWV meeting. John Comando asked if unused funds from prior projects could be returned to

the CPC. Ms. Carey noted that most projects were completed and they only received the needed funds. One major project that has not been completed is the bridge project at Ridge Hill, as the awarded funds were not sufficient for the full project. Ms. Howard recommended that any project that did not receive enough funding should come back to the Committee for a discussion about funding and whether a new appropriation should be requested. Mr. Foster asked for an update on the parcel at 174 Charles River Street. Ms. Carey stated that the house and basement had been removed, and that the basement was backfilled for safety. The remainder of the project will wait for a decision at Town Meeting on a funding request for Walker-Gordon Field improvements. If approved, the two projects would be bid together. The next meeting will be on April 13th. Ms. Carey stated that the Town's housing consultant and representatives of the Chapter 40B Working Group have asked to attend the meeting to review questions for their report.

**Adjournment:** Ms. Bernardo made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:10 PM. Mr. Gluesing seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved and the meeting was adjourned at 9:10 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Nicole DiCicco
Recording Secretary