

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

**Minutes of Meeting
January 10, 2018**

PRESENT: Gary Crossen - Chairman, Paul Alpert – Vice Chairman, Bob Dermody, Peter Pingitore, Artie Crocker, Bob Boder, Chris Gerstel

ABSENT: Artie Crocker

STAFF: Patricia Carey, Staff Liaison
Carys Lustig, Staff Liaison
Kristen Wright, Recording Secretary

GUEST: Anne Gulati, Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Operations

Mr. Crossen called the meeting to order at 7:31 PM in the Highland Room at Town Hall.

Chairman Updates

Mr. Crossen and Ms. Carey will attend the Board of Selectmen's meeting on February 27th to consult on the proposals under review. A consultation meeting with the Finance Committee will also be set up.

Determination of Eligibility

FY2018-4 Pre-School Playground Shade Structure

This request is for \$45,150 for the purchase and installation of a custom shade structure at Newman Elementary School under Recreation. The Committee reviewed the handout regarding the CPA definition of Outdoor Recreation (Appendix A). Mr. Pingitore stated that this project fits into both rehabilitation and capital improvements under the provided definition. Mr. Crocker stated that this structure appeared to be a permanent beam with a fabric cover, possibly made of canvas. Mr. Pingitore asked if the structure would come down. Ms. Carey stated that it may come down in the winter for storage. The shade structure is a safety addition to the playground. Mr. Crossen stated that he would consider this to be a capital improvement project.

FY2018-5 Mitchell School Playground

This request is for \$300,000 to replace playground equipment at Mitchell Elementary School requested under Recreation. Mr. Pingitore asked that when the school is renovated, at a later date, is the plan to disassemble this playground equipment and move it. Ms. Carey stated that there is no final plan for Mitchell at this time, so if need be, the equipment can be moved on the site to its permanent location. Assistant Superintendent Anne Gulati stated that Mitchell Elementary is the next school to be renovated once the Williams school has been completed.

Mr. Alpert made a motion that proposals FY2018-4 and FY2018-5 are both eligible for CPA funding under Recreation. The motion was seconded by Mr. Pingitore and was approved unanimously. Mr. Crossen stated that Mr. Pingitore would be the liaison for both projects.

Ms. Gulati stated that the School Committee is in the process of reviewing their revolving fund balances and may be able to supplement some of the funds requested for both projects.

In regards to the School Administration Building request, Mr. Boder stated that Emery Grover is an historic property and that the plan needs to be submitted to the Historic Commission for approval. Ms. Gulati stated that it is the intent and desire of the School Department to keep Emery Grover a historic site.

Liaison Updates

FY2018-1 Rosemary Sediment Removal Liaison: Paul Alpert

Mr. Alpert provided an update to the Committees' questions. Mr. Alpert stated that past water quality improvement projects have been funded by the Town's general fund and capital improvement plans. The Town has been working with the EPA on all water improvement projects and now that all water that leads into Rosemary Lake has been improved, this dredging project is the next step to continue the Town's efforts to improve the quality of all water bodies overseen by the Town. If the CPC does not fund this project, this will fall to the Town budget for future funding. While there is currently no specific deadline to complete this project, without this project, the brook that leads out of Rosemary Lake will continue to be polluted and the water quality of Rosemary Lake will not improve. Costs will likely increase if the project is delayed. Mr. Dermody asked where the sediment would be transported to, and Ms. Carey responded that most of the sediment is being transported within the state but some that has natural arsenic will be transported out of state.. Mr. Alpert noted that this project is not connected with the Rosemary Recreation Complex project due to timing, though there would have been financial benefits to aligning the two projects. Mr. Alpert stated that he does not feel that this is an Open Space project but a Recreation project rehabilitation or restoration of a site with recreational aspects. Ms. Carey stated that whenever the Rosemary Recreation Complex project was discussed last year, including two public meetings, the Rosemary Sediment project was also mentioned, and public input was received at prior CPC public hearings. Mr. Alpert stated that the permitting is completed and and the Conservation Commission has issued an Order of Conditions, which have been appealed by a resident to the Department of Environmental Protection. Mr. Pingitore asked what the level of toxicity is and what does that mean, what is the urgency of the project as it was deferred last year. Mr. Alpert stated that it is not urgent enough that it needs to be completed immediately, , but the EPA regulations were issued and under those regulations the Rosemary Lake is a toxic waterbody and this project should be completed sooner rather than later. Mr. Crossen stated this project was deferred last year but this is a part of a bigger project that has been in the works for year to improve the water quality of the Town.

FY2018-2 Rosemary Camp Property Trail Liaison: Robert Boder

Mr. Boder presented the answers to the Committee's questions (Appendix B). Mr. Dermody asked when the buildings were constructed at the camp property.t. Ms. Carey was not sure, but assumed about the 1940's, when the property was owned by the McCrackens. Mr. Dermody asked when the buildings were last used. Ms. Carey noted that it has been several years since Needham Girl Scouts requested use, and the regional council stopped using the site for Camp Malcolm in the mid-1990's. Mr. Alpert asked if the costs were high for the buildings, but Ms. Carey noted that access to the site was challenging. Two other projects related to Rosemary Trails are scheduled, with the Rosemary Recreation Complex project repairing the trail head from the parking lot. A request to host the Student Conservation Association to rebuild a bridge and do some trail repairs has been made, funded through a prior CPC appropriation.

FY2018-3 Emery Grover Historic Building Liaison: Bob Dermody

Mr. Dermody discussed answers to the Committee's questions. Mr. Dermody stated that in the Feasibility Study from 2013 there were four items being studied: (a) identify other Town sites for the School Administration Offices; (b) renovate the current facility; (c) renovate a different Town building for school administration offices; and (d) new construction at the Emery Grover site or other sites in Town. School Administration's preference is to remain in the same location and renovate the historic Emery Grover building. Mr. Dermody stated that this proposal is to update the budget on the renovation and provide more details on renovation. The 2013 study was funded by the Town's General Fund and there is not currently any funds in the School Department budget to fund the new study. The Committee discussed different funding options for this project.

FY2018-6 Memorial Park Field House Liaison: Bob Dermody

Mr. Dermody discussed answers to the Committee's questions. Only portions of this project are eligible to be funded by the CPC, if they are related to outdoor recreation uses at the park. There has been no private fundraising to help fund this project. Current users are known, and there will potentially be additional Needham organizations requesting use. Mr. Crossen asked if the building footprint would remain the same. Mr. Gerstel stated that it would be slightly bigger, and Ms. Carey added that some footprint changes were related to current zoning requirements.

FY2018-7 Historic Collection Database Completion Liaison: Artie Crocker

Mr. Crocker sent in written responses to the Committee's questions (Appendix C).

FY2018-8 Cooks Bridge Renovation Project Liaison: Chris Gerstel

Mr. Pingitore stated that, after some consideration, the Housing Authority is working on a full review of projects and may withdraw their proposal, at their upcoming meeting. He will provide an update on the decision at the next meeting.

FY2018-9 Preservation of Open Space – Purchase of Land

No updates to present.

Next Steps

Proponents will be asked to come to present their projects as follows: January 24: Rosemary Sediment Removal, Rosemary Camp Property Trail, and Memorial Park Field house; February 14: Pre-School Playground Shade Structure, Mitchell School Playground, Emery Grover Historic Building, and Historic Database Completion.

Minutes: December 13, 2017

Mr. Gerstel made a motion to approve the minutes of the December 10, 2017 meetings and the motion was seconded by Mr. Boder. The minutes were approved unanimously.

Adjournment:

Mr. Alpert made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:06PM. Mr. Gerstel seconded the motion and the meeting adjourned at 9:06PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Kristen Wright
Recording Secretary

Land For Recreational Use (Outdoor Recreation)

Section 2 also defines recreational use. The focus for CPA recreational projects is on **outdoor** passive or active recreation, such as (but not limited to) the use of land for:

- Community gardens
- Trails
- Noncommercial youth and adult sports
- Parks, playgrounds or athletic fields

CPA funds may not be spent on ordinary maintenance or annual operating expenses; only capital improvements are allowed. In addition, CPA funds may not be used for horse or dog racing facilities, or for a stadium, gymnasium, or similar structure. This prohibition has generally been interpreted to mean that CPA funds may be used only for outdoor, land-based recreational uses and facilities.

CPA funds may be used for the acquisition of land to be used for recreation, or for the creation of new recreational facilities on land a community already owns. A 2012 amendment to CPA broadened the law to also allow for the rehabilitation of existing, outdoor recreational facilities. The amendment made it clear that with respect to land for recreational use, "rehabilitation" could include the replacement of playground equipment and other capital improvements to the land or the facilities thereon to make them more functional for their intended recreational use.

Another change ushered in by the 2012 amendment was a prohibition on the use of CPA funds for the acquisition of artificial turf for athletic fields. Communities may still use their CPA funds for other aspects of a field project, but must appropriate non-CPA funds to acquire the artificial turf surface.

Needham CPC Playground Projects

- Greene's Field – total replacement of playground equipment
- Newman Preschool Playground – replace surfacing material with poured-in-place surfacing to make it more functional under ADA regulations

FY2018-2 Rosemary Camp Property Trail (Liaison: Bob Boder)

Responses from Director of Park and Recreation Patty Carey

- Please clarify the scope of the project; is it simply to demolish three existing buildings on the campsite?

This funding request is for demolition of the buildings, as phase one of the long-term vision.

- Please confirm Town ownership of the campsite.

The McCracken family deeded the property to the Town (under Park and Recreation) in mid 1980's. In May 2017, Town Meeting approved a consolidation plan for all of the Rosemary parcels into one, including eminent domain to make sure there were no lingering issues on any of the parcels.

- If the project also includes renovating the trail system, please detail this aspect.

The future project will include some trail improvements, but keeping the current trail system natural look – nothing major like has been done at Newman/Eastman or Reservoir trail.

With existing funding for Student Conservation Association, a project to replace a small bridge can be done this summer, if it fits in to their schedule. An application has been submitted to SCA.

It is likely Park and Recreation would look to later install some type of picnic pavilion in place of the larger building.

- How does this project fit in with the recently completed “5-year open space and recreation plan for the Town”

The plan discusses trail improvements and access to Town properties for passive recreation use. This also is part of the long-term vision for the Rosemary property, improving all outdoor recreation aspects, including use of the trails.

The trail system is centrally located in Needham, and also is a pedestrian connection from Highland Avenue to Nehoiden Street neighborhoods and the homes on Lake Street/Garden Street, without the need to go through the Town center. It connects pedestrians to the Library, Memorial Park and High School.

- What are the increases in operational costs, if any, as a result of this project, and how will those costs be covered?

Current costs would be reduced. The need to clean up after vandalism or make other safety repairs would be much less.

- Please detail the community input that resulted in this proposal.

The Park and Recreation Commission included discussions about the camp property and trail system in all meetings related to the Rosemary Recreation Complex. Tours of the site included both the pool side of the property, as well as the trail side.

- With what other resources is the project being funded?

There is no other funding, currently, for the demolition project. The replacement of the bridge over the stream would be done with previously approved CPA funds for Student Conservation Association.

- If CPC money is not approved, what will happen to the project?

Town resources will continue to handle vandalism issues. The concern is that the level of vandalism may grow as the buildings continue to deteriorate.

- How will land/ground be restored upon removal of structures?

Ground will be leveled off. There are no basements, so minimal fill would be needed. A permit through Conservation Commission is likely needed for any work due to proximity to streams and lake. Demolition permits are required from several departments.

1. Procedures – what the project includes:

- Creation of artifact database and entry of data for each catalogued artifact (includes object description, dimensions, materials, approx. date of creation; ownership and/or artist-creator history; photographs; storage information and location; other possible data – evaluation and appraisal history, exhibit and loan history, link to other people, objects, or collections in database. The database program in use is **PastPerfect**, which is the standard collections database for small museums.
- Creation of an archival database for books, documents and photos – the database program includes modules for these as well. Although we are not pursuing this as deeply right now as the cataloguing of the artifacts, we are scanning and entering the historic photos and some of the primary (historic) documents, especially when they are part of highly-requested collections or are related to the artifact collections.
- Rehousing of objects and collections into appropriate storage conditions – clean and supportive mounts, containers, etc; improved shelving that maximizes space efficiency and accessibility; shelf organization protocols, location labels, etc for retrieval; box labels and photos to maximize retrieval and minimize disturbance (*ie, if the box is properly labeled and a good photo attached, you can find what you need readily without unnecessary and damaging unpacking/repacking*)
- Creation of files (paper and digital) for collections and accession/ownership histories – by collection and/or acquisition (overall for collection, not item-by-item)
- Creation of thematic database categories (“virtual collections”) for use in research and retrieval to facilitate public access – ie, we record data primarily as “accessions” – a group of items given at one time by a donor. These might be related to each other (such as memorabilia from the 100th Needham-Wellesley game) or unrelated (such as various Needham items from someone’s parents home). Requests, however, tend to be thematic – “What do you have about the Needham-Wellesley Game?” – so items in numerous accessions need to also be linked by theme, and these themes need to be searchable. The better the thematic links, the better information we can provide.
- Creation of web-based “virtual exhibits” – provides public online access to collections information. Our first virtual exhibit (which will be posted by this time this application is submitted) will feature our “History of Needham in 100 Objects” exhibit, but future ones will cover other exhibits (current and past, such as “World War 1” and “Needham Center-Needham Heights”), and also use the thematic categories to provide online collections information to the public, and to create information portals on specific topics (ie, Native Americans in Needham) for the schools
- Ongoing and maintenance – while the first part of this effort is to create and complete the catalogue database for the current collections, the ongoing strategy is to maintain these procedures for new acquisitions going forward, and to continue to create virtual collections and virtual exhibits as a way of expanding public access to our collections and information. The NHC&M is in the midst of a strategic planning process to incorporate the salary support for the cataloguer in our operating budget, but this will take a couple of years to achieve.

2. How much overall is done: The CPC provided us with a grant for \$25,000 in May 2012 to begin this project, and which funded it from September 2013 – August 2016. Since that time, the project has been supported by additional grant funding. Progress so far:

- The database (PastPerfect) was purchased and its protocols have been created, including field definitions, data standards, and nomenclature standards (so data is entered with consistent categories and terminology); this necessary first step is complete.
- Staff and volunteers have been trained in the use of the database (currently 5 licensed users).
- Functional modules have been purchased and added to extend the utility of the database to include virtual exhibits, incorporate media, and network the program for multiple users.
- Data Records have been entered into PastPerfect in full for about 1000 artifacts and 500 books, with an equal number of partial records being researched for completion
- Rehousing – about 80% of the objects have been rehoused in new boxes or folders
- Photographs – all rehoused objects have had record photos taken
- Virtual exhibit – the pilot exhibit, *The History of Needham in 100 Objects*, will be available online within the next few weeks; others in planning.
- Photo scanning – about 1500 of the historic photos (approx. 25% of total) have been scanned and given partial data records; these will be given full database records at a later date. The full data for the photos was recorded in an earlier database (FileMaker Pro), and will be transferred into PastPerfect

3. How much overall remains to be done:

- Data records for the remaining objects, photos, and books
- Installation of new shelving to make the layout and capacity of the storage room more efficient
- Rehousing and record photography for the remainder of the objects
- Scanning of the historic photos, and creation of full data records for this collection
- Creation of new virtual exhibits and thematic searches for public access

4. Budget breakdown – June 2018-June 2020 (two years) - \$38,500 total

- Salaries –
 - **Cataloguer - Susan Jarvis (resume will be attached) - \$25,000 (requested from CPC) = c. 12 hrs/wk @ \$25/hr for c. 85 weeks**
 - Supervisor – Gloria Greis, Exec. Director – c. 2 hrs/wk @ \$35/hr for c. 85 weeks = c. \$6000 (funded by Needham History Center & Museum)
- Shelving - \$5000 (funded by NHC&M)*
- Conservation supplies (archival boxes, tissue, folders, etc) - \$2500 (funded by NCH&M)*
**still working on the overall budget – these are the approx. totals so far. Will itemize in final request. All additional materials, labor, etc will be funded by NCH&M)*

Will there be a further request from the CPC later? We will not be making further requests to the CPC for this project. The initial CPC funding, and the other grant funding that followed has

brought us to roughly 75% completion. The additional request, if granted will provide support to complete the catalogue and restorage of the current collections in about two years, by which time we expect to be able to provide ongoing support within the Needham History Center's operating budget.

The cataloguing work that we have been able to complete so far has immeasurably improved our ability to present our collections through exhibits, provide information to the public, and create community partnerships around exhibits and projects. The increase in our public visibility through these partnerships and projects speaks for itself. We would like to keep up this momentum by completing the catalogue sooner rather than later, and go forward with new ways to make our assets available in the community.