



City of Lowell – Community Preservation Committee

Community Preservation Committee Meeting Minutes

Thursday, February 11, 2021 6:00 p.m.

Conducted via Zoom

Note: These minutes are not completed verbatim. For a recording of the meeting, visit www.ltc.org

Members Present

Adam Baacke, Chairman
Eric Slagle, Vice Chairman
Troy Depeiza, Member
Sinead Gallivan, Member
John Linnehan, Member
Sidney Liang, Member
Diane Tradd, Member

Members Absent

Philip Shea, Member
Bradley Buitenhuys, Member

Others Present

Fran Cigliano, Senior Planner
Dylan Ricker, Assistant Planner

A quorum of the Committee was present. Eric Slagle called the meeting to order at 6:00pm.

I. Minutes for Approval

II. Continued Business

III. New Business

IV. Other Business

Introductions

E. Slagle asked all members to first introduce themselves. Eric Slagle introduced himself as the Director of Development Services, an ex-officio member of the Committee.

D. Tradd introduced herself as the Assistant City Manager and Director of The Department of Planning and Development, also an ex-officio and will be replaced when she retires.

S. Gallivan introduced herself as a Planning Board member since January 2020 and currently an Architect and Campus Planner with Brown University, and works on their Public Art Plan. She has lived in Lowell for 5 years.

J. Linnehan said that he is Chairman of the Board of Parks, and was appointed to the Committee due to this position.

T. Depeiza said that he has been a Lowell resident since 1997, currently serves on the Lowell Historic Board, and operates the Dream Collaborative in Boston as an architect.

S. Liang said that he works at Lowell Community Health Center as a Program Director, and is a community advocate. He was appointed to the Committee by the City Manager.

A. Baacke said that was appointed to the Committee by the City Manager as a Lowell resident. He currently serves as Director of Planning and Development at UMass Lowell and was previously the Director of the Department of Planning and Development for the City of Lowell. He says he is interested in the Community Preservation Committee and wrote his capstone for his Master's on the Community Preservation Act and its challenges for cities.

Meet DPD Staff Administering the CPC

E. Slagle introduced the staff that will be working with the Committee. He introduced Senior Planner, Fran Cigliano.

F. Cigliano said that she is the Senior Planner, has been working with the city for 1.5 years and is interested in seeing the different applications that come in.

E. Slagle introduced Dylan Ricker as the new Assistant Planner for the Committee.

D. Ricker introduced himself as the new Assistant Planner, he said he previously worked at both CTI, and Congresswoman Tsongas's Office, and is interested in the projects that will come in.

E. Slagle commented that there are two additional planners on staff as well.

Elect Chair and Vice-Chair

E. Slagle said that the Committee must now elect a Chairman and Vice Chairman. He asked the Committee for their thoughts.

S. Liang asked about the position's duties. E. Slagle explained the responsibilities, running the meetings, serving as the primary point of contact for staff for administrative issues, and communicating staff about potentially controversial projects. The Vice Chairman fills in for the Chairman in their absence.

A. Baacke asked whether the City would prefer an ex-officio member or non-ex-officio member to serve as Chairman. E. Slagle said the City has not considered this, and has not expressed an opinion. E. Slagle commented that he supervises staff, and will be working with applications, which may make serving as Chairman complicated. E. Slagle said that he would happily serve as Vice Chairman.

A. Baacke said he would support nominating E. Slagle as Vice Chairman.

J. Linnehan said that A. Baacke could serve as Chair. D. Tradd agreed saying that he knows the most about the CPA citing his capstone project, and knowledge of the program. A. Baacke said that he would be willing to serve as Chairman.

J. Linnehan motioned to appoint A. Baacke Chairman, E. Slagle seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously, (7-0).

D. Tradd motioned to appoint E. Slagle Vice Chairman, J. Linnehan seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously, (7-0).

Review Tentative Community Preservation Committee Schedule

E. Slagle said that the schedule for the first year would be slightly different than the permanent schedule in future years. E. Slagle commented that the Committee must create a Community Preservation Plan which the Committee will review then submit to the City Council. Once the plan is in place the City can begin accepting applications and begin the project review process.

E. Slagle asked what dates were used by other communities in the first year. D. Ricker said that the due dates were June 1 for Eligibility Forms, July 15 for Applications, and November 15 for final approval.

E. Slagle explained the pre-eligibility process as a form to be completed before the full application is submitted. This would have to be approved before a full application. The Committee would then have project presentations, and would vote on recommendations in November. Recommendations are sent to the City Council for final approval and appropriation of CPA funds. E. Slagle said in future years applications would start in the spring. E. Slagle asked for input from Committee members.

A. Baacke agrees with the plan. E. Slagle said the previously mentioned dates will only be used for this year.

E. Slagle said the Committee is required to meet 4 times per year, but the Committee will likely need to meet more frequently this year due to necessary approvals.

E. Slagle proposed the next meeting be March 25 at 6:30pm, and he said the staff would give a presentation on a proposed application process and Community Preservation Plan. E. Slagle said that future meetings will be held at 6:30pm to align with other City Boards and Commissions.

S. Liang asked how long meetings typically last. E. Slagle said that different Boards have different rules, and the Committee could set an end time for meetings at some point. E. Slagle proposed delaying setting an end time until there is a better understanding of how the process will work. He mentioned that it may make sense to set time limits for applicants to present projects which would depend on total number of applicants.

D. Tradd asked what the Community Preservation Committee requirements are and if Committee members are familiar. J. Linnehan said that it would be helpful to review the requirements.

E. Slagle explained the process, and background of the Committee. He said that the City put the Community Preservation Act to a vote in the November 2019 city election, and Lowell voters approved the ballot question. The City imposed a 1% surcharge on property taxes with some exceptions to fund the program. The state also provides matching funds, and currently the City has around \$1,000,000 in the fund. The CPA can fund 3 different types of projects: Historic Preservation, Open Space, and Affordable Housing, and the Act requires 10% of funds be allocated to each type of project. The Committee can decide where the remaining funds are spent. Maintenance projects are now approved uses for CPA funds and E. Slagle said that deferred maintenance projects may be a common type of application. The Committee makes a recommendation on projects which is then sent to the City Council for a final decision on the recommendations.

A. Baacke asked whether the Community Preservation Plan will describe city priorities along with the CPA process. E. Slagle said that it will do both. The plan will likely have priorities similar to those found in the city's Open Space and Recreation Plan. Historic Preservation and Housing plans will be set by City Council priorities, and will be broader.

S. Liang asked what happens if the City Council denies a project. E. Slagle said that the project is then denied and does not receive funding.

D. Tradd asked if funds can be used to create a housing plan. E. Slagle said that he is unsure and that during the eligibility process we will review whether particular projects are eligible.

A. Baacke asked whether the city currently has a housing plan. E. Slagle commented that the city has a master plan which can be used as a source for Community Preservation Plan priorities, and can be used for guidance.

S. Gallivan asked when the master plan will be updated. E. Slagle said spring 2020 was the projected start date, however it was delayed due to Covid. Staff is currently getting started, but it will be a multi-year process.

A. Baacke asked whether there will be an opportunity for public input in the Community Preservation Plan. He said this would be helpful to do community outreach to create the plan. Hearing from the City Council on their priorities to ensure there is alignment may be helpful as well.

E. Slagle agrees, and said that staff is aiming to get community input, and will determine how we can get the input citing how the City's current parking study plan is being done. E. Slagle mentioned questionnaires, and that DPD staff can bring drafts to the next meeting along with outreach materials.

A. Baacke asked if there is a simple summary of eligibility available so members can get more information. E. Slagle said that the Community Preservation Coalition has resources on their website.

E. Slagle opens the Committee for public comment on the process.

Jane Calvin, Lowell Parks and Conservation Trust, commented on the support for the CPA and supports how it was passed in the City. She is already receiving calls with interest in the CPA and her organization is very supportive. The toughest challenge is due to gray areas, but the program has been around long enough where most of the gray areas have been worked out. J. Calvin thanked members for serving.

E. Slagle thanked the community for their support in passing the CPA in Lowell, and the efforts by the non-profit community that helped accomplish this.

S. Liang asked who would provide oversight over CPA projects to ensure funds are being used appropriately. E. Slagle said that DPD staff will provide oversight similar to the oversight done with CDBG projects. They will ensure they receive reports and track that funding is used properly.

V. Notices

VI. Further Comments from Community Preservation Committee Members

VII. Adjournment

D. Tradd motioned to adjourn the meeting, A. Baacke seconded. The motion passed unanimously, (7-0). The time was 7:00pm.