



City of Lowell – Community Preservation Committee

Community Preservation Committee Meeting Minutes

Thursday, September 30, 2021 7:00 p.m.

Conducted in-person and via zoom

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

Members Present

Adam Baacke, Chair
Eric Slagle, Vice Chair
Sinead Gallivan, Member
Sidney Liang, Member
Bradley Buitenhuis, Member
Philip Shea, Member
Christine McCall, Member

Members Absent

John Linnehan, Member
Troy Depeiza, Member

Others Present

Dylan Ricker, Assistant Planner

A quorum of the Committee was present. A. Baacke called the meeting to order at 7:01pm. Members attending remotely include, Member Liang.

I. Minutes for Approval

9/2 Minutes

C. McCall motioned, and E. Slagle seconded the motion to approve the minutes. The motion passed unanimously, (7-0).

II. Continued Business

III. New Business

A. Baacke explained the purpose of the eligibility meeting is to determine whether applications were eligible and projects would not be approved funding at this meeting. A. Baacke asked that applicants keep their comments related to eligibility, and there will be an opportunity at the later meeting to discuss the merits of the projects.

Eligibility Application: 88 Middle Street, 01852

Middlesex Community College has applied to the Community Preservation Committee for an eligibility determination seeking \$458,708 of CPA funds for the Historic Preservation of the Derby Building located at 88 Middle Street. The applicant proposes to utilize funds to restore historic characteristics on the interior and exterior of the property. **The applicant is currently seeking an eligibility determination from the Community Preservation Committee.**

On Behalf:

Patrick Cook, Applicant

P. Cook stated that Middlesex Community College (MCC) has experience restoring downtown properties, and at the moment is focusing on the Middle Street corridor. P. Cook said this request is specifically for windows and they have been working with DCAM to ensure they are in line with Massachusetts historic preservation requirements. P. Cook added the intention is to beautify the Derby Building.

In Favor:

None

In Opposition:

None

Discussion:

None

Motion:

C. McCall motioned, and S. Gallivan seconded the motion to approve eligibility for Historic Preservation funding. The motion passed unanimously, (7-0).

Eligibility Application: 228 Worthen Street, 01852

Girls, Inc. has applied to the Community Preservation Committee for an eligibility determination seeking \$352,925 of CPA funds for a Historic Preservation project. The applicant proposes to utilize the funds to reimburse themselves for the purchase of the property, and for consulting fees. The property will be used for increased programming space and capacity. **The applicant is currently seeking an eligibility determination from the Community Preservation Committee.**

On Behalf:

Ashley Filipp, Applicant

A. Filipp stated that Girls, Inc. has been working with BVI Consulting to restore the historic building and it make it usable for the girls. A. Filipp stated they will be opening up windows in the building, will make the fireplaces working again, and will be adding lighting reflective of the time of the home. A. Filipp said they will be increasing the space for programming and will use the space to increase capacity.

In Favor:

None

In Opposition:

None

Discussion:

C. McCall sked what the consulting services were for. A. Filipp stated it is an architectural firm the applicant is working with to restore the building.

C. McCall asked whether reimbursements are eligible for CPA funding. D. Ricker said he believes these are eligible.

S. Liang reiterated C. McCall's eligibility question. B. Buitenhuis said that based on staff comments it appears reimbursement would be allowed.

B. Buitenhuis asked for more information related to the additional work that would be completed if the applicant was awarded CPA funding. A. Filipp stated they will be taking the building down to the studs and will be working with the Historic Board on the restoration. A. Filipp added there will be a courtyard which link the two properties.

B. Buitenhuis asked if any work is being done that is only able to be completed with the inclusion of CPA funds. A. Filipp said the funds will be used for additional projects.

E. Slagle asked for a detailed breakdown of the work because he is concerned that some of the work may not be eligible. ES said given the scope of work some of the work is likely to be ineligible.

A. Baacke reiterated the importance of ensuring all funds are used toward eligible projects.

Motion:

C. McCall motioned, and B. Buitenhuis seconded the motion to approve eligibility for Historic Preservation funding. The motion passed unanimously, (7-0).

Eligibility Application: 452-456 Broadway Street, 01854

Community Teamwork, Inc. has applied to the Community Preservation Committee for an eligibility determination seeking \$72,800 of CPA funds for the creation of affordable housing. The applicant proposes to develop the property at 452-456 Broadway Street into a 24-unit affordable housing development. The proposed units would be studio units serving the City of Lowell's homeless population. The applicant will use the funds for pre-development costs. **The applicant is currently seeking an eligibility determination from the Community Preservation Committee.**

On Behalf:

None

In Favor:

None

In Opposition:

None

Discussion:

None

Motion:

C. McCall motioned, and E. Slagle seconded the motion to approve eligibility for Community Housing funds. The motion passed unanimously, (6-0).

Eligibility Application: 243 Worthen Street, 01852

The Whistler House Museum of Art has applied to the Community Preservation Committee for an eligibility determination seeking \$400,000 of CPA funds for an Outdoor Recreation project. The applicant proposes to utilize the funds to expand and restore the existing park next to the Whistler House Museum of Art. **The applicant is currently seeking an eligibility determination from the Community Preservation Committee.**

A. Baacke recused himself.

On Behalf:

Sara Bogosian, Applicant

S. Bogosian stated that the Whistler House is a historic house and museum in Downtown Lowell. S. Bogosian said that the due to the increased need for space, the applicant intends to construct a 5,000 square foot addition, and the project will take the current park and expand it. S. Bogosian said the park is open to the public, and would provide recreational space for the public and local non-profits. S. Bogosian stated the space would provide more outdoor space for outdoor activities, and the applicant has been working with Reed Hildebrand on the project.

In Favor:

None

In Opposition:

None

Discussion:

C. McCall asked whether the applicant would be acquiring the property. S. Bogosian stated the Whistler House currently owns the property. C. McCall asked for clarification on the exact project being proposed. S. Bogosian said the Open Space will be expanded since the building will have a smaller footprint, and the park would complement the building and add to the total open space.

B. Buitenhuys noted that staff comments highlight the project as rehab and restoration of Open Space and Recreation.

S. Bogosian stated the building is historic and is part of the Downtown Lowell Historic District.

E. Slagle said the description of the project appears to be for the expansion and restoration of Open Space rather than Historic Preservation.

C. McCall stated that any improvements to the outdoor space would be eligible and asked for more details in the full application. E. Slagle agreed.

B. Buitenhuys asked for clarification on how long the project would be required to be open to the public if it is awarded CPA funds. D. Ricker stated he believes it would be required to be permanently open to the public.

Motion:

C. McCall motioned, and S. Gallivan seconded the motion to approve eligibility for Open Space and Outdoor Recreation funding. The motion passed unanimously, (6-0).

Eligibility Application: Downtown Lowell Building Restoration Loan Fund, 01852

The Lowell Development and Financial Corporation has applied to the Community Preservation Committee for an eligibility determination seeking \$1,000,000 of CPA for a Historic Preservation Loan Fund. The applicant proposes to use the funds to create a loan fund that will be used to lower interest rates, help developers defer payments, etc. with the goal of off-setting costs for Downtown developers to restore and preserve historic downtown buildings.

The applicant is currently seeking an eligibility determination from the Community Preservation Committee

On Behalf:

Allison Lamey, Applicant

A. Lamey stated that LDFC is a non-profit funding organization. A. Lamey said the application is to establish a loan pool dedicated to developers who intend to restore historic downtown buildings. A. Lamey stated the project is similar to the Historic Preservation Loan Fund the LDFC previously operated. A. Lamey said that in the past the LDFC worked with the National Parks Service to determine which projects were eligible.

In Favor:

None

In Opposition:

None

Discussion:

S. Liang asked if there was any precedence regarding CPA funding for loan program. A. Baacke stated there is precedence including the OnePlus program funded by the Boston CPA.

E. Slagle stated that he understands this as eligible based on the description and hopes that as part of a full application can provide the CPC with proposed guidelines for the fund. E. Slagle stated the guidelines must comply with the CPA, and as long as the guidelines meet CPC rules, then he would deem it eligible.

A. Baacke stated that any projects seeking to leverage CPA funds must be evaluated to ensure they are compliant with the CPA. A. Baacke stated this may be an opportunity to connect applicants who have applied to the CPC for Historic Preservation funding to stretch the funds.

A. Lamey stated that they would be happy to the CPC or a third party determine eligibility of projects receiving funding.

Motion:

B. Buitenhuis motioned, and C. McCall seconded the motion to approve eligibility for Historic Preservation funding. The motion passed unanimously, (7-0).

Eligibility Application: 375 Merrimack Street, 01852

The City of Lowell has applied to the Community Preservation Committee for an eligibility determination seeking \$473,713 of CPA funds for a Historic Preservation project. The applicant proposes to use the funds to restore stained glass within City Hall. **The applicant is currently seeking an eligibility determination from the Community Preservation Committee.**

On Behalf:

Stephen Stowell, Applicant

S. Stowell stated that 9 of the 24 stained glass windows in the application are located in the City Council Chambers. S. Stowell stated the funds would be used to restore 24 windows throughout City Hall including 2 which need full restoration. S. Stowell said he is hopeful that some of the work will be able to be undertaken.

In Favor:

None

In Opposition:

None

Discussion:

None

Motion:

P. Shea motioned, and E. Slagle seconded the motion to approve eligibility for Historic Preservation funding. The motion passed unanimously, (7-0).

Eligibility Application: 80 Gorham Street, 01852

New Gorham LLC has applied to the Community Preservation Committee for an eligibility determination seeking \$94,000 of CPA funds for a Historic Preservation project. The applicant proposes to utilize the funds to repair the façade and complete structural work at the historic property. The property has fallen into disrepair and requires significant structural work to make the building functional. **The applicant is currently seeking an eligibility determination from the Community Preservation Committee.**

On Behalf:

Leo Monteiro, Applicant

L. Monteiro stated that he is the property owner and developer of the property, and stated that the building has been vacant and condemned. L. Monteiro said that he has begun work on the property and recently completed demolition, and applications have been filed with the City's Land Use Boards. L. Monteiro said there are structural issues with the building which require major work and he is now working with Structures North to rehab the building. L. Monteiro stated that Structures North has significant experience working on similar building and proposed a different restoration strategy. L. Monteiro said the intention of the project is to completely rebuild the front façade while maintaining the historic characteristics of the building and added that the project needs to be addressed urgently.

In Favor:

None

In Opposition:

None

Discussion:

B. Buitenhuys asked the intended use of the building. L. Monteiro the building will have 5 residential units and 2 commercial spaces. L. Monteiro added the building has a rear addition which will be taken down and rebuilt and the addition will include 12 residential units.

A. Baacke asked whether the project is subject to Historic Board review. L. Monteiro confirmed this and stated he has been in contact with the City Historic Board Administrator and added that he is working on 62 Gorham Street as well.

A. Baacke asked if there is a significant cost difference in the new approach. L. Monteiro stated he believes it will be more expensive and he is currently working with the engineer and subcontractors to determine an estimate. L. Monteiro said he will not the full cost within the next few weeks. L. Monteiro stated that the new process includes taking the bricks down brick by brick and rebuilding the façade.

A. Baacke stated he does not see an issue with the final application having a higher request than the eligibility application, but at that time that would be the final request. L. Monteiro confirmed he will have the request by that time.

S. Gallivan asked for confirmation the scope of work meets the Secretary of State's Standard's for Rehabilitation. L. Monteiro confirmed this and stated the engineering team will address any such concerns.

Motion:

C. McCall motioned, and S. Gallivan seconded the motion to approve eligibility for Historic Preservation funding. The motion passed unanimously, (7-0).

Eligibility Application: Acre Crossing, 01852

Acre Crossing, LLC has applied to the Community Preservation Committee for an eligibility determination seeking \$760,000 of CPA funds for the creation of affordable housing. The applicant proposes to use the funds at the Acre Crossing development to aid the development of 32 two- and three-bedroom condos for first time homebuyers with incomes between 70% and 100% of the Area Median Income. **The applicant is currently seeking an eligibility determination from the Community Preservation Committee.**

On Behalf:

Bill Martin, Applicant's Representative

B. Martin stated the applicant will be building a parking area into the grade for the project with a parking deck above that is at grade with Market Street. B. Martin said that this proposal focuses only on the portion of the building which will include homeownership condos. B. Martin explained the elevations and site plan for the property.

B. Martin stated the project has challenges related to the cost of housing and the parking structure adds significant costs. B. Martin said the intention of the project is to create homeownership condos. B. Martin said the cost of materials, and other similar projects have experienced significantly increased construction costs recently. B. Martin said the project is fully permitted and has completed a market study that shows a need for the project. B. Martin stated the housing will be for individuals and families earning less than 100% AMI, and the project includes a mix of public and private funding. B. Martin said the applicant could accept an award over a two year period and the funding would buy down the cost of the units for low- and moderate-income homebuyers.

In Favor:

None

In Opposition:

None

Discussion:

A. Baacke clarified that the applicant is willing to place the necessary affordable restrictions on the units. B. Martin agreed and stated the units which benefits from the funding will be restricted.

Motion:

C. McCall motioned, and E. Slagle seconded the motion to approve eligibility for Community Housing funds. The motion passed unanimously, (7-0).

Eligibility Application: Clemente Park, 01851

The Clemente Park Committee has applied to the Community Preservation Committee for an eligibility determination seeking \$46,000 of CPA funds for an Outdoor Recreation project. The applicant proposes to use the funds for repairs and improvements at the Park. **The applicant is currently seeking an eligibility determination from the Community Preservation Committee.**

On Behalf:

Rothanak Sarath, Applicant

R. Sarath stated his goal is to make Lowell safer and a more fun place for kids. R. Sarath stated that he and his friends recently hosts a basketball tournament at the parking and notice that the parking used by the Boys and Girls Club of Lowell and was disappointed by the condition of the park. R. Sarath stated the basketball court had cracks making it

difficult to play, noted that the lines are too faded to see. R. Sarath said the volleyball court and benches are in poor condition as well.

R. Sarath noted the skate park in Clemente Park was used by US Olympic skateboarder Manny Santiago. R. Sarath said the skate park ramps were damaged and much of the playground equipment needs repairs or replacement. R. Sarath added that the playground needs to be remulched and needles are frequently found there. R. Sarath added that he had a petition from community members, and businesses in support of the work at Clemente Park.

In Favor:

None

In Opposition:

None

Discussion:

A. Baacke noted that the meeting was to determine eligibility and not for funding.

E. Slagle asked if the applicant had been in contact with the Parks Department to coordinate the efforts with the City. R. Sarath stated he had contacted one member of the Board of Parks.

C. McCall stated the park is one of the most utilized parks in the City and has been identified by the City as a project which needs improvements. C. McCall said not all of the requests in the application are eligible and recommended that the applicant work with the new Design Planner and Parks Department to create an application which meets all CPA requirements.

S. Liang agreed with C. McCall and stated the application should be more specific. S. Liang said he would like to see the park modernized and a concrete plan would be beneficial.

A. Baacke added that this park will benefit greatly from the proposed improvements. A. Baacke said the funds cannot be used for maintenance activities. A. Baacke said the funds can be used for comprehensive capital improvements to the park. A. Baacke stated that once the applicant works with City staff the final plan will likely be larger and could have a bigger impact on the park.

B. Buitenhuis stated the project should be found eligible since portions are eligible. B. Buitenhuis added that if the applicant brings forward a full application which is eligible it should be considered. E. Slagle agreed and added a condition that the applicant work with city staff to narrow the scope of the project to capital improvements.

Motion:

E. Slagle motioned, and C. McCall seconded the motion to approve eligibility for Open Space and Outdoor Recreation funds with the following condition:

- 1) The applicant shall work with City staff to create a full application which is entirely eligible for CPA funds.

The motion passed unanimously, (7-0).

Eligibility Application: OnePlus Lowell

The Merrimack Valley Housing Partnership has applied to the Community Preservation Committee for an eligibility determination seeking \$500,000 of CPA funding for the support of affordable housing. The applicant proposes to use the funds to start a homeownership program in the City. The program would use CPA funds to provide interest rate discounts on 30-year fixed rate mortgages for low- and moderate-income first time homebuyers. The program would

assist eligible homebuyers in the purchase of market-rate housing and higher priced, deed-restricted properties. **The applicant is currently seeking an eligibility determination from the Community Preservation Committee.**

On Behalf:

Cathy Mercado, Applicant

C. Mercado stated the project is intended to help low- and moderate-income Lowellians purchase homes in the City. C. Mercado said the funds will be used to buy-down interest rates and provide down payment assistance and closing cost assistance. C. Mercado stated the down payment assistance is not as helpful as it used to be given the current housing market, and added that the OnePlus program helps make purchasing a home affordable for individuals who want to stay within the City. C. Mercado said closing this gap will make Lowell affordable for Lowellians. C. Mercado noted that the real estate prices have increased recently, and this program will help close the generational wealth gap.

In Favor:

None

In Opposition:

None

Discussion:

E. Slagle stated that as part of the final application the applicant should include the number of properties you believe will be impacted by the OnePlus program. C. Mercado stated that units like the ones at Acre Crossing would be eligible, and added that the Boston CPA allocated \$3.8 million to their OnePlus program.

A. Baacke said that the questions the Committee is interested in is how many properties or units will the funds impact. A. Baacke asked whether the applicant is seeking ways to leverage private funding to support the program, and asked if the applicant is considering working with local financial institutions to leverage funds.

Motion:

C. McCall motioned, and B. Buitenhuis seconded the motion to approve eligibility for Community Housing funds. The motion passed unanimously, (7-0).

Eligibility Application: 1413-1415 Varnum Ave, 01854

Lowell Parks and Conservation Trust, Mass Audubon, and Mill City Grows has applied to the Community Preservation Committee for an eligibility determination seeking \$1,500,000 of CPA funds for an Open Space and Outdoor Recreation project. The applicant proposes to use the funding to protect Rollie's Farm and create an urban wildlife sanctuary and education center dedicated to local agriculture and community-based environmental education. The funds would be used to acquire and preserve two parcels. **The applicant is currently seeking an eligibility determination from the Community Preservation Committee.**

On Behalf:

Jane Calvin, Applicant

J. Calvin stated that the project has 3 partners, Lowell Parks and Conservation Trust, Mass Audubon, and Mill City Grows. J. Calvin said they have been working for several years to acquire the 2 parcels and they intend to permanently preserve these parcels. J. Calvin stated that both Lowell Parks and Conservation Trust and Mass Audubon are qualified land trusts. J. Calvin explained that the lower portion of the property will be farms, community gardens, and a children's playscape, and where the tree farm is located there will be a food forest and trails.

J. Calvin stated both properties combined equal 20 acres, and there is an additional 7 acre home lot which is excluded from the CPA application. Lowell Parks and Conservation Trust and Mass Audubon will own the property and the City has expressed interest in acquiring a preservation restriction, and added that they have been in contact with the City Manager.

J. Calvin stated the project will create a wildlife corridor with a scenic overlook. J. Calvin added there is a connection with several large parcels providing a connection to the State Forest. J. Calvin noted the application includes an early vision document and they intend to work with the City and neighborhood to create a final vision for the property.

Jessica Wilson, Applicant

J. Wilson stated that Mill City Grows is a partner and the project will provide equitable access to open space, food resources, and environmental education.

In Favor:

Councilor Rodney Elliott

R. Elliott stated he filed a motion to file a CPA application to preserve this property. R. Elliott said that the organizations have been on top of this project for a long time and it is important to ensure this resource is protected for the City and neighborhood. R. Elliott expressed his support for this application and hopes the Committee will look favorable upon the application. R. Elliott added that the parcels are a few of the last large tracts of open space and the entire City would benefit for generations to come.

In Opposition:

None

Discussion:

S. Liang asked that since there are two components of the project, whether one application would be sufficient. A. Baacke stated that since it is one project it can be a single application. S. Liang clarified that if the funds would ultimately be allocated at one time. A. Baacke stated that this can be sorted out based on the applicants full intentions.

E. Slagle asked the applicant to provide a detailed breakdown of how the funding will be used to delineate what is eligible and what the money is being spent on.

Motion:

C. McCall motioned, and E. Slagle seconded the motion to approve eligibility for Open Space and Outdoor Recreation funds. The motion passed unanimously, (7-0).

IV. Other Business

V. Notices

VI. Further Comments from Community Preservation Committee Members

E. Slagle proposed that the Committee address applications by breaking them down by category and holding meetings to hear presentations related to each category. E. Slagle added that deliberations could be saved for a single meeting after hearing each application since the application requests will exceed the total CPA reserves.

E. Slagle asked whether the Committee would provide staff direction to allow applicants to tell staff whether they can phase their projects. E. Slagle said this would be helpful in determining funding. C. McCall agreed with E. Slagle and

added that the CPC should make every effort to be in-person during the final deliberations to ensure transparency to the public.

B. Buitenhuis stated that he is concerned about needing the applicants at the meeting and something may get lost if there is too long before the determination. C. McCall said that the meeting may run too long if they deliberate and hear presentations at the same meeting.

A. Baacke suggested using the Citizen's Advisory Council's strategy and allow projects to present and use another meeting in which there are no presentations to deliberate. A. Baacke stated this Council faces similar challenges to the CPC with many great projects applying for limited funds.

A. Baacke requested a format in which the CPC members can see one another, having the members sit in the City Councilors' seats. The current seating makes sense for the presentations but it may be beneficial for the deliberations.

VII. Adjournment

E. Slagle motioned, and S. Gallivan seconded the motion to adjourn. The motion passed unanimously, (7-0). The time was 8:30pm.