



City of New Bedford
Community Preservation Committee
133 William Street, New Bedford, Massachusetts 02740
Telephone: (508) 979.1488

JONATHAN F. MITCHELL
MAYOR

MINUTES
PUBLIC HEARING
February 13, 2018
CITY HALL, ROOM 314 -133 WILLIAM STREET

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

PRESENT:

Janine da Silva, Co Chair
Ross Nunes, Vice Chair
Jessica Bailey, Clerk
Christopher Amaral

Arthur Glassman
Sylvia Gomes
Tim Walsh

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

ABSENT:

Dennis Audette

Elaine Safioleas

STAFF:

Edward Bates, *Neighborhood Planner*
Anne Louro, *Preservation Planner*

Call to Order

Chair J. da Silva called the meeting to order at 6:06 p.m.

Call the Roll. A formal roll call was conducted confirming members present and absent as stated above.

Brief Introduction to CPA and the CPC

A. Louro gave a brief presentation describing the Community Preservation Act, the FY18 application process and funds available.

Public Hearings

Project Presentations by FY18 CPA Applicants

MOTION to open the public hearing.

Moved by T. Walsh and seconded by A. Glassman

Motion carried.

Acushnet Saw Mill- New Bedford Expansion and Community Garden

Mark Rasmussen, President of Buzzards Bay Coalition presented the application which would fund the acquisition of 1.63 acres of land on the west side of Mill RD, across from the entrance of the Acushnet Saw Mill for the purpose of improved parking and accessibility and the creation of a community garden.

In response to S. Gomes, Mr. Rasmussen stated that there was no contamination on the site, as there was no industrial use on the site.

In response to S. Gomes, Mr. Rasmussen stated the percentage of land to be utilized for the parking area would be approximately 10,000 square feet, and approximately twice that area would be used for the community gardens and that the rest of the land would be preserved in its natural state.

In response to J. Bailey, Mr. Rasmussen stated that the parking accommodations would increase from eight parking spots to twenty, but more importantly would accommodate two buses versus the current single bus spot.

In response to R. Nunes, Mr. Rasmussen stated he was not certain of the exact number of schools which visit the Learning Center at the Sawmill, but noted that Sea Lab, New Bedford Public Schools and Dartmouth Public Schools use the site extensively.

In response to S. Gomes, Mr. Rasmussen stated that admission to the Saw Mill site is free and that the Community Garden would be used primarily by the Jireh Swift School and the surrounding neighborhood.

In response to R. Nunes, Mr. Rasmussen stated that he could not yet identify whether or not New Bedford contractors would be used for the project construction, as the bid documents had not yet been developed, however he noted that the Learning Center was constructed by Vocational Students and the garden beds would most likely be constructed by Jireh Swift School volunteers.

In response to J. Bailey, Mr. Rasmussen stated that fundraising had not yet started on the project, but was confident that based on the success of the Saw Mill fundraising efforts, that they would be successful in raising the \$55,000 match. He also stated that due to the acquisition amount, if CPA funding was not awarded, they would be unable to acquire the property.

In response to S. Gomes, Mr. Rasmussen stated no concerns have been raised by the neighbors, and that the neighborhood is supportive of the Saw Mill site, acting as monitors and stewards of the site.

Public Comment

Chuck Smiler spoke in support of the project and the Acushnet Saw Mill site.

Abolition Row Park

Lee Blake, President of the New Bedford Historical Society, presented the application which would fund the development of Abolition Row Park at two vacant lots located at the southwest corner of Seventh and Spring Streets. The Park would provide green space to the neighborhood and interpretation opportunities related to the City's historical abolitionist activities.

In response to S. Gomes, Ms. Blake stated that the project had vast community support and that there were several community meetings with neighborhood input which was incorporated into the final design.

In response to J. Bailey, Ms. Blake confirmed a discrepancy within the submitted budget and explained that funding for the Douglass statue was included within Phase 1. She also responded to the inquiry related to other

sources of project funding by stating that certain funds had been previously raised and noted a commitment of \$30,000 for the Douglass statue. She stated that full fundraising had not yet commenced for the project and noted that there were many funding opportunities. She also stated that the CPA funding would begin the project and demonstrate a vision to attract further funding.

In response to C. Amaral, Ms. Blake confirmed that the budget amount for the Douglass statue included the committed \$30,000 donation.

In response to R. Nunes, Ms. Blake stated that if the project was funded at a reduced amount fundraising efforts would be required to increase and the project start may be delayed.

In response to S. Gomes, Ms. Blake stated the property ownership was split with the City owning the south parcel and that the New Bedford Historical Commission owned the north parcel.

Public Comment

Susan Rothschild expressed support for the project and spoke to Ms. Blake's vision and dedication to the community's history.

Hank Mastey, a New Bedford Historical Society Board member, noted the need to interpret New Bedford's role in the 19th century anti-slavery movement and the opportunity to attract international visitors interested in that history.

Butler Flats Lighthouse Preservation

Robert Draper of Mass Light Ltd., a Massachusetts non-profit entity which owns the lighthouse, presented the application to fund the initial phase of restoration of the Butler Flats Lighthouse located at the entrance of New Bedford's harbor.

In response to S. Gomes, Mr. Draper stated that additional funding sources had been identified in the form of potential public grants and private funding. He stated that the restoration was a phased project and that the CPA funding would demonstrate the City's commitment to the lighthouse restoration.

In response to S. Gomes, Mr. Draper stated that shore electrical service to the lighthouse exists but is compromised, however solar power would be utilized, and if used as an aid to navigation there would be no need for plumbing.

In response to J. Bailey, Mr. Draper stated that he did not have direct experience in obtaining funding for these types of projects but planned on partnering with the Waterfront Historic Area League for funding aid. He noted his experience background in project finance and redevelopment. He also affirmed that they closed the real estate sale transaction in December and was seeking 501(c) (3) non-profit status.

In response to J. da Silva, Mr. Draper stated that he was uncertain when the 501(c) (3) paperwork was filed, as a local attorney was handling that matter. He stated that he would check and update the Committee.

In response to R. Nunes, Mr. Draper stated that although it was a phased project, it was not his intent to come back to the CPC for future funding and would prefer to rely on other funding sources.

Public Comment

None

Buttonwood Brook Trail and Bridges Project

Richard Leary, President of Friends of Buttonwood Park, presented the application which would fund the establishment of a network of accessible trails within the 19 acre North Woods portion of Buttonwood Park. He noted the revised scope of work and funding amount to address the engineering study in the amount of \$26,000.

In response to J. Bailey, Mr. Leary confirmed the reduced funding amount from \$255,000 to \$26,000; explaining that the initial application amount was for the engineering study and implementation. A reassessment of the scope of work determined that they would not have time to do both, therefore they were now seeking funding for the engineering study only, explore additional sources of funding, and would return at a later date for implementation funding.

In response to S. Gomes, Mr. Leary stated that the \$30,000 North Woods Master Plan study was an overall design document that identified the need for an engineering study. He also stated that they had not yet identified an engineering firm, and due to the specialized nature of the project, could not guarantee a City firm would be qualified and chosen. He also stated that the \$30,000 study amount was based on estimates.

Public Comment

Chuck Smiler recommended that the City's Department of Infrastructure complete some of the work and noted that the City's Parks, Beaches and Recreation Department was a co-applicant to the project.

Jeanne Bennett, a founding member of the Friends of Buttonwood Park referenced the Park's thirty year old Master Plan, which identified this project at that time.

Buttonwood Park Adult Outdoor Fitness Equipment Concept

Jeanne Costa and Jackie Nagent presented the application to fund the purchase and installation of adult outdoor fitness equipment at Buttonwood Park, noting that it would provide an alternative work-out experience for residents unable to afford a typical gym membership.

In response to J. Bailey, Ms. Costa stated that they were exploring various types of equipment and manufacturers and that maintenance should not be an issue and the equipment is durable. She also confirmed that she was partnering with the City's Parks, Beaches and Recreation Department as well as the Buttonwood Park Neighborhood Group.

In response to J. Bailey and S. Gomes, Ms. Costa stated that this would be the first installation of this type of equipment within the region and that there are a few similar types of exercise equipment at Brooklawn Park which are well used.

In response to R. Nunes, Ms. Costa stated that educational workshops would be explored in conjunction to the project and that Dr. Rocha has expressed interest in the project. She also stated that there currently is no funding in place for the project and that the CPA funding request would be matched by the City's in-kind services.

In response to A. Glassman, Ms. Costa confirmed that the funding request would cover the cost of all the equipment shown within the video presentation as well as the surface material.

In response to S. Gomes, Ms. Costa stated they had several letters of support and were partnering with the local neighborhood group.

Public Comment

None

Rehabilitation of Schooner Ernestina-Morrissey

Derek Stevens, on behalf of the Schooner Ernestina-Morrissey Association Inc, (SEMA) presented the application seeking \$100,000 towards the funding of Phase 1 rehabilitation of the Schooner, the official vessel of the Commonwealth and a National Historical Landmark whose home port is New Bedford. Mr. Stevens stated that the \$6 million rehabilitation began in 2015 and described the partnership with the Massachusetts Maritime Academy where it will be maintained and operated during the academic year, and that all educational, cultural and recreational programming will take place when it is berthed in New Bedford. He also stated that the Manton Foundation has committed to match the CPA funding towards the project's overall costs.

In response to S. Gomes, Mr. Stevens stated that the timeline for completion depends on Phase 2; however there is a target date of 2020 for completion. He also stated that when the vessel is berthed in New Bedford there would be no admission fee to board. He also explained that SEMA is the fundraising organization for the vessel and that a Memorandum of Agreement between the State and the City regulating the duration of time the vessel spends in New Bedford would not be under their authority.

In response to J. Bailey, Mr. Stevens confirmed that they have raised \$390,000 with the expectation of receiving \$100,000 within the week, and that the money raised would be matched by the Manton Foundation.

Public Comment

Brian Rothschild, a Governor's appointee to the Schooner Ernestina Commission, believes that there is community consensus that the Ernestina is a significant cultural resource, important to the Port and iconic to the City.

Attorney Margaret Xifaras spoke regarding her history working with the Ernestina at the State level and endorsed the partnership with Mass Maritime as being ideal.

Chuck Smiler, a long-time supporter of the vessel sated that the Ernestina compliments the other port-related cultural resources and institutions within the City.

William Banks stated that he came to New Bedford to sail on the Ernestina and eventually became its Captain. He spoke to the educational opportunities and noted that the Ernestina is a partner and included within the legislation of the New Bedford Whaling National Historical Park. He works at Mass Maritime but hopes that the vessel can be supported within the port of New Bedford as much as possible.

Polly Zajac, a board member of SEMA and past Education Program Manager of the Ernestina, spoke to the partnerships that once existed between the Ernestina and other organizations. She noted that the Schooner is a cultural and educational resource that has a demonstrated history of community programming which will be reestablished by many of those who participated in the past, like herself.

Dagny Ashley, City of New Bedford Tourism Director and a Governor's appointee to the Schooner Ernestina Commission, stated that the City was fully committed to the marketing and promotion of the Ernestina and noted that the Schooner is a resource that has the potential to attract a variety of visitors to the City.

Matthew Stackpole, a member of SEMA, spoke to not only the local, but the national significance of the Schooner and stated that the dual function of Mass Maritime use and summer programming within the Port would provide a long-term use which would preserve the resource. CPA funding will demonstrate City support and the one to one match from the Manton Association will double the amount as SEMA nears its fundraising goal.

The meeting recessed at 8:05 p.m. and reconvened at 8:10 p.m.

Rotch Jones Duff Roof Replacement and Coachman House

Kate Corkum, Director of the Rotch Jones Duff House (RJD), presented the application which would fund the rehabilitation work at the RJD to include roof and gutter replacement. She noted that an allocated Mass Cultural Facilities Fund (MCFF) grant would be the match to the CPA funding.

In response to S. Gomes, Ms. Corkum stated that the museum receives between 8-9000 visitors per year and their school programming attracts approximately 2000 students per year, free of charge.

In response to C. Amaral, Ms. Corkum described the current water damage, stating that they had taken measures to mitigate the water infiltration, however the roof and flashing requires immediate attention. She also stated that all rehabilitation work must adhere to the Secretary of the Interior Standards, as a Preservation Restriction exists on the property and all work is reviewed by the Massachusetts Historical Commission.

In response to R. Nunes, Ms. Corkum stated that the roof shingle warranty would be 50 years.

In response to J. da Silva, Ms. Corkum explained that the MCFF grant would partially match the CPA funding, as it would also address the rose garden restoration, driveway, pathways, lighting and signage.

In response to J. Bailey, Ms. Corkum ensured the CPC members that her retirement would not affect the project, as she will continue to work with the new Director during the transition, and the architect will oversee most of the project.

Public Comment

Hank Mastey, a member of the New Bedford Historical Society, stated that the RJD is an important resource which will also compliment and partner in the interpretation of the Abolition Row Park project.

South Coast Scenic Greenway- Feasibility Study-New Bedford Portion

Paul Pawloski, a landscape architect and planner, acting as a volunteer representing the South Coast Bikeway Alliance, presented the application which would fund a feasibility study for a pedestrian/bikeway that would connect Fall River to New Bedford. He stated that the routes would run through Fall River, Westport, Dartmouth and New Bedford and the Alliance is seeking similar CPA funding amounts from those communities to help fund the study. He did note that they missed Fall River's CPA application round, but would apply in the next round in September.

In response to S. Gomes, Mr. Pawloski stated that if they do not receive all the funding they would move forward, and felt confident that the fall timing of Fall River's CPA funding would not affect the contracting of a consultant. He also stated that the estimated cost of the \$25-\$40,000 feasibility study was based on estimates from a number of consultants.

In response to J. Bailey, Mr. Pawloski stated that they have received support and positive feedback from Dartmouth and Westport, but had not yet discussed the study with Fall River officials, but was confident of their support. He also stated that the entire length of the trail is 16 miles, of which 4 miles are within the New Bedford boundaries.

In response to R. Nunes, Mr. Pawloski stated that he was uncertain how the portion of the New Bedford trail aligned with SRTA bus lines and bus stops. A. Louro stated that she would provide that information to the Committee.

Public Comment

Richard Leary stated that as an avid recreational biker he fully supported the project as an important recreational resource for the region.

Chuck Smiler stated that as a B& B owner, he can attest to the number of visitors that travel with bicycles and that there is a demand, as many visitors have sought a regional trail.

Zeiterion Theatre Marquee Project

Nicole Downing Merusi, Development director of the Zeiterion (Z), presented the application which would fund the design and construction of a historically accurate marquee as part of the ongoing restoration of the Z's façade. She noted that the CPA funding requests represents approximately 40% of the entire project's overall budget and that a potential MPPF grant would be the match to the CPA funding, with the remaining funding being raised through philanthropic donations.

In response to R. Nunes, Ms. Merusi was unable to identify the source of a \$32,000 construction cost line item within the budget and would have to supply that information to the Committee.

Public Comment

Arthur Bennett stated that as a long-time resident of downtown he recognizes the significant impact the Z has on the economic and cultural revitalization of the downtown and that the façade needs a marquee.

David Klamen, Dean of UMass Dartmouth CVPA, located across the street from the Z, spoke in support of the project and referenced the University's expansion in the performing arts and the opportunity to share momentum in the City's art community's overall growth.

Jeff Pontiff, a Z board member, spoke in support of the application.

MOTION to close the public hearing.

Moved by A. Glassman and seconded by T. Walsh.

Motion carried.

Next Meeting Date: Tuesday, February 27, 2018.

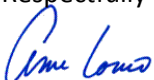
Adjourn

There being no further business, a motion to adjourn was moved by T. Walsh and seconded by J. Bailey. The motion carried. The meeting was adjourned at 8:52 p.m.

Documents and Exhibits

- Agenda
- Application Presentations

Respectfully submitted,



Anne Louro
DPHCD Staff

Approved: 04.10.18