

Conway Community Preservation Committee

April 12, 2021

Meeting by Zoom

Members Present: Malcolm Corse, Dusty King, Bob Nowak, Donald Joralemon, Mary McClintock

Other Attendees: Joe Strzegowski, Janet Chayes, Megan McDonough (Pioneer Valley Habitat for Humanity), Amy Landry (Pioneer Valley Habitat for Humanity)

Location: Remote by Zoom (phone/video) in accordance with memo from Town Administrator dated March 17, 2020 (“Logistics for Committees During the COVID-19 Emergency”)

Meeting Called to order at 7:35 pm.

1) Conway Selectboard requests for two grants towards Conway buying land along the South River for flood mitigation

Joe Strzegowski and Janet Chayes presented about two requests from the Conway Selectboard for CPA funds to purchase land along the South River for flood mitigation projects. These included:

- 69 Main Street
- Two small/unbuildable parcels between the South River and Shelburne Falls Road = approx. 2.5 acres

The Town has \$105,000 from the sale of the old school and is seeking \$50,000 and \$15,000 (total of \$65,000) of Community Preservation Act funds to do restoration of the riverbank. This project is under the open space and recreation category of CPA-funded projects.

Discussion included questions and comments from CPC members including clarification of how this type of project fits CPA-funded project criteria and whether these projects are a good use of funds.

8:04pm: COMMITTEE VOTED UNANIMOUSLY to send both projects to Annual Town Meeting.

2) Pioneer Valley Habitat for Humanity request \$45,000 for a grant towards affordable housing construction

PV Habitat for Humanity (PVHH) has built almost 50 homes in western Mass over the past 30 years to provide the opportunity for homeownership for low-to-moderate income (60-80% of area median income) community members. Eligibility criteria for such homes includes housing need, the willingness to partner (through sweat equity), and the ability to pay an affordable mortgage. Generally, potential homeowners need to have a minimum income of approx. \$29,000 per year. The homeowner will apply for an affordable mortgage (typically \$120,000-175,000).

PVHH received a donated building lot in Conway (638 South Deerfield Road) and plans to build a single-family home there. Support for construction of that home will come from grant funding, community labor, future homeowner labor, and donations. PVHH is seeking \$45,000 from Conway's CPA funds to help support construction of the home. CPA funds show a commitment of the community to the project which can be helpful for getting other funding. Costs associated with construction include paying site professionals, heavy equipment, permitting, as well as construction materials.

Discussion included questions about deed restrictions to maintain affordability when the property is sold by the original homeowner and how PVHH homes differ from other types of affordable/low-income housing. A key difference from other low-income housing is that PVHH homes are homeownership opportunities rather than rental properties. The process for selecting a homeowner is an application to determine eligibility and then all applications deemed eligible are entered in a lottery to choose the homeowner.

8:29pm: COMMITTEE VOTED UNANIMOUSLY to send both projects to Annual Town Meeting.

3) Improving our CPA grant process using Deerfield's contract as a model

Town Administrator Tom Hutcheson recommended adopting the contract used by Deerfield's CPC to standardize the process Conway's CPC uses for contracts with organizations receiving Conway CPA funds.

After discussion, the committee decided to have Malcolm contact our technical support (Stuart Saginor from Community Preservation Coalition) to review the Deerfield contract and to see if there are smaller/more Conway-sized communities that use a contract that might serve as a model for Conway. Malcolm will report back to the committee at a future meeting about what he learns.

4) Electing our Secretary, Chair, and Treasurer

Dusty agreed to serve as Treasurer but no one was able/willing to serve as Chair or Secretary. We tabled this discussion until a future meeting.

5) Any other business brought before us at the meeting

There was no other business brought before the committee.

Meeting adjourned at 8:50pm