



**WILLIAMSTOWN COMMUNITY PRESERVATION COMMITTEE
31 NORTH STREET
MINUTES
JANUARY 24, 2024**

This meeting of the Williamstown Community Preservation Committee was held in person with remote participation via Zoom and streamed live on Willinet.org., & broadcast live on Willinet's Spectrum cable TV channel 1303.

Present: Phil McKnight, Joe Finnegan, Jane Patton, Nate Budington, Charles Fox, Benjamin Greenfield, and Steve Dew via zoom

Also Present: Linda Sciarappa Minute Recorder

Chair Phil McKnight opened the hearing at 7:01 PM. and introduced the committee members.

Welcome and Introduction of Members

Current: Phil McKnight-Conservation Commission
Nate Budington- Historical Commission
Joe Finnegan- Resident
Charles Fox- Finance Committee
Jane Patton- Select Board
Steve Dew- Housing Authority

New: Benjamin Greenfield- Planning Board

McKnight announced that the committee is looking for the appointment of two more members.

1. Consideration and Approval of the Minutes of CPC Meetings in 2023

Approval of CPC Minutes was deferred until later in February; the minutes are still under preparation.

2. Review of the Committee's Financial Position for FY 2025 Applications

Phil McKnight presented the Committee's financial position. The amount of money that is available is \$ 430,000. From that sum CPC is required to pay the last year of a Cable Mills debt together with an \$ 80,000 payment on the second Cable Mills debt. The amount available for other applications was \$ 232,000. The Committee discussed reserve funding for future years and the amount to withhold for potential state match shortages. The consensus was to proceed with the \$ 232,000 and see what was left over for reserve funding.

McKnight announced that Williamstown Rural Lands had withdrawn their \$14,000 application.

3. Consideration of Recapturing Funding Previously Committed to a Review of Town Recreation Opportunities

McKnight will check with the Town Accountant to see if \$ 50,000 remains in the account for review of the town's recreational facilities and if it has a sunset clause. There would potentially be an additional \$50,000 to add to funds available. If there is no sunset clause, the Committee could vote to retain the funds because they have not been spent over three years.

4. Consideration of Repurposing Previous CPC Recommendations Not Expended

There remains \$ 3,000 unspent from a 2008 historic resources appropriation, and from a 2013 appropriation \$ 85 unspent for community housing projects. McKnight stated that there were two options. One possibility is asking this year's Town Meeting to approve the restoration of those funds into those two categories for use in this year or future years. The other option is to see if town counsel will allow CPC to have the same result without going back to Town Meeting.

5. Outline of Plan for Considering the FY25 Applications

By consensus of the Committee, the applications were reviewed in the order that they were received in.

6. Consideration of the Community Preservation Act FY 2025 Applications:

1) Williamstown Affordable Housing Trust- Andy Hogeland \$120,000

Affordable Housing was seeking \$ 120,000 to help support many housing-related needs/initiatives including a pending request for \$ 24,000 to support a Habitat roof repair project. Andy Hogeland addressed questions from the Committee. AHT's current fund balance is \$ 410,000 and expects \$ 120,000 in CPC funding.

2) Williamstown Meeting House Preservation Fund- Carrie Greene & Susan Yates \$ 50,000

In FY25, the WMPF seeks to undertake the design and construction of a stormwater drainage system and was seeking \$ 50,000 to help defray the cost. The proposed work moves moisture away from the foundation of the building, thereby helping to keep the basement spaces dry and free of mold and mildew. Given plans to maintain, if not increase, the use of the basement spaces, this work is vital.

Questions from the Committee were addressed. There are twenty organizations who use the building either on an annual or regular basis. No funds raised by the WMPF will be used for religious, denominational or congregational enterprises. There was concern about the group's nonownership of the building and what happens to public monies that have been invested in the building. Renovations have been ongoing. The church wants to maintain the building until

ownership is determined sometime in the future. They have renters in the building who are helping with the maintenance costs. The estimated restoration project cost is projected at \$ 6,400,000. The group is hoping to receive state and federal funding which they are in good standing to receive plus other potential funding sources in the future.

3) Multi Use Path Fitness Court- Bob Menicocci \$ 115,000

The Town Manager submitted an application on behalf of the town in the amount of \$ 115,000. The total project cost is \$ 215,000. The project to install a fitness court in Williamstown is proposed to be located along the town's Mohican Multi-Use path adding to the offerings along the path as well as possibly increasing the use of the path itself. Siting can be at a number of locations along the path and for initial planning purposes the project is looking at an unutilized portion of land adjacent to the town's skatepark which provides for easy access and synergistic use. Questions from the Committee were withheld until the skatepark application was presented.

4) Sand Springs- Henry Smith \$ 11,100

Sand Springs was seeking \$ 11,100 in CPC funding to address a number of safety hazards at the facility and to inform visitors of the space's history, both as a means of further enriching the Town and aiding Sand Springs' capacity to serve residents of Williamstown and its neighbors. Sand Springs is the only spring fed pool in Massachusetts and it stays at 72 degrees year round. Sand Springs serves a broad swath of the community. It was noted that the YMCA in North Adams announced that they will not continue operating. There was only one question from the Committee regarding no one being denied entry based on ability to pay and how that worked in practice.

5) Williamstown Rural Lands Foundation- withdrawn due to lack of grant funding from Massachusetts Fish & Wildlife Service

6) Williamstown Skatepark- Bill MacEwen \$ 75,000

Bill MacEwen presented his skatepark proposal and he was seeking \$ 75,000 in CPC funding towards a total project cost of \$ \$ 750,000. MacEwen discussed the project details of the open space plan. The skatepark would provide needed recreation for teenagers and with beautification would make it a destination for families. MacEwen also discussed his recent meeting with the Select Board and their desire to fit into the limited space other recreational activities such as basketball and pickleball. The Select Board plans to send out a survey in the tax bills asking residents what they want at the site for recreation. This would be part of the planning and design phase. Bob Menicocci emphasized the need for commitment to pursue grant funding for the project, with a goal of starting construction in the summer. Questions from the Committee were addressed regarding the lifespan and maintenance costs. McKnight expressed concern that between the two recreational projects, the money asked was a considerable amount, there may be room for other projects and what the projects would be are still up in the air. MacEwen stated that the skatepark design begins with layout, then solidifies

existing uses and creates a plan. Andy Hogeland seeks a strategic approach to allocate funding for multiple projects, prioritizing planning and site work with a time frame. Bob Menicocci expressed confidence in external funding, citing nonprofit status and minimal strings attached. Budington felt the fitness court project was pretty much shovel ready. Patton supported a quick analysis of the space available. There is a need to put a stake in the ground to provide recreation for the town that is not owned by the college.

McKnight proposed motions for applications, citing state statute compliance.

1) Williamstown Affordable Housing Trust-\$ 120,000

Motion made by Phil McKnight that the Williamstown Affordable Housing Trust application is in conformance with the Community Preservation Act, seconded by Jane Patton. The motion passed by unanimous roll call vote. 7-0-0: Budington-aye, Dew-aye, Finnegan-aye, Fox-aye, Greenfield-aye, McKnight-aye, Patton-aye

2) Williamstown Meeting House Preservation Fund-\$ 50,000

Motion made by Phil McKnight that the Williamstown Meeting House Preservation Fund application is in conformance with the Community Preservation Act, seconded by Joe Finnegan. The motion passed by unanimous roll call vote. 7-0-0: Budington-aye, Dew-aye, Finnegan-aye, Fox-aye, Greenfield-aye, McKnight-aye, Patton-aye

3) Multi Use Fitness Court-\$ 115,000

Motion made by Phil McKnight that the Multi Use Fitness Court application is in conformance with the Community Preservation Act, seconded by Steve Dew. The motion passed by unanimous roll call vote. 7-0-0: Budington-aye, Dew-aye, Finnegan-aye, Fox-aye, Greenfield-aye, McKnight-aye, Patton-aye

4) Sand Springs-\$ 11,100

Motion made by Phil McKnight that the Sand Springs application is in conformance with the Community Preservation Act, seconded by Charles Fox. The motion passed by unanimous roll call vote. 7-0-0: Budington-aye, Dew-aye, Finnegan-aye, Fox-aye, Greenfield-aye, McKnight-aye, Patton-aye

5) Williamstown Skatepark-\$ 75,000

Motion made by Phil McKnight that the Williamstown Skatepark application is in conformance with the Community Preservation Act, seconded by Charles Fox. The motion passed by unanimous roll call vote. 7-0-0: Budington-aye, Dew-aye, Finnegan-aye, Fox-aye, Greenfield-aye, McKnight-aye, Patton-aye

Discussion about available monies ensued. It was suggested to consider two separate funds for funding discussion: \$232,000 available and \$83,000 possible additional funding if it becomes available. Committee members discussed potential uses of \$83,000, including allocating it among the applications and reserving some for surplus.

Bob Menicocci thought the two recreation projects could happen simultaneously if they could get the process moving for the design work. The town has limited funds for the design work. The fitness court could be done by the summer.

Committee discussed the allocation of \$232,000, leaving \$16,000 for the reserve fund:

Affordable Housing Trust	\$ 30,000 (2013 previous unspent funding)
CPC Funds	\$ 40,000
Skatepark	\$ 50,000 (unspent recreation funds)
CPC Funds	\$ 25,000
Sand Springs	
CPC Funds	\$ 11,100
Williamstown Meeting House	
Preservation Fund	
CPC Funds	\$ 50,000
Multi Use Fitness Court	
CPC Funds	\$ 90,000
CPC Reserve Fund	\$ 16,000

Motion made by Phil McKnight and seconded by Steve Dew that the Committee recommend to Town Meeting the allocation of its Fiscal Year 25 money as laid out, \$ 216,000 and leaving \$ 16,000 of the \$ 232,000 as reserve fund. Discussion followed regarding when the Committee would know about the availability of funds for the skatepark and housing trust. Bob Menicocci stated that they should know by the end of the week. The motion passed by unanimous roll call vote. 7-0-0: Budington-aye, Dew-aye, Finnegan-aye, Fox-aye, Greenfield-aye, McKnight-aye, Patton-aye

McKnight thanked the applicants for the thoroughness of their applications.

Other Business

Steve Dew asked if the Committee could use a couple thousand dollars from this year's Reserve Fund or prioritize it for the next cycle, for the purchase of a few signs that could be put up on projects that were funded with CPC funds. It was by consensus of the Committee to use the unspent \$ 3,000 for that purpose instead of putting it into the Reserve Fund.

Adjournment

Motion to adjourn made by Joe Finnigan to adjourn the meeting at 9:20 p.m., seconded by Jane Patton. The motion passed unanimously by a roll call vote. 7-0-0: Budington-aye, Dew-aye, Finnegan-aye, Fox-aye, Greenfield-aye, McKnight-aye, Patton-aye

The Warrant Articles will be considered at the CPC meeting.

Respectfully submitted,
Linda Sciarappa, Assistant to the Town Manager