



WILLIAMSTOWN COMMUNITY PRESERVATION COMMITTEE
31 NORTH STREET
MINUTES
JANUARY 22, 2025

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, Steve Dew, Nate Budington, Randal Fippinger, Barbara Halligan, Ken Kuttner, Polly Macpherson, Molly Magavern

Absent: Alison Bost

Also Present: Linda Sciarappa Minute Recorder

Chair Phil McKnight opened the hearing at 7:00 PM.

Barbara Halligan read the land acknowledgement, acknowledging the ancestral homelands of the Stockbridge Munsee Mohicans.

Phil McKnight outlined the meeting procedure, explaining the order of application hearings and the voting process. The committee considered applications in the order they were filed, with a maximum presentation time of 10 minutes.

Discussion of Late-Filed Applications

The committee considered late applications from the Williamstown Affordable Housing Trust and Sand Springs, both due to confusion over deadlines. Phil McKnight opened the floor for general discussion on the late filing applications. Committee members discussed the importance of supporting local organizations and the challenges of enforcing strict deadlines. Following discussion of clarifying the deadline by changing to the end of the business day, the committee decided to consider the late applications by a majority vote.

Discussion of "Funding Return" Requirement for Historic Preservation Applications

The committee debated the adoption of a recapture provision for historic preservation projects. Three towns have adopted the provision.

They discussed the potential benefits and drawbacks of implementing recapture provisions.

The vote to adopt a recapture provision did not pass by a show of hands. 4-4

Discussion of FY26 CPC Funding Availability

- Phil McKnight provided an overview of the available funding for fiscal year 2026, including sources of revenue and previous allocations. There was \$ 202,535 available for applications.
- The committee discussed the importance of setting aside funds for open space and the potential impact of state revenue shortfalls.
- Available funds in the amount of \$ 202,535, subject to requirements were outlined, with a focus on the specific applications being considered.
- The total of all applications was \$ 294,000 with \$ 144,781 available for distribution

Consideration of FY26 Applications in Order of Filing

The Store at Five Corners

\$ 30,000

Delia Marshall and other board members from the Store at Five Corners presented their application for window replacement. The project aims to replace outdated windows to preserve the historic integrity of the building. The committee discussed the project's alignment with historic preservation standards and the applicant's track record. The committee asked questions about the project's funding, contractor selection, and the historical significance of the building.

Purple Valley Trails- Skate Park Project

\$ 50,000

Bill MacEwen from Purple Valley Trails presented the skate park project, highlighting the need for a modern, inclusive skate park. The project aims to replace the current deteriorated skate park with a cast-in-place concrete skate park. The committee discussed the project's alignment with community needs and the potential impact on local youth.

Purple Valley Trails-Mountain Bike Trails

\$ 25,000

Bill MacEwen presented the mountain bike trails project, emphasizing the lack of public mountain bike trails in Williamstown. The project aims to create a network of low-impact, sustainable mountain bike trails on college land. The committee discussed the project's alignment with community needs and the potential impact on local outdoor recreation. Questions were raised about the project's alignment with recreation standards and the potential for attracting users from outside the community.

Images Cinema Two-Screen Theater Renovation

\$ 51,797

Dan Hudson from Images Cinema presented the project to renovate the main auditorium and add a second screening room. The project aims to increase programming and better serve the community, including younger families. Questions were raised about the project's alignment recreation standards and the potential for attracting users from outside the community.

Williamstown Historical Museum

\$ 8,000

David Dewey from the Williamstown Historical Museum presented the project to preserve and restore several historically relevant items, including a farm wagon. The project aims to enhance the museum's collection and increase community engagement through public events. The committee discussed the project's alignment with historic preservation standards and the potential impact on local history. Questions were raised about the project's alignment with historic preservation standards and the potential for attracting users from outside the community.

Williamstown Rural Lands Foundation-Lahovec Riverwalk

\$ 14,000

Daniel Gura from the Williamstown Rural Lands Foundation presented the project to remove invasive species along the Green River Walk. The project aims to improve the ecological health of the downtown area and enhance public access to nature. The committee discussed the project's alignment with conservation and recreation goals and the potential impact on local ecology. The project aims to reset the nature preserve by hiring a contractor to mow down invasives, apply herbicides, and create a floodplain forest ecosystem. The project has the approval from the Conservation Commission, State Department of Environmental Protection, and Fish and Wildlife Department.

Williamstown Affordable Housing Trust

\$ 100,000

Dan Gura from the Affordable Housing Trust discussed the growing need for affordable housing in Williamstown. The 2022 housing needs assessment showed that 27% of Williamstown residents are cost-burdened, paying more than 30% of their income on housing. The average home sale price is \$700,000, far out of reach for most residents at 80% of AMI. The Affordable Housing Trust supports residents through programs like WE Wrap, WE Map, and down payment assistance grants such as the DeMayo Mortgage Assistance Program.

Sand Springs Recreational Center

\$ 15,000

Henry Smith from Sand Springs Recreation Center discussed the scholarship fund to support accessibility. The center serves 275 family units with season passes and provides various community activities, including swim lessons, camps, and community events. The scholarship fund helps families with financial difficulties access the center's facilities. The center aims to formalize the scholarship process and increase its visibility and usage.

Applications were reviewed for conformance with Community Preservation Act for historic preservation, recreation, and community housing requirements

1) Store at Five Corners

Motion made by Phil McKnight that the Store at Five Corners application is in conformance with the Community Preservation Act, seconded by Randal Fippinger. The motion passed by unanimous vote. 8-0

2) Purple Valley Trails Skatepark

Motion made by Phil McKnight that the Purple Valley Trails Skatepark application is in conformance with the Community Preservation Act, seconded by Steve Dew. The motion passed by unanimous vote. 8-0

3) Purple Valley Trails Mountain Bike Trails

Motion made by Phil McKnight that the Purple Valley Trails Mountain Bike Trails application is in conformance with the Community Preservation Act, seconded by Barbara Halligan. The motion passed by unanimous vote. 8-0

4) Images Cinema Two-Screen Theater Renovation

Motion made by Phil McKnight that the Images Cinema's application is in conformance with the Community Preservation Act, seconded by Polly Macpherson. The motion passed. 7-0-1

5) Williamstown Historical Museum

Motion made by Phil McKnight that the Williamstown Historical Museum application is in conformance with the Community Preservation Act, seconded by Ken Kuttner. The motion passed by unanimous vote. 8-0

6) Williamstown Rural Lands Foundation- Lahovec Riverwalk

Motion made by Nate Budington that the Williamstown Rural Lands Foundation-Lahovec Riverwalk application is in conformance with the Community Preservation Act, seconded by Ken Kuttner. The motion passed. 7-0-1

7) Williamstown Affordable Housing Trust

Motion made by Phil McKnight that the Williamstown Affordable Housing Trust application is in conformance with the Community Preservation Act, seconded by Ken Kuttner. The motion passed by unanimous vote. 8-0

8) Sand Springs Recreational Center

Motion made by Phil McKnight that the Sand Springs Recreation Center application is in conformance with the Community Preservation Act, seconded by Steve Dew. The motion passed by unanimous vote. 8-0

Debate on Funding Allocation Criteria

The committee debated the criteria for allocating funds, including economic development, reach, criticality, and targeting underserved groups. The debate highlighted the challenges of balancing the needs of different projects and the limited available funds.

Phil McKnight proposed allocating funds equally among all applications to ensure fairness. The proposal was debated, with some members supporting the idea and others preferring a more selective approach.

Phil McKnight motioned that each applicant gets one half less what's required to reduce the grants to the total available funds, seconded by Steve Dew. The motion did not carry. 4-4

The committee decided to continue the discussion and agreed to develop a set of criteria for evaluating future applications and to inform potential applicants of these criteria.

Following the discussion, Randal Fippinger motioned to adopt the chair's formula for allocating funds, which involved dividing requests in half and reducing them by a balance remaining, seconded by Polly Macpherson. The motion passed by a vote of 7-1.

Finalization and Allocations

Motion made by Phil McKnight to allocate \$ 3,000 from the committee's expenses towards the applications, seconded by Randal Fippinger. The motion passed by unanimous vote. 8-0

Motion made by Phil McKnight to allocate \$ 42,754 towards the required 10% set aside for application for open space in future years, seconded by Steve Dew. The motion passed by unanimous vote. 8-0

Motion made by Phil McKnight to allocate \$ 15,000 of FY26 CPA funds to The Store at Five Corners Stewardship Association, seconded by Randal Fippinger. The motion passed by unanimous vote. 8-0

Motion made by Phil McKnight to allocate \$ 25,000 of FY26 CPA funds to Purple Valley Trails-Williamstown Skatepark, seconded by Randal Fippinger. The motion passed by unanimous vote. 8-0

Motion made by Phil McKnight to allocate \$ 12,500 of FY26 CPA funds to Purple Valley Trails, seconded by Randal Fippinger. The motion passed by unanimous vote. 8-0

Motion made by Phil McKnight to allocate \$ 25,900 of FY26 CPA funds to Images Cinema Two-Screen Theater Renovation, seconded by Randal Fippinger. The motion passed. 7-0-1

Motion made by Phil McKnight to allocate \$ 4,000 of FY26 CPA funds to Williamstown Historical Museum, seconded by Randal Fippinger. The motion passed by unanimous vote. 8-0

Motion made by Phil McKnight to allocate \$ 7,000 of FY26 CPA funds to Williamstown Rural Lands Foundation-Lahovec Riverwalk, seconded by Randal Fippinger. The motion passed. 7-0-1

Motion made by Phil McKnight to allocate \$ 50,000 of FY26 CPA funds to Williamstown Affordable Housing Trust, seconded by Randal Fippinger. The motion passed by unanimous vote. 8-0

Motion made by Phil McKnight to allocate \$ 7,500 of FY26 CPA funds to Sands Springs Recreational Center, seconded by Randal Fippinger. The motion passed by unanimous vote. 8-0

The hearing concluded with a consensus on the budget allocations and a plan to refine the decision-making process in future meetings.

Other Business

Next meetings:

January 29, 2025 at 7:00 p.m.

February 19, 2025 at 7:00 p.m

February 27, 2025 at 7:00 p.m

Adjournment

Motion to adjourn made by Ken Kuttner to adjourn the meeting at 10:19 p.m., seconded by Molly Magavern. The motion passed unanimously. 8-0

Respectfully submitted,

Linda Sciarappa, Assistant to the Town Manager/Select Board