**Sturbridge Community Preservation Committee**

**Meeting Minutes of Monday, March 13, 2023**

**Julian Room, Town Hall**

**Call to Order**

Community Preservation Committee (CPC) Chair Penny Dumas established that a quorum was present and called the CPC meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. CPC Clerk Elisa Krochmalnyckyj read the meeting notice.

Committee members present: Penny Dumas, Kelly Emrich, Ed Goodwin, Wally Hersee, Kadion Phillips, Barbara Search. Absent: Lauren Vivier.

In-person guests: Council on Aging Director Leslie Wong. Virtual guests via Zoom: ICON Architecture’s Ned Collier and Mark McKevitz.

**1. Approval of Minutes**

Ed made a motion to approve the minutes of the Jan. 9, 2023 minutes be as written; Wally seconded. Passed 6-0-0.

Wally made a motion to approve the minutes of the Feb. 6, 2023 minutes as written; Kelly seconded. Passed 6-0-0.

**2. Continued review of request for CPA funds in the amount of $1,000,000 for ADA upgrades for 60 Cedar Street to include making sidewalks, parking lot, beach access, and building fully ADA-compliant and accessible.**

Because Recreation Director Annie Roscioli, who is the most knowledgeable about the proposal, had a work conflict the review was tabled until the April meeting.

**3. Request for CPA funds in the amount of $1,750,000 for the renovation of the historical Senior Center.**

Penny shared the CPA Coalition’s advice regarding using CPA funds for historic projects like the Senior Center renovation. Guidance included that CPA funds are prohibited from “supplanting,” or replacing, existing funding. In this case, that means that CPA funds cannot be used to reduce the $11,450,000 for the Senior Center renovation approved at the June 2022 Annual Town Meeting.

However, if new funds are sought because a project is over budget, then items that meet other CPA requirements can be funded by the CPA. Leslie confirmed that all of the CPA requests for the Senior Center renovation are for additional spending. Ned explained the project is the same size and same scope, but the extra costs are largely the result of inflation and changes in market conditions between the time the project was approved and when work will begin. Penny added that anyone doing any home project is aware of increasing costs.

Ned made a short presentation that included a list of ICON’s current and past restoration and rehabilitation projects, notably the Fitchburg City Hall renovation. That project has many similarities to the Senior Center project, including the building’s style and windows.

Leslie clarified that the Senior Center’s existing windows are inserts from 15 years ago. Ned stressed ICON’s intent to restore the windows. While it is not likely to find matching original windows, plans are to return to the original pattern of 6 panes over 6 panes in a larger frame, as opposed to the existing 9 panes over 9 panes. The new windows will balance the need for historic integrity, insulation, and code requirements.

Ned described the Center as a “beautiful Italianate building” in a prominent location with many distinctive features that will be returned to the greatest degree possible to its original form. That includes restoring the original main stairway, and returning the main floor to a single primary open space. Barbara noted that according to people who attended school when the building was a school, there were two classrooms on each floor. Leslie said that there is a track for a curtain-type wall that may have been used to divide the room in two.

Ned also spoke of the lengths the architects went to ensure the view of the Senior Center from Main Street retained its prominence. He noted the addition is a “low-slung” single story with a lower ridge line than the Center, and a roof similar to the Center’s. Mark added that the plan is to have the new building play second fiddle to the original building, even though the addition is roughly the same size as the existing Center.

Barbara asked if the wainscoting paneling is being saved. Ned explained it is not, because of costs and lack of thermal performance.

With the approximately 6,000 square feet addition and the roughly 9,000 square feet of existing building (a third of which is basement space), the renovated Center will be about 16,900 square feet. The two buildings will not touch, but instead be joined an expansion joint that can be removed so that in the future the original building could be stand-alone if desired.

Penny stressed, as she did throughout the meeting, that the single most important factor from the CPA-funding perspective is that the Senior Center retain its historic look and maintain the same environment, and that grounds have as similar an appearance as possible from the public view — in this case the view from Main Street. That means the new addition cannot overpower the historic structure if any CPA funds are to be used.

Penny also reviewed the list of “cannots” of requested uses for CPA funds. Discussion about funding the window replacements ensued. Wally pointed out that replacing the widows with historically correct 6-over-6 windows with divided light should qualify for CPA funds. Penny will check with the CPA Coalition.

Penny noted that several plan changes help the renovated building retain its historic look: the playground plans were removed, and the number of the skylights in the addition was reduced. However, the size of the proposed parking lot is of concern. Ned explained that as everyone is aware, parking was among the largest challenges with the site, and that even the increased parking will likely not suffice at busy times. Leslie added that parking plans were curtailed as much as possible for historical-integrity reasons, and that the parking that is in the plans will look like it was part of the property forever.

Ned agreed that adding more trees — mature trees — to the site will help the renovation look more established and older.

In response to Ed’s concern that the addition doesn’t match the original building, Mark explained that the Secretary of the Interior recommends not trying to replicate existing parts of a project, but complementing them.

Penny reiterated that her concerns are not about whether the plans are nice — she happens to think they are — but whether the plans meet the criteria for CPA funding by retaining the Center’s historic look. Ned said to that end, the plans will now include raised beds and more trees up front to make the new building recede and the existing building stand out. Ed suggested they be adult trees. Penny and Wally added that the cost of the trees may be eligible for CPA funds because they help preserve the historic view of the site.

Questions arose about whether CPA funds could be used for building a new path. Mark said that may be allowed because it is necessary to bring the renovation up to code. Currently, the slopes in some of the parking lots are greater than allowed for accessibility. Ed suggested that be put in writing.

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The next meeting is scheduled for Monday, April 3 at 7 p.m. in the Julian Room at Town Hall.

**4. Planning for meeting with the FinCom to discuss warrant articles.**

Penny suggested one or more CPC members attend the Finance Committee meeting at which CPA articles are discussed. Ed and Wally agreed to attend.

**5. Adjourn**

Barbara made a motion to adjourn at 8:27 p.m.; Wally seconded. Passed 6-0-0.