

ADVISORY AND FINANCE COMMITTEE

Minutes

August 30, 2023, Hybrid Meeting

PRESENT **14 members of the committee were present:** Gail Butler, Louis Cabana, Brian Dunn, Daniel Green, Bruce Howard, Joe Lalley, Timothy Lawlor, Steve Nearman, Lorenzo Pizarro, Bethany Rogers, Ashley Shaw, Evelyn Strawn, Jim Young, and Robert Zupperoli.

ABSENT **1 member of the committee was absent:** Christine Richards.

Call to Order - The meeting was called to order by Chairman Steve Nearman at 7:00 PM.

Announcements

- **Hybrid Meeting:** This meeting is likely to be conducted in a hybrid format, with some participants attending physically and others attending virtually via a video conference application.
- **Ways to Watch:** The meeting will be airing on Comcast 15, Verizon 47, or on PACTV's YouTube channel which can be viewed at pactv.org/stream.
- **Public Comment:** Any speaker giving public comment is allotted up to 5 minutes in which to speak. Public Comment can be made at the beginning or end of each meeting, or in regard to a particular agenda item the speaker wishes to be heard on
- **Zoom Login Information:** Anyone who wants to attend the meeting virtually, including members of the public who wish to give public comment, can use one of the following methods in which to do so:
 - **Join via Zoom application:** Download the Zoom meeting application on your device, press/click on "Join", then enter Meeting ID: **995 2986 0638**, and then the Meeting Password: **100131**, or
 - **Join via website** (requires microphone): Go to www.zoom.us, click "Join A Meeting" on the top righthand side, and enter the meeting ID: **995 2986 0638**, and then the meeting password **100131**, or
 - **Join via Telephone (voice only):** Dial **929-205-6099** and Enter Meeting ID: **995 2986 0638** and enter Meeting Password: **100131**

Public Comment: None.

Agenda Items

Chairman Nearman discussed respect between the committee, presenters, and citizens alike. He noted that everyone has an opinion but the obligation of the presenter and the committee is to present the details of the article to the best of their ability and for a question-and-answer discussion to ensue.

Fall Town Meeting Articles

Chairman Nearman introduced the articles the committee would be considering.

Article 9A Housing: Habitat for Humanity – Mr. Bill Keohan, CPC Chair, advised that Habitat for Humanity is partnering with the Town of Plymouth Office of Community Development to renovate an existing 20 x 28 cottage at 47 Indian Ave. by expanding the building to a two story 3-bedroom single-family home. They are requesting \$100,000 in CPC funding. There will be a deed restriction placed on the property once the property has been sold restricting the property to be affordable in perpetuity. The estimated cost of the project is \$289,630.

Mr. Dunn motioned to recommend to Article 9A to Town Meeting. Mr. Lawlor second. Motion carried unanimously (14-0-0).

Article 9B Housing: Plymouth Housing Authority - Bill Keohan, CPC Chair, advised that Plymouth Housing Authority is requesting additional CPC funding of \$381,525 to complete the restoration of the 3 units of rental housing at the Oak St. School. This phase of the project is estimated at \$1,028,896. Mr. Keohan said the 3 units are restricted affordable housing units and are being designed for seniors with special mobility requirements that need overnight assistance. Mr. Young asked who would be staffing the building after it is complete. Mr. Keohan advised that the Housing Authority would handle the application and qualification process. Mr. Young restated the question, who would take care of the

occupants. Mr. Keohan advised that the occupants are self-sufficient but there would be an evening person available for assistance. Ms. Butler has concerns about the responsibilities of the person staying there at night. Mr. Keohan advised that it wouldn't be a medical person but an evening position for assistance to the residents. Ms. Butler wants to make sure that the lease agreement is clear to the occupant that the overnight assistance is not a medical position. Mr. Howard asked if these are apartments. Mr. Keohan replied yes. Mr. Howard asked who would receive the proceeds from the Article 9A and Article 9B. Mr. Keohan advised that Art. 9A is being sold and the proceeds go to Habitat for Humanity and Art. 9B are rental units and the rents go to the Plymouth Housing Authority. Deed restrictions are placed on the properties and rental units restricting the property to be affordable in perpetuity.

Ms. Butler motioned to recommend Article 9B to Town Meeting. Mr. Howard second. Motion carried unanimously (14-0-0).

Article 9C Historical: Old Russell Library - Bill Keohan, CPC Chair, advised this is a historical preservation project for the restoration of the old Russell Library. The Building was built originally as a library in 1899. Previous CPC funds (2007) were utilized to purchase the building and then CPC funds (2017) were used for ADA compliance improvements to the building. This request is for a \$443,942 grant to The Plymouth Center for the Arts for the façade and structural work. The estimated cost of the project is \$631,492. The Center for the Arts has a 100-year lease with the Town beginning in 2007 with the option for another 100 years. Ms. Eileen Pacheco, Board of Directors & Development Committee Co-Chair, described the Center for the Arts commitment to the cultural and historical experience for all who visit. She noted that the center has been entrenched in Plymouth for over 50 years, offering many classes and community activities.

Ms. Pacheco said they initiated a 20-year Systems Replacement Plan (SRP) project in 2022 to identify and prioritize capital maintenance needs using a grant from the Mass Cultural Council. Items identified in the SRP, in combination with priorities identified by their Board of Directors, Facilities Committee and Finance Committee, is the basis for this project.

Mr. Howard motioned to recommend Article 9C to Town Meeting. Ms. Strawn second. Mr. Zupperoli feels this is a great use of the building and a great project. Mr. Lalley appreciates the maintenance plan they initiated and their stewardship of the property. Motion carried unanimously (14-0-0).

Article 9D Historical: Pilgrim Hall - Bill Keohan, CPC Chair, advised that the Pilgrim Hall Museum is the oldest Museum in North America. The Pilgrim Hall Museum is requesting a grant for \$3.2 million from CPC to address issues with the roof & skylight, interior display lighting, and upgrades to the heating & cooling system. The estimated cost of the project is \$5,267,000. These renovations are necessary to protect and display historical artifacts. Protecting the largest collection of archives, manuscripts, documents, photographs, and historical artifacts covering over 400 years.

Mr. David Peck discussed the specifications of the RFP for the roof, which in sections of the slate roof, is crumbling. The architect, Spencer Preservation Group, discussed the aging roof and the leaking 1914 skylight. They are recommending a full roof replacement to make the building watertight and preserve the structure and its contents with a new 100-year-life-roof, a replicated skylight feature will be roofed with copper sheathing to provide longer-term weather protection for the building and collections, an innovative lighting feature will be installed recreating the visual appearance of the skylight without the danger of leaking or harmful ultra-violet light to the historic artworks and artifacts, a replacement of the heating and cooling system with an efficient and historically sensitive AC system to provide proper climate control for preservation of the integrity of this very important 400-year history of Plymouth.

Ms. Donna Curtin, Executive Director, outlined what happens next. She said the art needs to be moved with the greatest care by a specialized removal process prior to the roof repairs. While the artworks are in storage, they will also remodel the display areas in conjunction with the other the renovations.

Mr. Lalley asked what the concern was by the one CPC member who voted against the project. Mr. Keohan advised that it had to do with the restrictions and matching funds. Mr. Zupperoli noted that the \$3.2 million opens up the Museum to seek additional grants. Mr. Nearman asked what the total cost of the project was. Ms. Curtin stated \$5.27 million. Ms. Rogers asked what the Museum makes annually. Ms. Curtin advised \$900,000 a year. Ms. Strawn asked if Plymouth residents got free entry. Ms. Curtin advised that currently there is no waived entry fee, but if the CPC wanted to make

that a point it would be welcomed. Ms. Strawn said she is trying to wrap her head around the different components of the project and if they all comply with the CPC requirements. Mr. Keohan said that the amount of the CPC Grant is covering eligible items and those items that are not eligible for CPC funding are being funded by other funding sources including, grant, foundation gifts, sponsorships, and donations. Ms. Rogers asked about the lost revenue in the budget. Ms. Curtin advised that the Museum will be closed for 9 months and entrance fees are a big part of their revenue and it needs to be replaced. Ms. Shaw asked if repairs would be sufficient and Ms. Curtin advised that patches and repairs have been done but the facilities plan found that replacement was necessary. Mr. Green asked how the \$3.2 million correlates to other projects. Mr. Keohan advised that it is not the biggest grant and discussed some other large projects. Mr. Howard is concerned about the Towns spending and asked if alternative materials for the slate roof were considered. Mr. Howard would like the cost estimate and would like alternative materials costs. Ms. Curtin advised that there are 3 restrictions on the property and one of those restrictions dictates that replacement must be with like kind. She advised that slate would be 100 years and asphalt would be 30 years. Mr. Lalley motioned to recommend Art. 9D to Town Meeting. Mr. Zupperoli second. Mr. Dunn supports this project and the previous projects this committee has accomplished for the Town, such as the Forefathers Monument. Mr. Green supports. Mr. Zupperoli supports and noted that access to the whole building is important. Ms. Strawn feels that this is a very valuable asset to the Town, however, she is concerned about the level of borrowing and can't support this amount. Mr. Lawlor supports it, because it is all about tourism and what this brings to the Town. Mr. Young said his family came to Plymouth for history and anything the Town can do to preserve history and bring tourism is a win. Ms. Rogers is concerned with the amount of the borrowing request compared to the annual revenue estimate. Ms. Shaw feels that as the Finance Committee member she needs to be concerned with the Town Finances and can't support this amount. Motion carried 10-4-0.

Article 9E Open Space: Land off Rocky Pond Rd - Bill Keohan, CPC Chair, advised that Article E is requesting CPC funding in the amount of \$175,000 to purchase 50.2 acres of defunct cranberry bogs situated at 36R Rocky Pond Road, and to authorize the Select Board to grant a conservation restriction on the property. This parcel abuts 67 acres of Town conservation land and lies within areas designated as ecologically significant. Mr. Keohan said that the property contains a coastal plain pond, a potential vernal pool, and core habitat components. David Gould, Director DMEA, noted that the property is within a significant water supply area for groundwater and surface water protection. Mr. Howard asked if the vernal pools have been certified yet. Mr. Gould replied, no. Ms. Shaw motion to recommend Article 9E to Town Meeting. Mr. Young second. Ms. Strawn commended Mr. Gould for his restoration of cranberry bogs. Motion carried unanimously (14-0-0).

Article 9F Open Space: Land Rocky Hill Rd - Bill Keohan, CPC Chair, advised that Article F is requesting CPC funding in the amount of \$1,210,000 to purchase 23.6 acres off Rocky Hill Rd, with 900 feet of frontage on Plymouth Bay. Mr. Keohan advised that this unique oceanfront property is the point at Manomet point and would allow Plymouth residents walking trails with incredible views of Cape Cod bay. The property will have a parking area, trailhead, hiking and; therefore, shouldn't pose a burden to Town staff or budgets. The current owner removed the building. Mr. Keohan said the purpose would be passive recreation and the vista is the attraction. Ms. Butler viewed the property and it is very interesting and she feels that a portion of the property should be sold as a home lot to recoup the CPC funds and bring in tax dollars. Mr. Keohan advised that when CPC funds are used for an acquisition a conservation restriction is required on the property and therefore can't be sold for building. There is an existing hiking trail and they are not planning to expand on the trails or create access to the beach. Mr. Lawlor advised that the view of the ocean is minimal since the thicket is prohibitive to the vista. Mr. Keohan advised that in different seasons the vista would change. Mr. Gould noted various trees on the property that are not native to Plymouth and are specular. Mr. Howard asked about access. Mr. Gould noted that the parking area would be open daily but that there would be gates to prevent driving deep into the property. Ms. Rogers asked about emergency vehicle access, if necessary. Mr. Gould said there was adequate access for emergency vehicles and they would have access to the gates. Mr. Green asked about work improvements to the site. Mr. Gould said minimal work would be necessary. Mr. Pizarro asked about the Conservation Restriction. Mr. Gould advised that his dept. manages open space and there would be a conservation restriction recorded. Mr. Lawlor motioned to approve Article 9F to Town Meeting. Mr. Dunn second. Ms. Butler can't support \$1.2 million for land that is so dense it would be hard to walk and feels there is better use of this land and that the Town should derive some income from it. Mr. Zupperoli feels this is a bargain for \$1.2 million. Mr. Howard feels the property is spectacular and supports the acquisition. Mr. Dunn feels that protecting this waterfront property is a good thing. Mr. Lawlor supports this and feels it is a steal. Motion carries (13-1-0).

Article 9G Recreation: Hedges Pond Demolition - Bill Keohan, CPC Chair, said that Article 9G is requesting CPC funding in the amount of \$157,500 for demolition of 7 cabins at Hedges Pond Recreational and Preserve due to the presence of lead paint and poor structural integrity of the cabins. Mr. Keohan advised that the camping experience was a motivation for Hedges Pond park. Mr. Howard asked why there were two costs. Mr. Gould advised that they are awaiting the tests results of the TCLP lead analysis and that the two costs are, in worst case, the test is positive they want to have the funds available for additional clean up. Mr. Gould advised that if the test is negative the funds won't be spent. Mr. Gould noted that the disposal of the buildings is expensive and that is why the Town requested CPC funds to remove the buildings. Mr. Nearman asked if the CPC would be back for removal of the remaining buildings in the future. Mr. Keohan stated, yes. Ms. Rogers motioned to recommend Article 9G to Town Meeting. Mr. Cabana second. Motion carried unanimously (14-0-0).

Article 9H Reduce Borrowing for Stephens Field - Bill Keohan, CPC Chair, is requesting to use CPC available funds of \$1,487,154 to reduce the final borrowing commitment for the renovations to Stephens Field. Stephens Field is a great park that CPC has been renovating. CPC continues to work to reduce their debt. Mr. Dunn motioned to approve Article 9H to Town Meeting. Mr. Howard second. Motion carried unanimously (14-0-0).

Article 9I FY24 Annual Budget - Bill Keohan, CPC Chair, advised that they are budgeting \$161,563, 4% of the estimated 2024 CPA revenue, for administrative costs. Mr. Keohan discussed the budget process for CPA and the required percentages from the 2024 estimated revenues. Mr. Lalley motioned to recommend Article 9I to Town Meeting.

Mr. Zupperoli noted that the information presented is a lot and a summary of the highlights and lowlights would be beneficial at the beginning of each article.

There was a discussion on the merits of a support person for the CPC, though this item is not included in the articles presented tonight.

Mr. Keohan advised that they work to provide as much information as possible regarding their articles and backup and he doesn't feel that they are in a position to withhold information.

Mr. Dunn feels this was well put together and very detailed and appreciates all the work that went into it and wouldn't change a thing. Ms. Shaw would like presenters to provide as much information as possible and she doesn't want a summary. Mr. Young also feels that the more info the better as a new member. Ms. Rogers feels all too often we ask people to provide more information so she is grateful to get all the information ahead of time. Mr. Zupperoli said he is only requesting a summary, not less info, and thanked Mr. Keohan for this thorough submission. Ms. Shaw noted that each Article submission included a memo with a summary & intent section on it.

Ms. Barrett, Finance Director, advised that the motion should include a 10% aside for Community Housing for \$403,908 and the administrative budget of \$161,583 only since the required spending for the other categories has been satisfied. Mr. Young motioned to recommend Art 9I to Town Meeting. Ms. Shaw second. Motion carried unanimously (14-0-0).

Old/New/Other Business

Chairman Nearman noted that they received a reply from Town Treasurer Patty Meachen regarding Tax Title properties and the Title Search process.

Public Comment - Ginny Davis, Precinct 4, noted that CPC had independently prepared their own materials for as long as she can remember and the decision for support should be theirs to make.

Adjournment Mr. Dunn motioned to adjourn. Ms. Shaw second. Motioned carried unanimously (14-0-0). The meeting adjourned at 9:48 PM.

Submitted by
Jeanette White
Budget Analyst