



City of Lowell – Community Preservation Committee

Community Preservation Committee Meeting Minutes

Thursday, March 25, 2021 6:30 p.m.

Conducted via Zoom

Note: These minutes are not completed verbatim. For a recording of the meeting, visit www.ltc.org

Members Present

Adam Baacke, Chairman
Eric Slagle, Vice Chairman
Troy Depeiza, Member
Sinead Gallivan, Member
John Linnehan, Member
Sidney Liang, Member
Philip Shea, Member
Bradley Buitenhuys, Member
Kara Keefe Mullin, Member

Members Absent

None

Others Present

Dylan Ricker, Assistant Planner

A quorum of the Committee was present. A. Baacke called the meeting to order at 6:31pm.

I. Minutes for Approval

2/11 Minutes

P. Shea asked about a comment that was made at the previous meeting stating that the CPC was required to meet 4 times per year, he stated that the City ordinance requires 6 meetings per year. D. Ricker confirmed this.

Motion:

E. Slagle motioned to accept the minutes, seconded by P. Shea. The motion passed unanimously, (8-0).

II. Continued Business

III. New Business

IV. Other Business

Review proposed Community Preservation Act Survey

A. Baacke asked that staff provide highlights of the survey for members. D. Ricker stated that the goal of the survey is to understand where Lowell residents feel the majority of funds should be spent. At least 10% of funds must go to Open Space and Recreation, Affordable Housing, and Historic Preservation, but we want to understand how the public feels the remaining funds should be split. Additionally, we would like to understand the public's priorities for each of the categories.

S. Gallivan asked how strictly the responses will be followed, especially if there is a limited number of responses. E. Slagle stated that regardless of the number of responses the survey will be a tool to guide the committee, not a binding decision. It will be the Committee's ultimate decision, the survey is for guidelines of what the community thinks. A. Baacke agreed that the survey is not binding, it will help with the creation of the Community Preservation Plan, and ultimately be a resource to consider when deciding on CPA project prioritization. The Committee should take into account the sample size when considering the survey results.

S. Liang asked staff to provide information about the survey distribution plan, and how long the survey will be open. D. Ricker stated the survey will be translated into Khmer, Spanish, and Portuguese to get as many responses from Lowell residents as is possible. The goal is to have the survey open early-mid April, and remain open until early-mid May. The survey will be promoted through the City's promotional channels, as well as through our partners as was done with the recent parking study.

S. Liang asked if staff will be providing information notifying City residents and organizations that the survey will be sent out. E. Slagle stated that staff would do this, and would also provide an informational piece to the City Council, and ask for help from the City Manager's Office to promote the survey through social media, and website.

A. Baacke stated that he would support utilizing community partners that have helped distribute surveys in the past to be able to reach people that are more challenging to reach through conventional channels. Promoting the survey to as many residents as possible would be beneficial.

P. Shea said that some question on the survey were difficult to answer, and not clear cut. E. Slagle stated that he saw the survey beforehand and his edits are reflected in the current documents.

S. Liang asked if the survey needs to be sent to another Department for review.

K. Keefe Mullin asked if the survey would be an online survey that can be submitted via email. D. Ricker stated that the survey will be done electronically and will be done via Survey Monkey. K. Keefe Mullin asked about survey translation. E. Slagle confirmed it will be translated and we currently have some quotes for the cost.

A. Baacke asked that staff review the survey to ensure questions are not too technical, and rephrase questions to ensure it is understandable to a broad audience. B. Buitenhuys stated that Question 10 in the Community Housing section which references the proportion of affordable units in developments is difficult to understand.

P. Shea said that in Question 1 in Community Housing more than one of the choices could be selected making it challenging to answer. A. Baacke suggested allowing respondents to rank the importance on 1-5 scale of each response, the aggregate results will be shown at the end. B. Buitenhuys suggested allowing respondents to select multiple options. E. Slagle said that staff will review the longer questions with more choices to determine if there is a better way to format them to gather more data without being overwhelming.

A. Baacke suggested that understanding how successful residents feel the City is at addressing each challenge is important, residents may feel the City is doing enough and does not need to change its approach. This can help identify where residents feel there needs to be more investment. E. Slagle said staff will look into this.

T. Depeiza stated the survey looked fine, but that Question 10 in the Community Housing section may be confusing to some respondents.

Discuss Public Hearing Date to solicit feedback from the public on the Community Preservation Plan

DPD Proposed Date: 4/29 at 6:30pm

A. Baacke asked whether the public hearing was to receive feedback on the Community Preservation Plan, or to inform the plan. D. Ricker stated the public hearing is to inform the plan, the date was set to be prior to the completion of the plan.

A. Baacke asked if the public hearing date is set or whether the committee needs to approve it. E. Slagle stated that there will be upcoming formal votes on budgeting due by late April or early May, this impacted the decision for the date as well. DoR requires the CPC take a vote to request the City Council appropriate the 10% for each category, and administrative costs.

A. Baacke asked whether the last Thursday of the month at 6:30pm should be established as the CPC meeting date.

K. Keefe Mullin stated that if the committee is looking for public input, it may be beneficial to hold the public hearing on a Tuesday when more residents are tuned in due to City Council meetings. P. Shea suggested avoiding Tuesdays because the City Council may begin meeting every Tuesday again, and supports keeping meetings on Thursdays. K. Keefe Mullin said that only having the public hearing on a Tuesday, but having regular meetings on Thursdays make more sense.

E. Slagle stated the hearing can be done on April 20th, or April 29th but with a smaller public response. E. Slagle supported keeping regular meetings on the final Thursday of the month, this was the day of the week that worked best for members when he initially asked; the Committee can meet more frequently when necessary. K. Keefe Mullin, and S. Liang agreed. A. Baacke said that the regular meeting schedule can be determined after the hearing.

Motion:

B. Buitenhuys motioned to set the public hearing date on April 29, 2021 at 6:30pm, seconded by P. Shea. The motion passed unanimously, (8-0).

Review proposed application materials

S. Gallivan asked whether a question should be added asking applicants if they own the property. A. Baacke agreed, and stated that it should be determined if applicants at least have sufficient site control, or whether they need funds to acquire the site. E. Slagle agreed.

S. Gallivan asked whether there should be a questions asking if the applicant is working with an architect, engineer, or contractor. A. Baacke added that we will likely see different types of applicants, some with experience, and others with less experience. Understanding organizational capacity can help determine how impactful a CPC investment would be. E. Slagle stated the question can include an area for applicants to state who their architect, engineer, or contractor is if applicable.

A. Baacke said that referencing application materials from other communities would be helpful. A. Baacke asked whether staff has referenced materials from other communities. D. Ricker stated that materials from Lexington, Acton, Gloucester, and New Bedford were used in designing the current application materials.

Review proposed Community Preservation Project Recommendation Form

A. Baacke asked for an explanation of the purpose of the recommendation form. D. Ricker stated that the form is a suggested best practice from the Community Preservation Coalition. The form ensures that funds are appropriated from the correct CPA reserves upon a City Council vote to ensure compliance with the Department of Revenue. The form also provides background on projects to City Council members.

V. Notices

VI. Further Comments from Community Preservation Committee Members

B. Buitenhuys invited members to attend a Lowell clean up hosted with State Rep. Howard. The group will meet at Angkor market and will be cleaning up to Route 110.

VII. Adjournment

P. Shea motioned to adjourn the meeting, S. Gallivan seconded. The motion passed unanimously, (8-0). The time was 7:12pm.