

Approved 2/23/2022

Town of West Tisbury
Community Preservation Committee (CPC)
Meeting Minutes – February 11, 2022, 5:30 pm
Virtual Meeting via Zoom

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Cheryl Lowe, at 5:33 pm.

Present: Bea Phear, John Rau, Doug Ruskin, Ted Jochsberger, Cheryl Lowe, Jeffrey DuBard, Nancy Dole, Mary Sage Napolitan, Angela Luckey

Others: Sara Fuschetto, Administrative Assistant

Old Business:

The Committee reviewed the minutes from the December 8, 2021 meeting. Cheryl Lowe asked if the Committee had any changes or corrections to the minutes. Doug Ruskin requested detail regarding an IHT/CPC conflict of interest added to the minutes that involves Ruskin and DuBard. 401 State Road (“the last property the town owned”) needs reference. Ted Jochsberger explained that this was the last piece of property that the town owned that was available as an affordable housing project. The reading of a note from Michael Culinari needs more explanation in the summary. On a motion made by Cheryl Lowe, seconded by Jeffrey DuBard, the Committee approved the minutes as amended.

New Business:

Kathy Logue, West Tisbury Town Treasurer/Collector, spoke about Howe’s House and needed repairs. Logue made an appeal for renovations and a small addition, estimating in the 3.5 to 5 million range since there should be code compliant items like a second staircase and an elevator. Logue said the project is an ideal candidate for CPC funds, as it is a historic building in a historic district. It could be a CPC borrowing situation similar to Scott’s Grove. Lowe encouraged an application submission for next year, as the current list of projects exceeded funds. Logue clarified to Lowe that other towns utilize the building as Up Island Council on Aging, and Aquinnah and Chilmark could have a role in paying for future repairs. Doug Ruskin asked if Howe’s House was completely owned by West Tisbury. Logue said yes, like the Tri-Town Ambulance building in which the building is in West Tisbury but other towns utilized it. Jeffrey DuBard asked Logue to consider funding outside of the towns with programs like MassDevelopment that work with endeavors of greater size and expense.

Lowe started the process of voting to distribute the funds. She asked the Committee if they would like to begin with those projects the Committee had historically funded. The Committee agreed, and Lowe proposed to begin with the Scott's Grove debt service, the Affordable Housing Reserve, and the MVCMA Tabernacle Roof since these were all previously committed projects.

Ruskin asked about administrative funds and said we might be able to add \$10-15,000 to the total. Ruskin said it seems we don't spend all of what we appropriate to the administrative fund. Could we move some of that into one of the reserves? Bea Phear said the leftover administrative funds go to undesignated funds at the end of the year. Lowe and Phear did not remember how much have been left in the funds historically.

Phear stated misgivings about funding the Island Housing Trust project, Huseby School Housing. It may be years to go through the planning board and the Martha's Vineyard Commission for permitting, which may or may not be approved. It would be premature to set aside money for a program that may not happen.

John Rau stated hesitations about the Affordable Housing Trust. They already have approximately \$600,000 in the Affordable Trust Reserve, and every year they make a financial request. Rau said they don't spend this money, so every year they keep building their reserve. Rau recommended that we cut this funding back substantially. Ruskin addressed this by speaking conceptually: the Affordable Housing Trust acts independently of the town, with funds available to address affordable housing. Ruskin continued that the AHT does not always have a project in mind, and it is important for the municipal trusts in every town to build up funds to address opportunities as they arise. This way, the AHT can act without having to wait and potentially lose an opportunity. DuBard spoke about the practical application of AHT with the example of 401 State Road, which is a project that will need an RFP approval and extensive funding. DuBard said we can't anticipate the opportunities and the large sums they invariably cost. Phear proposed that the Committee go forward and grant the \$350,000 requested for the Affordable Housing Reserve. Jochsberger seconded the motion with a yes. Rau voted no. Napolitan, Lowe, Ruskiin and DuBard voted yes to granting the funding.

Phear researched the MVPT Grange Hall through GuideStar and said they had not filed their nonprofit form 990 since 2018. At that time, they had about \$17,000,000 worth of property and \$700,000 cash. Phear recommended giving them 50% of their requested amount. Jochsberger seconded the motion. Ruskin wondered if we should say yes at all or bring them back for further confirmation that things will be done right. DuBard voiced grave concerns and said he followed up after the interview regarding the MVPT income assets. DuBard had requested financials and did not receive a response. Without information or clarity from the MVPT, DuBard was not comfortable with the full amount or reduced amount. Jochsberger also found the non-response troubling and agreed with DuBard's decision. Phear withdrew her motion for granting the reduced amount, and the Committee instead voted on whether to fund the project. Jochsberger made a motion to reject the application, Rau seconded the

motion. Ruskin asked that if this vote goes through that we formally address a letter citing lack of clarity to their financial situation and failure to respond to DuBard's request for further information. Approval vote to not fund the project: Rau, Napolitan, Jochsberger, Phear, Ruskin, DuBard and Lowe voted yes to not funding.

The Committee voted on the MVCMA Tabernacle Roof. Phear made the motion for funding the full amount, Ruskin seconded the motion. All in favor of funding the full amount: Rau, Napolitan, Jochsberger, DuBard, and Lowe voted yes.

The Committee voted on the Old Mill Building Feasibility Assessment. Ruskin expressed concern that the Martha's Vineyard Garden Club doesn't seem to have successful, organized fundraising. Rau suggested there might have been difficult times, given new leadership and COVID related challenges. Phear expressed the significance of the building and that repairs to the Old Mill may create an ease and opportunity for fundraising later. Jochsberger agreed with Phear and said the amount requested is not exorbitant. Lowe took a vote: Phear, Jochsberger, Napolitan, DuBard, Ruskin, Rau and Lowe voted yes to fund the full amount requested.

The Committee voted on the Aidylberg III for Island Elderly Housing. Ruskin made the motion to approve the full amount, Phear seconded. Rau, Napolitan, Jochsberger, Phear, Ruskin, DuBard and Lowe voted yes.

The Committee voted on the Harbor Homes for Women. Ruskin said IHT does not have money in this project, although they are involved with them. DuBard made the motion to approve the full funding requested with a second from Jochsberger. Rau, Napolitan, Jochsberger, Phear, Ruskin, DuBard and Lowe voted yes to full funding approval.

Nancy Dole joined the meeting.

The Committee voted on the IHT Huseby School Housing. Phear made the motion to reject the full funding requested. Jochsberger seconded. Rau, Napolitan, Jochsberger, Phear, Dole and Lowe voted yes to rejecting the full funding requested. Ruskin and DuBard abstained from the vote.

The Committee voted on IHT Red Arrow Road. Phear made the motion to approve the full funding requested, and Jochsberger seconded the motion. Rau, Napolitan, Jochsberger, Phear, and Dole voted yes. Ruskin, DuBard and Lowe abstained from the vote.

The Committee voted on Dukes County Regional Housing Authority. Phear made the motion to approve the full funding requested, and Jochsberger seconded the motion. Rau, Napolitan, Jochsberger, Phear, Ruskin, DuBard and Lowe voted yes.

The Committee voted on Island Autism Center and Neighborhood. Napolitan worked as a designer in the early master planning stages. She is eligible for the vote as she is no longer on the project and does not stand to benefit from this or any Island Autism project going forward.

Phear made the motion to approve the full funding requested but expressed disappointment in the funding documentation Island Autism has provided. Ruskin said the warrant must be submitted by February 2, 2022, but language can be changed up to two weeks thereafter, and the CPC can always delete the language if the Committee is not satisfied. Rau said he is concerned they do not have a plan for fundraising. Dole asked if the Committee was able to approve conditionally. Lowe said there wasn't time for provisional items as we had to submit the warrant next week. Napolitan asked if the Committee could later change the decision, based on discovering more detail on the pro forma. Jochsberger made the motion that the Committee should vote no as the project has years ahead of it, and a better application could be produced next year. Voting no to funding the full amount: Rau, Napolitan, Jochsberger, Phear, and Dole. Ruskin, DuBard and Lowe abstained from the vote. Ruskin asked that we provide a letter detailing the rejection, same as what we are providing to the MVPT. Phear said we can ask them to apply for funds in the future and include this in their letter.

The Committee voted on the Scott's Grove Affordable Housing Development. Jochsberger made the motion to approve the full funding requested, and Phear seconded the motion. Rau, Napolitan, Jochsberger, Phear, Ruskin, DuBard, Dole and Lowe voted yes to approving the full funding requested.

With no further business, the Committee voted unanimously to adjourn at 6:49 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Sara Fuschetto
Administrative Assistant

