

TOWN OF STOW
Community Preservation Committee

Minutes, April 13, 2020

Community Preservation Committee Virtual Zoom Meeting

Community Preservation Committee members present: Vin Antil (chair), Andy Crosby (vice chair), Mike Busch (arrived late), Erica Benedick, Bob Larkin, Roger Zimmerman, John Colonna-Romano, Gary Yu (arrived late), Ingeborg Clark

Other Attendees: Cortni Frecha (CPC Liaison), Mike Kopczynski (SMAHT) – Joined meeting around 8:00 pm

Admin. Assistant: Krista Bracci

The meeting began with a quorum at 7:40 pm

MINUTES

VOTE: Bob made a motion to approve the minutes of February 24, 2020, Roger seconded. A roll call was taken and the motion passed:

Roger	Yes
Bob	Yes
John	Yes
Ingeborg	Abstained
Andy	Yes
Vin	Yes
Erica	Abstained
Mike	Not present for vote
Gary	Not present for vote

INVOICES

No invoices to approve

PROJECT UPDATES

- Vin informed the members that he had spoken to Laura Greenough and Kathy Sferra and that they have decided not to move forward with the purchase of the Stow Acres Driving Range. They conducted another site visit of the property and felt it was just too wet. They also mentioned they would rather wait to see what their options may be if one of the courses goes up for sale. Vin also mentioned that no engineering work had been done, thus no administrative funds have been spent. He also shared that he felt this was a better decision for two reasons: may have the option to protect part of the land and have a better (less wet) site location for soccer fields. Krista will have the article pulled from the warrant.
- Krista mentioned that she heard from Carolyn Read (Habitat for Humanity) recently. Carolyn said that the project on the corner of Sudbury Road and Pine Point is going forward. Carolyn is happy to attend a CPC meeting to give a project update and will send Krista the time line once she has it.

MEETING SCHEDULE

Monday, April 27th via Zoom

PUBLIC HEARING DATE DISCUSSION FOR THE COMMUNITY PRESERVATION PLAN REVIEW

The members decided to hold off for another month picking a date. They would like to see how things are going due to the COVID-19 pandemic and social distancing.

Mike (7:50 pm) arrived in the Zoom meeting.

COVID-19 RENTAL ASSISTANTANCE OPPORTUNITY DISCUSSION (Pre Mike K)

The committee members chatted amongst themselves about this possible program prior to Mike K's presentation. These are a few of their comments:

- The company Metro West Collaborative Development may have a sample warrant article and can possibly administer the program for us.
- There were questions of how much would be needed and hopefully Mike will have a better understanding of that number.
- Bob made a point to make sure we follow the Fair Housing laws.
- Ingeborg suggested a broader application.
- Vin thought we should try and help individuals who also rent houses in Stow.

Mike K and Cortni F (approximately 8:00 pm) arrived in the Zoom meeting.

COVID-19 RENTAL ASSISTANTANCE OPPORTUNITY DISCUSSION (Post Mike K)

Gary (8:15 pm) arrived in the Zoom meeting during this discussion.

Mike from the Stow Municipal Affordable Housing Trust has been doing research on this program (supplied a summary handout). Below is a list of the key points he discussed (after discussing this project with the SMAHT committee members).

- Massachusetts Housing Partnership (MHP) had started this process and Mike has been in contact with them. He has also contacted Metro West Collaborative Development (MW for short). MW will be administering this program for about 15 towns. Some of the towns would be Waltham, Newton and Watertown who have a high rental population. The one program that fits all of them may not be the best option for Stow. We are very different from these towns, thus we may be better off going with MCO out of Leominster. Mike also mentioned that their administrative costs may be less per unit and the upfront administrative work would be more reasonable.
- There are three main things Mike has been trying to research:
 1. The scope of need in Stow
 2. How to attack that need
 3. Which organization will be able to administer the program and be flexible
- CPA funds can only be used for rental assistance, not on mortgages. This program can be a 90 day emergency tool and then later be reassessed.
- Most of the renters in Stow are in Plantation Apartments and Pilot Grove. There are other renters outside of these two locations; this may pose an obstacle (there are 13 other multi-family units in town).
- Some questions Mike raised that we should think about:
 1. Do we limit help to those only in affordable housing; this would make eligibility easier to check.
 2. What about people who are not already in need, but may eventually need help?
 3. How do you handle liquid assets?
 4. How do we verify in the short time that individuals qualify for help?

5. Should we only pay a portion of the rent and have the landlord forgive a portion so that the renter is paid in full?

The conversation was then opened up to comments and questions by the CPC members.

- How many landlords are there in Stow – Mike said about 4. There is no way of knowing how many houses are for rent in Stow.
- It was mentioned that SMAHT would be the organizational Sponsor and they would use either MW or MCO as the administrator. Bob mentioned he has worked with MCO and they are great.
- The CPA funds can be transferred directly to SMAHT if they are approved at town meeting. SMAHT could start right away helping renters and also fundraise for administrative costs. That way the CPA funds can be used solely to pay rent for qualified applicants.
- There may be a need for an interdepartmental memo explaining the agreement between the CPC and SMAHT.
- There is a risk that town meeting may not approve this request or town meeting will be postponed again to a later date. In this case, SMAHT runs the chance of being out of funds and would need to cancel the program.
- Renters are not able to be evicted at the moment in Massachusetts if they do not pay rent. The CPA funds can help them renters get themselves out of the hole they will soon find themselves in.
- There was a discussion that this program would need between \$250,000 and \$300,000. Some members thought it may be better to estimate high, maybe around \$400,000. It was clear \$500,000 was too high of an estimate.
- It is possible that the landlords at Pilot Grove and Plantation may wait for rental funds until after town meeting if asked.
- Will this program be first come first serve each month? There are many factors to think about how you will spend the money. Maybe every applicant that qualifies will get a percentage of their rent so everyone gets help.
- There was some question on who would write the application. Would it be the administrative organization with SMAHT's approval?
- Could we have people apply and then come up with a number?
- Mike mentioned that spending this money does not offer Stow anything in return. Not like building an affordable unit and then getting a unit on the SHI.

VOTE: Bob made a motion to accept the Emergency Rental Assistance Program (amount TBD at the next meeting), Mike seconded. The vote was unanimous and a roll call was taken:

Andy	Yes
Erica	Yes
Gary	Yes
Ingeborg	Yes
John	Yes
Mike	Yes
Bob	Yes
Roger	Yes
Vin	Yes

ACTION ITEMS:

Mike is going to do some more research and get back to Vin and Erica with more details. This program and even a warrant article will be discussed at the next CPC meeting. The warrant article deadline is now May 1st. Cortni will be supplying Krista with a project application for the file.

NEWS & VIEWS

None reported

Vin made a motion to adjourn at 9:12 pm, Erica seconded, the vote was unanimous and a roll call was taken.

Andy	Yes
Erica	Yes
Gary	Yes
Ingeborg	Yes
John	Yes
Mike	Yes
Bob	Yes
Roger	Yes
Vin	Yes

Respectfully submitted by: Krista Bracci