

TOWN OF STOW
Community Preservation Committee

Minutes, April 27, 2020 (Amended)

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)

Community Preservation Committee members not present: Ingeborg Clark

Other Attendees: Cortni Frecha (CPC Liaison), Mike Kopczynski (SMAHT)

Admin. Assistant: Krista Bracci

The meeting began with a quorum at 7:36 pm

MINUTES

VOTE: Bob made a motion to approve the minutes of April 13, 2020, Erica seconded. A roll call was taken and the motion passed:

Roger	Yes
Andy	Yes
Bob	Yes
Erica	Yes
John	Yes
Vin	Yes

INVOICES

VOTE: Bob made a motion to approve an invoice from Gatehouse Media totaling \$39.56 (Town Hall Restoration Project – 2nd attempt), Andy seconded. A roll call was taken and the motion passed:

Roger	Yes
Andy	Yes
Bob	Yes
Erica	Yes
John	Yes
Vin	Yes

CONTINUED DISCUSSION ON THE COVID-19 EMERGENCY RENTAL ASSISTANCE

Vin opened the discussion asking that we cover four items tonight regarding this topic:

- Hear from Mike Kopczynski on any new developments
- Review the project application Cortni Frecha submitted after the last meeting
- Review and approve the warrant article that is due on Friday
- Begin discussion on the SMAHT and CPC agreement

Mike K's Updates (he supplied a written update prior to the meeting):

Gary arrived during this discussion

- Mike has sent out some emails to the Secretary of State and the Department of Revenue regarding private fundraising. He does not feel this will be an issue since the Town of Newton has done this in the past. He is also looking into some grants. Hopefully, the funds raised will help with the administrative costs.
- He has obtained a list from TCB showing that they already know about 90% of the individuals that will qualify for the emergency fund (have to have an income below 80% of the region area median income). Mike is not sure at this point how to handle the new residents that will fall under the 80% AMI due to this pandemic?
- The program will only run for three months, April through June and then be funded in July. TCB has agreed to wait for the funds until July. By then Mike said he should have a pretty firm grasp on the total cost. If it turns out they have too many applicants and not enough money there may need to be a lottery. MCO is helping with the documents and may mention a lottery may need to take place.
- Mike also touched on asset limitations (no more than \$50,000 in savings). TCB feels that most of their renters have no other assets and no savings.
- TCB will be discussing at one of their meetings about foregoing some of the rent for three months only (possibly 20%). The fund then would only pay 80% of the rent.
- MCO agreed on a flat rate of \$7,500 to administer this program for three months. SMAHT will pay this fee out of their funds; therefore MCO will get the money up front and not have to wait until July. MCO also has records of most of the renters who will apply for relief.
- The advertising will most likely consist of putting a write up in the paper, informing the COA, Food Pantry, Helping Hands and the town Social Worker. TCB will also send letters to their eligible renters.

Discussion Q&A:

Q. How to return unused funds to the CPA when the three months are up?

A. After some discussion it was determined this would not be an issue. By Town Meeting SMAHT will have a firm handle on what the total need would be? They will invoice the CPC in chunks instead of the entire amount at once. All funds would be paid directly to SMAHT, not the land lords.

Q. Is this program fair and legal?

A. Mike explained it seems to be fine because it is a temporary program and does not have as many constraints and is also only for Stow residents.

Q. What CPA bucket should the funds be taken from?

A. Mike would prefer that the funds be taken out of the Unreserved Account, not the Affordable Housing bucket. He felt that rental assistance is a people project, not an affordable housing one. No units are being added to the SHI. Most of the CPC members were fine with this request.

Q. Should we extend the program if needed?

A. Mike K and Bob felt very strongly that this needs to be only a temporary program (3 months) with no extension option. Bob felt the government will put into place a rental assistance plan at some point if there is continued need.

Q. Can the requested CPA amount be changed at Town Meeting?

A. Yes, it can be lowered not increased.

Q. What will be the deadline to apply?

A. Mike was thinking that May 15th would be a good date so that he can have a firm number by town meeting.

Q. Can some of the money raised through donations and grants be used to lower the CPA obligation?

A. Mike said this may in fact happen depending on how much money is donated beyond the \$7,500 needed for administration costs.

Q. What happens if there is not enough money to help everyone?

A. Instead of giving TCD 80% of the rent, they may only give them 60%.

Additional Discussion Topic:

There were some questions about how funds are transferred and what happens when the funds are no longer needed. Krista explained to the members that transferring all the funds to SMAHT has never been done. Most likely once those funds are released any unused funds cannot be returned. If the funds are kept in the CPA account for the emergency fund, after three months the unused funds can then be returned to the original account they came from. A good plan would be for SMAHT to invoice the CPC a number of times in smaller amounts rather than transfer the entire amount at once.

The project was voted on at the last CPC meeting, but the amount allotted for the project was not (Krista gave all members a copy of the project application that was sent after the last meeting).

VOTE: Bob made a motion to approve \$300,000 from the Unreserved Fund Balance to be used for the *ninety day* COVID-19 Emergency Rental Assistance Fund, Erica seconded. A roll call was taken and the motion passed:

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

Mike arrived at the meeting

COVID-19 WARRANT ARTICLE DISCUSSION AND VOTE

Krista supplied the CPC members with a draft warrant article to review. They suggested some minor changes:

- The Title should match the application

- The funds should only come out of one account, not split between two
- After written agreement it should say, between SMAHT and the Community Preservation Committee
- After the word temporarily add the following, assisting with rental payments

VOTE: Bob made a motion to accept the COVID-19 Emergency Warrant Article as amended, Roger seconded. A roll call was taken and the motion passed:

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

ACTION ITEM:

Krista will email the revised “already approved” warrant article to all committee members and Mike K after the meeting to make sure it reads correctly. Then she will send it to the Board of Selectman, Capital Planning, and the Finance Committee by the end of the week.

VOTE: Bob made a motion to place the COVID-19 Emergency Fund article on the warrant and also endorse the article to the annual town meeting, Andy seconded. A roll call was taken and the motion passed:

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

COVID-19 SMAHT/CPC AGREEMENT DISCUSSION

Krista created a draft agreement between SMAHT and the CPC that pertains to the COVID-19 Emergency Rental Assistance Fund, Roger revised Krista’s work and offered the members a second draft to look at. After a quick discussion Roger offered to work with Vin and Mike K to revise the agreement a third time. They will then share the agreement with Krista so that it can be added to the next CPC agenda for further discussion and a possible vote. It was noted that the agreement does not need to be finalized right away, but definitely by Town Meeting.

PROJECT UPDATES

- Vin mentioned that the Stow Acres Driving Range warrant article has been officially pulled from the warrant.

MEETING SCHEDULE

Monday, May 11th via Zoom @ 7:00 pm

NEWS & VIEWS

None reported

Erica made a motion to adjourn at 8:47 pm, Bob seconded, the vote was unanimous and a roll call was taken.

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

Respectfully submitted by: Krista Bracci