

COMMUNITY PRESERVATION ACT STUDY GROUP

MEMORIAL BUILDING – ROOM 113
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STEVEN WEISMAN, CHAIR | C. PATRICK DUNNE, VICE CHAIR
BOB BERMAN | SHEILA M. CUSOLITO | EVE LEWINGER | THOMAS
MAHONEY | STEPHEN MELTZER | ELIZABETH ROY | RICHARD
SHAPIRO | DOUG STEPHAN | FREDERICK WALLACE | AMY WEADER

Minutes: February 27, 2020
Executive Conference Room
7:00 PM
Approved: March 26, 2020

Members present: STEVEN WEISMAN, CHAIR, C. PATRICK DUNNE, VICE-CHAIR, BOB BERMAN, SHEILA M. CUSOLITO, EVE LEWINGER, THOMAS MAHONEY, STEPHEN MELTZER, ELIZABETH ROY, DOUG STEPHAN, FRED WALLACE, AMY WEADER

Members absent: RICHARD SHAPIRO

Public: JAN HARRINGTON

CALL TO ORDER: The Chair called the meeting to order at 7:02 pm.

APPROVAL OF PAST MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of January 30, 2020 were approved with changes proposed by Ms. Cusolito by a vote of 8-0-2. Mr. Dunne and Ms. Weader abstained because they were not at the meeting.

DISCUSSIONS

Presentation by Study Group to City Council on 2-4-2020

1. Mr. Weisman had presented a short progress report to City Council on behalf of the Study Group. A number of other Group members attended. Objectives were to update all CC members and make new members aware of our activities. The CC was attentive and receptive to the presentation.
2. Councilor Long expressed support for the CPA initiative.
3. Councilor Cannon said he is concerned about increasing taxes and that increases should be balanced by cuts elsewhere. Mr. Stephan reported Council Chair King had echoed this sentiment in conversation with him. Mr. Weisman observed that the Council will set FY2021 budget this spring, but CPA, if approved, won't show up on tax bills until FY2022. So they cannot adjust budget for CPA now. Mr. Berman reiterated that we must be thoughtful about the % surcharge we propose. Mr. Dunne reported that he has had follow up conversation with Mr. Cannon, telling him that CPA should sell on its merits, but may protect city budget later.

Meetings with Councilor Long and Councilor Steiner

1. Study Group members decided to reach out to CC members as a follow-up to 2-4-2020 presentation.
2. Mr. Weisman and Mr. Dunne met with Ms. Long. She does support the initiative. She suggested also speaking with Mr. Steiner because he chairs the Finance Subcommittee.

3. Mr. Weisman, Ms. Roy and Ms. Weader met with Mr. Steiner. He is generally supportive, though must see the numbers. He in turn suggested we talk with Mr. King.
4. We agreed we should all reach out to the individual Council members and set up meetings in March between a council member and one or two committee members. We should ask: what are your concerns; what does your district need that may fit into the CPA program. We should give answers to any questions about the Act and the process and close with a request for support. We should also ask about and reach out to existing neighborhood groups/associations.
5. The pairings with councilors are:
 - **Pat Dunne with Bob Berman will reach out to Mike Cannon**
 - **Pat Dunne with Doug Stephan will reach out to Margareth Shepard**
 - **Steve Meltzer will reach out to Phil Ottaviani**
 - **Tom Mahoney will reach out to Robert Case**
 - **Bob Berman and Doug Stephan will reach out to Janet Leombruno**
 - **Doug Stephan and Fred Wallace will reach out to John Stefanini**
 - **Amy Weader and Sheila Cusolito will reach out to Tracy Bryant**
 - **Amy Weader and Steve Weisman will reach out to Cesar Stewart-Morales**
 - **Steve will talk with Chairman King.**
6. We also discussed reaching out to Council subcommittees before and after we present our report to the Council. It is not clear if we are disbanded when the report is presented or remain in existence to provide information on our report to subcommittees leading up to Council action on the report.
7. **Mr. Weisman will talk to Chairman King about the committee's ongoing activities, if any.** We should all consider if we individually want to continue to be actively involved in such activities.

Framingham Master Plan Updates

1. Ms. Long sent the committee the approved but not finalized Master Plan updates. It specifically recommends CPA passage.
2. Mr. Mahoney reported that there are still some fixes to be done because of the change in government, but our proposals should be based on the Master Plan where possible.
3. We need to look at the maps in the appendix for locations of target properties. Should ask planning board administrator for the appendices.
4. Mr. Dunne asked if we can also get the draft Open Space plan. Apparently, it is not as far along. **Eve will ask for the draft.**

Reports by teams on research and analysis

1. Outdoor Recreation:
 - Mr. Berman reported that they have met with or scheduled meetings with the various sports boards. They are generally supportive. He asked how we want the group to interact with the Parks and Rec Commission/Department. He will ask to speak at the next commission meeting.
 - Mr. Weisman asked how public schools facilities fit into outdoor recreation. Mr. Dunne said school playgrounds are not funded through the school budget, and there are some that need work. He stated that Waltham has Parks and Rec activities on school playgrounds during the summer. **Mr. Dunne will contact Matt Torti, Schools Building and Grounds Director.**

- Ms. Roy mentioned the community garden at the high school and the nature trail at Stapleton as possible tie-ins. Have we touched base with the local Boy Scouts?
2. Historic Preservation:
- Mr. Wallace stated that the Nobscot neighbors will meet with us in April. He has met with the History Center program committee. They had many questions, but are enthusiastic about the CPA. He has written an article about CPA for the History Center March newsletter and website.
 - Among opportunities missed, the History Center listed: the Marist buildings and property and Millwood golf course, both of which have been developed privately; also the Rugg Gates House (built 1774) which was demolished by Mass DOT. It was noted that Waltham preserved Fernald School property by having Historic, Open Space and Community Housing working jointly. Future opportunities in Framingham are the soon-to-be closed MCI facility that has historic buildings in unknown condition. Also, historic district creation around Coburn St area with mill housing. The Solomon Foundation may be interested in supporting a Farm Pond walking trail for historic preservation and outdoor recreation.
 - There was discussion about whether we can get information on any State policy on disposition of property. **Mr. Meltzer will ask Stuart Saginor of the CPC.**
3. Open Space:
- Mr. Mahoney reported that they had met with Rob MacArthur, and he identified parcels that would be priorities for conservation/preservation. They met with Erika Oliver Jerram, who told them to talk with Rob.
 - Mr. Dunne reported that Matt Torti has a list of sites for possible future downtown schools.
 - Mr. Weisman has consulted with DPW about GIS information on all town property, including small parcels. We still need to look at their mapping.
 - Open Space team needs to consult with SVT.
4. Community Housing:
- Ms. Cusolito has met with Erika Oliver Jerram, and has sent follow up queries, which have not yet been answered.
 - She has also met director and staff of the Framingham Housing Authority. They have the infrastructure in place to take advantage of the CPA. They are concerned about palatability of the CPA for the city voters.
 - She has been playing phone tag with SMOC. She was advised to talk with Sam Swisher, to track down possible Affordable Housing Trust.
 - She is talking with other nonprofits. She cannot attend Council on Aging because of a scheduling conflict. **Mr. Dunne may connect with them.**
5. Data Crunching:
- Ms. Roy has met with the Assessor, and he has been quite helpful. He is familiar with the CPA from previous municipal work.
 - She is working on reports and seeking an easily understood way to present the needed data.
 - She said that Councilor Steiner stressed that we must highlight affordability of the surcharge.
 - She distributed a sample analysis.

- The Assessor has offered to meet with the whole committee. He is comfortable with CPA and will validate our numbers.
- We discussed alternative strategies: Do we target an amount to raise or amount to collect from “average” taxpayer? We need to create a meaningfully sized fund, but need also to watch resident’s pocketbooks.
- With regards to income-based exemptions, she is not factoring in individual exemptions, rather trying to discover the order of magnitude of who would qualify.

Status of draft report:

1. Mr. Weisman has begun drafting a proposed report, which he distributed. He excerpted information from the Act and IGR that does not require Group decisions. The draft includes sections that can be finalized now and sections in outline that will need fleshing out.
2. We will all read this by the next meeting, and also look to add the results of our research. We discussed the level of detail for the executive summary, and for the backup documentation.
3. We agreed that the executive summary should be brief, and the full report will add detailed explanations/appendices. Our report is intended to educate both the CC and the public, and provide a head start for the CPC committee. But if the Report is too long, the Council may feel overwhelmed and not act promptly.
4. **Each team should pool information and draft a section on needs, objectives and goals (page 17), and potential benefits (page 19), for the next meeting on March 5, 2020.**

Time line for future Study Group work

1. It is now time to finalize research and begin deciding on recommendations to CC.
2. **Teams must write up reports on needs, lost opportunities and benefits by end of March.**
3. Next meeting (3-5-2020) will focus on data crunching results.
4. We need to discuss and vote on recommendations: surcharge, exemptions, CPC membership, etc.
5. April will be the time to finalize the writing.

Upcoming Meetings

1. We agreed to schedule meetings for March 5, 19, and 26.
 - On March 5, we can concentrate on Ms. Roy’s data crunching and Mr. Weisman’s draft report.
 - On March 19, we can start critiquing team reports. **Amy will draft IGR-based CPC ordinance.**
 - On March 26, members should report on meetings with councilors.
2. We will schedule all Thursdays in April for writing and preparing final report. The Council is scheduled to meet April 7 and 28. We will try to deliver report to the Council on April 28.

PUBLIC COMMENTS: No public remained

ADJOURNMENT: Voted unanimously shortly after 9.

Respectfully submitted,
Amy Weader, Clerk