



City of New Bedford

Community Preservation Committee

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JONATHAN F. MITCHELL
MAYOR

MINUTES

August 22, 2017

Meeting at the Department of Planning, Housing & Community Development
2nd Floor Conference Room
608 Pleasant Street, New Bedford, MA

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

PRESENT:

Janine da Silva, Co Chair
Colleen Dawicki, Co Chair
Jessica Bailey, Clerk
Sylvia Gomes

Ross Nunes
Elaine Safioleas
Tim Walsh

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COMMITTEE MEMBERS

ABSENT:

Dennis Audette
Arthur Motta

STAFF:

Kirsten Bryan, *Assistant City Planner*
Edward Bates, *Neighborhood Planner*
Anne Louro, *Preservation Planner*

Call to Order

Co-Chair Da Silva called the meeting to order at 6:03 p.m.

Call the Roll

A formal roll call was conducted confirming members present and absent as recorded. J. da Silva introduced K. Bryan, the city's new Assistant City Planner, and the members welcomed her and introduced themselves.

Approval of Minutes

A motion was made by T. Walsh and seconded by J. Bailey to approve the May 23, 2017 meeting minutes as presented. Motion passed unopposed.

Old Business

Review of Community Preservation Public Engagement Input

The three June meetings at which the CPC gathered public comments was reviewed and discussed. J. da Silva explained the process in which the comments have been incorporated into the draft plan and the readjustment of existing goals and priorities as a result of those comments. Members expressed their pleasure with the meeting turnout and the amount and type of comments gathered at both the meetings, as well as the participation in the online survey. J. Bailey noted that review of the comments reaffirmed that the initial draft goals were on target, as there was little change in that area.

Review and Approval of Final Community Preservation Plan

A. Louro and E. Bates explained that the public comments had been recorded and were incorporated as an appendix to the Plan, and that the community goals and priorities had been edited to reflect the public comments. They explained that a formal vote to adopt the final plan was in order. S. Gomes noted that the draft plan currently on the city website incorrectly had community gardens as an identified priority. Staff assured the committee that they would review the draft once more and make the appropriate edits.

MOTION to adopt the FY18 Community Preservation Plan with the corrections related to community gardens.

Moved by J. Bailey and seconded by E. Safioleas.

Motion passed 7-0.

Review of Community Preservation Project Application Package

A. Louro and E. Bates explained that there had been minor changes to the application package, including the separation of the Pre-Eligibility Form from the Full Application for clarity purposes. They noted that Pat Sullivan would be providing additional application criteria relative to potential construction projects.

Update on 2016, 2017 & 2018 Budget Warrant

A. Louro informed members that the budget submittal to the City Council in June had been referred to the Finance Committee, and due to the Committee's summer recess, would not be heard until September 13th. She noted that it was anticipated that the budget's approval would then be referred to the City Council the following day on September 14th. Both Co-Chairs indicated that they would be unable to attend the Finance Committee meeting, as they would be away. Staff asked if other members would be able to attend to show support and speak if required. J. Bailey, E. Safioleas and R. Nunes expressed their willingness to attend and A. Louro stated that she would send a meeting reminder to the entire committee.

New Business

Funding Application Technical Workshop

The planning of a technical workshop to aid potential applicants in their submission of a project was discussed with members expressing their concern of potentially not meeting previously targeted timelines for application submittals. Staff explained that due to the delay in the budget process, the technical workshop would be postponed until the budget was approved by City Council. C. Dawicki expressed her desire to proceed with the workshop prior to the budget approval, while other committee members disagreed, stating that it would be advantageous to hold the workshop as soon as possible after the budget approval date.

Application Submittal and Review Timeline

Members discussed application release dates and the timeframes for review relative to the timing of the workshop. Members agreed, that based on the budget approval, the application packet be available for review on the City website on September 15th and the technical workshop was proposed to be held the first week in October. There was debate as to an adequate timeframe for submitting the Pre-Eligibility Form, as it is a relatively simple form reviewed by Staff. E. Bates noted that internally Staff had discussed a two week submittal timeframe for the Pre-Eligibility Form and forty five days for the Project Application.

C. Dawicki expressed her desire to have the CPC accepting and approving applications by the end of the calendar year. A. Louro stated that it would be possible to accept applications before that timeline, but impossible to approve projects prior to the end of the year, as project applications need to be reviewed and approved in a public hearing, and depending on the number of applications, there may be multiple public hearings. T. Walsh made note of holidays and readjusting the goal to reflect having the applications submitted by the end of the year and reviewing the applications after the first of the new year. There was consensus for T. Walsh's suggestion.

J. Bailey laid out a potential timeline proposing that the application materials be available on the website on September 15th, a technical workshop held in the first week of October, a two week Pre-Eligibility Form submittal deadline, and invitation to submit a Project Application one week later. Allowing forty five days for Project Application submittal would extend the submittal deadline to the first week in December. The CPC has a scheduled meeting on December 19th, at which time Staff could provide members with the application packets to review on their own time, and then have public hearing reviews in January and make recommendations to City Council in February.

T. Walsh sought clarification as to whether all eligible projects would be reviewed by the commission. There was discussion regarding prioritizing projects based on different types of criteria, including geographical location and funding availability. Members agreed that the first January committee meeting agenda address the review criteria for the projects prior to the public hearing review.

There was discussion regarding the use of a rolling submittal for the Pre-Eligibility Form and consensus that all eligible applicants would be invited on the same date to submit a Project Application. Staff noted that the Pre-Eligibility Forms would be reviewed and justification would accompany any denial. Staff indicated that they would provide a data sheet for the received Pre-Eligibility Forms for the Committee's review. The Project Application will be available online for review and J. Bailey suggested the use of a watermark so that potential applicants do not submit prior to a formal invitation.

There was discussion regarding Committee reevaluation of Pre-Eligibility Forms that may have denied. A. Louro clarified that Staff would not be reviewing the merits of a project, but simply determining whether or not the proposal met the guidelines of eligibility based on CPA legislation. Members debated the merits of reevaluation and the need to treat all applicants equally. C. Dawicki made note that if a project proponent knew that a proposal was non-eligible, it would be advantageous for them to have the opportunity to submit another eligible project. J. Bailey reiterated the need to provide a justification for an eligibility denial and the need for equity to all applicants. S. Gomes expressed her concern regarding the two week submittal timeline, indicating that it may not be adequate. That led to discussion regarding the availability of Staff for technical assistance to applicants throughout the process. Staff indicated that their contact information is available on the website, within the Plan, and will be available on the applications as well.

Based on concerns that the public would not have the opportunity to resubmit a denied Pre-Eligibility Form, there was brief discussion regarding the use of a call-in phone workshop, as well as the suggestion of hosting two workshops; one for each type of application. A. Louro reiterated the simplicity of the Pre-eligibility Form and stated that she would reach out to more experienced CPA communities to seek their best practices. E. Bates stated that DPHCD's policy is to release application materials the same day as a technical workshop, ensuring equity and mitigating confusion.

C. Dawicki expressed her desire to reach as many people as possible. A. Louro stated that they would use an aggressive outreach process for the applications, similar to what was used for the public hearings, including direct email contact. Further discussion related to a phone-in workshop was countered by staff stating their continuous availability to provide technical assistance to applicants.

In an effort to determine consensus, J. da Silva reviewed the proposed timeline which would have application materials available on the website on September 15th, noting that the Project Application would be watermarked and non-fillable, to deter submission. A technical workshop held in the first week of October, a two week Pre-Eligibility Form submittal deadline, and invitation to submit a Project Application one week later. Inform applicants the following week and invite full submissions, providing a forty-five day submittal time. J. Bailey asked Staff to inform committee members as to the status of the Pre-Eligibility Forms as well.

There was brief discussion regarding the use of outreach materials to emphasize the availability of technical assistance to applicants and the need to develop scoring sheets and evaluation criteria for reviewing projects. Committee members suggested reaching out to other CPA communities to receive a copy of their scoring matrix to use as a model. Staff indicated to the Co-Chairs that they would have those materials available for review at the next meeting.

Other

There was no other business.

Next Meeting Date

Tuesday, September 26, 2017.

Adjourn

There being no further business, a motion to adjourn was moved by R. Nunes and seconded by S. Gomes. The motion carried. The meeting was adjourned at 7:36 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Anne Louro
DPHCD Staff

Approved: 10.05.17