

**BELMONT WARRANT COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
FINAL**

**MARCH 29, 2017, 7:30 P.M.
CHENERY COMMUNITY ROOM**

Present: Chair Epstein; Members Alcock, Dash, Fallon, Gammill, Helgen, Libenson, Lisanke, Lubien, McLaughlin, Schreiber, Slap; BOS Chair Paolillo; School Committee Chair Fiore

Interim Town Administrator Marshall

Members Absent: Crowley and Mennis

The meeting was called to order at 7:33 pm by Chair Epstein.

Chair Epstein began by reviewing the evening's agenda.

Approval of Minutes

The minutes of 3/1/17 were approved, as amended, with two abstentions.

***Discussion: Community Preservation Committee (CPC) Approved Projects
– with Project Sponsors***

Ms. Anne Marie Mahoney, CPC Member, Mr. Floyd Carman, Town Treasurer, and Ms. Peg Velie, Chair of the CPC, approached the WC table. Chair Epstein informed the WC that Mr. Carman will lead the CPC Projects discussion.

In answer to a question by Member McLaughlin, Mr. Carman explained the analysis applied by the CPC when reviewing applications. The projects, he said, are vetted on the merits and eligibility of the applications.

Ms. Velie stated that there are five projects that are being recommended this year. She reviewed the areas that the CPA projects may fall into: parks and recreation/open space, affordable/community housing, and historic preservation. She noted that the funding comes from a local tax surcharge as well as a state contribution. She explained the application review process as well as the criteria used to assess the applications.

Ms. Mahoney then briefly reviewed the five projects:

1. Grove Street Tennis Courts – \$336,000
2. Redevelopment of Sherman Gardens – \$173,200
3. Sons of Italy Historical Artifacts Preservation – \$24,125
4. Grove Street Park/Intergenerational Walking Path – \$35,000

5. PQ Playground Revitalization Project – \$615,000
Total: \$1,183,325

1. Grove Street Tennis Courts – \$336,000

Mr. Jay Marcotte, DPW Director, approached the WC table to discuss this application. He noted that several years ago repairs were made to these courts; having met their life expectancy, those repairs have now failed. This request is for four new courts, with an estimated cost of \$68,000 per court. He explained the bid process as well as the contingency and design costs. Concerning the number of courts, there are 24 courts in town. Mr. Carman added that the courts at the high school will be unusable once that project is underway. From a community perspective, he said, it makes sense to repair these courts.

Chair Epstein raised the issue of postponing this project by a year. The PQ and Winn Brook courts will have been recently refurbished and the use at the Grove Street is fairly light. It might be a valuable exercise to wait a year and analyze the court usage at the PQ and the Winn Brook.

Mr. Marcotte stated that he believes the courts are well-used, but that the DPW staff does not officially monitor court usage.

The WC discussed issues relating to this project as well as to Chair Epstein's suggestion to wait a year. Member Helgen said that the open space/recreation assets have not been officially prioritized, but that there was general support of the Recreation Commission for tennis court repairs at Grove.

Ms. Donna Ruvolo, a Grove Street neighbor, stated that the courts are well used. She added that she attended the meeting of the Rec Commission and there was support for this project.

Member McLaughlin moved: Favorable action on this project.
The motion passed unanimously.

2. Redevelopment of Sherman Gardens – \$173,200

Ms. Donna Hamilton and Ms. Gloria Leipzig, of the Belmont Housing Authority, approached the WC table to discuss this application. Ms. Leipzig explained that the Sherman Gardens units are not handicapped-accessible. The units, of which there are 80, were built in 1971. The senior population is growing and housing is needed to accommodate this group. This money would be used to study the best use of the Sherman Gardens space and to determine what best suits this location. Sherman Gardens is not currently deemed "suitable" for the elderly and disabled population. The consultants would assess the site, look at financing options, and look at design options. The data collected from this study and would be presented to the town.

The WC asked various questions and discussed issues relating to this project. Also explored was the role of the state, potential tax credits, and future steps (post study).

Member Dash moved: Favorable action on this project.
The motion passed unanimously.

3. Sons of Italy Historical Artifacts Preservation – \$24,125

Ms. Cynthia Pasciuto, Culture Commission of the Sons of Italy, and Dr. Gene Saluti, from the state Sons of Italy organization, approached the WC table to discuss this application. This project falls under historic preservation and this proposal is to preserve vital records and artifacts and to create an area to display those materials.

Dr. Saluti provided some background information the Sons of Italy – both across the state and in Belmont. He noted that the Belmont facility has been a hub for statewide Sons of Italy historical data. He explained how the application came into being, as well as the benefits of creating a database and preserving these artifacts. There will be museum-quality cabinets used to hold these documents and the community is welcome to peruse them.

The WC asked various questions and discussed issues relating to this project. Member McLaughlin expressed general support for this undertaking, but suggested that this project be funded privately by the members of the Sons of Italy. He expressed concern about the precedent that this sets, noting that other groups will request funding for their own artifacts.

Chair Epstein noted that the total cash budget is on the order of \$35K with \$10K coming from private sources. He stated that he would support this project but noted that Member McLaughlin raised a legitimate question for similar future requests. That Belmont will gain a small museum, one that is open to the public, makes this project reasonable in his view.

Member Schreiber noted that this proposal highlights the struggle of CPA funds going toward private organizations (Homer House, etc.) versus public entities. Member Libenson said this proposal is a public/private partnership and is an experiment in supporting a mini-museum.

Member Gammill moved: Favorable action on this project.
The motion passed with 10 in favor and 4 opposed.

4. Grove Street Park/Intergenerational Walking Path – \$35,000

Ms. Donna Ruvolo and Mr. Steve Pinkerton, Friends of Grove Street Park, approached the WC table to discuss this application. Mr. Pinkerton noted that this is a followup to the 2015 Master Plan Study. The Grove Street Park has limited access for strollers and wheelchairs. The park currently has no pathways and no landscaping. The money would

help to create a construction site plan, which would likely lead to a larger project that might cost around \$350-400,000.

The WC asked various questions and discussed issues relating to this project.

Ms. Ruvolo explained the process that led to the proposal for this construction site plan study. She added that the walking path will hopefully draw people into the park. Sustainable landscaping and improved accessibility will help upgrade the park, which is currently in shabby condition. It was noted that this is the next step, prior to the building phase.

Member Dash moved: Favorable action on this project.
The motion passed unanimously.

5. PQ Playground Revitalization Project – \$615,000

Ms. Julie Crockett, Ms. Sam Sanderson, and Ms. Ogden Sawyer, Friends of PQ Park, approached the WC table to discuss this application. Mr. Sanderson explained that the overall upgrade to the PQ has been broken down into phases. Last year, phase one was conducted. This resulted in the creation of a plan for the PQ. This proposal is to execute the recommended upgrades to the playground, e.g., two tot-lot areas, a basketball area, improvements to the drainage system and two small walking paths.

Ms. Crockett noted that PQ is among the oldest parks in town. She further explained the nature of the upgrades. The Friends of PQ organization will remain in existence beyond the re-building of the park. Mr. Sawyer added that the group hopes to raise about \$35,000 in private donations.

The WC asked various questions and discussed issues relating to this project. Ms. Schreiber asked about the process for overseeing the construction contract, the site, paying the bills, etc. She raised the issue of when private fundraising is required (often when citizens submit the proposal, as for PQ, etc.) and when it is not required (when a town department submits the proposal, as for Grove Street, etc.). This is a murky area, she observed, with different standards being applied. The WC explored this issue.

Member Helgen moved: Favorable action on this project.
The motion passed unanimously.

Updates: Subcommittee Status Reports for WC Report

Chair Epstein requested that subcommittee chairs email him their updates.

Updates: Board of Selectmen, School Committee, and Minuteman

Board of Selectmen: BOS Chair Paolillo reported that the BOS has met with all town departments regarding their FY18 budgets. There were about \$185,000 in supplemental

requests, all of which are important. The Town Administrator search is underway. The MCPWG (Capital Working Group) has been meeting. He noted that no vote was taken on the Farmer's Market; it will be taken up on the 10th of April.

School Committee: SC Chair Fiore reported that the Belmont High School Building Committee is hosting a Community Forum on April 6 at 7:00 p.m. at the Beech Street Center.

Adjournment

Member McLaughlin moved to end the meeting at 9:38 p.m.

Submitted by Lisa Gibalerio
WC Recording Secretary