

Oak Bluffs CPC Meeting
03/06/07
Oak Bluffs Library 2nd floor conference room

Members Present: Stephen Durkee, Chairman. Joan Hughes, Alison Shaw, Peter Martell, James Westervelt, Cheryll Sashin, Harvey Beth.

Also Present: Michael Dutton, Town Administrator

The meeting began at 10:05 am

-Stephen introduced Michael to the Committee. Michael explained his original intention to meet with the Committee was to request CPC funds to pay for the Town's annual assessment to the county's housing authority. However he declined to do so because Paul Manzi had contacted the state and they demurred on the idea of asking for funds through the CPA for administrative costs in the assessment.

-Harvey talked to Committee Members on how the regional housing authority is organized.

-Stephen asked Michael for suggestions for fortifying the CPC's warrant article for the April Special Town Meeting. Michael said he was working on a draft document for both town meetings and suggested the Committee should get its own written work product out indicating the Committee's recommendations and the rationale behind it. Stephen stated the Committee wants to let townspeople know that the money is already in place and the Committee has recommended 8 projects that should be voted on so the money can be spent.

-Committee members discussed how the warrant article is presented and procedural matters within the article should amendments be made to change things around at Town Meeting. Michael said that similar to the way the capital improvements warrant is presented, with proposed spending for various departments, the CPC article will also list different spending items that could be modified while on the floor of the meeting. Both Michael and Committee Members were unclear if the article itself can end up being a "yes" or "no" vote with regards to total spending and that amendments from the floor to increase spending above the committee's recommendations could happen.

-James read from the CPA Enabling Legislation that the expenditure of revenues from the fund shall be limited to implementing the recommendations of the community preservation committee and providing administrative and operating expenses to the committee.

-Michael said he would look into the procedural aspects of how the article will be considered at the Special Town Meeting. Michael said a plan's in place to get the all the articles for both warrants written and ready for printing by March 16th. He said the FinCom will be voting their recommendations next week.

-Stephen asked Committee Members if there was a need to vote to have one article or have each project become separate articles. Joan said the best position the Committee can take is as advocates for all the projects since that's how the Committee voted for them and developed the rationale behind their decisions. Michael said he would draft the recommendations both ways and seek counsel on how best to have the article(s) presented at Town Meeting. He will review the options with the Town Moderator and invited anyone from the Committee to attend.

-Peter asked if there would be a mailing to residents explaining the CPC and its spending recommendations. Michael said he probably would. Peter said he had resources to help with the mailing.

-Committee members discussed how they physically would, as a group, present their recommendations at Town Meeting.

-Michael asked the Committee if there was a preference on location of the CPC in the Town Warrant. Members said they had no preference. Michael stated the CPC should be in the Special Meeting so that if approval occurs, the money becomes available immediately. Committee Members agreed.

-A discussion ensued about the Town's Affordable Housing Committee and the establishment of the "trust" the CPC money can be put into so that the AHC can then spend in a manner it deems appropriate. Michael pointed out that there are warrant articles in place for Town Meeting for voters to approve the creation of the trust.

-Alison asked members who were not present at the meeting when decisions were made on spending recommendations if the Committee was a divided group and were there any plans to speak at Town Meeting on the division thought to exist within the CPC. Cheryll stated that although she's an advocate for keeping money in reserve, she thought Committee Members did an admirable job of putting together the recommendations and wouldn't speak against the overall spending plan at Town Meeting. Alison then asked Cheryll if there was a specific proposal within the 8 recommended she might want to "knock down." Cheryll said no. Harvey stated he had expressed criticism in an e-mail on how the Committee went with the spending proposals, and specifically the money recommended for the Viera Park baseball expansion, when there is such a dire need on island for affordable housing. He wants to have the opportunity to let be known that not every member agreed with the overall spending project plan going to town vote.

-Peter discussed his points on why he didn't vote for the housing proposals and his opinion on how affordable housing should be apportioned for Oak Bluffs residents only.

-Harvey disagreed and thinks there should be more money for affordable housing because it is a more critical issue than baseball.

-Joan stated her reasons for not voting on several of the housing proposals. Based on her years of experience in the building business, she was not satisfied with the presentations made by any of the housing groups justifying their construction costs. She felt the spending proposals were out of line with today's actual building costs, especially when requesting public money.

-Harvey stated that it's the concept of how much is being put aside for affordable spending. He thinks that only 30% of the money available from the CPC fund is not enough for the critical need of obtaining community housing. He thinks 50 – 60 % should be the goal. Joan also talked about how well crafted some of the presentations were and the background the presenters had in getting similar projects accomplished.

-Stephen said that he researched how the other towns are dividing money to affordable housing through the CPC and Oak Bluffs was second highest in percentage of apportionment.

-James expressed his opinion that money should have been held in reserve instead of almost all of it being recommended for spending. He too feels too much is being spent on the ball field.

-Committee Members discussed affordable housing options in town and the mistakes made with land availability decisions in years past. Discussion continued about how the Southern Woodlands property is a hopeful project for future community housing needs.

-Joan discussed membership fees for joining the Community Preservation Coalition. Members discussed the \$1,500 fee and what the actual organization.

-Peter made a motion to accept the minutes from January 30th. James seconded.

The Committee voted 4 – 0 – 3 to approve the minutes from January 30th.

Committee Members agreed that the next meeting was March 20th.

The meeting adjourned at 11:15am