

Oak Bluffs CPC Meeting
12/5/06
Oak Bluffs Library 2nd floor conference room

Members Present: Stephen Durkee, Chairman. Joan Hughes, Cheryll Sashin, Alison Shaw, Charles Rock, Peter Martell

Also Present: Adam Wilson, Administrative Assistant

The meeting began at 10:10 am

-Peter motioned the minutes from 11/7 to be approved. Joan seconded.

The Committee voted 6 – 0 to accept the minutes form November 7th, 2006.

-Adam handed out information on the number of applications received. He also handed out copies of the Community Preservation Act & the Oak Bluffs Committee's vision statement. The worksheet showed that 12 requests for funding had been submitted by December 1st at 4 pm. The budget range in projects goes from 24,000 up to 300,000.

Steven talked to the committee about how to spend the money available. If there's 700K+ available but 1.4 million being asked for, should committee members decide if all the money available should be spent or perhaps some of it held in reserve. Everyone around the table was given the chance to express their opinion.

-Joan Hughes talked about the demand by affordable housing groups to reserve 75% of available funds for affordable housing. She talked about other viable requests for open space & recreation and historic preservation that also seem to work well for the town.

-Charles Rock talked about holding back the twenty nine thousand held in reserve for administrative costs. He feels that the CPC should not set standards for spending on each category. He feels that all applicants have viability but small projects should be fully funded and larger projects (100K or more) should be proportionally approved.

-Peter Martell admitted he hadn't had the chance to review the applications. He feels that spending for town infrastructure projects has a bigger benefit for the residents as a whole. He feels that bonding may be necessary for some of the larger projects and that perhaps the CPC should not have to spend all the money available this year.

-Cheryll Sashin is conservative in spending. She advocates holding back more money other than administrative costs as suggested by Charles. "It may be in the citizen's best interest to invest in tangible projects rather than funding financial statements. There is a great deal of ambiguity in the paperwork and we need to all read the fine print. We may want to fund larger projects such as the ball park in annual incremental payments with each project improvement phased in."

-Alison Shaw agrees that all the money should not go to affordable housing and that the applicant's request for funding could be carefully proportioned according to merit and the success the applicant has had with previous projects. Projects should be considered based on the idea of what will help the town the most.

-Stephen Durkee also agrees that administrative costs are a priority. He feels that townspeople still don't know what the CPA is all about. Education of the residents is very important in order for the recommended projects to pass on the town floor.

-Peter thinks only 3 - 4 applications should be handled for this year. Joan thinks the small ones are well thought out. She had concerns about the fishing pier application because her knowledge of state regulations and chapter 91 dictates that it may not be allowed. Charles has a question about the fence project and it how it relates to historic preservation. Committee members discussed how certain applications could find ways to match some of the funds requested.

The Committee discussed the approval process at town meeting for warrant articles.

-Steve talked about how to set up the next series of meetings to get the information necessary to make decisions. Alison talked about grouping all the applications for one category together so that the committee can tackle them at the same time.

A discussion ensued about members of the committee having to recuse themselves from discussing applications if they were somehow affiliated with them. Steve stated that a committee member has the right to be an advocate for any of the applications submitted but would have to recuse themselves from the actual decision making. Committee members agreed.

-Joan stated that she had been part of the group that put together the “fence” application. She certainly wants to be able to talk about it but understands that she may not be able to vote on it.

Charles talked about the “fence” committee and how it has just formed and that maybe the whole project needs an overall review. Joan talked about the specifics of the fence and how the highway department would have to take care of it. She questioned the building permit application and will the design meet code. Steven tried to imagine townspeople getting their chance to comment on the aesthetic design of the fence and how catastrophic that could be for the committee trying to get it approved. Adam pointed out that applicants may be recommended for their project from the Committee and Selectmen but would likely face another public relations battle seeking town voter approval. Committee members hoped that applicants have real plans to show the Committee. There was consensus that many of the projects submitted were thrown together just so that they could make the deadline.

-Committee members talked about how decisions would be made. Written notice of acceptance or denial would have to be sent. Committee members struggled with the idea of an approval process that gives the applicant some of the money requested and then sitting back and watching the project go nowhere.

-Peter talked about how the money is accrued in each town. He also asked can money be allocated for trust funds. Committee members discussed whether or not money should only be appropriated for projects that are “in a pipeline.”

The members discussed which applications should be looked next time. Members decided the next meeting will be to look at open space and historic groups’ applications. Committee members decided that at that meeting decisions would be made as to which of those projects could go forward for further review and which would not.

-January’s meetings will be the second and third Tuesdays (9th and the 16th). The Committee adjourned at 11:30 am.