



Community Preservation Committee

Regular

~ Minutes ~

36 Court Street
Springfield, MA 01103
<http://www.springfieldcityhall.com>

Kevin Chaffee

Tuesday, January 7, 2020

6:00 PM

See Agenda

I. Call to Order

6:00 PM Meeting called to order on January 7, 2020 at See Agenda, City of Springfield, Springfield, MA.

Attendee Name	Title	Status	Arrived
---------------	-------	--------	---------

II. Public Portion

III. Minutes

Springfield Community Preservation Committee

January 7, 2020

City Hall Room 23

36 Court Street, Springfield, MA

Present: Lamar Cook, David Finn, Juanita Martinez, Robert McCarroll,
Ralph Slate, Willie Thomas

Absent: Gloria DeFillipo, Terry Mitchell, Terry Rodriguez

Robert McCarroll began the meeting by introducing Lamar Cook, David Finn, Juanita Martinez, Ralph Slate and Willie Thomas as well as Karen Lee our administrator and Suzanne Joyal our note taker. Robert then asked Mr. David Bloniarz to give the committee a brief update of how things are going with the funded project.

Public Speak Out: David Bloniarz began by introducing Doug Johnson who has been instrumental in bringing the realization of invasive plants in Springfield from his work in the Adirondacks. We didn't get our contract until late in the game and then with that in the contract it states some sites that we have worked on and some we will work on. In the previous year we had gone out and had done some work on our own and had gone through and actually started some of the trails. We had to go to the Park Commission and the Springfield Conservation Commission and spoke to them about what we are trying to do. We trialed some of the tests over in Forest Park looking at various control methods. The primary one we tested was the injection of the stems of the Japanese Knotweed. This project they are doing with the CPA Funds is to control Japanese Knotweed. However, we are aware that there are other invasive plants within the city but we are focusing on the Knotweed because that's the clear

and present danger that we are looking at. We are also working with the folks from the University of Massachusetts.

As we got started we didn't get our contract until last year probably not until around the end of August. Most of the work that has been requested is on Right of Ways. Right of Ways are publicly owned land. Most of the roads in Forest Park as well as the bike and walkway trail.

Doug and I have prepared a Five Year Vegetation Management Plan which we submitted to the State along with a One Year Plan. We also have folks that are licensed that will apply pesticides. Doug also got a higher license which is called the Right of Way License which was required. David also got a Right of Way License. We have submitted all of this stuff to the state and they finally held a public hearing in Springfield where folks could come and propose the five year plan or the one year plan as well as comments. There was no opposition. From there we had to go to a hearing on November first. Doug did go to the board meeting in Westborough at the Department of Fish and Wildlife, The Pesticide Board was there and presented both of these to them. They looked at it and asked Clayton Edwards that we have worked with for nearly a year to put these things together. They asked Clayton "do they have to do this?" He responded by stating "yes." They then stated that he didn't need to do this.

They went back and forth among themselves and they asked if you are controlling invasive plants and I answered "yes." They said that I don't need a Right Away license and that we could apply them anywhere as long as you have permission from the property owner. Unfortunately, we were put behind schedule for nearly a year. He didn't know that on Right Away if you are just controlling invasive plants you don't need a Right Away license. Both Doug and I have our Right of Way license that was on November first. We started working on November first to use some of the funding and on December we got our first frost and after that we can't do anything.

What we need right now is our contract to be extended that expired on December 31st. David then stated that he put a request together for you, there are three copies and hopefully we can extend our contract. Robert then asked David when would you like it extended to David? David would like to finish it up by the end of this fiscal year but there are trials we are doing and the effectiveness is better if you do it in August through November. However, we still have enough that we can treat because the Connecticut River Walkway is one of our most in infested areas. We are going to set up five pots down at the Riverfront and we want to start testing the protocols down there in March. We can go back and hit it with lawnmowers every two weeks or we can come and spray every two weeks or inject every two weeks depending on what we want to do. If you inject the plant you get 100 percent control. I ask for an extension here until June 30th because the new fiscal year starts on July first. I don't even know if you can carry over money to a new fiscal year so we could expend the money before July first. Robert then stated

that we can do two things. We could either give you right now a vote that extends the contract to June 30th. If for whatever reason you make the decision after your tests to say fall injections are the best come back to us in May.

David preferred the November 30th date. Robert did explain that they will just change the end date of the present contract. Robert stated that he would accept the motion to extend their current contract to November 30th, 2020. Ralph Slate made the motion to approve this and *A unanimous vote was taken.*

At this time Robert explained that we will soon be taking applications for the April first deadline. It will be going up on our website sometime this month. The other thing I want to discuss with you is that some people who got funded didn't take a good look at their contract. I want you to be aware that when we funded you this initial money our priorities were the Riverwalk and the four Conservation areas that we are working with them on a walking trail that was Abbey Brook, Delta Hills, Garvey Promontory, White Cedar Bog and what we didn't fund was the McKnight Dingle. We don't want you to go off on some other place and spending the money. David stated that he would like to have someone come out and see what kind of work we are doing at some point. We want to show you what we are doing. At this point Ralph stated that it may be good to have some press coverage on that because you are trying to get people to understand this and maybe that would help. Mr. McCarroll stated that it may be wise to bring a contingent of the committee to see the work in process. In the end there is now a new view shed that is visible at the River Walk which has been hidden for years by the Japanese Knotweed that's the publicity. The invasive species has been removed and now there is the view shed. At this time Mr. Bloniarz thanked the committee for their time.

PUBLIC SPEAK OUT: At this time Mr. McCarroll asked Coleen Moynihan if she would like to address the Committee. Colleen first thanked the Committee for the work that they are doing. Coleen noted that she has been here before and I always learn and because this is a new process for me too. I represent Campus Neighbors of Springfield we were blessed by receiving One Hundred Seven Thousand Dollars from you in your second cycle and now we are in the process of implementing the activity and the activity is to reclaim Venture Pond which is a glacial pot pond which is in the Sixteen Acres area. I think the idea of you folks coming both before and after so that you can see the impact. One of the things that has been exciting about this project is that we have gotten such a broad range of community interest and active engagement. We will also work with Keep Springfield Beautiful and we have a Boy Scout Troop that is getting engaged and it has been amazing. Plus making individuals residence in the Sixteen Acres area sensitive to and be aware of this wonderful place. I understand Kevin, I don't know his last name, he once stated to me that he comes here when I need to let go.

Thank you for your time and asked the Committee if they had any questions. Colleen stated that they are trying to

restore the eco system because at one time we had a family of swans every year and we had an incredible array of water fowl, we had a large array of birds, we have several families of hawks now and it's just amazing. It is large enough that people can kayak on the pond. We have a lot of interest on this project that we will look at how to reestablish Water Shops Pond.

Let's talk about the Sixteen Acres Water Shed it starts at Mill Pond it was a public treasure but over the years public access has been sort of hidden and you have the North Branch and the South branch which feeds into Water Shops Pond. We are trying to get this whole watershed to stop the water run-off which contains excess fertilizer which is causing Water Shops Pond to be overrun with algae. Colleen then thanked the Committee for the time to address the Committee and I appreciate the support you have given Campus Neighbors.

Robert then stated that if you are contemplating putting in some kind of application to the 2020 cycle you should make sure that you go to the Community Preservation Coalition web site as the department of revenue allowable spending chart. Just so you know when you are talking about recreational you get a wide range of what you can do with CPA money. When your talking about natural resources like open space it is much narrower of what you can do.

Robert stated that it is important to read the definitions of what are the eligible activities and also what you can do with those eligible things. At this time Colleen thanked the Committee once again.

At this time Robert stated that we still have the minutes of the November twelve meeting to approve. Would anyone like to make a motion to approve that? Juanita made the motion to approve of the November twelve minutes and Lamar second the motion. Robert asked those present if all were in favor and *a unanimous vote was taken.*

2018 Funding Approval Updates: Mr. McCarroll began asking Ms. Lee if we have any updates? Did we get any statements from the budget office as to expenditures? Ms. Lee replied that we did and she sent it to you regarding the expenditures that we had. In the white folders that we have you will see the 2018 and 2019 project tracking. Should I print this each time once a month because when there are changes I just add it. So they are going to look the same with slight updates. Mr. Carroll then stated that all he is looking for at this point is for you to say the Campanile study has drawn down \$236 and the ReGreen Springfield project has drawn down \$24,000. Ms. Lee then stated that The Campanile Restoration \$224,000 that they have drawn down and they have about \$25,000 left. Robert then stated that just to add we have a volumes report sitting up in our file on the Campanile. Karen then asked if we should circle back to

them and ask them about the remaining \$25,000? Robert asked when is their contract up? Ms. Lee stated that it is November 30th. Mr. McCarroll suggested that Ms. Lee circle back to them to find out where they are with the rest of the study. Ms. Lee then stated that the East Forest Park Reading Garden had their grand-opening and they spent \$98,000 out of \$204,000. Mr. McCarroll then explained that this is the problem that we have with the budget office ongoing and we need this sorted out before meetings. They got legated from us \$138,000 for the reading garden. At this time Robert stated that we move on. Robert stated that rather than going over these when we don't have accurate information from the Budget Department. Ms. Lee and I will be working on getting the contracts for the Parks Department for the 2019 projects and hopefully we will have that done sometime this month. Robert stated that he didn't necessarily feel that we had to print this out for every meeting. What I wanted was that a brief summary of those eleven projects as to how much they have drawn down to date. At this time Robert stated that the main thing we need to do tonight is to approve the edits to the annual Community Preservation Plan which I have mailed to folks and basically the only thing that I changed is the timeline eliminating the preliminary application which technically is on page five of the plan it says Schedule and Project Review Process and so we voted that the applications are due on April 1st. So I'm figuring in April and May we will be meeting with applicants in June and July we will deliberate and send our recommendations to City Council in July. There didn't seem to be anything that came up that changed our goal. Mr. Slate then stated that he didn't want to put Mr. Thomas on the spot but asked Mr. Thomas if he had any insights as being the housing representative to something that we perhaps haven't thought of. What we did with the housing and we have kept this for the last two years, we have said that we would like to focus on increasing owner occupancy in neighborhoods. The Community Preservation plan is essentially a guideline for the people who are applying for funding. Mr. Slate then stated that in Springfield we have a lot of housing and we have a lot of sub-standard housing that could be used for affordable housing. We wanted try to give the signal to anyone that applies that we would like to see housing rehabilitated and made affordable. That way rather than building from the ground up. We would also like to try to focus on owner occupancy meaning that instead of focusing on these larger blocks where you may have an owner out of town and they are maybe not on top of things we want to bring people in on the ground level and say we would like to help you as a Springfield resident to purchase a two or three family house, live in it and keep your other units affordable. It could also be a person that currently has an existing two or three family house and that was the one modification that we made last year is we would like to see a program where perhaps if someone owns a two or

three family house and they use CPA funds to renovate one of the units and make that unit permanently restricted. The other one they live in perhaps doesn't have to be restricted. That

was our consensus but you are more in touch with housing needs and we are curious if you have any suggestions.

Mr. Smith responded by stating that he didn't have anything to add as you're focusing on the right areas. As to affordable housing the approach of the Housing Authority that we would like to see all of our tenants who live in public housing sometime be homeowners. It was not intended to be permanent housing. Given the opportunity there are a lot of our residents who do work and pay rents that are substantially higher than those who are not working. This program may be a lead for them to become homeowners. Give me a week or two and I may come back with more than that. Mr. Slate added that when they first talked about first time homebuyer programs in the city I think that they can fund up to eighty percent of the area median income. We can fund up to one hundred percent of the area median income. So the program that they put in for a few years ago we were trying to target between the eighty and the hundred because that's the HUD funds can't target that space but our funds can. I think that they have had mixed success on that because they didn't think that slice was very big. Mr. McCarroll then stated that this serves as a guide for what our priorities are for future proposals. It doesn't lock us into this it just says here is our druthers. So we will very soon be inviting applications for 2020 funding. Folks may look at this and say I'm going to put in a proposal to do that and sell it to income eligible owners. It is not something locked in concrete.

That's the only housing proposals we will consider. Mr. McCarroll then stated that one of the constraints that we have is that the state law says that in dealing with housing issues in most cases you have to either be dealing with an already restricted unit or you have to make the unit restricted. You can preserve housing without a restriction but you can't rehabilitate housing. You can do a study, you can give a first time homebuyer a grant up to \$2,500 without a restriction. The minute you start talking about doing substantial rehabilitation the state law states that you have to put on a restriction if you acquire. Mr. McCarroll then stated that you can rehabilitate housing that has either been acquired or created by CPA. It was also stated that you can preserve housing without having the restriction on it but you cannot rehabilitate it. Mr. McCarroll then stated that those were the three housing priorities.

Our priorities for the Historic is if the structure is deteriorated, the structure is in eminent danger of demolition, the structure is vacant, the structure will not be renovated without CPA Funding, the structure was constructed before 1850, the structure is a landmark with

significant Historic architectural or civic importance. Mr. McCarroll stated that there are fifty known buildings in the city that pre-dates 1850. After the Civil War the numbers go up experientially. If we said 1870 there would be a lot more. Mr. McCarroll mentioned that Open Spaces/Recreational uses what we said was our priorities are renovating small neighborhood playgrounds, green spaces, creating, improving community gardens, creating and enhancing

opportunities for bikeways, walkways, trails on park and conservation land and pulling invasive species on park and conservation land, improving access to the Connecticut River and other water bodies for water based recreation and enjoyment. At this time Mr. McCarroll stated that if someone had another priority that they feel we should be adding I guess what I would like us to do is to adopt. Unless someone has some changes what I would like to do is adopt this. There are still some things like written comments that we have received need to be added to this and the summary from the minutes of people who spoke. Mr. McCarroll stated that we need to be sure that we have a total packet that can be gotten to Tim Brown to put on the website. At this time Mr. McCarroll asked those present if we have a motion. Mr. Slate made a motion to approve Two Thousand Twenty Springfield Community Preservation as submitted. Mr. McCarroll then asked all those in favor. *A unanimous vote was taken.*

The next thing Mr. McCarroll stated was to talk about the application. What you should have is the fillable cover sheet that we have been using for the last couple of years and then there is the draft of the instructions as to what we want with the application. Basically, the only changes I made on this I removed any reference to the preliminary application in the last two years we asked for a one page preliminary application that we would look at and make sure that we thought that they were eligible. Then we informed them that they could proceed to step two. Because in the two years we did it in the fifty plus applications that came in there was only one that we said they were not eligible. We have decided not to skip that step entirely but we are having an informational session that we will be discussing later. So we are now inviting a full application. Much of this reiterates our priorities and tells them what kind of information we want on the proposals. Mr. Slate asked if we are still requiring ten copies of their application. Mr. McCarroll stated that he will ask for eleven copies. At this time Mr. McCarroll asked if anyone had any changes he would like them to make a motion to approve the 2020 application.

Mr. Finn made the motion to approve the 2020 application and Ms. Martinez second the motion. *A unanimous vote was taken.*

Mr. McCarroll then stated when we got rid of the preliminary application we decided that we would have an informational meeting so people could come and ask questions and we also could explain the process too. We have two choices: I think the February meeting won't have a lot for us to do. We could combine an informational meeting with our regular scheduled meeting which is February fourth. We could also decide to do a different day and it's not a full Committee Meeting. However, we can explain the process to people who show up. At this time Mr. Slate stated that we would have to find a venue that is suitable for a public presentation. He also stated that as the timing goes is 6:00 pm the best time for the public

and could we postpone it to 6:30 pm. Robert said that changing the time would be fine with him. He also stated that Ms. Lee could see if room 220 where the planning board meets might be available on Tuesday, February 4th. The other option is to ask the park department if we can use the Shea Facility in Forest Park. It was also suggested by Ms. Martinez that we could look into the new East Forest Park Library. Mr. McCarroll stated that he felt that the library is closed at 8:00 pm. Mr. McCarroll stated that he would like to hear that the Committee likes the Shea Facility or the new East Forest Park Library noting that they must be open after 8 pm. Lastly, we would want to be at City Hall. Mr. McCarroll asked those present if we are in agreement with the choices of where the next meeting will be held, choosing from three venues; East Forest Park Library, Shea Facility or City Hall. Ms. Lee asked the Committee if a February 4th meeting gives us enough time.

Mr. Slate made a motion that we authorize \$250.00 for spending on Facebook advertising so that we can promote the upcoming information session. Mr. Finn second the motion. Mr. McCarroll asked all in favor. *A unanimous vote was taken.*

The next meeting will be on February 11th and the March meeting will be held on March 3rd. Ms. Lee then stated that we should mention in the ad that there will be two sessions available.

Mr. McCarroll asked Ms. Lee if she had an update on the computer. She responded that it is working fine. The City has put all its security measures on it and the printer is upstairs and they gave me an office space. They also asked me if I wanted a phone I said sure. Mr. McCarroll asked her if we are paying for the phone? Mr. McCarroll asked if they are going to be billing our administrative budget \$200 and if they say we are going to be dipping into your administrative budget you will have to tell them that you need to discuss this with the Committee.

Mr. McCarroll then stated that the Springfield Museums were thrilled that we gave them one hundred thousand dollars for their roof even though to repair the roof will cost close to six hundred thousand dollars is putting in a grant application to the Mass Cultural Facilities Grant Program. They would love to have a letter of support. I would appreciate it if you would authorize me to send a letter to the Mass Cultural Facilities Grant Program. Mr. Slate made the motion to authorize Mr. McCarroll to send a letter in support of the Springfield Museum to the Mass Cultural Facilities Grant Program. Ms. Martinez second the motion. *A unanimous vote was taken.*

Mr. McCarroll then asked if we have a breakdown of how much we have to spend out of our Administrative Budget. Ms. Lee stated that as of December first it is \$6,614.

The next meetings will be February 11th and the March meeting will be March 3rd. The location of these meetings will be announced.