



Community Preservation Committee

Regular

~ Minutes ~

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

Kevin Chaffee

Tuesday, September 7, 2021

6:00 PM

Utilizing Remote Collaboration Technology

I. Call to Order

6:00 PM Meeting called to order on September 7, 2021 at Utilizing Remote Collaboration Technology, (Online), Springfield, MA.

Attendee Name	Title	Status	Arrived
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II. Public Portion

III. Minutes

Springfield Community Preservation Committee

September 7, 2021

Remote Meeting 6:00 p.m.

A video recording of this meeting is available on the Springfield Community Preservation Facebook Page

Present: Gloria DeFillipo - (Planning Board) - Juanita Martinez - (Conservation)
Ralph Slate (Neighborhood Representative) - Clinton Harris (Park Commission)
David Finn - (Historical Commission) - Rhonda Sherrill - (Neighborhood Representative of Old Hill Council)
Robert McCarroll, Chair (Springfield Preservation Trust, Inc.)

Motion to approve the minutes of August 3, 2021: Ralph Slate made the motion and Juanita second the motion to accept the minutes of the August meeting.

All in Flavor: Juanita Martinez: yes, Gloria DeFillipo: yes, Clinton Harris: yes,
David Finn: yes, Ralph Slate: yes, Robert McCarroll: yes

Robert then stated that our 2021 recommendations are complete with the exception of Magazine Park. At the last meeting we would be recommending approval for it and we put in a place holder in the amount of \$250,000 which is what they were asking for. I need to update the Committee regarding that there is a slight math error that I must have done a miss calculation somewhere. We checked with the comptroller who informed us that given us what we allocated so far we don't have an additional \$250,000 we have \$184,799.61. Robert then stated that he will now always check with the comptroller on the final amount. As we

discussed Magazine Park our option is to fund it with everything we have left to actually dip into the twenty-twenty-two budget to supplement it and we could decide that we could actually fund it with less than what we have to fund it with. We had asked the Park Department to provide us with additional financial information about the components of this project which were occurring in phase one. Karen included the response from the Park Department. Robert then asked Karen if she could read it to us. Robert then stated that in phase one the master plan development includes engineering and specifications which was fifty thousand, the renovation of the baseball field which was grading, irrigation, resurfacing and over seeding was \$80,000. The playground equipment was eighty thousand and the park amenities were \$90,000 so that was our question, so we could get an idea of how those park amenities were broken down by cost. That amount was added up to three hundred thousand dollars. If you remember the Community Development Block Grant is paying part of it up to \$100,000. Not everything is out of CPA. Ralph then stated that there were also cameras listed at \$50,000 so the total project was \$350,000 and CDBG was going to kick in \$100,000 so there request was for \$250,000.

Robert then stated that someone should make a motion for a particular amount so that we can talk about it. Ralph made the motion that we approve \$200,000 for the Magazine Park renovation plan. Juanita second that motion. Robert then stated that motion has been made to approve \$200,000 so let us have a discussion on this. Ralph began the discussion by stating that he came up with the amount of \$200,000 because I am not one hundred percent with all the amenities. I am not supportive of all the cameras and the security system. I understand that some people want to think of it as important. I don't see it as a priority of the CPA. As park amenities go it's \$90,000 and the things that are listed are: bleachers, scoreboard, benches, trash cans, LD lighting, plantings and fence repair. We did not get a breakdown on the cost of that because as Pat noted it will be determined in the master renovation plan which we are kind of paying for here. I am not necessarily on board with spending \$90,000 on all of those items especially because we don't know what each item is going to cost. I just came up with \$200,000 out of their \$250,000. Gloria then stated that she agreed with him. I might just add that without the cameras and the amenities I thought it was \$210,000 thousand dollars. Aside from that I agree with you. Unless we get a breakdown of the benches, I want to know what the scoreboard is going to look like, I would vote for it but I want to see it detailed. Do I think that the baseball field is something that should be done now? Yes! They can come back next year with a better detailed plan. Ralph then stated that he would be agreeable with \$210,000 which would include the renovation plan and the master plan of the baseball field and the playground equipment. Robert stated that the CDBG is paying for part of this. They could pay for whatever we are not paying for as part of this current reduced phase one program. Ralph stated that the CDBG they are still going to contribute \$100,000. Robert stated that on the front page of the application it states that they are applying for \$100,000 but I don't know if they got it. If they indeed have that commitment the CDBG could be paying some of the playground equipment costs that we are not covering. Gloria stated that the priorities are the

playground and the baseball field, in my mind. David stated that if we do not fund this \$250,000 in its entirety it doesn't necessarily include them in finishing to the point where the project is a usable space, right? Are we pulling back some of the funding because we are not certain? My only concern is does the project start but not get it completed because they cannot find another source of funding. Then we end up with a project that is eighty percent complete. Gloria stated it will come back next year and ask for more money. Isn't this the multi-phase project? David then asked we don't know the number of phases, is that correct? Robert stated that in the application that came in from the McKnight Neighborhood Council they broke it down to three phases. The second phase was the pavilion, concession stand and restrooms. Phase three would be a new splash pad. In Pat Sullivan's response to our questions what he said I believe, was that in the design of the whole facility would indeed dictate the number of phases. We don't know how many phases at this point. Robert stated that Patrick said until they have a designer they won't be able to know how many construction phases that the park can be broken into. Rhonda asked is there only \$184,000 and something left? Robert responded by stating that is correct. Robert stated that our committee in general allocates the money that came in from the fiscal year that just closed. So all the money that was collected prior to June 30th of this year is what we are recommending to the City Council and obviously I made a math error. We have been approved CPA budget for the current fiscal year 2022 which began on July first and runs through next year. We have the legal right to say we are going to take \$184,000 out of what is left of the last year and we are going to dip into the current year into the \$25,200.00. Rhonda then stated that those amenities without having specific information should hold off. Gloria stated that amount of money we are looking for next year is \$26,000. Robert then brought to the attention of the committee that there was some money that wasn't spent on Godfrey Triangle by the Park Department and they say it is not enough for them to do the remaining work. So if we sort of say when we get to it Godfrey Triangle as far as we are concerned is done, come back next year and apply for more money. That extra \$16,000 comes back to us and maybe we can use that as opposed to the \$25,000 that we need. So it is a small amount of money compared to the amount that we have in this year's budget. Robert stated that the money for the Veterans Park that little excess has already been put in our pot. It is in what Pat Burns, the city controller includes in terms of our money from last year, as well as the unused money for the conservation commission trail head signs because they didn't have to spend all the money they had. It hasn't been theoretically returned to us as yet is overage from Godfrey Triangle. Robert then stated the discussion on the table is up to \$210,000 that Ralph has put up to his motion. As long as everyone understands that the motion really means that part of the money comes from what we have left in last year's amount and \$25,200.39 and we will be recommending open space reserve of this year's budget. Robert stated that this will be a City Council Financial order and I am not sure as to what happens after they have voted. Even if we take the money out of twenty, twenty two we still get the sixteen thousand dollars back and at fit's in still the appropriate account that we can spend in next year. Robert then stated that in

this phase one and they thought that they would finish in fall of 2024. That is the final completion date and the other two phases. I am going to assume David that the phase one will be completed sooner rather than 2024. Karen then asked do we have the math right? We have left \$187, 500, that's what is left. Karen stated that those were the figures Pat Burns has. Robert then stated that we should assume that motion in hand is that we recommend two hundred and ten thousand. We know that some of it will come from whatever the amount of what the Comptroller says what we have left and the remainder will come from the Open Space Reserve for twenty-twenty two. I don't think we will solve the issue of your figure and my figure don't agree. Robert noted that as he looked at the application, phase one which is the master plan, the baseball field, and the playground equipment is supposed to be finished by the fall of twenty-twenty two. The park amenities were supposed to be fall of twenty-twenty two, the cameras were twenty-twenty two, Phase two which was the Pavilion, Concession Stand and Rest Rooms, they were supposed to be projected in the fall of 2023. The Splash Pad was supposed to be 2024. So phase one will be done at the end of construction season next year. David posed the question to Robert stated that we can accomplish a master plan, the ball field and the playground equipment, yes. Robert then stated that we will now go for a vote.

All in Favor: Gloria DeFillipo: yes, Clinton Harris: yes, Juanita Martinez: yes, Ralph Slate: yes
Rhonda Sherrill: yes, David Finn: yes, Robert McCarroll: yes

Robert then asked Karen to get the figure to Lindsey Hackett so that they can have a financial order ready by agenda to them by noon tomorrow so that this recommendation can now flow with all of the other recommendations which will be appearing with the City Council on Monday. The other thing to remember is to change the Magazine Playground page on the Project Summary Report that we have given to the City Council and send all the councilors the update page on the Project Summary Report that we had given to the City Council, and then send all the councilors the updated page. I don't think we have to send them the full report. Lastly, I would like the Mayor to get a paper copy of that report, with that cover letter not being a part of the report, but as a cover letter for it. I don't want him to just get an e-mail. Karen stated that she could do that tomorrow or Thursday.

Karen then gave us the Administrator's Updates:

The Connecticut River signage balance is zero.

The balance of the Springfield Veteran's balance was returned.

The Conservation Trail balance was returned.

The Godfrey Triangle balance is \$14,388.50 and funds for irrigation, electrical work exceeds the remaining grant. Do we want to fund this \$25,000 to complete the work or ask for that difference back?

Ralph then stated that the point he wanted to make is if we can figure this out map wise I would prefer not to have a precedent that any project can over spend on part of their project and not do the full amount of the work. Is it true that the original application and the irrigation and the electrical work amounted to \$14,388.50? Or did they spend more on the other work and then they didn't have enough left over for irrigation and electrical work? If it is the later I think that our position should be that we paid an amount for work, why wasn't that work done. (This sets a precedent and someone says that I am going to do an apartment building and we give them one hundred thousand and they do half of it and they spend \$100,000 and then they say I'm sorry.) I don't think it is a good precedent that they don't use the full amount of work and exceed the budget as well. Gloria then said to Ralph there was a third scenario like Westminster Park maybe COVID raised the prices and that is why they can't finish it. I agree with you, we should have some type of an explanation as to why they can't complete it. Why there isn't enough money. David then stated that he agreed with both of the suggestions. One of the challenges is that when people come to us for funding, they actually don't have signed contracts in hand and for the most part it is not a guaranteed price that they are going to pay. That is where you can get some leakage of overages on the budget. It certainly is worth discussing because it could be an issue down the road. Robert stated that if we have not received we should ask for a project cost breakdown based on the money that was spent. So that we can do what Ralph wants to do was to see if they said there was irrigation what did they think it would cost and what did they spend or what they can't afford to spend. I think it would be helpful if we could see what the money was spent on. Besides the issue of the electrical services and the irrigation system we were told there would be many trees. I went up there today and I didn't see any trees. I think it would be helpful if we knew what money was spent on so that we know what wasn't done. My inclination is that they need to do what the McKnight council did, which was re-submit next year for supplemental money to continue with and we will make a decision whether we want to fund it.

Robert then stated that the other thing I have to raise and it goes beyond Godfrey Triangle when I was there, they had new plantings strips. There is a new plaza, there are two benches one of which carries the CPA acknowledgement. There are nice plantings around the plaza and in that nice planting strip there was a weed that was as tall as Robert. Next to it there was a weed that was up to my chest. I think we have to have a discussion with neighborhood organization's that bring proposals to us and the Park Department about the maintenance of what we are paying for. After I left there I went by the East Springfield Veterans Memorial and the little planting around the Memorial there was more crabgrass than plants. There were weeds growing through the yew bushes around the circle. If CPA is going to be paying for improvements we need to have some kind of guarantee of maintenance of the facility. Juanita stated that she was in the area and it was at a newly planted area that was not maintained. Juanita suggested that we should have it in writing. There has to be a plan for maintenance. We can ask but we need a contract in writing. Robert suggested that maybe we need to somehow encourage the Park Department to work the neighborhood Councils in those areas.

Indian Orchard was very supportive in having Godfrey Triangle fixed. Maybe, the Indian Orchard Council could find someone in the neighborhood who says I will go there once a month and weed as to expect in paying a person in the Park Department to have it on their schedule. If someone went over there once a month we wouldn't be talking about what Juanita and I saw at this space or the Veteran's space. I think we need the neighborhoods involved as well. Karen suggested that asking for neighborhood involvement would be reasonable if the application originates from a neighborhood but many of these projects come from the park department. Gloria then stated that a lot of the projects take place in the neighborhoods and we have asked them to be sure that they speak to the neighborhood about the project. If the neighborhood says "yes" we want this, then they have to know that they have a buy in and have to maintain part of it. Clinton then added we could request to them to adopt a project. Ralph stated that a part of the decision making process is that if the city is not maintaining plants and the city asks for more plants then we will have to say that the upkeep of those plants must be maintained. Robert then stated that there are two types of maintenance. There are the splash pads that have been vandalized or the mechanical equipment fails. We are not expecting the neighborhoods to do that. The city needs to be prepared to do that. It's just like the city is trying to mow the triangles on terraces. When it comes to the little fine tuning the weeding and the trimming of shrubs one would hope that we could get neighborhoods to be involved in these spaces that are center pieces for their neighborhoods. We will ask Karen to breakdown how the money was spent and then take a look at that. After that we will probably want to have a chat with the park department folks.

McKnight Trail. Karen stated that the McKnight rail trail has used all CPA funds. Since the project is still ongoing and being funded by other sources, do we consider that the project is complete when we file the annual report for the state? Is the Rail Trail considered a completed project?

Robert stated that we would look for a project in total. Let's pretend that someone was renovating a playground and they wanted \$250,000 of our money but they were getting \$300,000 of someone else's money and there was \$550,000 for the playground. The project is complete when the playground is complete. It is not simply complete because our money has spent but there is still more money. That would be my feeling. A project is a project and it's just not our portion of the project. Ralph interjected by stating that we would be focusing on the phase, it's not completely like when the rail trail was built. Robert then stated that it was the engineering work and we weren't funding at all. There was a large of it was also coming from some state money. The project was engineering design was the Rail Trail and that was the project. Robert responded that the email from the DPW person was not clear on the status and that's not something for us to solve right now.

Robert then stated that we are beginning the new cycle for planning fiscal twenty-two

recommendations. The state law requires every year that we hold a public hearing to get input from Citizens, City Departments on needs that CPA can address and opportunities that CPA could meet. Our October meeting will be that public hearing. Karen check the state law. My recollection is that we have to place an ad in a newspaper for two consecutive weeks which we really have to get on that sooner than later. I believe the city ordinance requires us to mail written notice to every single neighborhood organization and I think that is three weeks before the public hearing. In other words, much of the stuff has to be done by next week to meet those legal deadlines. Obviously we will be doing a zoom meeting with written comments. Karen then asked Robert if people can come on and ask questions? Robert stated that it is not a question time it is a statement time. I would think that they can, this will be an open meeting on zoom and they will have to register with you ahead of time. You will send them the log in information. There is an opportunity that either departments or City Councilors, or neighborhoods or simply the private people can say we have too many run down houses, I have a specific park that I know has to be worked on. It is to make use an idea of what the needs are out there. Then we will tweak our plan, based on what we hear.

Will the regular meeting follow the public comment portion of the night?

Robert responded yes and the date is October fifth. For our newcomers, the state requires every CPA community to have created a plan and every year to revise that plan. When we first began we created our plan and we have tweaked it a little bit every year. We are not creating the wheel and the plan says what we feel our priorities that we want to fund and we can change them over time based on what we feel are changing needs. So the other thing that we might talk about now is about our November meeting would normally be the second and that is Election Day. So I will probably have Karen send out a Doodle Poll to see whether folks could meet on the ninth or some other day or a Tuesday. I am assuming that we don't want to meet on an election day.

Gloria then wanted to address the presentation to the sub-committee. I was a little taken back by the city councilors. In particular, Justin Hurst made a couple of comments about how we are operating and I think we need to have a meeting with the finance committee. He has made a couple of remarks in the past. I don't feel comfortable that he fully understands how we work. There were a couple concerns that we didn't want to pay for a parking lot. Nor did we want to pay for bathrooms. I think it would be helpful if we could sit down and zoom with each other and have a little discussion. If he has some concerns he says it to the Committee as opposed to just Bob and that is nothing about you Bob, it's just the way I think it should be. Robert stated that Councilor Whitfield and Councilor Davila felt that we should expand our thinking of what is recreational beyond the recreational stuff to the ancillary stuff. They were the ones that were disappointed that we weren't interested in the parking lots and bathrooms. Councilor Justin Hurst one of his comments was well it was a lot of the regular players I see you are recommending. A lot of the people who are recommending are city departments that come back from year to year, especially the park department. I tried to explain to them as I have explained to committee people. I think most CPA communities the lion's share of their money

is spent by municipal departments. This is not an unusual happening that the Park Department is getting money for recreation. But there seems to be a concern that there was a regular group getting funded. Gloria stated that she would call it that. Ralph stated that some of them were non insider applicants some of their projects were not CPA eligible. Some of them are not well informed by a spark of an idea. Some of them were gigantic in size and they couldn't figure out on how to pare it down to something more palatable. I am a supporter of having private individuals to work and we have seen that. We had a few that were relatively successful. That was an applicant who was not an insider. Some of the requests were that have come from non- insiders haven't been anywhere up to snuff. I would be willing to work with people. I think we need to figure out how to bridge the gap between people who are the city who say they want to do something and then put together a proposal that is actually fully formed so that it can be acted on. Maybe the Acorn Street Tennis Courts is an example. I appreciate the activist who wanted to solve that problem. There was a gaff between their desire and sort of what it takes to fund the entire project. I think there was some reluctance on the part of the city because they have different use for that project. That was difficult for me at least and to know to vote for something is that the City may be way behind and how do we smooth all those issues out. Especially for recreation products I don't know how we can do local recreational projects. I think they will all be done on city land. Rhonda told Robert that you were more accurate as to what happened. I feel that we all have to be mindful that anyone is allowed to give an opinion. I think it is important to know what someone else may be thinking and consider what this committee is doing. This committee is being very applicable when they are doing anything. It doesn't look good if all the people always get the money. I think explaining it as Ralph said bridging a gap with someone might help. In the future I think that it is a great idea Ralph. I see Re-Green has come back for additional money, they have come back twice.

Other than the Park Department there are no regular players. Rhonda then stated that Ralph had a great idea to bridge the gap. It is good to have some feedback. Gloria then stated there were two meetings that we go over how to apply to prepare an application, they have a check list to follow or should follow. We do that but in the Time of COVID due to two meetings you can come and then we will have people from the community who has submitted their proposals and they talk about the process so people know. The other thing is, and I think Bob did a better job than I did of explaining of what went on and that maybe my gander got up when Councilor Hurst stated that he heard that. I think he is referring to the park department coming back to every time looking for funding for projects. Is that appropriate use of the CPA monies and should it be something that the city funds? We question that every single time it happens. It also happens when Bob explained, but I'm not sure that they fully heard the explanation. Bob had a very good response. Ralph then stated that two years ago we had a fairly robust set of applications that came in. I also felt that there are some that were too far out. I did feel that we got more proposals and their quality was just as good. I don't feel that we probably address those concerns that of the City Councilors or of the public. There is a gap

in the understanding how the money is supposed to work. Rhonda asked Ralph, “so you feel there is a disconnect?” Rhonda then stated, how can we close that disconnect? Two years ago we had two separate meetings and we had a pretty good attendance. We went through and explained precisely what CPA was. Hopefully, we can do that again this year. People who are in the know are represented. We are also open as to come up with ideas that reach other people. Karen has a decent social media outreach that some of the other committee didn’t do. We are always open to do more. Someone else may have some other ideas. Gloria then stated that when Karen posts something I copy it and I put it onto Neighbor. Next there are two for the neighborhoods and there is also a group called All Springfield so I post it twice. Once in each spot I don’t know what else we can do. Karen then stated that when Ralph talked about this a couple of years ago right before COVID hit we had two meetings that were really successful. There was a lot of interest in that interaction on that at a personal level. It brought in a good group and it brought in different neighborhoods. We had a pretty good show that attended our workshop. Juanita also stated that we had some past recipients, especially from the neighborhoods they came in and explained how they went about doing it. That was very helpful. We all want more variety than just the Park Department. Ralph made a point and it’s true if it is recreation, most of the land is owned by the Park Department and most of the property is owned by the Park Department.

Robert then stated that what we will be doing, after we have the Public Hearing and we have input we will take a couple of meetings like in November and December to do the tweaking of the plan. Then we will promote the revised plan. Starting in January is when we will normally have some informational meetings. We will start our meeting with an informational meeting on how folks can apply. The plan will outline what the priorities are and the time table for next year. Come January and February meetings anyone can show up to have a tutorial in how to put together an application. Like last year’s applications will be due in the month of April then we will start the review process again.

Karen then stated that David sent an email stating that he would be happy to present any of the neighborhoods. Karen then added that any of the neighborhood councils will meet once a month. We could ask them to send us an invitation to us and meet these groups individually. Ralph stated that the bigger disconnect we should work on is that the city and the city administration has the priority. The people in the city have different priorities. If the city and the city administration don’t have shared priorities of the people ultimately things are not going to get done. Rhonda stated she felt Karen’s idea was great because the neighborhood councils are there for a reason. They are supposed to be advocating for the residents and the citizens. This is something fairly for everyone who puts up a complete and comprehensive proposal, am I correct? From the ground up the responsibility we should reach out to the neighborhood council and they should do what Karen suggested.

Robert then stated that we keep in mind that we certainly don’t have to go to McKnight, they know how to do a plan or East Springfield, because they have done the plans and Indian Orchard. East Springfield has been successful and some that haven’t. We may need to zero on

those two neighborhoods. The thing to keep in mind should our meetings are virtual folks can come and watch the recordings of the tutorial at their leisure. Old Hill Committee meeting can go one night and the old members can go on to Facebook and see the program. There is more flexibility with this remote and record the stuff instead of meeting live. Robert stated that they can bring up suggestions on how we can reach more people and know about the application process. The annual hearing is not the time for us to try to solve everything that night. We feel that CPA doesn't involve all of the folks at Springfield then you need to figure it out and broaden it. That would be a goal, just like there are a variety of neighborhood walking trails throughout the city that are falling apart and they need to be addressed. It is not for us to figure out which neighborhoods they are right now or what has to be done to the walking trail it is for us to know that there is a need to fix deteriorated walking trails. Ralph stated that it was a good point Bob. So if there are citizens that come to our annual meeting and say that it is good feedback and we can put it in our plan. If there is no neighborhood council puts in an application and if the parks department doesn't put it in an application the walking trails will not be fixed. It is a multi-stage process. Not enough to justify the issues from people who are willing to do things. Forest Park had a pretty active association. I have reached out several times and said there were no proposals coming out of Forest Park. Honestly, no one is interested in putting in proposals. It is probably the same at other groups. We are not seeing them coming from the entire city. Robert added that he didn't feel that we have to remedy it. As long as they know there is money and an application process and here is how you apply for it. There are neighborhoods that are looking for projects. Karen stated maybe I could reach out to them more directly. Then we could have a conversation to talk to the chairperson and invite them to this hearing in October. Ralph then stated that we need to get people involved. We just can't throw the idea out there and say I want this to happen. You have to get in allies, you have to work with the city, bring everything together and that is how you get the project to happen. Bob then stated that the cottage Hill Park in Indian Orchard that we recommended for funding came from a specific individual. The Park Department will do the work because it is park land. That application carried a single person's name as the applicant. He was the one who made the presentation when we had the zoom meeting with applicants. I don't know to what degree, he may have gone to the Indian Orchard council and they said "yes." That is an example of one person who was interested in getting the park fixed.

Robert then stated unless anyone has anything we will have a motion to adjourn. Gloria made the motion and Juanita second that motion. Robert then asked those who wanted to adjourn.

The next meeting will be held on October 5, 2021