



# City of Westfield

## COMMUNITY PRESERVATION COMMITTEE

Meeting Minutes  
January 20, 2021 6:30 PM

Pursuant to Governor Baker's March 12, 2020, Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law, G.L. c. 30A, §20, and the Governor's March 15, 2020 Order imposing strict limitation on the number of people that may gather in one place, this meeting of the City of Westfield CPC was conducted via remote participation. Specific information was provided on the City of Westfield website at [www.cityofwestfield.org](http://www.cityofwestfield.org). For this meeting, members of the public who wished to listen to the meeting were advised to do so by tuning into Channel 15 or online at [westfieldtv.org](http://westfieldtv.org). No in-person attendance of members of the public was possible.

Members attending:   
Members absent:

Staff attending:

Thomas Sharp   
John Bowen (Alt)   
Cynthia Gaylord   
Daniel Kelly   
Joe Muto   
William Porter   
Michael Tirrell   
Richard Salois

Jay Vinskey   
Christine Fedora

### 1. Call to order:

Chairman Sharp called the meeting to order at 6:30, called the roll and members of the Committee introduced themselves. It was noted that Member Salois was selected by the Planning Board as its representative, with Member Bowen now as the alternate.

John Bowen	-	present
Cynthia Gaylord	-	present
Daniel Kelly	-	present
Joe Muto	-	absent
William Porter	-	present
Michael Tirrell	-	present
Thomas Sharp	-	present
Richard Salois	-	present

### 2. Review of Approval of minutes of 10-8-20

Chairman Sharp voiced his concerns regarding the fact the minutes were just received today which does not leave enough time for review. Members Gaylord and Tirrell noted the minutes are a thankless job and agreed they would also like them sooner. Upon Chair Sharp's suggestion, the Commission agreed they would like the minutes sent out within 2 weeks after the meeting. (Member Bowen left the meeting)

### 3. Review of Budget/Funds.

Planner Vinskey reviewed his tally of current budget numbers: No money in historic; \$50,000 in Open Space this fiscal year plus \$152,937 in the reserve balance; \$50,000 in Housing this fiscal year plus \$348,932 in the reserve balance. Undesignated - \$114,776.96 this fiscal year plus reserve balance: \$323,713 + \$140,911 state match. Planner Vinskey informed the Commission he had a discussion with the City Auditor, and they are still in the process of getting the final figures, he further noted amounts are higher than the Auditor's since they were from the June fiscal year closeout, and do not include the state match. Firm numbers should be available by next meeting.

Chair Sharp asked the Commission if they would consider moving to item 7b (CPA Plan) on the agenda. Agreed.

- Community Preservation Plan update/readoption

Chair Sharp asked Planner Vinskey to share the CPA Plan on his screen as kind of a primer to review the CPA plan. Planner Vinskey stated this is essentially the same document as the prior plan with some project and image updates.

He briefly reviewed the criteria upon which the Committee looks at when considering funding. As one of the items on the agenda is a recreation application, he reviewed some of the criteria that must be met for a recreation application.

Discussion included a review of project listed in the appendix. Chair Sharp stated asked if all of these are closed out. Planner Vinskey noted these projects have all had money appropriated, some of them still have all or part of their balances unspent.

Chair Sharp asked about the Boardman field? Planner Vinskey informed him it was for land purchase and construction of the athletic field near the High School; he further added this was before his tenure.

Member Salois asked if the WHIP factory was completed. Planner Vinskey replied the CPA portion has been completed. Member Salois asked if he had any word on when the museum would open? Planner Vinskey replied no, the funding from the CPC was for preserving the historical structure itself, not specifically what uses occur in it.

Member Porter asked if all these have been approved by the Council? Yes, Planner Vinskey noted the last several projects submitted have increased the amount of recreation projects.

Planner Vinskey updated the members on the updated draft grant agreement and the amount of retainage being held. He noted it now requires 80% retainage until any required restriction is recorded. Member Gaylord asked if it they would be in perpetuity. Planner Vinskey replied generally that is the default, but now the CPC decides on a case by case basis depending on the amount of funding.

Chair Sharp asked about a mission statement? Planner Vinskey stated the CPA legislation itself lays out the CPC's charge. Chair Sharp asked for a motion to readopt the plan as discussed at the October 8<sup>th</sup> meeting and again tonight. Member Salois so MOTIONED, seconded by Member Gaylord.

By Roll Call vote:

Cindy Gaylord -	yes	
William Porter	-	yes
Daniel Kelly	-	yes
Michael Tirrell	-	yes
Richard Salois	-	yes
Thomas Sharp	-	yes

#### 4. Review of New/Pending Applications

- Boys & Girls Club playground (recreation) - \$62,405.20

Mr. Bill Parks (CEO of the Boys & Girls Club) introduced himself to the Committee and Bo Sullivan (Chief Advancement Officer). They are before the Committee seeking funding for a playground proposed as part of the building expansion at their facility.

Mr. Parks gave a history of the Boys & Girls Club. They started a licensed childcare program about 12 years ago; at that time there were about 30 kids attending, currently they have over 200. With the number of participants, they need additional space.

They applied to the State Early Education, were denied 2 years ago, they reapplied last year and were awarded 1-million-dollar grant, with this grant they will be able to welcome an additional 100 youth into their licensed childcare program. The Westfield Boys & Girls Club is one of only four agencies in the State to receive the funding.

Mr. Parks further added with the COVID regulations they now must expand the square footage per child from 35 s.f. to 42 s.f. per child, which made them expand the building, they had to redesign the interior of the building as well. They also are planning on expanding the kitchen as they have increased their food service, they currently are serving 4 meals a day, for a total of 400 meals a day as well as serving weekend back packs. They currently have served over 170,000 meals to the residents of Westfield.

Mr. Parks reviewed the additional funding he received. They received a \$134,000.00 grant from EEAC as well as \$50,000.00 from the state for Capitol Improvement. He added they have another 1million dollars raised but still need an additional 1.5 million dollars.

The Planning Board's site plan approval has been received and the 20-day appeal period is coming up, they will be able to start construction after that. The timeline for completion is set for August 15, 2021; they plan is to be open by September 1.

Mr. Parks informed the Commission they have an education program with a full curriculum, the playground will be able to accommodate 200 kids a day. The community will be able to access the playground when the licensed childcare is not using it, per state regulations.

Member Salois voiced concerns over how much time will be available for the public to utilize the playground. Mr. Parks replied it would be open to the public after school and will be closing at 6:00, it will also be open on weekends. A reserved pass is also necessary as it will be locked for insurance purposes, it will however be available for city wide events. It would be available about 85% on the weekends and during the week about 45% of the time. Member Porter was trying to justify the CPC funds that are being requested, when you look at a public playground it

is open 100% of the time for the public, in this case it is not open to the public 100%. He felt the amount they are asking for is a greater ratio than the time allowed for the general public. Mr. Parks reiterated the time could be reserved and noted the 300 kids that will be using the playground in the program are kids from Westfield. He felt the playground would get more use from Westfield's kids more than any other playground in the city as well as an additional 150 kids per day using it.

Member Kelly stated he has known Mr. Parks and Mr. Sullivan for some time, they have done a lot for the Boys and Girls Club, this will help kids in need, he also added this would be a benefit for the tenants in his housing.

Chair Sharp asked if they charge the members to attend? There is a childcare fee for the program, about 75% are subsidized, and the general population is \$50 a year. He further noted there are summer camp programs.

Mr. Parks stated he came back to Westfield in 2004 at that time the budget was \$600,000/year now it is close to 3 million/year; they try to run a balanced budget and try to keep their costs as low as possible, but they do have to follow state guidelines.

Chair Sharp asked if most of the members are from Westfield? Mr. Parks stated they also serve Southwick but 95% of the membership is from Westfield. There are 1500-1600 kids that are members. Mr. Parks mentioned they do have a full curriculum at the club consisting of an education director, theater, dance, music, fine arts, video director, athletic director, technology director. The kids have schedules, the licensed childcare programs stay together and go to different rooms as a group.

Chair sharp asked if the Club owns the property? Mr. Parks replied they lease the property from the City.

Member Tirrell echoed the words of Member Kelly that the Club serves the underprivileged populations; it is a great facility the kids can go to after school. He further noted after 6:00 in the summer there is still plenty of time to go out and use the playground.

Chair Sharp reviewed the application regarding the funding. He asked about the donation. Mr. Parks there is a donation of excavation services, which consists of disassembling of playground equipment so it can be used again. In kind services? Mr. Parks informed him the \$6470.00 is for mulch, and trucking to the site. Chair sharp asked if he had gotten multiple quotes. Mr. Parks reviewed the 2 quotes for the fencing, 2 playground quotes. Mr. Parks stated he has done a lot of work to make sure comparable quotes from Premier which is a very well-known company, Multi Play is a well-known local company and they have quality work they do.

Chair Sharp noted Planer Vinskey would not have given this application if it did not qualify as a project. What if the applicant were some other private entity like Roots, he was not sure if the application is something the CPC would approve, would that be something the CPA was designed to do? He asked Planner Vinskey how he could get more comfortable with this.

Planner Vinskey replied that is the part of reason for the CPC committee, as a gatekeeper. Roots might qualify as a recreational land is recreational, but it unlike the CPC would fund a commercial endeavor. Chair Sharp asked how would he find out adding he does not want to be criticized? He noted the Boys and Girls Club is a wonderful organization it's not municipal, but it is a distant cousin because they are leasing the land. Member Salois voiced his concerns as this is limited access to the city, he felt it should serve the whole city. Member Porter agreed. Chair Sharp asked how this could be resolved? Will an open door policy mess up the insurance coverage? Mr. Parks stated he would be open to the city to make everyone comfortable.

Member Gaylord said she understood what the members were saying adding we are talking over 300 children every day, she knows the need as a teacher, she felt \$62,000 asking for small amount. She would be proud to see money going towards Boys and Girls Club and do not think we would be criticized for supporting this.

Chair Sharp added he doesn't want to do something where it could be litigated where someone says what's next? Member Gaylord felt the population of the Boys and Girls Club versus Roots is much different; the Boys & Girls Club gives kids that normally would not have an opportunity a place to go, the need is out there.

Planner Vinskey showed the DOR matrix which identified the definition under recreation.

Member Porter asked if the Boys and Girls Club is a nonprofit. Yes. Tirrell felt that is the key to the answer as far as something like Roots.

Chair Sharp stated he is hung up on using taxpayer's money, he would like to talk to the tax guys to see if the CPC money can be used for this. He further asked Mr. Parks if this could be delayed for 3 months. Mr. Parks informed him the playground would not be built until the building is up.

Member Gaylord mentioned the CPC has approved playgrounds for schools, what would be the difference? Chair Sharp noted the school is municipal. Member Salois also added the school's playgrounds are available to everyone.

Chair Sharp suggested Planner Vinskey investigate it. Planner Vinskey informed him there is nothing in the language prohibiting this, so the answer must come from this Committee. Chair Sharp asked if the Committee looks at the CPA plan, does it check off enough boxes? Member Tirrell asked if there is a number that it must pass. Planner Vinskey stated these are not requirements; these are guidelines that the committee established to help prioritize projects and answer these questions.

Chair Sharp noted he would feel comfortable if he knew this Committee was not the first to travel down this road and asked for a motion to continue or approve.

Member Salois MOTIONED, seconded by Member Porter to continue. Discussion? It was noted that a 3 month delay would not be a deal breaker.

Member Porter also suggested they reduce their asking noting the Commission usually asked for a 50% contribution, in this case they are asking for an 80% adding that would be more palatable to him and he is also concerned about the Westfield public not having general availability to it. Member Salois also felt a lower amount for funding would be more advantageous.

Member Tirrell asked what the amount they are asking for a fraction of one percent of the total expansion project. Mr. Parks stated the playground project is \$76,905. They are asking for \$62,000, or about 81% of the playground project. It was noted the overall project is \$3.5 million.

Planner Vinskey looked up other communities and shared his screen showing Holyoke and Marshfield funded Boys & Girls Club projects, so this would not be the first.

Chair Sharp noted there was a motion on the table, if the motion passes it will be continued, if the motion is defeated the Commission will discuss funding further.

By Roll Call Vote:

Thomas Sharp	-	yes
Cindy Gaylord	-	no

Bill Porter - yes  
Dan Kelly - no  
Mike Tirrell - no  
Rich Salois - yes

Motion fails to pass.

Member Kelly stated the Boys & Girls Club is a great club, he felt this is a good project and that is why he did not vote for the motion to continue. They are looking to serve 300 kids a day, this is a good idea.

Member Kelly MOTIONED, seconded by Member Gaylord to approve the project in the amount of \$62,405.20 for the Boys & Girls Club playground.

Member Tirrell asked if there is any resolution to leaving the gate open for the community to use the playground at some point. Mr. Parks stated he would have to talk to his insurance company if they are fine with it the Boys & Girls Club is fine too.

Chair Sharp asked if after the fact Mr. Parks would be willing to sit down and talk about having the playground equipment more accessible to more residences? Mr. Parks said he would be willing.

Member Gaylord also noted there is also a playground at the Ashley Street site as well. She further asked if this would be open on the weekends. She further noted she would be proud to vote on this project.

Chair Sharp asked if there were further comments. Planner Vinskey also added the Committee could put in the grant agreement a condition that it have public access. Member Salois also noted he would like to see it stipulated that it be open to the public.

Chair Sharp asked for agreement of an understanding that Mr. Parks will be receptive to future conversations about making the playground available to the general public. Member Porter felt this does not give much teeth, he is agreeable to have them meet with Planner Vinskey or the City to figure out a solution to allow the public to use the playground.

Member Tirrell asked what he considered reasonably available. Mr. Porter felt anything after 5:00 Monday - Friday. The majority would be on the weekends when not in use.

The CPC agreed to add the requirement for a future discussion on this matter.

By Roll call vote:

Tom Sharp - yes  
Cindy Gaylord - yes  
Bill Porter - yes  
Dan Kelly - yes  
Mike Tirrell - yes  
Rich Salois - yes

5. Status of Recommended/Funded projects  
▪ Baker Property

Planner Vinskey mentioned the conservation restriction has been recorded and the project is closed out, this creates a 100 acre block of open space land.

▪ Funded projects with outstanding historic restrictions  
Not discussed.

- Other open projects

Planner Vinskey quickly ran through the list.

6. Discussion of potential projects

- Old Long Pond Rd. land (72R-9)

Chair Sharp informed the Committee he received a letter from Dan LaBrie, stating there is an opportunity for the city to consider seeking development rights on 42 acres of property near Hampdon Ponds. They are asking for \$575,000. The owners have frontage on Old Long Pond Road and they have given the city an opportunity to consider whether they want to get involved. After discussion, the Chair Sharp will reach out to the property owners to see if they would be willing to consider selling development rights instead of the City purchasing the property.

- Virtual downtown historical tour (Historical Commission)

Member Gaylord stated that during COVID the Historical Commission came up with some thing families could do: virtual tours would include tours of the monuments, museum at the Athenaeum, Dewey House, Whip factory. She noted the Commission would be looking for funding somewhere in the area of \$2,000 to help for the cost. She added she would be sending the links out to people.

Planner Vinskey stated he was not sure if that would be an eligible CPA project. Member Salois asked if there would be links to City Hall web site? Member Gaylord stated it is currently on the School's web site.

7. Other Business/Suture Agenda Items

- Wyben Woods Conservation Area

For information only, Chair Sharp informed the CPC some residents did not like the Sampson name; they wanted it changed to Wyben Woods, and it was so voted by the City Council.

8. Annual election of chairperson, vice chairperson

Member Kelly MOTIONED, seconded by Member Salois to keep Member Sharp as Chair. Mr. Sharp said he would be happy to serve as Chair again. Member Salois noted he is doing a good job. Member Kelly MOTIONED, duly seconded to keep the Vice-Chair Muto.

Roll Call vote on both:

Tom Sharp	-	yes
Cindy Gaylord	-	yes
Bill Porter	-	yes
Dan Kelly	-	yes
Mike Tirrell	-	yes
Rich Salois	-	yes

9. Designation of the date/time of regular quarterly meetings

Member Kelly MOTIONED, duly seconded to retain the current schedule (meeting on the second Thursday 6:30 on a quarterly basis). Next meeting April 8.

By Roll Call vote:

Tom Sharp	-	yes
Cindy Gaylord	-	yes
Bill Porter	-	yes
Dan Kelly	-	yes

Mike Tirrell - yes  
Rich Salois - yes

Planner Vinsky noted the Lambson agreement needs to be signed by the Chair.  
The meeting was adjourned at 8:28.

A True Record Attest:  
Christine Fedora  
Community Development Office Manager

APPROVED