



Lancaster CPA Comm Minutes 12/13/23 via
Zoom

Members Present: Linnea Lakin Servey, Win Clark, Regina Brown, Tom Seidenberg, Amy Brown, Margot Hammer-Streeter

The Chairman convened the public hearing at 6:02 pm.

The Chairman welcomed Kendra Dickinson and an anonymous participant, and then welcomed new members Tom Seidenberg, Conservation Commission, Marilyn Largey, Housing Authority and Amy Brown, Historical Commission, who signed in later in the meeting. Each new member gave a brief bio.

The first agenda item was the approval of minutes from 9/20/23 and 10/18/23, and 11/16/23 which was tabled due to lack of a quorum of participants. After some technical difficulties, a quorum was present, and the minutes were approved unanimously via roll call vote.

Discussion ensued regarding the public hearing/forum held last month. Member Clark suggested doing the presentation a few times a year to encourage people to put together applications throughout the year. The committee agreed that having year-round applications are beneficial to both applicants and the committee.

Discussion ensued regarding what criteria to use to evaluate project submissions. Examples from Groton and Greenfield were reviewed in depth. Member Brown suggested keeping things simple for the applicant. She suggested rewording the criteria to simplify the process. Member Clark suggested having an initial assessment even before the application has been submitted to help shepherd a project from start to finish, as the process is a many steps process. He said a pre submission form with three basic questions could be helpful.

Member Seidenberg asked what the timeline is for completing the process.

Chairman Lakin Servey said that the hardest deadline is getting a completed application by mid-February to be on the town meeting warrant. Member Clark said the biggest job of the committee is to hone down what projects make sense to present to town meeting. Member R. Brown again stressed the need to keep forms as simple as possible for the applicant, so people don't get overwhelmed with the process.

Discussion ensued regarding how much tweaking would be necessary.

Member Clark suggested working on a short, preliminary application that can be put out sooner than later.

Chairman Lakin Servey said that having a shorter form at the beginning makes sense but feels that more criteria need to be there for larger, more complicated projects.

The next agenda item is the review of available funds. Chairman Lakin Servey said the State has awarded the money to CPA towns, with Lancaster receiving 21%, which is lower than last year because of changes in the real estate market and less transactions at the registry of deeds (funds are 166k, 172k with interest).

Discussion ensued regarding how distributions work from town to town: Lancaster gets one distribution as the town only collects 1% from taxpayers, as opposed to the full 3%.

Of note: the money allocated to the dugout project that is left over will be used in the next year as opposed to putting it back into the general CPA pot.

Of note: money can be banked from one year to another, with no cap.

Member Clark said he wanted to ask a hypothetical question, whether money could be reallocated if there are too many projects in for example, rec, and none in affordable housing.

Chairman Lakin Servey said that money is constantly being collected such that it is a rolling fund. She also said projects can be phased. Member Clark said that much of this should be in advance before town meeting.

Of note: only money approved at town meeting can be spent. Member R. Brown suggested that the committee should provide help to applicants if they need to phase projects, since once a project is accepted at town meeting, it is up to the town to move the project forward with bids, etc. Of note: only one budget number per project can be submitted, with the bidding process starting after the project is accepted. Member Clark said that it is teamwork that gets the project finished. Chairman Lakin Servey said that that is also why a member from various boards is on the Committee. Member Clark said the committee's job is to solicit ideas and to assist in the application process, but it is not the committee's job to take an idea and bring it to fruition.

Update on projects: ballfield, surfacing done, fencing started this week. Dugouts at Thayer field are done and dugouts at Mill Street are in the planning phase. Historic, 1st church portico is done, windows at the library will begin in January. The middle cemetery assessment project has been awarded and is moving forward, to assess what restoration work needs to be done and in what order. Discussion ensued regarding what studies can be paid for by CPA funds and how important those studies are.

Member A. Brown said that the contract has been awarded and work will start soon. Discussion ensued regarding what cemeteries can qualify for CPA because they are on the historic register. Member R. Brown asked which were on the register; the middle, old common, north cemeteries on Otis Street are all listed. Discussion ensued regarding whether the cemetery up the road from the College B and B is in the registry.

Chairman Lakin Servey asked about the Conservation Trail parking update, which is still in process.

The next meeting will be on January 18, 2024 at 6 PM.

Member Hammer-Streeter made a motion to adjourn at 7:17 pm. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously via roll call vote.

Respectfully submitted by Margot Hammer-Streeter
Approved 1/18/24