

COMMUNITY PRESERVATION COMMITTEE
MINUTES

January 20, 2022, 4:30 p.m.

ORLEANS TOWN CLERK
Principale
22 JAN 31 8:38AM

An online meeting of the Community Preservation Committee was held via Zoom beginning at 4.30pm on January 20, 2022. Real-time public access was provided by Orleans Channel 18 on the Town website and cable television

In attendance for the CPC were: Chair Walter North, Vice Chair Barry Alper, Clerk Sue Christie, and members Stephanie Gaskill, Joan Francolini, Charles Ellis, John Lipman and Kevin Galligan. Mr. Crabtree joined the meeting at 4.40pm.

1. Call to Order: The Chair called the meeting to order at 4.30pm
2. Public Comment: The Chair reminded committee members of the need to complete the Conflict of Interest Training and sign and send the relevant forms to Molly Bates.

Kyle Wibby of South Orleans spoke about the restoration of the Old Firehouse and how the grant application might affect the not-for-profit youth group that uses the building in its current form. He said he felt there had not been enough opportunity for public comment and input on the designs for the restoration of the building. He observed there was not dedicated space for the after-school program. He suggested the building needs to be more than an attractive centerpiece in the town and should be for multi-generational use. He expressed concern about the disruption construction could pose to the youth programs and the lack of a replacement site for such activities during restoration of the Old Firehouse.

3. Continued review of Town Counsel's memo of opinion on Grant Applications: The chair informed the committee that the second memo of opinion had not yet arrived for consideration.
4. Presentation and consideration of selected FY 2023 Project Applications:
 - NW Schoolhouse Roof – CPC Liaison Sue Christie introduced Paul Davies from Odd Fellows 132 who spoke about the ongoing efforts of the group to bring the historical building up to suitable standards. He described the delay caused by the pandemic to roof replacement (awarded in a CPC grant in FY21) and the subsequent increase in material costs. The grant application the group has submitted to CPC in FY23 is for some of the increased material costs. Mr. Davies also spoke of the size and benefits of the building and its potential as a community space. It was recommended that he link with the Community Center Task Force so that they could investigate opportunities at the NW Schoolhouse.
 - French Cable Museum - CPC Liaison Stephanie Gaskill introduced Meri Hartford from the French Cable Museum who discussed a revised grant application to improve wiring, restore 22 original windows and conduct archival work for documents and items dating from the operational years of the station (1880s to 1959). Ms. Hartford began by reading a letter of thanks from the Museum for previous support in restoration, preservation and protection of

historic materials and the building. (*Transcript is attached to these minutes*). She explained the old wiring was historically relevant and would remain in place as part of the Museum but rewiring to meet the current code was necessary. She explained the Museum building still retained original windows, but that restoration was required. She described an archiving project to sort, scan and protect original station documents, many of which are in handwritten archaic French.

The committee asked her to ensure lead paint would be properly managed in the restoration. It was also suggested that the French Cable Museum could connect with the Center for Culture and History (CHO) for their experience using an archivist. Ms. Harter from CHO was present and confirmed she would forward information to the French Cable Museum.

- CHO, Historic Collection Project – CPC Liaison Charles Ellis introduced Jay Stradal and Cris Harter from CHO to speak to their grant application to curate, document and preserve some 6000 items in their collection. They reviewed the successful results of previous CPC grants to the museum and Hurd Chapel and noted the renovated space had potential for use by the broader community for meetings or activities. It was suggested they connect with the Community Center Task Force. Ms. Harter detailed some of the needs for appropriate archival and storage of the collection, data entry and curatorial assistance. A discussion of both past and upcoming exhibits followed reviewing representation, diversity, and integration of historical material from the community (ie, private collections).
- Old Firehouse Restoration - CPC Liaison Kevin Galligan introduced Alan McClennen and Brian Sosner from the Community Buildings Restoration Task Force to speak about the grant application for \$2M. Mr. McClennen read a previously-submitted letter (*transcript is attached to these minutes*) describing the needs for the Old Firehouse and reviewed the progress of previous CPC grants in FY14, FY15 and FY19. Mr. McKevez and Mr. Collier from ICON presented the newest design dated January 5, 2022, for the Old Firehouse restoration. The proposal aims to meet the Department of Interior's standard for rehabilitation. It includes efforts to recapture the character of the former fire station, while adding accessibility, usable space, and public bathrooms.

Ms. Gaskill left the meeting.

Subsequent questioning sought to clarify whether restoration included Parish Park which is managed by the OIA. There was review and clarification of the Select Board's scope of approval of costs and plans and the role of the Select Board to manage the use of the building.

Mr. Ellis spoke as a representative of the Historic Commission and said the Commission had not yet determined if the standard set by the Department of the Interior would be met. He explained that the Historic Commission recognizes the significance of the building although it was not included in previous historic surveys. He said the Historic Commission did not have enough information about the project yet to recommend it. They had arranged an onsite inspection but still require information about steps to include historic preservation in the

project, materials to be used, and a breakdown of costs for the interior and exterior renovation. A meeting with the Commission, the Task Force and the designers is scheduled for January 26, 2022, at 3pm. Mr. McClennen assured the CPC that all background studies, including previous historical reviews, were included in the brief to the design team. Mr. Ellis agreed to share the discussion and decisions of the Jan 26 Historic Commission meeting with the CPC.

Mr. Alper sought to clarify that the phrase “no cost to the taxpayer” is not strictly accurate. Mr. North asked for clarification of the suggested timeline for the project. Mr. McClennen said he expected bids to be ready at the time of the May Town Meeting. After a successful vote of bond approval from the Town, he felt a contract could be awarded and the Town would acquire a Bond Anticipation Note for a year to a year and a half. He speculated the bond would not be drawn down until FY24 or possibly FY25.

Mr. Sosner spoke about the potential for related economic benefits to downtown Orleans from a renovation site at the Old Firehouse.

Mr. Crabtree left the meeting.

5. Bonding - consideration of bonding needs, implications, and variables:

Mr. North advised that the Town Treasurer was doing an analysis of the potential impact of the bonds and grants to CPC in FY23 and beyond. This is expected next week so the discussion was postponed. Mr. Ellis expressed concern about the ability to fund projects in future years due to debt obligations. A discussion of interest rate favorability, leverage and inflation probed some of the challenges around bonding. Mr. Alper urged committee members to remember the charge of the CPC to preserve the character of the Town of Orleans. Ms. Christie also noted that CPC is not the sole source of funds for the Town of Orleans and that other options, such as the Capital Improvement Fund, are available in some instances.

6. Minutes to be Approved:

Mr. Alper moved to accept the minutes of the CPC meeting of January 13, 2022. Mr. Lipman seconded the motion. Vote by roll call was in favor of the motion: 7-0-0.

7. Adjourn:

Ms. Francoli moved to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Alper seconded the motion. Vote by roll call in favor: 7-0-0.

*Respectfully submitted,
Jennifer Fountain*

Letter: As read into the record by M. Hartford, French Cable Museum

Basically, we would like to thank the committee for continued support for proposals these past few years. Because of your commitment to preservation, we've been able to accomplish critical projects in a timely manner. The French Cable Station Museum runs entirely on volunteers. There are no paid directors, no grant writers, no development teams. We have tackled these projects in phases that were manageable for our organization, and found this more organic approach has worked well for us.

For members new to the committee and for the public who are not familiar with the grants that we have had, our proposals have sort of coalesced in this way: Starting, we created an online database of all the instruments and objects in the museum with photographs. Also, that is now currently available for view online so researchers from all over the world can access it. During that time, we realized there was a critical need for better control of temperature and humidity within the building. Then we also found areas in the building that we're really suffering from the effects of not having climate control.

So, once that basement was remediated, we saw that a research library and archive-state storage area could be created, which, incidentally, we recovered letters from museum volunteers in the 90s that discussed exactly the same location for the same thing. So, it's kind of fun to have that well underway by this point.

So, we do not take lightly the opportunity given to our community, and to us with Community Preservation funds. We've decided intentionally to approach these projects one by one and in small chunks, allowing us to keep a closer eye on costs rather than wrestling with one giant all-encompassing project that could overwhelm a small, but hearty group of volunteers. So, I know it feels to some that we come back year after year and the reason is for, for just that reason: to try to maximize the use and make the money go just as far as it can.

Text of letter read into the record by Mr. McClennen of the Community Building Restoration Task Force. The letter was originally written in November 2012 by Andrea Shaw Reed.

Dear committee members,

We have embarked on a grassroots effort to restore the Old Firehouse with a clear goal of preserving the historic character of the building and furthering the cultural environmental and economic vitality of Orleans.

The Old Firehouse is a town icon, a cultural asset that, once restored, could set the stage for how we as a community host the future through the preservation of our past. We see the Old Firehouse as a jewel in the cultural campus that could be the village center with access for our residents, visitors, organizations, and businesses.

This project will enhance our community by preserving and protecting a unique historical structure and creating a Main Street center where artists can exhibit, musicians can perform, writers can lecture, families can gather, local businesses and nonprofits can hold meetings and events.

We are asking for your help to transfer the old firehouse into a vibrant public presence that will add to the historic charm of our town and create a cultural asset right in the heart of Orleans.