

2022 CPC ANNUAL NEEDS ASSESSMENT HEARING REPORT

(CPC Approved 4-14-2022)

March 10, 2022

Via Zoom Webinar

Part I – Number of Attendees and Respondents

- Number of attendees at hearing via Zoom webinar – 14
- Number of written comments submitted to CPC – 10
- Number of oral comments at hearing – 10

Part II – Comments

Written Comments by Category

- Historic Preservation: 9
- Community Housing: 1
- Open Space/Recreation: 0

Summary of Written Comments

Historic Preservation (9 Comments)

Lillia Frantin, Precinct 5 Town Meeting Rep., also on the Board of the North Falmouth Village Association (NFVA) reached out to provide information on NFVA activities and wondered what sorts of project are funded through CPC. She is particularly interested in historic preservation opportunities for North Falmouth Village.

Patricia and Kevin Friel, Homeowners of the historic Crocker-Bourne home at 328 Waquoit Highway that has been in their family since the 1800's but is now slated for demolition due to their inability to keep up with costly maintenance making the house unsafe for habitation. The Historical Commission granted a waiver of the 1-year demolition delay on 3/1/22. The Friel's expressed the great loss of their beloved, historically significant home for the family as well as Waquoit Village and the entire Falmouth community. They said the loss could have been prevented if CPA funds were available to homeowners and that many more privately owned historic homes, that are assets to the Town, could be saved.

Bonnie Maresh, Parsons Lane, Waquoit resident, is supportive and appreciative of the CPC's work and mentioned the Waquoit Congregational Church CPA funding being a "life saver". She is concerned about the loss of privately held historic assets and asks if the eligibility requirements could be broadened to include private citizens interested in preserving historic structures.

Christian Valle, Vice Chair of the Historical Commission, is supportive of CPA funding private citizens for historic preservation and renovation with hundreds of historic properties being privately owned and contributing to the historic character of the Town. He says the Historical Commission regularly reviews applications from homeowners of historic properties that have fallen into disrepair due to the inability to keep up with the cost of maintenance and repair, often resulting in demolition. Christian also makes the connection between these historic homes, that have passed down through families for generations, and affordable housing; when these homes are demolished the families often cannot afford to live here and cannot stay local.

Johanna Reed, Member of Historical Commission & Architect, wrote to advocate for the preservation of historic resources and particularly those owned by private citizens. She supports providing funds to qualifying home and business owners to maintain and restore historic buildings while bringing them up to modern safety & energy codes to preserve a "living link" to Falmouth's history.

Jill Neubauer, Owner of Jill Neubauer Architects, wrote to advocate for expanding the CPA policy to allow funding to go to private citizens/businesses to repair historic buildings since the majority are privately owned. She mentions Waquoit Village as an area where we are losing historic homes & buildings through demolition. Jill's closing sentence is, "We are only as beautiful and as meaningful as our built environment."

Lisa Walker, Co-Executive Director, Highfield Hall, wrote to Annie Dean to say she wouldn't be attending the Needs Assessment Hearing, but thanked the CPC & Historical Commission for all the past support. She provided an update on the development of Highfield's comprehensive restoration plan that they will use to prepare a new CPA application this year. From Lisa, "As George Orwell said, "The most effective way to destroy people is to deny and obliterate their own understanding of their history.'"

Mary Loftus, Menauhant resident, supports CPA funds being used for privately owned properties to preserve their rich histories for future generations.

Ed Haddad, Chair, Historical Commission, submitted his personal CPC funding priorities as:

- a. Old Burying Grounds – urgency of continuously funding preservation of gravestones until completed as well as the cemetery itself as a historic landmark and sacred burial ground to include entrance, roadway, fences, and trees/landscaping
- b. Funding restoration projects for homes & buildings owned by private individuals and companies – Historical Commission would be a willing partner to help CPC develop & manage a program for the many benefits this could provide
- c. Linking historic restoration and affordable housing – most historic homes are near town centers that are also ideal locations for affordable housing

Community Housing (1 Comment)

Gerald Potamis, Precinct 2 Town Meeting Rep., also on the ZBA, recommends that workforce and affordable housing receive priority.

Oral Comments by Category

- Historic Preservation: 2
- Community Housing: 8
- Open Space/Recreation: 2 (comments combined with 2 Community Housing comments from T3C)

Summary of Oral Comments by Category

Historic Preservation

Edward Haddad, Chair of the [Falmouth Historical Commission](#), referenced his written comments on his three personal priorities for historic preservation including: 1) the Old Burying Grounds and encouraging the CPC and the Town to continue to move the project forward through to full restoration of the gravestones as well as the entire site as a historical landmark and a sacred burying ground; 2) funding historic restoration projects for homes and buildings owned by private individuals and companies since the majority of historic properties are privately owned. Funding such projects could enhance streetscapes, property values, tourism, commercial areas, historic districts, and architectural details that are all public benefits; 3) linking historic restoration and affordable housing since most historic homes are near the town center that is an ideal location for affordable housing. Adaptive reuse of historic buildings is both environmentally and economically sound while preserving a historic home from being razed as well as offering an opportunity for residents to become part of an established neighborhood. Sandy Cuny, CPC Vice Chair, mentioned that the Town should get involved with replacing the trees, improving the entranceway, and overall site as those items would not fall under historic preservation.

Laura Reckford, Executive Director of the [Falmouth Art Center](#) and Chair of the [Woods Hole Historical Museum \(WHHM\)](#) Steering Committee thanked the CPC for recommending funding for the WHHM Historic Structures Report (HSR) and attended the hearing to advocate for historic preservation. Laura believes historic preservation doesn't have as many advocates as the other categories, all of which she considers to be important. She commented on how beautiful Falmouth is because of historic buildings and how there are fewer and fewer of them because of the high costs of maintenance that result in tear downs. Laura asked the CPC for support of historic buildings that make Falmouth both charming and beautiful.

Community Housing

Leonard Johnson, Board Member of [The 300 Committee \(T3C\)](#), brought to the CPC's attention that a high priority for T3C is to find suitable land for affordable housing and open space. T3C has been working with the Falmouth Housing Trust to submit proposals for the purchase of land for these purposes. In three separate efforts, they have been outbid by developers or unable to afford the high asking price. Increasingly high land prices have made it very difficult to put bids together for the combined purpose of open space and community housing, but they will continue trying to do so. Paul Glynn, CPC Chair, asked if recreational land was more appropriate than open space in areas that are adjacent to affordable housing. Leonard said T3C is very flexible and that recreation would make sense, especially if it was a large project. Chair Glynn told Leonard that the CPC appreciates T3C and hopes that historic preservation entities can eventually create such an efficient a program.

Jessica Whritenour, Executive Director of [The 300 Committee \(T3C\)](#), highlighted the \$300 million Little Pond project as an example of a high priority, collaborative project that provides affordable housing, open space, and recreation for public benefit. Jessica mentioned the success of the Falmouth Housing Corporation's 40-unit affordable housing development at Little Pond Place. T3C has partnered with the Conservation Commission on many projects and continues to work with them on implementation of the Little Pond open space project to create passive recreational access and trails around Little Pond. The project will occur in three phases with Phase I being site restoration and preparation (2013 CP-funded project). Following phases will provide access and useable open space. In response to a question from Vice Chair Cuny about the acreage purchased, Jessica said 21 acres were purchased in 2010 with 11.4 acres set aside for community housing and 9.6 acres for open space and recreation. The Town owns the land and T3C holds the conservation restriction. Jessica talked about the broad collaboration on the project that involved multiple town boards and nonprofits.

Chris Kazarian, Marketing Manager at the [Housing Assistance Corporation \(HAC\)](#), prepared a presentation (with Scott Lajoie) to provide background on the HAC and the nonprofit organization's work on the Cape and Islands. The HAC assists the homeless and works to prevent homelessness, provides housing supports, weatherizes, and repairs homes, builds affordable housing, and educates consumers. Chris mentioned the HAC's new advocacy efforts to increase year-round affordable housing opportunities including the [Housing to Protect Cape Cod Petition](#), the purpose of which is to increase workforce housing on the Cape through updating zoning, speeding up the RFP process and review of housing projects. HAC is also working to increase accessory dwelling units (ADU's) by providing financial assistance and incentives to homeowners to add ADU's through their [My Home Plus One ADU Program](#). Chris referenced other ongoing HAC programs in Falmouth including the Carriage House Shelter Program in North Falmouth and the housing lotteries they oversee in Falmouth. Chris provided details on the financial assistance HAC has awarded to residents of Falmouth and throughout Cape Cod over the past couple of years. From March 23, 2020 to March 4, 2022 more than \$7.4 million in financial assistance was provided to nearly 1400 households on Cape Cod and the Islands for past due rent and mortgage payments. During the same period, more than \$780,000 in financial assistance was provided to 144 Falmouth households. Last year, alone, \$530,000 was awarded to 90 Falmouth households. For comparison, in a typical pre-pandemic year, \$300-\$350,000/year was awarded for the entire Cape and Islands region. The data demonstrates the magnitude of the

housing crisis on the Cape and Chris expects the financial awards will continue to increase with increasing needs.

Scott Lajoie, Director of Government Relations at the [Housing Assistance Corporation \(HAC\)](#), continued the HAC presentation and reported on the housing cost burdens across the Cape. Of the 163,557 housing units on Cape Cod, only 11.6% are year-round rentals making it difficult to meet the housing needs of people in the work force. Of those renting, 50% are cost-burdened households, or paying more than 30% of income toward housing in most Cape towns. The cost burdens range from 21% to 61% across the Cape. A severely cost-burdened household pays more than 50% of income to housing costs. Scott provided [Massachusetts Housing Partnership \(MHP\)](#) cost burden details for Falmouth showing that 50% of rental households are cost-burdened or severely cost-burdened and 30% of homeowners are cost-burdened or severely cost-burdened. Scott reported that 10,000 households are on the waiting list for affordable housing with affordable home options decreasing through the years. For example, from 2019 to 2022, the number of houses for sale in Falmouth for less than \$600,000 decreased from 117 to 9 houses. The HAC forecasts that the affordability gap will grow, year-round rentals will continue to decrease, pressure to increase wages will continue, workforce shortages will grow, cost of goods and services will increase, and locals will be displaced if more is not done to address the housing crisis. Chair Glynn let Scott know about all the work the Town of Falmouth has done on the affordable housing front including the \$5.8 million the Town appropriated to the FAHF in the past year. Chair Glynn asked Scott if he know of any other town on the Cape that has done this much work to address the affordable housing crisis. Scott said he doesn't know of any other town doing the same and he referenced Falmouth's new overlay district as another tool that will help increase residential inventory. Vice Chair Cuny told Scott that the CPC is in support of their efforts and asked how the CPC can help HAC. Scott mentioned mortgage buy-downs, regional projects, creative solutions for rental assistance, and said there are many ways the Town and HAC can work together. (HAC presentation posted on [CPC webpage](#) & [CP Fund website](#))

Eric Turkington, Treasurer of the [Falmouth Housing Corporation \(FHC\)](#), gave tribute to Linda Clark, Executive Director of FHC, for her amazing leadership on FHC's creation of over 300 affordable housing units (after Scranton Avenue is completed) that are all on Falmouth's subsidized housing inventory (SHI) with every one of them made possible with CPA funding to and through the [Falmouth Affordable Housing Fund \(FAHF\)](#). Eric mentioned that the Town has really stepped up to provide more funding for affordable housing because of CPC action and it allows the FHC to leverage more funding. As an example, Eric said that the CP Fund provided less than \$50,000 per unit for the Scranton Avenue project, but the cost to build those units is \$350,000 each so the FHC does a lot of work to secure outside funding to make the projects work. Eric requested that the CPC provide as much funding to the FAHF as last year but requested that the CPC keep the funding in the community housing reserve for future FHC projects. In addition to the Scranton Avenue project that is moving forward, Eric mentioned another project that will create 40-50 affordable units and will require \$4-\$5 million in the next year or so to make it a reality. Paul thanked Eric for letting the CPC know what is in the pipeline for long-term planning. Michael Stone, CPC Financial Officer, asked what the FHC priorities are and how the projects align with Falmouth's goals around smart growth, the environment, and densification of village centers. Eric replied that the Spring Bars Road and Scranton Avenue projects that add density close to town center, transit, shopping, and other amenities while considering environmental issues (e.g., flood zones & stormwater) as well. Eric added that for rental housing to be successful, the projects must be well-managed and FHC provides the necessary management. Michael said that FHC is doing a great job and he is interested in understanding the philosophy of the organization. Eric replied that FHC's philosophy is simple: all rentals, all in Falmouth, with as many units built, as soon as possible.

Karen Bissonnette, Executive Director of the [Falmouth Housing Trust \(FHT\)](#), thanked the CPC for all the help and continued support of funding through Town Meeting and the FAHF. Karen said she is thrilled to collaborate with the Historical Commission on affordable housing and continues to work very closely with T3C to put bids in on

properties for affordable housing and open space opportunities. Karen mentions how important it is to think outside the box on things like small lot developments to make progress on the housing crisis. Karen also emphasized that the CP Fund affordable housing funds can be used for people earning up to 100% of area median income (AMI) with most targeting only 80% AMI. Karen said that at 80% AMI a family of four can earn \$77,750 and at 100% AMI a family of four can earn \$97,200; not a lot of money for a family of four, but people in those families will be able to fill some of the professional jobs in town. Karen mentioned the difficulty with hiring and retaining Town employees while emphasizing the importance of filling all jobs. Karen closed by saying she looks forward to more collaborations and appreciates the money that has been appropriated for affordable housing, however, she says more is needed.

Edward Curley, Chair of the [Falmouth Affordable Housing Committee \(AHC\)](#), said he was heartened to hear everyone speaking and understanding that we are in crisis mode and getting help from everyone including open space advocates for affordable housing. Ed said the cause was blessed this year with the \$1.8 million from CPA and \$4 million from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) free cash from the Town. He expressed that \$5.8 million is a lot, but with \$100,000 needed for each unit, that is only 58 units. The Housing Production Plan (HPP) estimates the need at 74 units per year to reach the 10% target for Falmouth which is 400 total housing units. Ed said it will take developers a little while to figure out the new overlay district just passed at November Town Meeting and asks CPC not to lose sight of the long-term goals. With CPA supporting affordable housing for many years, there is still a need to continue to build and subsidize developers. Ed supports Eric's suggestion of setting aside funds as the \$5.8 million will not likely be spent within one year and there is a need to build revenue to get to the 10% even though that is low in terms of year-round residents being able to afford 80% AMI. AHC will do its best with buy-down programs in addition to other creative solutions and supporting development proposals. Chair Glynn congratulated Ed for all the work he and the AHC did in the past year to help the cause. Michael Stone noted that the CPC has been conservative over the past few years with more revenues than spending and funds accumulating. Michael mentioned that the CP Fund will receive at least an additional \$1 million to the undesignated fund balance which will carry over to next year while this year there was \$2 million in the undesignated fund balance. Money is coming in faster than it is going out so reserves will continue to build unless the CPC starts to allocate more than it has in recent years.

Elizabeth Wade, Director of Land Acquisition and Project Development at [Habitat for Humanity of Cape Cod](#), thanked the CPC for all the support on Willett Way, especially the critical support with acquisition and early infrastructure that Beth says is difficult to support with grants. Habitat is currently developing 16 houses with 10 at Willett Way which is moving forward despite some COVID-related delays. Beth provided an update on what Habitat is doing to respond to the need for affordable housing including: 1) working with two architects to create homes at greater density, referring to it as 'boxcar' design, to build much closer together and still retain the fee ownership model; 2) installing solar and other environmental attributes in homes with most of Willett Way solar being funded by Falmouth community members. Habitat's actions to promote green energy in its homes will be recognized in May for having the best Home Energy Rating System (HERS) indices of any Habitat in the country; and 3) continuing to prioritize building homes to serve those earning 60-65% of AMI and starting to build to serve those earning up to 80% AMI by collaborating with developers to provide mixed AMI developments. Chair Glynn asked Beth when Willett Way will be completed. Beth said both phases will be finished in February 2023. Vice Chair Cuny thanked Beth and mentioned that the former CPC Chair, Ralph Herbst, was a supporter of Habitat and helped to build houses, adding that the CPC has done a lot for Habitat in the past and hopes to continue to help the organization in the future.

Open Space/Recreation

Leonard Johnson, Board Member of [The 300 Committee \(T3C\)](#) - See Community Housing comment above

Jessica Whritenour, Executive Director of [The 300 Committee \(T3C\)](#) - See Community Housing comment above

General Comments

Samuel Patterson, Select Board Member, offered many thanks to the CPC for all the projects funded that enhance the vitality and beauty of Falmouth.

Chair Glynn wrapped up by summarizing that all interests including historical, affordable housing, and open space were represented with a lot of comment received from historical and housing advocates. Paul mentioned that recreation will become more important as more affordable housing is developed.

John Druley, CPC Planning Board representative, thought there was good attendance at the hearing and better than he expected through Zoom. He shared how much CPC and FAHF has contributed to affordable housing including: Spring Bars Road/Little Pond Place – 40 units; Brick Kiln Road – 20 units; Gifford Street – 20 units; Habitat – 10 units; North Falmouth – 10 units; various home remodels/builds – 4 units; and Scranton Avenue – 40 units. This totals almost 150 rental and home ownership units and John said the CPC should be congratulated for doing an outstanding job. Paul agreed and mentioned his surprise that the \$4 million Town contribution to affordable housing was not reported in any regional news, remarking that this was quite a change in philosophy for the Town.

Vice Chair Cuny mentioned that in past years, the CPC would make a presentation to Town Meeting under Article II, and she suggested it may be time to do this again to highlight CPC accomplishments for residents who may not know about the amazing projects in Town that have been funded through their contribution via the 3% surcharge.

Stephen Patton, CPC Clerk and Housing Authority Representative, did some research with the Housing Authority and pulled up all the waiting lists for affordable housing. Steve wanted to see what the need was for family housing and said there is an exploding need particularly for housing more than two people. He said the demand for Section 8 is staggering.

Part III – Goals

The following list of goals is the result of the CPC's discussion of the hearing, including oral and written comments:

Historic Preservation

1. Continue to support the funding of historic preservation in both the short- and long-term.
2. Continue to fund the Old Burying Grounds project, with the support of Town capital funds, beyond the Condition Assessment Report to allow restoration not only of the gravestones, but also restoration of the entire property as a historical asset for the community.
3. Expand the CP Fund to allow funding of historic preservation projects by private individuals/entities for community benefit. Funding would be in exchange for permanent preservation restrictions.
4. Explore collaborative and creative solutions to address the loss of privately held historical assets for mutually beneficial purposes. One example provided would be to meet both historic preservation and affordable housing goals through a needs-based, income-eligible framework.

Community Housing

1. Continue to support the funding of affordable housing in both the short- and long-term.
2. Consider setting aside more funds in the community housing reserve in the short-term to appropriate to Falmouth Affordable Housing Fund (FAHF) on an as needed basis over the long-term.

3. Expand the CP Fund to allow funding of affordable housing projects by private individuals/entities for community benefit. Funding would be in exchange for permanent affordable housing restrictions.
4. Explore collaborative and creative solutions to address the housing crisis for mutually beneficial purposes. One example provided would be to meet both affordable housing and historic preservation goals through a needs-based, income-eligible framework.

Open Space & Recreation

1. Continue to support the funding of open space & recreation projects in both the short- and long-term.
2. Continue to support collaborative efforts to meet open space & recreation needs, especially in and around affordable housing developments as the need increases.

General CPC Comment in Response to Needs Assessment Hearing

1. CPC will continue to advocate for the hiring of the new Housing Coordinator to help lead the Town's community housing needs and goals.
2. CPC will continue to collaborate with local community and nonprofit groups to achieve the goals in each CPA category.

Part IV - Summary Conclusions

The 2022 CPC Needs Assessment Hearing engaged 24 community members, through both written and oral comment, on the needs, possibilities, and resources of the Town regarding community preservation. Most of the written comments were submitted by historic preservation advocates while most of the oral comments were provided by affordable housing advocates. In FY2022, the community made great strides on both the historic preservation and affordable housing fronts with significant action taken to achieve some of the goals identified in the 2021 Needs Assessment. An important action taken toward historic preservation was the submittal of a CPC application to fund the restoration of the Old Burying Grounds off of Mill Road, addressing the many comments received in 2021 on the dire need for its restoration. Critical actions taken to fund more community housing include the \$5,830,000 appropriated from free cash and CPA funds, an increase in the excise tax, and the creation of a community impact fee on short-term rentals; all providing more revenue to FAHF to promote, expand, and retain affordable housing in Falmouth.

Despite significant accomplishments in the past year, the participants in the 2022 Needs Assessment made it clear that more needs to be done especially in: 1) preserving privately held historic resources that are being lost to demolition at an alarming rate due to the inability of homeowners to keep up with the increasing costs of maintenance and restoration; 2) addressing the housing crisis that continues to exacerbate due to the increasingly exclusive local real estate market; and 3) responding to increasing open space and recreational needs, especially around affordable housing developments. The CPC is exploring policy changes and creative solutions with various community groups to expand the possibilities and resources available to meet these pressing community needs.

It became clear during the 2022 Needs Assessment that the housing crisis is a cross-cutting issue among all CPA categories with historic, open space, as well as community housing advocates all working together to tackle the problem. The CPC will continue to work with all groups to address the crisis while also being mindful to manage CP Fund resources equitably among all CPA categories – historic preservation, open space and recreation, as well as community housing.