



TOWN OF WESTFORD
COMMUNITY PRESERVATION COMMITTEE

TOWN HALL
55 Main Street
WESTFORD, MA 01886
Telephone (978) 399-2905 Fax (978) 399-2556

DATE: January 27, 2026

TIME: 6:45 p.m.

PLACE: Virtual Meeting

PRESENT: Dylan O'Connor, Marilyn Frank, Michael Furman, Robert Stafford, Chris MacMillan, Diane Holmes, Robert Jefferies & Jaime Holmes

GUESTS: Laura Thomae, Bharath Shankar, David Barr, Matt Salem, & Martha Kennedy

TOWN STAFF: Jesse Beyer – CPC Administrator
Jeremy Healy – CPC Administrator

Call to Order:

Frank called the meeting to order at 6:45 p.m.

New Business

Frank discussed that Kathleen Healy is stepping down as CPC chair due to work commitments. Frank made a motion to nominate Bob Jefferies as CPC chair, Furman seconded the motion, which was approved 8-0. The committee agreed to meet again in September to vote for the chair and vice chair positions.

FY26 CPA Application Discussion

Community Gardens Sun Shelter

Laura Thomae presented the sun shelter application and explained the pros and cons of both options in the application. Thomae explained that option 1 is a wooden structure with a shingled roof that is more expensive but provides more shade and is weatherproof. Option 2 is less expensive and consists of a metal structure with a canvas shade cover that is not weatherproof. Furman asked about maintenance costs and who

would pay for them. Thomaе said the community gardens would cover the maintenance. The CPC agreed that option 1 with the wooden structure is the better plan.

Forge Pond Drawdown Improvement Study

David Barr discussed how in the last three years there has been a large increase in invasive plant growth in Forge Pond and with the warmer winters the drawdowns are not as effective. This study would look into the current drawdown locks for improvements using computer models to help improve the efficiency of the drawdowns. Barr said the Littleton CPC has approved \$20k, pending ATM vote, for this study as well. Jefferies asked about the potential impact to the anaerobic parts of the pond after the drawdown. Barr said there is no indication the drawdowns would impact those parts or affect fish populations.

Forge Pond Herbicide Treatment

David Barr discussed that herbicides have not been used in over 40 years on Forge pond. Barr said there were previous concerns about using herbicides and having them flow into nearby conservation lands. Barr said the Westford Parks & Recreation Commission recommends using herbicides since they have had success with herbicides in other ponds. O'Connor asked if there are any restrictions regarding use of herbicides on waterfront properties. Barr said there are no restrictions. O'Connor asked how long before they would be able to see results. Barr said they plan to use multiple different herbicides with some being quick acting and others being slower acting to see what delivers the best result. Barr said that there is also \$20k in matching funds from Littleton CPC that is approved and ready to use on this project.

Vine Brook Footbridge Design

Matt Salem discussed the project, and the goal is to improve access and make the footbridge ADA accessible, and the Conservation Commission agreed to match funds. Salem said the goal is to get the design study completed within the year and be back next application cycle with the project costs.

Freedom Park Improvements

Matt Salem discusses how the gazebo, fishing pier, fencing, and various other parts of the park are in need of improvement. Salem said the goal is to make the park more ADA accessible and the park currently acts as an emergency access to Forge Pond for public safety boats. Salem said maintenance of the park would be performed by volunteer residents and Conservation Commission.

First Parish Church United

Martha Kennedy discussed how the conditions assessment identified several areas of concern that would be addressed in multiple phases based on structural urgency.

Kennedy said phase 1 would address all the immediate items such as the foundation, basement columns, bell tower, bell deck, steeple columns, steeple, & clock face. Kennedy said this work is estimated to take 1-2 years and cost \$590k. Phase II would address the siding, windows, reglaze windows, windowsills, exterior trim, & bring plumbing & electrical to code. Kennedy said this work is estimated to take 2-5 years and cost 450K. Kennedy said they are applying for grants, but the award timeline is after ATM. Furman asked if both phases need to begin at the same time or could they approve one phase this year and come back next year for the other phase. Kennedy said they could proceed with just phase I if that's what they are approved for, but phase II would likely cost more in the future since with phase I they will have scaffolding up around the building which is needed for phase II so if both phases are approved together there is potential for some cost savings. Kennedy discussed how they are in the process of acquiring a historic preservation. Jefferies asked if they are using an architect with historical experience so they can preserve the building properly. Kennedy said they would plan to work with an architect that had historical experience.

Future Meetings

The CPC discussed the upcoming FY26 meeting schedule.

Wednesday February 4, 2026 – Applicant Presentations

Tuesday February 10, 2026 – Applicant Presentations, Make Recommendations

Tuesday February 17, 2026 – (if needed)

Adjourn:

The meeting was adjourned at 8:19pm.

Submitted by Jeremy Healy, CPC Administrator