

**TOWN OF HARWICH
COMMUNITY PRESERVATION COMMITTEE**

**Community Preservation Committee Regular Meeting Minutes
December 11, 2025**

*Recording and Taping Notification: As required by law the Town may audio or video record this meeting.
Any person intending to either audio or video record this open session is required to inform the chair.*

I Call to Order

Harwich Community Preservation Committee Meeting called to order with a quorum of committee members present by Chair Dave Nixon at 6:00 PM, on Thursday, December 11, 2025, at the Harwich Town Hall, Donn B. Griffin Room. Present for quorum: Chair Dave Nixon, Vice Chair Kathy Green, Mary Maslowski, Marcy Vigneau, John Ketchum, Emily Brutti, and Art Bodin.

II Guests Welcomed

A. Public Comment

Chair Dave Nixon welcomed the guests and invited them to speak at tonight's meeting, although he reminded them after this section of the meeting, no other public discussion is allowed.

Although Duncan Berry serves as the Chair of the Harwich Planning Board, he spoke in support of the Historic Preservation 1 - Exterior Renovation of the Historic West Harwich Baptist Church Project as a resident and neighbor of the West Harwich Church. He cited many references from Donovan Rypkema's Economics of Historic Restoration: A Community Leader's Guide. Mr. Rypkema is an economist at University of Pennsylvania who has won the National Lifetime Award – The Crowninshield Award, the National Trust for Historic Preservation's highest honor. He offers 100 arguments for why community preservation, architectural preservation, community growth, and economic development go hand in hand. The book offers full documentation showing ways of how the return of investment from preservation and adaptive reuse over the last 50 years can impact economic growth and development in small towns and cities.

The primary economic argument for preservation is its financial benefit.

This National Trust Main Street approach to economic development strategy has been used in Sandwich, Falmouth, Nantucket, Boston, Charleston, SC., Santa Fe, NM, Galveston, TX and dozens of other towns. Local economic growth that's leveraged for each dollar invested in a Main Street program averages a 40 to 1 return on investment. Mr. Carey's requested \$665,000 comes out to about a .067% for a 40 x return.

If we look at this renovation of the Historic West Harwich Baptist Church project not as a cost, but what we will receive as a return of investment. This project is preserving something of cultural and historic significance, seeding the viability and vitality in a virtually dead village at this time. We are watching this area gradually breathing again with the West Harwich School building. In the first 24 hours, Mr. Carey received 40 applications for his new housing units.

Preservation work not only creates immediate jobs beyond traditional construction roles but also delivers medium- and long-term benefits. These include stimulating private investment, attracting new businesses, increasing property values and tax revenues, promoting compatible land use, and reducing deteriorated, low-revenue land usage—issues prevalent in West Harwich. Additionally, it drives direct local purchasing and fosters incremental, property-by-property reinvestment, a more sustainable approach to building a stable village economy over the next five years. Longterm for Captain's Row property values will increase. Over time neighboring properties take stock in what they own and can improve. Some of the structures on Captain Row won't make it as private dwellings, new uses for the structures will be created; that's growth.

The iconic Old Mill House property is open for sale. That's the most photographed house in Barnstable County. There are over 400 different postcards, and four different book covers. It is part of the Harwich brand. Our amazing historic properties in town are unique, and we cannot recreate their aura. We need to preserve them.

It makes economic and cultural sense to preserve this historic structure. It is a monument in town, a landmark in town for over 400 years, we should preserve it.

West Harwich resident Patty Twork spoke in support of the Historic Preservation 1 - Exterior Renovation of the Historic West Harwich Baptist Church Project. She offered she volunteers at an historic building in town and is thrilled that the opportunity again arose to provide the village of West Harwich and the entire town with a gorgeous restoration of this 1841 church building. Mr. Carey's restoration of the West Harwich School building is a model of careful planning and reuse of a historic structure that this church building restoration will be. She is thrilled that this building has the potential to provide space for so many different events and functions within this community of Harwich. She hopes the funds will be provided for this project.

TOWN OF HARWICH COMMUNITY PRESERVATION COMMITTEE

Community Preservation Committee Meeting 12.11.25. Page 2

Judith Ward spoke in support of the Historic Preservation 1 - Exterior Renovation of the Historic West Harwich Baptist Church Project. Her father was the minister of the First Baptist Church from 1956 to 1970 and remembers the church suppers where the community gathered and got to know one another. There are people excited about this restoration. People are getting involved. It would be a shame to tear it down. It is such a beautiful building with so much history. If we can invest in this building and invest in this town we could get to know each other, to see the community gathering again in this building, it would be worth the investment.

III Approval of Minutes

A. CPC Meeting Minutes of December 4, 2025.

A motion was made by Art Bodin, seconded by Mary Maslowski to approve the December 4, 2025 meeting minutes.

Vote: Chair Dave Nixon – Aye; Kathy Green – Aye; Mary Maslowski – Aye; John Ketchum - Aye; Marcy Vigneau – Aye; Emily Brutti – Aye; Art Bodin – Aye.

Motion passed unanimously.

IV New Business

A. 2025/2026 Project Presentations:

Presentations of 2025/2026 Community Preservation Act funding projects requests continues.

Eleven project applications were submitted this year. One application has been withdrawn.

Each Applicant will be given 5 minutes to present, followed by a 15-minute increment of time for discussion with Community Preservation Committee members.

REC 4 Diagnostic Assessment of Hinckley's Pond Project

Applicant: Harwich Natural Resources Department

Project Presenter: Amy Usowski Conservation Agent, Harwich Conservation Department

Project Representative: Stephanie Ridenour Director Harwich Natural Resources Department

Request: \$138,000

Power Point presentation

Amy Usowski, Harwich Conservation Agent, presented this project request for the Natural Resources Department Director Stephanie Ridenour, who couldn't attend tonight's meeting.

This diagnostic assessment project's \$138,000 request includes a 10 percent contingency. The project will analyze the water quality and sediment of Hinckley's Pond. Hinckley's is a glacial pond, averaging about 13 feet in depth. In 2012 the pond was studied. The study determined the water needed an alum treatment, which finally took place in 2019 using CPA funds. Amy reported that treatment was successful. But now new water quality issues have arisen. Last winter, in December, January, February, for the first time, there was a cyanobacteria bloom. The water quality has deteriorated. To address the current public health and safety issue of algae blooms and follow federal, state, and town regulations and permits, the Town must conduct an in-depth water quality and sediment assessment and develop a management plan accordingly. The Town is currently out of compliance with the Order of Conditions as regulated by the Conservation Commission for the alum treatment project and requires further monitoring to complete the 10-year plan from the original assessment.

We need to identify the issue. The Town doesn't have any data since 2021, except for water sampling. Blooms are harmful, putting the public and environmental health at risk. Until the assessment is done, the town cannot move forward.

This pond is a recreation and natural resource asset. It is part of the Herring Run, where clear water is a necessity, not just for the herring, but also for other wildlife in the area. There are inactive bogs around it. The application has many letters of support.

Following best practices and the procurement requirements, they did some research in who could conduct the assessment. U MASS Dartmouth responded to their inquiries and offered some points. The assessment would last about 1 ½ years. They would want to begin in late summer, early fall. They would test the sediment courses at different times of the year and at different levels of water depth. They would measure the stream flow monthly, survey the area, and investigate its plants and shellfish.

Amy offered she thought the analysis would provide the scientific results needed to create a watershed management plan, making suggestions on how to remediate the issue, then the Town will need to implement a treatment. Algae Blooms and water quality deterioration will continue. Nothing has been done since the alum treatment. The Town must conduct this project for public safety. It is the Town's responsibility to achieve regulatory compliance. They understand that CPA funds cannot be spent on maintenance, but the study would be looking into all the new parameters of this new issue.

The Town departments will look into grant funding in the spring.

TOWN OF HARWICH COMMUNITY PRESERVATION COMMITTEE

Community Preservation Committee Meeting 12.11.25. Page 3

When asked about fertilization restrictions in the area, Amy offered the Harwich Health Department and Harwich Conservation Commission have increased reaching out, providing educational workshops for public awareness on fertilizers and lawn runoff. She estimated that 30% of the issues probably comes from private contributors. They also need to evaluate stormwater runoff. It was noted there is an ADA compliant viewing area and a bathing access from the bike trail down to the pond.

HP 1 Exterior Renovation of the Historic West Harwich Baptist Church Project
Applicant: Friends of Harwich, INC. (A non-profit. Prior applicant: John Carey)
Project Representative: John Carey, Property Owner
Request: \$667,500

Video presentation. Handouts 2 pages – Budget and Phase 2 Budget

Mr. John Carey and his wife own the West Harwich Baptist Church as of November 2025. A requested change in the applicant for this project is the newly created non-profit Friends of Harwich, INC., (filed, paperwork included.) Instead of the town giving funds to a private individual, the funds will go to a non-profit, acting as a tenant.

Mr. Carey thanked those who attended this meeting and recognized the 170 people who attended the open houses at the church and contributed written letters of support.

Last fall, a demolition permit was pulled on the church, that's when Mr. and Mrs. Carey stepped up and through negotiations over the past year, got the building off demo list and acquired it. They are looking to partner with the Town to restore, preserve, and open the building again. This historical preservation CPA funding request is for Phase 2: Exterior Renovation of the church. This work is required to stabilize and preserve the structure the building's envelope against further deterioration and provide the foundation for the building. In the future, the plan is to use the building as the West Harwich Meetinghouse, a cultural and community gathering place for everyone to enjoy.

These proud, old churches represent who we are and what we value, the center of the communities, standing as a physical landmark and symbol of our town's heritage. This church is an historical resource, the crown jewel of Captain's Row. This parish was established in 1759. This building was built by veterans of the American Revolution, and later in 1871 the Sea Captains of Captain's Row improved and modernized it by adding a first floor. It has eleven stained-glass windows from France, a clock tower, a Paul Revere Bell, and a memorial marker on the front steps to commemorate four gentlemen that gave their lives for Harwich.

Harwich is gradually losing its character a little bit every year. In the Town Center, the 1888 Harwich Exchange Building is now gone because the Town didn't want to fund the historical preservation. The Belmont Hotel in West Harwich from the 1930's was sold to a private party who created townhomes and the Town lost an historical asset. Mr. Carey thinks this building is worth fighting for. The Commonwealth has already recognized the importance of Captain's Row corridor, committing \$17 million to roadway, sidewalk, and streetscape improvements. Mr. Carey would like to take this opportunity to invest in restoring this beautiful building. What will the Town get – refurbishment of this critical historical asset and revitalization in West Harwich commercially. The Town will hold a Historic Preservation Deed Restriction on the Church with a clause that the building cannot be torn down. The Careys will be donating land for a Sewer Pump Station for the Town. The church property will be added back to the tax rolls; first time since 1821. The town will not pay for the utilities, etc. It will be used by the community, a gathering spot to host events & concerts, arts and cultural performances. They will not be modeling the South Harwich Meeting House, but rather the Leavitt Theatre in Ogunquit, Maine. The church parish will continue to hold their Sunday services, retaining a 10-year lease. Event fees will go towards the building's ongoing upkeep.

Property Acquisition cost: \$403,000. Paid by the Careys this November. Phase 1: \$157,000 funded by the Careys, at this point is about 70% complete. This CPA funding request project is for Phase 2: Exterior Restoration, \$667,300, is scheduled to begin in fall 2026 and finish by May 2027. The Careys will not be paid; they will not take salaries or fees. (*Budget sheets provided. He has bids for the work listed.*) Phase 3: \$502,500 - they will be applying for grants, along with submitting paperwork for Federal and State tax credits. Contingent on Phases 1 & 2, they will be applying for 40% of the cost in State and Federal tax credits. Their experience in working on the West Harwich School House has given them the confidence they should be able to get these tax credits. The church will have the siding replaced, replicating the existing building style. The clock original faces will be refurbished. The estimate for the painting was questioned. A few years ago, the Brooks Free Library had historic restoration exterior work done and spent \$750,000 just for the painting. The Careys are requesting less than that for their whole project. How is the project going to get done for \$667,300? Mr. Carey offered since he is not the Town/government, he can get work done for a lot less. He has spoken to the painters, and they have given their bid in the budget. Mr. Carey has included \$25,000 contingency in the budget. Anything over that, the Careys will cover out of their own pockets.

He was asked about the sustainability of using this as a community event center. The South Harwich Meetinghouse is self-sustaining now. Can the Town accommodate another event center? Mr. Carey offered he has received inquiries about using the building in the

TOWN OF HARWICH COMMUNITY PRESERVATION COMMITTEE

Community Preservation Committee Meeting 12.11.25. Page 4

future for private functions, even a dance studio. Their business plan is to have 50 events a year, 2 events a week with a \$250 fee. The building will be available for community meetings.

The budget provided to the committee lists the substantial work items to improve the building's structure and exterior envelope. The budget was questioned; are the numbers too low? It was suggested that when working with antiques, you never know what you are going to find. Is this request enough to complete the job? The requested amount can't be increased if they run into unexpected issues. Mr. Carey said he is comfortable with the budget and will cover overages if needed.

An expert inspection confirmed the timber framing is of high quality though the wedges need to be replaced. The clock repair tradesman will donate his time. The windows can be repaired within the budgeted \$15,000. The windows will not be removed and sent to France for work. The bell was probably made by an apprentice of Paul Revere. Currently it is in a private garage. They are working on getting it returned. They plan to have the bell displayed for public view.

The Careys contacted the Harwich Water Department regarding donating land for a proposed sewer pump station. They will work together on the best land spot. 90% of the station will be underground, and a small building will be needed.

The cemetery behind the church will be maintained by the Town, but the ownership will be retained by the Careys. The Town doesn't want or need to own the cemetery. The Careys will improve the landscaping around the Church.

The Harwich Historic District & Historic Commission has voted in support historic preservation and restoration of the building. The project work will still need to be reviewed by the HDHC for approval of materials, parking, etc.

B. Rescinds: Vote to rescind open balances on the following completed projects:

- a. 2024 Annual Town Meeting - Article #35 South Harwich Gravestone Conservation Project, funded at \$23,000. Vote to Rescind \$3,500.

Chair Nixon asked if there was a motion on the 2024 Annual Town Meeting - Article #35 South Harwich Gravestone Conservation Project, funded at \$23,000. Vote to Rescind \$3,500? The motion was made by Mary Maslowski, seconded by Art Bodin.

Vote: Chair Dave Nixon – Aye; Kathy Green – Aye; Mary Maslowski – Aye; John Ketchum - Aye; Marcy Vigneau – Aye; Emily Brutti – Aye; Art Bodin – Aye.

Motion passed with unanimous vote.

- b. 2024 Annual Town Meeting - Article #25 Beach Automated External Defibrillator (AED) Acquisition, funded at \$39,000. Vote to Rescind \$18,502.

Chair Nixon asked if there was a motion on 2024 Annual Town Meeting - Article #25 Beach Automated External Defibrillator (AED) Acquisition, funded at \$39,000. Vote to Rescind \$18,502.06? So moved by Mary Maslowski, seconded by John Ketchum.

Vote: Chair Dave Nixon – Aye; Kathy Green – Aye; Mary Maslowski – Aye; John Ketchum - Aye; Marcy Vigneau – Aye; Emily Brutti – Aye; Art Bodin – Aye.

Motion passed with unanimous vote.

- c. 2024 Annual Town Meeting - Article #34 Senior Memorial Softball Field Fencing Project, funded at \$110,000. Vote to Rescind \$54,300.

Chair Nixon asked if there was a motion on the 2024 Annual Town Meeting - Article #34 Senior Memorial Softball Field Fencing Project, funded at \$110,000. Vote to Rescind \$54,300. So moved by Marcy Vigneau, seconded by Art Bodin.

Vote: Chair Dave Nixon – Aye; Kathy Green – Aye; Mary Maslowski – Aye; John Ketchum - Aye; Marcy Vigneau – Aye; Emily Brutti – Aye; Art Bodin – Aye.

Motion passed with unanimous vote.

C. Discussion and vote: Motion to reconsider the June 12, 2025 CPC Meeting Vote to Rescind: 2023 Annual Town Meeting, Article #31, Senior Memorial Field Restroom Project, \$150,000. Open balance is \$143,740, not \$150,000.

Postponed until the committee receives the project's financial report, including debits and credits, from the Harwich Financial Director.

We will request a detailed financial report with the projects' debits and credits included. The MUNIS reports don't reflect everything we need. We will revisit accounts in January.

V Old Business

- A. Update: Social media/Facebook – Emily reported there has been no change since her report last week.

**TOWN OF HARWICH
COMMUNITY PRESERVATION COMMITTEE**

Community Preservation Committee Meeting 12.11.25. Page 5

B. Update: Website and Application – It was agreed that an application's letters of support are not a part of the application, but rather supplemental material. They will be attached to the online application if received on/before December 1st. The application guidelines specify that all supporting material must be submitted by Dec. 1st. A project's support letters received after Dec. 1, 2025 will be available online.

C. Update: Signs – Kathy presented the new sign sample. The committee approved. This sign design will mark many prior Open Space projects funded with CPA monies. Because many of these projects are on Harwich Conservation Trust sites, the signs would avoid the town's sign approval process. These signs will highlight where taxpayer funds have been invested throughout the town. Kathy will speak to HCT Executive Director Mike Lach about posting the signs. Each sign is about \$50-\$55. Kathy will order 10 signs for now and future postings. Kathy volunteered to continue working on the signs for the other CPA funding categories and report back.

VI Other: Dave will again request our Financial Report from the new Finance Director.

VII Next meeting's Agenda points – January 8, 2026: Start discussion and possible voting on project funding requests. We hope we will have the needed financial numbers to be able to begin.

VIII Adjournment: A motion was made by Mary Maslowski, seconded by John Ketchum, to adjourn. Motion passed with unanimous vote.

Adjourned 7:44 PM.