

Barnstable County Economic Development Council (BCEDC) Grants Committee

DRAFT Minutes | December 18, 2024 at 1:30pm.

Meeting Room Location

Held virtually via Zoom at capecodcommission.org/bcedc/join

This meeting was held virtually on Zoom.

Attendance/Roll Call

Member

Attendance

Greg Bilezikian

Present

Kara Galvin

Present

Robert Talerman

Present

Cape Cod Commission Staff Present

Kristy Senatori

Executive Director

Erin Perry

Deputy Director

Chloe Schaefer

Chief Planner

Cory Murray

Community Development Planner

Fiscal Year 2025 Barnstable County License Plate Grant Review

Chloe Schaefer, Chief Planner of the Cape Cod Commission, presented an overview of the Fiscal Year 2025 Barnstable County License Plate Grant applications. Ms. Schaefer explained that approximately \$300,000 is available for prospective grants and reminded committee members of the two categories of grants – a micro grant program for grants up to \$25,000, with a 1-year timeline, and a major grant program for grants up to \$150,000, with up to a 3-year timeline. For the FY25 round of applications, 9 micro grants and 9 major grants were submitted.

Members engaged in a detailed discussion about the grant applications and emphasized the need to ensure that projects align with the strategic priorities outlined in the 2024 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS).

The Association to Preserve Cape Cod requested \$150,000 to support the Native Plant Growers Cooperative of Cape Cod, to ensure demand for native plants is met by local growers. There was consensus amongst the committee that the proposal was high quality and well thought out, demonstrating strong connections to many aspects of the CEDS. Members noted the significant



matching funds proposed and agreed to further consider it for funding, potentially at a reduced amount.

Cape Cod Children's Place requested \$30,000 to support the Wellspring project, which equips professionals with skills and evidence-based tools to address the complex needs of children and families, promoting a sustainable, year-round workforce. Committee members reflected positively on the application, particularly for its connection to workforce training. Members agreed to further consider the project for funding but wanted clarification on whether the project could still be completed if the government funding referenced in the proposal is not provided.

The Cape Cod Culinary Incubator requested \$53,700 to create a "Grow to Market" program, providing food entrepreneurs with skills and knowledge to equip them for the "business of food business." The committee did not recommend funding, in part because it did not appear to address regional needs in the way many of the other proposals did.

The Homeless Prevention Council's (HPC) requested \$25,000 to provide tools, resources, and guidance to help Lower and Outer Cape residents preserve their housing and attain financial independence through HPC's Personalized Case Management program and REACH Project. Members agreed to further consider the application for funding given the essential services it provides.

The Housing Assistance Corporation (HAC) requested \$150,000 to support "Rent 365", a program designed to increase year-round rental opportunities on Cape Cod. Kara Galvin recused herself from discussing the application given her role on the HAC Board. Members agreed the project addresses a critical regional need and that the funding could be effectively utilized. They agreed to further consider it for funding, potentially at a reduced amount.

The Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe requested \$150,000 to expand its broadband infrastructure. The project aims to deliver fast, reliable, and affordable internet to non-tribal homes and businesses in alignment with the Tribe's commitment to community connectivity. Members commended the application for its connection to social services and appreciated the approach of advancing the goals of the Tribe while providing a critical service to the surrounding community, and noted these funds would help leverage other funds to create a sustainable broadband network and service provider. Members agreed to further consider the proposal for funding, potentially at a reduced amount.

Open Cape requested \$150,000 to support strategically expanding high-speed internet connectivity by extending OpenCape's network to underserved and remote business locales and providing connection subsidies. Members agreed the proposal addresses a critical infrastructure need, but it was also noted that the proposal didn't clearly articulate how the businesses receiving subsidies would be identified. They also discussed the need to fund a variety of projects and there was already another potential broadband project they wanted to consider funding. The committee did not recommend funding it.

The Cordial Eye Gallery and Artist Space Inc requested \$32,500 to support the Creative Futures Cape Cod program, providing 1-1 mentorship, a cohort-based curriculum, access to free artist studio space, and a stipend for all participants. Members commended the proposal for its inclusivity and community engagement. They agreed to further consider it for funding, potentially at a reduced amount.



The Truro Center for the Arts at Castle Hill requested \$125,000 to renovate a newly acquired 2-car garage into a handicapped accessible year-round art gallery and studio space to showcase regional and local artists. Members commented that this is a strong project, but expressed concern about dedicating the funding requested, in part due to the fact that its impacts seemed more narrow and less regional than other projects. The committee did not recommend funding it.

Amplify POC requested \$25,000 to scale up business trainings, technical assistance, and access to capital for people of color-owned businesses on Cape Cod. Members appreciated the inclusivity and alignment with community needs and regional priorities. The committee agreed to further consider it for funding, potentially at a reduced amount.

The Arts Foundation of Cape Cod requested \$19,500 to support the Creative Exchange Program, a personal and professional development program for all who work in the arts sector. Members recognized the organization for its contributions to the arts community and regional economic vitality. They noted the Foundation's diverse funding sources and agreed to further consider funding the proposal at a reduced amount.

Cape Cod Community College requested \$25,000 to support the Equity Leaders: Building Inclusive Workplaces on Cape Cod program, which offers sector-specific DEISJ and DEIB training. Members acknowledged that this work is of great value and that the proposal was well thought out. Members agreed to further consider it for funding, potentially at a reduced amount.

Entrepreneurship for All (EforAll) Cape Cod requested \$25,000 to support the 2025 Spring and Fall business accelerators which provide aspiring entrepreneurs with business education, dedicated mentorship, and cash prizes to turn their ideas into local ventures. Members broadly supported this effort and noted EforAll's demonstrated success and established program. They noted the organization can leverage other funding sources and agreed to further consider it for funding at a reduced amount.

Falmouth Bike Lab requested \$3,000 to support their operations. They are an all-volunteer non-profit that receives donated bicycles, refurbishes them and gives them away to anyone desiring a bike. Included are a helmet, safety lights and a high-visibility vest. Members expressed appreciation for the project and community impact; however, noted that it was a lower priority when compared to the other requests and other funding sources may be available, and ultimately agreed not to further consider it for funding.

Love Live Local requested \$25,000 to support the Retail Incubator program, which offers entrepreneurs a low-risk platform to test products, refine offerings, and gain valuable market insights, and the free Boost Your Brand Workshops which equip small businesses, especially women-owned and BIPOC-owned, with essential branding and marketing skills. Members expressed strong support due to its alignment with regional economic development goals, particularly around entrepreneurship and inclusivity. Members praised the organization's focus on supporting local businesses agreed to further consider it for funding at a reduced amount.

The Marine Biological Laboratory (MBL) requested \$24,922 for engineering design for a nature-based resiliency solution at MBL's Stoney Beach. Members appreciated the project's contributions to



infrastructure and environmental goals but noted its lack of broader regional impact. They also noted other funding programs that may be available to fund these kinds of efforts. The committee agreed not to recommend it for funding.

SK8capecod LLC requested \$2,000 to build a stock of rental skates to create pop-up roller skate events in the community for year-round activities and create partnerships for economic growth. Members appreciated this submission as a unique, grassroots effort; however, noted that it was a lower priority when compared to the other requests given its likely impacts and ultimately agreed not to consider it for funding.

The Town of Orleans requested \$20,000 to engage the resident and business community in East Orleans and produce recommendations for zoning modifications, streetscape, and placemaking improvements to support existing and new businesses and expand its year-round potential. Members noted the local nature of the project and suggested it will not have a broader regional impact. The committee agreed not to further consider it for funding.

Given the many proposals received and the limited funding available, members requested that staff gather some additional information regarding the ability of applicants to complete work should funding less than what was requested be awarded. The members discussed the need to ensure that if projects receive partial funding, they would still be able to meet their objectives. Members agreed to meet again in the new year to revisit proposals, with the goal of balancing allocation of funds and identifying those with the greatest potential for impactful outcomes.

Adjourn

Upon a motion by Bert Talerma, seconded Greg Bilezikian, the meeting adjourned with a roll call vote at 2:42pm. Galvin, yes; Bilezikian, yes; Talerma, yes.