



TOWN OF NORTHBOROUGH Community Preservation Committee

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Approved 1-15-09

Meeting Minutes Community Preservation Committee October 23, 2008

Members Present: Tom Sartori; Joan Clowes; Jane Fletcher; Robert Rosenberg; Don Haitsma; Andy Clark

Members Excused: John Campbell, Chairman; Todd Helwig; Chris Kellogg

Others Present: Kathy Joubert, Town Planner; Elaine Rowe, Board Secretary; June Hubbard-Ward, Town Treasurer/Collector; Norm Corbin, Historical Commission; Kathleen Polanowicz, Housing Corporation; Lynne Giblin, Housing Authority; Charlie Bradley; Northborough Trails Committee; Sean Durkin and John Farrell; Northborough Baseball Association

Members of the Committee convened in the Town Hall parking lot at 7:00PM to view the “gator” vehicle purchased by the Fire Department using CPA funds.

Tom Sartori called the meeting to order at 7:15PM.

Tom Sartori voiced appreciation for John Campbell’s efforts and the successful outcome at the 2008 Town Meeting.

Discussion with Town Treasurer regarding CPA Funds: June Hubbard-Ward distributed copies of a spreadsheet that she had prepared for tracking CPA funds. She noted that there had been some confusion in the early stages of the CPA as to how to reserve the funds. Applications are funded based on anticipated revenues from the town and the match from the state. Ms. Hubbard-Ward explained that the committee is responsible for estimating the amount of revenue that will come into the CPA fund, and noted that this revenue is decreasing. She explained that the state match for FY09 is 67.62% but is estimated to be only 35% in 2010. The CPC will use the anticipated revenue amount of \$370,000 plus an anticipated 35% match from the State of \$129,500 for the FY2010 applications to be approved at the 2009 Annual Town Meeting.

Ms. Hubbard-Ward explained that the bottom portion of the spreadsheet shows reserves and the undesignated fund balance. She explained that we are currently in good shape, but given the expected decline in these revenues going forward, she cautioned the committee to act conservatively and not overspend.

Ms. Joubert explained that the spreadsheet was produced to assist the town with compliance with some new reporting requirements from the Department of Revenue.

As of 10/23/08 available reserve & fund balances are as follows: open space reserve = \$257,813; housing reserve = \$32,813; historic reserve = \$182,813; and unreserved fund balance = \$113,961.

Mr. Sartori asked about the administrative fund balance. Ms. Hubbard-Ward noted that this is part of the undesignated balance. Ms. Joubert explained that unused monies from the administrative fund go back into the CPA fund every year as undesignated/unreserved funds. The CPC can ask Town Meeting to move up to 5% back into the administrative fund. She also noted that there will be approximately \$5000 in appraisal costs to come out of the administrative fund this year. In addition, the administrative fund covers payroll costs for the board secretary.

Mr. Rosenberg asked about whether money has actually been disbursed for any of the projects. Ms. Joubert agreed to prepare a report detailing that for the next meeting. Mr. Rosenberg suggested that the CPA books be closed out from year to year. Ms. Hubbard-Ward agreed that this is done annually.

Status Reports

Historic Preservation:

Norm Corbin discussed the Historical Preservation project that is currently underway. He explained that Phase 1 of the project, which was funded in April of 2006, is now complete and fully paid for. He noted that Phase 1 involved the research and inventory of 148 historical properties, with some being recommended as properties to consider for the National Registry.

In discussing Phase 2 of the project, Mr. Corbin noted that it was started later than originally planned. He explained that the Historical Commission has contracted with a different company for the Phase 2 work, and they are working now to identify the properties to be inventoried.

Mr. Corbin also noted that signage for the Historical District has been ordered and should arrive within a couple of weeks. He distributed a copy of the sign design, and noted that they will be white signs with black lettering. He explained that there will be two signs posted on Church Street, one on Howard Street and one on Whitney Street to identify the boundaries of the Historical District. Mr. Sartori asked who will be responsible for installing the signs. Mr. Corbin explained that the DPW will handle this task, and voiced his assumption that the signs will be placed on town property.

Mr. Clark asked why the original company was replaced, since it appeared that the Commission was pleased with their work last year. Mr. Corbin explained that the members of the commission felt that the new company would do a more thorough job. Though the original company had met the state requirements, the Commission would have liked them to include more historical data in their reporting.

Mr. Sartori asked where the survey reports can be viewed. Mr. Corbin noted that the survey was first turned into the State Historical Commission, with an additional paper and electronic copy retained by the Northborough Historical Commission who will eventually make them available online.

Town Hall Gym Floor:

Ms. Joubert noted that this project is not proceeding as fast as the town would have hoped, and further updates will be provided to the board as information becomes available.

Trails:

Charlie Bradley explained that the past month had been extremely busy for the Trails Committee. He noted the completion of the Coyote Trail, which now runs all the way from the Yellick property, across the Assabet River and out to Boundary Street. Mr. Bradley also stated that work has begun on the trail which runs from Route 20, through the High School property and out to Bartlett Street where you can then pick up the Cedar Hill trails network. He also noted that, with completion of these trails, there will be a nice trail loop on the eastern part of town. The Trails Committee plans to begin repair work on some of the existing trails once construction of the high school trail is completed.

Town Records Preservation:

Ms. Joubert reminded the committee that this is to be a three-year project, primarily because the Town Clerk does not want to have all of the materials out of his office at the same time. She noted that the bids have been reconfirmed and the project is expected to get started in approximately one month.

Mr. Rosenberg asked about the status of the bid for the steam pipe repair. Ms. Joubert was uncertain as to whether this has been put out for bid yet.

Jane Fletcher stated that the work at the Historical Society is nearly finished. She noted that there was a nice article about the project in the Record, which mentioned the use of CPA funds for this work. Mr. Sartori asked how the budget worked out. Ms. Fletcher stated that the project was very costly, and that the Historical Society had to provide additional funds of their own. Mr. Sartori asked if there has been any impact to the usage of the building. Ms. Fletcher explained that the work had only been completed this week. Ms. Joubert confirmed that the CPA funds have already been disbursed for this project.

Ms. Joubert noted that the library renovation appears to be moving along, but she has yet to see any bills for it so she is not sure where they stand.

Open Space Committee:

Ms. Joubert explained that the Open Space Committee has been working with the Sudbury Valley Trustees (SVT) and John Schunder for his property on Green Street. She noted that Mr. Schunder is interested in moving forward, and a contract for the appraisal has been signed. Ms. Joubert stated the Open Space Committee was disappointed that the Druan property on Green Street, which was of high interest to the Open Space Committee, was recently sold.

Mr. Rosenberg asked how much progress can be made with regard to the Schunder land without John's brother being available/involved. Ms. Joubert explained that this Committee had previously agreed to fund the cost of the appraisal and, once we know the figure, we can then start talking about protection, including whether it should be done as out-right open space, a conservation restriction, and/or if any portion of the parcel is to be developed.

Housing Corporation

Kathleen Polanowicz and Lynn Giblin provided a brief update on the actions of the Housing Corporation and Housing Authority. Ms. Polanowicz noted that the CPC had approved funding for the reorganization of the Housing Corporation and that documents that were drafted by the attorney are under review. The Housing Corporation has also contracted with Ms. Giblin for administrative support. Ms. Polanowicz noted that the Housing Corporation is looking for contractors, inspectors, and other real estate professionals to assist them in their efforts.

Ms. Giblin discussed properties of interest to the Housing Authority. She noted that the unit at Hitching Post Lane is still tied up in legal issues and the DHCD is trying to get involved, but it is her understanding that it could be a lengthy process. She also noted that the Authority is looking into different options for affordable housing, including properties at 23 Whitney Street and 16 Hudson Street.

Ms. Polanowicz explained that the Housing Authority would like to have a reputable contractor provide ideas and a cost estimate for what could be done to the building on Whitney Street. She also noted that there is a small parcel of land across from the Senior Center where it might be possible to construct a unit. In addition, the existing Senior Center will eventually come back to the Housing Authority, and it may be feasible to convert it into two of four additional units.

Ms. Polanowicz discussed the old Fire Station, which she recently learned is not restorable and will need to be demolished. She noted that there are several possibilities that can be pursued, but that funding is limited. She explained that the CPC funds that were provided have been put in an interest bearing account, and liability insurance has been acquired for the Housing Corporation.

Mr. Sartori questioned the status of the CPC funds, and asked how the warrant article was written. Ms. Polanowicz noted that the article was written fairly open, without referencing a specific property. Mr. Rosenberg asked if the funds have been transferred to the Housing Corporation. Ms. Joubert confirmed that they have. Mr. Sartori asked if the Housing Corporation is confident that all administrative procedures

are now in place to allow them to legally move on a property that might become available. Ms. Polanowicz confirmed that they are.

Lincoln Street fields:

John Farrell & Sean Durkin discussed work that had been done on the fields behind the Melican Middle School. Mr. Sartori asked Mr. Durkin to submit an invoice for his work on the lighting of the flagpole.

Mr. Farrell, who was recently elected President of Northborough Baseball, discussed improvements to the Melican Middle School field that included the upgrade of the fields, installation of an irrigation system, and sinking of some wells. He noted that this became a two-year project, primarily because of some hydro-fracturing work that was needed on the wells. He stated that, as of July 2008, the project was completed and the irrigation system was up and running. Between the irrigation system, the weather, and the fertilization program, there have been some dramatic results thus far. He indicated that feedback from the various programs that use the fields has been extremely positive, and all groups are very thankful.

Ms. Clowes asked if any grading was necessary. Mr. Durkin explained that the town had tried to install a stone swale, but there are still issues with water at times. Mr. Durkin noted that he had also moved some pipes that were obstructing use and was able to gain the use of almost another entire field. He also stated that, since the field can now be mowed, it tends to stay drier than before.

Mr. Farrell noted that having other fields available for use was very helpful for completing this project. He also stated that the project was \$6,000 over budget, mainly because of the hydro-fracing that was needed.

Mr. Sartori thanked Mr. Farrell and Mr. Durkin for the budget breakdown that was provided, and noted that having legitimate numbers is helpful for the Committee to get a sense for what things really cost. He also noted that the transformation of the Middle School fields is quite remarkable, and extended his appreciation for a well done project. Mr. Durkin thanked Mr. Sartori for his support and efforts as well. Mr. Rosenberg commented about the cooperative effort involved with this project, and voiced his opinion that this was a great use of CPA funds.

Ms. Joubert asked if the fields at the elementary schools are still used. Mr. Durkin noted that he had done work on the lower Peaslee field and the small fields at Lincoln Street School were done by Dan Polanowicz for his Eagle project. He commented that the upper Peaslee field is a good example of what happens when a field is over-used. Ms. Joubert asked if the schools are considering submission of applications to restore some of their fields. Mr. Durkin explained that the upper Peaslee field is not used by the school on a daily basis. He also noted that it would need to be completely re-graded before any other work would be effective. Mr. Farrell voiced his opinion that the lower Peaslee field would be a good location for an irrigation system.

Meeting Schedule 2008-2009:

Ms. Joubert noted that the CPC met on the fourth Thursday of the month last year. Since CPC applications are not due until December 1st, it was agreed that there was no need for a November meeting. Members of the Committee agreed that their next meeting would be on December 4, 2008, at which time they will set the remainder of the schedule. Ms. Joubert agreed, and noted that she has some old meeting minutes that need to be approved at the next meeting.

Mr. Sartori suggested that, as funded projects get completed, the CPC should consider posting signs indicating they were funded with CPA funds. Mr. Clark stated that the Committee could get some good-sized silk screened signs for little money, but noted that a more significant sign or plaque might be more appropriate for some of the larger projects. Mr. Sartori asked Mr. Clark to give some thought to signage ideas. Mr. Clark agreed to bring some sign ideas to the next meeting.

Adjourned at 8:30PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Elaine Rowe
Board Secretary