



Approved 2-12-09

**Community Preservation Committee
Meeting Minutes
January 15, 2009**

Members Present: John Campbell, Chairman; Todd Helwig; Robert Rosenberg; Don Haitzma; Tom Sartori; Jane Fletcher; Andy Clark; Chris Kellogg

Members Excused: Joan Clowes

Others Present: Kathy Joubert, Town Planner; Elaine Rowe, Board Secretary; Andy Dowd, Town Clerk; Charlie Bradley, Northborough Trails Committee; Jeff Amberson, Board of Selectmen; Alison Lane, Recreation Director; Robert Kimball; Sean Durkin; Rick Leif, Lynn Giblin

Chairman Campbell called the meeting to order at 7:04PM.

Consideration of Minutes of the Meeting for October 23, 2008 and December 4, 2008 - Chris Kellogg made a motion to accept the Minutes of the October 23, 2008 and December 4, 2008 meetings as written. Robert Rosenberg seconded, vote unanimous.

Public Hearing to consider 2009 CPC Applications

Town Clerk, Historic Records Preservation – Andy Dowd, Town Clerk, discussed his application, which he noted is a continuation of the request made last year for preservation of the town's historic records. He thanked the committee members for the \$35,000 awarded last year, and stated that the first batch of records from the archives was sent to the vendor two weeks ago.

Mr. Dowd explained that he is back with the second of three requests for funds to continue the restoration process. He noted that the scanning of the documents is expensive, but that it is most efficient to do this while the books are apart for the restoration work. He also noted that, when the work is completed, the vendor will return to the town newly bound books with preserved pages and a disc with scanned copies of all pages.

Mr. Sartori asked how far chronologically Phase 1 will get through. Mr. Dowd explained that the records are not being done chronologically. He explained that the first batch he sent included the town's oldest book along with a mixture of years. This will help him better evaluate the work and get a good feel for the vendor's process. He explained that even the most recent records will be included, as they need to be preserved to prevent future damage.

Mr. Rosenberg asked Mr. Dowd whether the original estimate will cover all that needs to be done. Mr. Dowd stated that the vendor has committed to staying within the estimate provided for Phase 1, but if costs should go up as we move forward, the town will pick only the most important elements to do in order to stay within the budget.

Recreation Department, Gym Floor - Allie Lane, Recreation Director, explained that she is back seeking additional funding for replacement of the Town Hall gym floor. She noted that she was awarded \$52,500 in 2007, but it was later determined that there was an issue with a leaking pipe under the floor. She reminded the members that she had come back to the board and was given permission to use the funds to address the problem with the pipe, and that work will be starting within the next week or so. Ms. Lane distributed information about the expenditures for the original \$52,500, which included \$8,000 for bid preparation by RDK and \$39,777 for the repair work on the pipe. She noted that there will be \$3,874 remaining once the pipe work is completed.

Ms. Lane stated that she is seeking \$86,250 this year in order to replace the gym floor next year. She explained that the price is considerably higher because of cost increases and the prevailing wage requirement, which the original quotes did not take into consideration.

Sean Durkin explained that none of the vendors would give assurances on any of their work unless the moisture problem was resolved. Mr. Campbell asked Ms. Lane how many bids she now has for the floor replacement work. Ms. Lane stated that she has no formal bids, but that RDK had provided her with a rough estimate of \$86,250. She also noted that, if the application is funded, RDK will put the work out for bid and will obtain multiple quotes. Mr. Campbell recalled that the board had encouraged Ms. Lane to get official bids. Ms. Lane explained that she did not have the money to pay RDK to put together the bid packet. Mr. Campbell asked if the \$86,250 estimate includes the cost to do the bid as well as the floor. Ms. Lane confirmed that it does. Mr. Campbell voiced his opinion that the bid preparation cost and the cost to repair the pipe seem outrageous.

Mr. Amberson asked how many bids were obtained for the pipe repair. Ms. Lane indicated that she received only one. Mr. Durkin explained that they had obtained other proposals on how to address the problem, but that they were more costly.

Mr. Campbell asked about timing for the work. Ms. Lane stated that the work will take approximately three weeks to complete, and she would like have it done during the summer months in 2009 since that is when usage is low. Mr. Campbell commented that it would be better for the board to consider what the real cost will be based on a formal bid. Mr. Kellogg suggested that the board could use monies from the administrative fund to pay RDK to put together the bid packet. Mr. Campbell reiterated his desire for a more concrete figure, especially since the board had originally been told this work could be done at cost of \$50,000. Mr. Kellogg voiced his understanding the pipe repair will solve the moisture problem, and asked if the unevenness of the floor is impacting use. Ms. Lane stated that the floor is rippled throughout, with the worst section being the area beneath the hoop. She also stated that the main concern is with the nails popping up through the floor, which is a serious safety concern. Given the variety of programs using the gym, it is critical that the floor be replaced.

Mr. Campbell commented that there is a dramatic difference between what was first approved, and he would be more comfortable if the board were working with a more realistic price target. Mr. Kellogg agreed that it would be advantageous to obtain a bid now, but Ms. Joubert explained that it is difficult to get a vendor to bid on a municipal project that is not funded.

Mr. Rosenberg noted that the replacement of the bleachers does not appear to be included in the application. Ms. Lane stated that the DPW has agreed to do the demolition and removal of the existing bleachers, and Northborough Youth Basketball has agreed to cover the cost of the new bleachers. Mr. Rosenberg indicated that he would like the application to reflect that other groups are committing to funding portions of the project, and suggested that Ms. Lane obtain a

letter from Northborough Youth Basketball confirming their agreement. Ms. Lane agreed to do so.

Northborough Trails Committee - Charlie Bradley thanked the Committee members for their support of last year's request for funding, and provided an annual report showing how those funds were used. He noted that there is a balance of \$3861.23 in their CPA account, minus approximately \$400 for two picnic tables for the Coyote Trail that have been installed but not yet billed.

Mr. Bradley explained that he is seeking funding for two items this year. The first is a request for \$5,000 in general funding for new trails development and though there are not yet any specific trails planned, there are several prospects. Mr. Bradley noted that having a bank of money allows the Trails Committee to act as soon as a trail is identified. He also noted that a significant amount of the CPC fund was used to cover costs for a bridge to cross Stirrup Brook on the Algonquin trail.

Mr. Bradley explained that the second part of his application relates to funding to implement an MP3 program for Edmunds Hill Woods. He explained that Forest Lyford has narrated a historical presentation that can be downloaded onto MP3 players for use while hiking the property, and the funds will help with acquisition of additional MP3 players, to be made available to the public at the library.

Mr. Campbell asked about any specific areas that the Trails Committee may be considering. Mr. Bradley explained that they are looking at some additional DCR properties.

Open Space Committee – Charlie Bradley noted that there were two applications submitted by the Open Space Committee. The first was for \$1.25 million for land acquisition, which the committee is respectfully withdrawing. Mr. Bradley explained that this request was to fund the acquisition of a parcel that has been of interest for a number of years. In the process of moving forward on an agreement, the committee encountered some issues that will need to be resolved, but they anticipate they will be resubmitting next year. Mr. Bradley also indicated that the Open Space Committee plans to pursue land grant opportunities with the state, in hopes of getting up to \$500,000 to put towards this parcel. He explained that the landowner is seeking \$1.5 million for the property, which the Committee hopes to be able to cover using monies from the Conservation fund, Open Space reserves, land grants, and with additional funding assistance from the Sudbury Valley Trustees (SVT). He noted that they are moving forward in a positive direction, and reiterated the Committee's intent to pursue CPC funds next year.

Mr. Bradley explained that the second application is for \$300,000 for open space preservation. He explained that there was some mystery in previous years about what the Open Space Committee (OSC) was seeking these funds for, and noted that they are actively pursuing a 19 acre parcel in close proximity to the Mount Pisgah property. He indicated that a Purchase & Sale agreement is already in place and stated that securing this \$300,000 would be an important step toward the \$1.5 million goal and would help solidify the deal. He reiterated the importance of having funds in reserve to effectively pursue land that may become available.

Mr. Campbell explained that the OSC had conducted a mailing campaign and has established goals for 2008, which include focusing on specific parcels and pursuing land grants with SVT to build towards a fund of \$1 million.

Mr. Rosenberg noted that the Trails Committee is building and maintaining trails and asked how the regulations about the use of CPC funds is restricting the Trails Committee's ability to

function effectively. Mr. Bradley noted that CPA funds can only be used for the creation of trails, so he separates out any maintenance items to ensure that they are funded through other means. He explained that he works closely with Ms. Joubert to ensure that we comply with the spirit of CPA funding. Ms. Joubert commented that the majority of our current trails are on state or private land. Mr. Rosenberg voiced his understanding that if land is purchased entirely with CPA funds, trails can then be created on that land and maintained using CPA funds.

Affordable Housing Corporation – Robert Kimball discussed the reorganization of the Affordable Housing Corporation after a period of dormancy. He noted that the Northborough Housing Authority is somewhat limited in their abilities because they are controlled by the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD), but as a private entity the Housing Corporation will have more flexibility to be able to acquire and sell properties and work to further support the efforts of the Housing Authority. Mr. Kimball noted that there were two properties discussed with the CPC last year, both of which were part of our affordable housing inventory. He explained that, over the course of a few years, those units were put in jeopardy because the owners and/or lenders violated the affordable housing restrictions. At this point, the Housing Corporation is seeking to find ways to move these properties back into use as affordable units, but this will take some time and effort.

Mr. Kimball also discussed the Senior Center on Centre Drive. With the completion of the new Senior Center on Colburn Street later this year, the existing Senior Center will become the property of the Housing Authority who is proposing to convert the building into additional senior housing units. Mr. Kimball explained that the Housing Corporation is seeking to assist with this project, and has contacted the DHCD for input and assistance.

Mr. Kimball spoke about an additional property in town, currently up for foreclosure, that could be converted to a duplex to provide additional housing units for the town.

Mr. Kimball explained that the Corporation is seeking \$300,000 to enable them to provide funds for the purchase of available units or to assist with the conversion of the Senior Center. Mr. Campbell asked Mr. Kimball what the Housing Corporation believes are the more viable targets to create additional units, and how they would compare to the two condominium units at Hitching Post Lane. Mr. Kimball expressed a primary interest in obtaining the two condominium units if they should become available. He stated that the Senior Center would be the second priority.

Mr. Helwig suggested that, since there is no guarantee that anything will happen with the two condominium units, the funds should be used for the purchase of the more imminent foreclosure property. Mr. Leif voiced his understanding that the corporation would consider another opportunity should one present itself, but will continue to pursue the condominium units until that time.

Mr. Sartori voiced his understanding that the creation of the Housing Partnership allows them to buy properties as they see fit without having to come to this Committee for approval. He also expressed his opinion that it would be more prudent to invest our resources in something that we can control, such as the Senior Center. Mr. Leif noted that the Senior Center will not address the non-senior housing needs in town. As there is a need for both senior and family housing, the housing groups in town are looking to move toward both. Mr. Sartori commented that shovel-ready projects are more apt to get the funding. Mr. Helwig mentioned that other towns are using their funding to provide down-payment and rental assistance to eligible residents.

Mr. Leif noted that some projects could be used to generate a revenue stream for the Housing Corporation to use towards other projects. Ms. Giblin stated that the town should be able to get 2 or 3 units in the Senior Center, but she anticipates it will cost a minimum of \$400,000. Mr. Rosenberg asked if the newly created units proposed for the Senior Center would be restricted as Senior Housing. Ms. Joubert confirmed that they will be.

Housing Partnership – Rick Leif discussed his group’s request for funding for a housing needs analysis that was turned down last year. He noted that, since last year, the group has developed a working relationship with both the Housing Corporation and Housing Authority. He explained that the Partnership had also requested maps of all town-owned parcels to determine potential opportunities for development of housing on town-owned land or in town buildings.

Mr. Leif also noted that his group had worked through a couple of grant proposals, but they were not successful. He voiced his opinion that the grant programs are funding those towns that have better plans already identified, and he believes we would be in a better position to secure grants if we had a housing needs analysis in hand.

Ms. Joubert stated that she had surveyed a variety of housing planners and town planners, all of whom have been funded for an initial housing needs analysis, which serves as the blueprint for the Housing Partnership and Housing Corporation to work from.

Mr. Campbell asked Mr. Leif if the consultant would work independently to provide a report or work with the partnership. Mr. Leif indicated that they would work jointly, but that there will also be some independent work by consultant. Mr. Campbell asked if a greater need for a needs analysis has been identified over the past year, given the progress of the Corporation and the Partnership. Mr. Leif noted that the need is the same, but we now also realize that it is harder to get outside funding without one. Mr. Campbell asked if the group could get a sufficient result for less money. Ms. Joubert stated that she had contacted a variety of consultants that were recommended by the state, Mass Housing Partnership and CHAPA, and they all indicated that an adequate study would cost between \$18,000 and \$22,000. Mr. Campbell asked about the lead time for the study, which Ms. Joubert indicated will take approximately 6 months. Mr. Campbell asked if we have an example of a deliverable from another community to get a better idea of what we will be getting. Mr. Helwig questioned if we couldn’t simply use an analysis from a similar town, and voiced his opinion that we already know our housing needs.

Mr. Kellogg suggested that the Committee authorize the use of \$20,000 from the administrative fund for the housing needs analysis. Ms. Joubert suggested that the Committee members consider awarding half of the requested funding tonight and then take the remainder out of next year’s administrative fund. Mr. Rosenberg questioned whether funds moved into the Housing Corporation’s account at Town Meeting can later be reallocated to the Housing Reserve fund by a subsequent Town Meeting vote. Mr. Campbell commented that, if the Committee is honest about our intentions, it should hold to its decisions. Mr. Helwig asked if any money awarded to the Housing Corporation is theirs to use at they see fit. Mr. Campbell suggested that the warrant articles be written to be more specific about the approved use of the funds. Mr. Rosenberg asked if the CPC has the authority to recall funds that were previously awarded and reallocate them as appropriate. He voiced his opinion that it would be helpful to know whether this is possible.

Mr. Sartori asked if the Committee can get more finite information about how much money they will have to spend. Ms. Joubert stated that the Committee will have \$499,500 in funds.

Mr. Kellogg told the board members he will be unable to attend the next meeting.

Tom Sartori made a motion to continue the hearing to January 29, 2009. Robert Rosenberg seconded, vote unanimous.

Adjourned at 9:07PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Elaine Rowe
Board Secretary