



Approved 2-12-09

**Community Preservation Committee
Meeting Minutes
January 29, 2009**

Members present: John Campbell, Chairman; Todd Helwig; Don Haitsma; Robert Rosenberg; Tom Sartori; Jane Fletcher; Joan Clowes; Andy Clark

Members excused: Chris Kellogg

Others present: Kathy Joubert, Town Planner; Elaine Rowe, Board Secretary; Marie Nieber, Northborough Historical Commission; Rick Leif; Charlie Bradley, Northborough Trails Committee; Bill Lyver, Northborough Police Dept.; Norm Corbin, Northborough Historical Commission; Arlene Marshall, Northborough Historical Commission

Chairman Campbell called the meeting to order at 7:05PM.

Continued public hearing to consider 2009 CPC Applications

Northborough Police Department – Lt. Bill Lyver discussed the Police Department's application for funding for the purchase of two All-Terrain Vehicles (ATVs) for use on the town's trails network, which has seen an increase in use in recent years. Lt. Lyver also noted an increase in calls for the Mt. Pisgah property, primarily due to underage drinking, inappropriate vehicular traffic, trash, and other such trouble. He stated that the primary purpose for the ATVs is to facilitate a two-officer patrol on some of the more rugged terrain within the town's conservation lands. He explained that the town has had mountain bike patrols in the past, and police presence has been well received by those using the trails. Unfortunately, the bikes are not practical for areas of more rugged terrain, specifically within the Mt. Pisgah property. Lt. Lyver stated that the plan is to implement patrols of two officers on four hour overtime shifts on a random basis, which will be funded through community policing grant funds.

Chairman Campbell asked about the frequency of these patrols. Lt. Lyver noted that they will be done three days per week, on a random basis. Chairman Campbell commented that the program would be most effective if the community saw it as a regular presence. Lt. Lyver stated that patrols will be scheduled in a way to make it appear that there is always a presence. He anticipates patrols will be scheduled for Friday and Saturday evenings from 6:00 to 10:00PM during the spring and summer months.

Chairman Campbell asked how confident the department is about their ability to staff these patrols, as he would not like to see the ATVs sit unused because no one is

available to work. Lt. Lyver stated that department personnel will make themselves available to staff as needed, and noted that the trails are as deserving of police presence as any place else in town.

Robert Rosenberg asked if the trailer is designed to carry two vehicles. Lt. Lyver confirmed that it is. He also noted that, though the ATVs are not as agile as a snowmobile, it is possible to get an adaptor to use them on snow.

Mr. Clark asked if the proposal went before the Conservation Commission. Lt. Lyver stated that it was discussed with the Open Space Committee and the Trails Committee.

Mr. Rosenberg asked how much of the town's trails network will be accessible with these vehicles, given that many of the trails are not on town land. Lt. Lyver explained that the Northborough PD has secondary jurisdiction on MWRA land, and can also gain access to private lands if the need arises under the open fields doctrine. Lt. Lyver also suggested that the Conservation Commission post "No Unauthorized Motor Vehicles Allowed" signs on town property, which will give the Police Department enforcement abilities.

Chairman Campbell asked about the "wear and tear" impacts of the ATV patrols on the trails and properties. Mr. Bradley noted that he initially had concerns, but believes that the perception that there is a police presence will be a deterrent to other, more detrimental activities. He voiced support for this proposal and agreed to work with the Police Department to map out the best points of access and egress for the various trails. Lt Lyver noted that there are some concerns about trail degradation, and indicated that the Environmental Police will provide free training for the officers that will include both personal and environmental safety. He also stated that the department plans to purchase alternate tires, as recommended by Mass Environmental, as they cause less of an impact to the trails than the standard tires.

Mr. Helwig asked why the Police Department cannot use the vehicle like the one purchased by the Fire Dept. last year. Lt. Lyver stated that that vehicle is not designed for frequent use, is much wider than the ATVs he is proposing, and is not practical for this application. Ms. Joubert indicated that both the Trails Committee and Open Space Committee have voted in favor of this proposal.

Historical Commission - Marie Nieber and Norm Corbin were present to discuss their request for \$100,000 for the Historical Preservation fund. Ms. Nieber explained that this is exactly the same request that they have submitted for the past two years, and noted that they are trying to build up the fund to enable them to save and preserve historical structures in town. She stated that the group needs to have funds available to react should a need arise, and also needs to show that they have matching funds capabilities in order to pursue any grants.

Mr. Sartori asked if the Historical Commission has the authority to purchase properties. Ms. Nieber stated that they are primarily geared toward preservation. Ms. Marshall indicated that the group is allowed to purchase properties, but would need to find an agency to acquire and oversee any properties that are purchased.

Mr. Clark recalled that there was a request last year for funding for restoration of a privately owned property, and questioned if there is a way for these types of requests to be handled by the Historical Commission with some type of grant program. Ms. Nieber noted that private home owners can apply for funding, but that the CPC was unclear as to how this could be effectively handled. Mr. Clark suggested establishing a fund from which private homeowners can apply for grants. Ms. Marshall stated that the focus at this point is to complete the historical inventory and apply for some properties to be listed on the National Historical Register so that they would then be eligible to apply for matching grants for restoration and preservation.

Mr. Clark asked how the funds in the historic reserve can be used. Ms. Joubert suggested that the Historical Commission could establish their own grant program where people can apply for funding for façade improvements and/or restorations. The money could then be gifted to the homeowner, with the stipulation that it be paid back when the property is sold.

Chairman Campbell asked if the Historical Commission has any specific properties of interest. Ms. Marshall noted that there is a Victorian home on 9 acres that the Commission would be interested in preserving. She voiced concern that the property could be sold to a developer, which would likely result in demolition of the home. Chairman Campbell asked if the Historical Commission might attempt to acquire this property, given the threat of demolition. Ms. Nieber noted that it might be a viable prospect if several organizations could work together and mutually benefit.

Mr. Corbin mentioned a property on Whitney Street that is of interest that may also be a good prospect for a joint project with the housing groups in town.

Chairman Campbell asked about the status of the old Grange building. Ms. Joubert voiced her understanding that this was purchased by a private owner, but she has no further details at this time.

Mr. Corbin distributed pictures of signs, funded by the CPC, that were installed in the Historic District.

Mr. Corbin explained that Phase 2 of the Historical inventory is now underway, with the contractors making recommendations about resources that should be nominated for the National Historic Register. He noted that 20 resources were identified during Phase 1 of the project, and the Historical Commission selected the following three to submit for consideration, at an estimated cost of \$9,000:

Gale Library
Howard Street Cemetery
Goodnow gravesite

Mr. Corbin stated that, in addition to the honor of being listed on the register, properties that are nationally registered may also be eligible for grants that might otherwise not be available. He explained that the costs involve cover services of an outside source to

prepare the documentation that is required for the nomination process. Ms. Nieber voiced her intention to actively participate in the process, so that she can assist for any future nominations.

Affordable Housing Corporation – Robert Kimball and Rick Leif were present to discuss the proposal and answer some of the questions raised at the last meeting. Mr. Leif noted that there are several opportunities under consideration at this time, including the two condominium units on Hitching Post Lane. He reminded the members that these two units were initially set up as affordable housing units, but those restrictions were ignored by owners and lenders alike. Mr. Kimball explained that the Housing Corporation believes that the lenders should conduct foreclosure sales in a manner that will retain the affordable designation on the units. If the lenders are not in agreement, then the Corporation would seek to purchase the units in order to do so.

Rick Leif discussed options for the existing Senior Center during a recent walk-through with an architect who works with the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD). He stated that the architect indicated that this is exactly the type of project that the DHCD likes to be involved with, and has agreed to do a feasibility study on whether it is more beneficial to maintain the exterior and renovate the interior or completely demolish the structure and build new. The Corporation is now waiting for the study, which they anticipate will be ready sometime in February. Mr. Leif agreed to keep the CPC informed of the status.

Mr. Leif explained that, if DHCD does get involved in this project, it will dictate whether the project has to comply with prevailing wage requirements. He stated that, since the Housing Corporation is a private entity, they are not required to conform to municipal requirements for bidding provided they are acting independent of any state agencies. Mr. Leif also indicated that it is unclear at this time whether this project will be done in 2009, 2010, or 2011.

Mr. Leif noted that the Corporation had had some preliminary conversations with Arlene Marshall about the Victorian home on Bartlett Street. He voiced a desire to work in conjunction with the Historical Commission to preserve the property and potentially provide some housing units for the town. If it is determined that the property is worthy of preservation, Chairman Campbell asked if it is possible to offer a historic conservation restriction to allow the family to sell the property but help to maintain its historic character.

Mr. Kimball discussed a property on Crestwood Drive that is scheduled for a foreclosure auction, and indicated that the Housing Corporation is interested in bidding on the property. If successful, the group plans to renovate the structure to convert it into two rental units. Chairman Campbell voiced his opinion that this property appears to be a more reasonable target than the units on Hitching Post Lane.

Financial Summary for 2009 CPC funds – Chairman Campbell distributed copies of a spreadsheet showing the breakdown of applications for the 2009 CPC funds.

Consideration of Applications - Chairman Campbell suggested that the Committee members consider the request from the Housing Partnership for funding for a housing needs analysis. Mr. Helwig stated that he remains opposed to funding the analysis. Ms. Fletcher voiced her opinion that the study is needed. Mr. Clark questioned the objective for doing an analysis, and whether it is really needed. Ms. Joubert reiterated that the analysis is helpful in identifying the types of housing, income levels, and housing prices that we need to meet, and is necessary if the town hopes to qualify for any grants.

Ms. Joubert noted that one of the outcomes from the community development plan was a recommendation to reformulate the housing partnership, which has since been done. While Ms. Joubert is available to support and help the Housing Partnership as much as possible, she simply does not have the time or resources to put together a housing needs analysis. Mr. Helwig reiterated his objection to funding a needs analysis.

Robert Rosenberg made a motion that the committee forward to Town Meeting an article for \$10,000 for the housing needs analysis and that the committee vote to fund the other half out of the 2009 administrative fund after Town Meeting, but only if the article is approved. Mr. Clark asked if the intention is to get Town Meeting input on funding this type of request. Chairman Campbell did not feel it was necessary to take the matter to Town Meeting, as the committee can use the administrative fund at their discretion. Jane Fletcher seconded Mr. Rosenberg's motion. Mr. Sartori questioned moving forward with a vote on this motion when the committee has not deliberated on all of the proposals yet.

The members voted 5 in favor and 3 opposed (Todd Helwig, Andy Clark, and Tom Sartori opposed). Motion carries.

Adjourned at 9:04PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Elaine Rowe
Board Secretary