



# TOWN OF NORTHBOROUGH Community Preservation Committee

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Approved 1/13/11

## Community Preservation Committee Meeting Minutes December 2, 2010

**Members in attendance:** John Campbell, Chairman; Andy Clark; Don Haitsma; Peter Martin; Todd Helwig; Chris Kellogg; Kathleen Polanowicz; Sean Durkin; Michelle Gillespie (arrived at 7:25PM)

**Others present:** Kathy Joubert, Town Planner; Elaine Rowe, Board Secretary; Norm Corbin; Rick Leif;

**Chairman Campbell called the meeting to order at 7:10PM.**

Chairman Campbell explained that tonight's meeting will include updates from past recipients of CPC funds about the status of their projects. He voiced his opinion that it is beneficial for the CPC to receive updates on a regular basis.

### **Historical Society Renovations**

Norm Corbin stated that the construction has not yet begun, but that the project is in the design phase. Ms. Joubert noted that, to date, she has paid two invoices for work done on this project. She explained that the process is for recipients to submit invoices to her for review, and she approves them for payment once she is satisfied that the charges are appropriate.

### **Town Hall Gym Floor**

Chairman Campbell inquired about any open items from past years. Ms. Joubert noted that the gym floor work that was previously approved for funding was never initiated, and that the funds will remain in the account until a vote is taken at Town Meeting authorizing those funds to be moved to another account. She commented that she needs to get an update on this project from the Recreation Director as she does not believe that the work to repair the pipe has resolved the moisture problem. Mr. Durkin voiced his understanding that the issue has been improved but not completely resolved. He also commented that it is not prudent to install a new hardwood floor if the moisture problem has not been entirely resolved. Chairman Campbell stated that the Town Administrator does not consider the gym floor to be a priority, given the other issues with the Town Hall building. Ms. Joubert stated that she does not yet know what capital projects will be on the Town Administrator's application for this year. She agreed to obtain the current account balance for the gym floor and provide it to the board at the next meeting. Chairman Campbell noted that the project was tied to the historical preservation category at the time that it was approved, and voiced his opinion that it is logical to move it to another account so that it can be made available for a project of a higher priority. Ms. Joubert agreed

to get an update from the Town Administrator and the Recreation Director. She also reiterated that moving the funds will require an action at Town Meeting.

### **Preservation of Town Records**

Chairman Campbell referred to a report provided by the Town Clerk that indicates that the project to preserve the town maps and town records is progressing nicely. Ms. Joubert explained that the large format scanner has not yet been ordered, but that she recently discovered that the particular model she had researched has been added to the state bid list. Ms. Joubert also noted that the fly-over has been done and she is waiting to receive the updated maps, at which time she will move forward with the scanner acquisition.

Michelle Gillespie arrived.

### **Affordable Housing**

Chairman Campbell commented that Rick Leif had provided a nice write-up for the Committee, and he asked Mr. Leif to summarize. Mr. Leif discussed last year's request for additional funding for the housing effort, which was to be used to convert the old Senior Center into housing units. He noted that the Housing Authority agreed that the best use of the space would be for additional housing units, which would fall under the auspices of the Department of Housing. Mr. Leif commented that both the Housing Authority and the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) concur that an additional 3 to 6 units is feasible.

Mr. Leif noted that he and his group had met with the DHCD representative for mixed project funding, and were advised that no state funds will be available for this project. However, because the Housing Authority is a public agency, they are required to write an RFP and solicit bids. This requires that they hire an architect, develop a conceptual design and perhaps do a survey. Mr. Leif stated that, during the summer, the Housing Authority started work on a draft RFP, which was written to include a land lease arrangement. The RFP package went out in November in the standard register in the Worcester Telegram and the Housing Corporation has obtained a bid package.

Mr. Leif also explained that the Housing Corporation is working with an architect firm in Sudbury that has a great deal of experience working on these types of projects. In addition, the owner of the firm has a fondness for helping non-profit organizations. Mr. Leif explained that the Corporation has a three-phase agreement with the architect, to include conceptual design, detailed design, and help with the bid and contractor selection process.

Mr. Leif explained that a public walk-through of the site is scheduled for Monday, and that so far the only interest expressed has been on the part of the Housing Corporation. Even so, it is still critical to do a good RFP submission.

Mr. Leif commented that all other projects are currently on hold, with this project having complete focus at this point.

Mr. Helwig stated that his firm has been hired to represent the Housing Authority for the RFP and is drafting the land lease document. Ms. Polanowicz voiced her understanding that there has been considerable effort to ensure that everything is done right, with no overlap between entities, so that there can be no accusations of any preferential treatment being given to the Affordable Housing Corporation.

Mr. Leif explained that, if selected for the project, the Affordable Housing Corporation should be able to take the project privately with no risk of any of their actions being challenged. Mr. Helwig asked if it matters that the project is being paid for using CPA funding. Mr. Leif voiced his opinion that having the project done by a private entity will withstand challenges of any legality or conflict of interest. He reiterated his opinion that the project will not need to be put out to public bid.

Chairman Campbell asked if the Housing Authority will manage the assignment of the housing units. Mr. Leif stated that they could potentially manage the units for a fee, and that fee along with any taxes could be covered through the rents charged.

Ms. Polanowicz explained that the calculations were done in association with DHCD, who has experience with these types of projects. Mr. Clark asked if there will be any return on investment, or if the rent will be based on simply maintaining the property. Mr. Leif noted that they have not yet determined whether the project will be exempt from property taxes, but reiterated that any taxes or fees will need to be recovered through the rental income.

Chairman Campbell asked Mr. Leif if he anticipates needing more CPA funds as this project progresses. Mr. Leif stated that the architect has indicated that they should be able to build 5 units for \$500,000 - \$600,000. He noted that there may be a problem if DHCD does not believe it can be done within this budget. Chairman Campbell voiced his opinion that it would be completely appropriate to come back for more funds if needed.

Mr. Leif commented that the attempt to purchase two condo units at Smith Pond has, to date, been unsuccessful and that the Senior Center conversion project appears to be more viable and worth pursuing. Ms. Polanowicz agreed, and noted that the mortgage companies for the Smith Pond properties are still not willing to negotiate.

Mr. Leif explained that the Affordable Housing Corporation had also attended a real estate auction for a property on Crestwood Drive. He noted that the property was valued at \$390,000, and the bank declined a high bid of \$125,000. He also commented that it is not possible to inspect an auction property prior to bidding, so it is important to ensure that you have sufficient funding to cover any repairs and/or improvements that may be necessary.

Mr. Martin asked if the funding agreement needs to be finalized by the end of December for the purpose of the RFP. Mr. Leif commented that it would be ideal but, if not, he will need some type of document from the Town in which they agree to provide the funding.

Chairman Campbell voiced his understanding that the Town Administrator has indicated that he needs more time to review the agreement, and that he will appear

before the board to present it once it has been finalized. He also reiterated that the CPC is interested in a funding agreement that can be applied to any entity that receives CPC funds, and that it should include basic tenets to provide a formal mechanism for reclaiming funds as well as holding recipients responsible for using the funds in the manner stipulated in their application. Ms. Polanowicz asked if it would be possible to have a special meeting to approve the agreement if it is ready prior to the end of December, in hopes that this will assist the Housing Corporation with their efforts.

Mr. Helwig asked if the funding agreement was reviewed by Town Counsel. Ms. Joubert indicated that Town Counsel had drafted the original document, and made some subsequent revisions. Ms. Polanowicz explained that she had found several examples of such an agreement from other towns, and that they all appear to be much more straight-forward than our document, which is more project specific and seems to put more of a burden on the CPC. She voiced her opinion that, if the CPC is to sign the agreement, the members need to ensure that it is in our own best interest. Mr. Clark questioned whether the CPC should spend some of the administrative fund to have the document finalized to the Committee's satisfaction. Ms. Polanowicz voiced her opinion that the current draft does not appear to have been drafted with the CPC's best interest in mind, and she encouraged the other members to review it carefully and provide comment. Ms. Joubert agreed that the current draft is specific to the housing project, and stated that the CPC needs something more general for other projects. Chairman Campbell agreed that a standard agreement that can be applied to all projects is warranted, and should be one that addresses the Committee's concerns and protects its interests while providing some level of comfort regarding the disbursement of funds. He suggested that perhaps a face to face meeting with the Town Administrator might be helpful in moving the process forward.

Ms. Joubert asked Chairman Campbell if he would agree to a special meeting in December to review the draft agreement if it is finalized in time so that the Northborough Housing Corporation can respond to the RFP. Chairman Campbell agreed to a special meeting if necessary.

### **Town Hall Projects**

Ms. Joubert noted that the Town Administrator had submitted a report on the status of town hall projects, and voiced her understanding that bids were due today.

### **Housing Partnership**

Ms. Joubert noted that the Housing Partnership was granted funds from the CPC's Administrative fund for a housing needs analysis that is scheduled to be completed in late January or early February. She noted that the data sets from the 2010 census are due to be released soon, so that the 2010 census data can be incorporated into the survey. She also noted that the study will be published on the town's website, with copies available at Town Hall, and that there are a series of recommendations that will be made based on the results of the survey.

Chairman Campbell commented that the CPA has enabled us to move the affordable housing effort forward in this town quite a bit, and we should try to publicize our successes.

## **Open Space**

Chairman Campbell noted that the Open Space Committee continues in their efforts to pursue land acquisition opportunities. He stated that they have finally been able to reach an agreement with both land owners for the parcel that they have been pursuing on Green Street and, though they do not yet have a formal P&S, they are on the path to do so and anticipate that they will be submitting an application for that this year. He anticipates having an agreement ready prior to Town Meeting, with the hopes of being able to close on the land roughly a year from now.

Mr. Clark voiced his understanding that this is the first project that ties into a future revenue stream, and commits us to guaranteeing a certain dollar value each year. Chairman Campbell indicated that the purchase is to be funded using Open Space reserves, Conservation reserves, additional funds from FY12, and the balance through a 5 year bond (\$100,000 each for five years). He also stated that, if a grant award is approved and the timing works, a bond may not be necessary at all. In addition, the P&S agreement would be conditioned based on approval at Town Meeting, so that there will be no commitment from the town to buy the property if the proposal is defeated at Town Meeting.

Mr. Helwig asked about the administrative costs. Chairman Campbell noted that the CPC will require legal services and he would propose using CPA Administrative funds for that. Mr. Helwig suggested that reasonable estimates for environmental assessments, title insurance, etc. should be factored in as well. Chairman Campbell indicated that this issue will be further researched so that more detail can be provided during the presentation to be made in January.

## **Presentation order for CPC applications**

Members of the Committee agreed that the applications will be presentation in the following order:

- #1 Open Space (funds for land acquisition)
- #2 Police Dept. (recreation vehicles for trails patrols)
- #3 Historical Commission (Church Street stone wall)  
Ms. Polanowicz inquired about how much the Historical Commission has in banked funds. Ms. Joubert agreed to provide an updated spreadsheet at January meeting.
- #4 Historical Commission (Cyrus Gale plaque)
- #5 Historical Commission (John Brigham Mill)
- #6 Historical Commission (Historical preservation fund reserves)
- #7 Town Administrator (Town Hall improvements)
- #8 Housing Authority (demolition of old senior center)

Ms. Joubert informed members of the Committee that the Town warrant is due to the Town Administrator by February 14<sup>th</sup>. The CPC meeting schedule will be as follows:

January 13, 2011  
January 27, 2011  
February 10, 2011

In addition to the above, there may be a need to hold a meeting in March in preparation for Town Meeting.

Chairman Campbell suggested scheduling the eight presentations for the January 13<sup>th</sup> meeting, with the discussion of the funding agreement to be scheduled for January 27<sup>th</sup>.

**Review Minutes of the Meeting of February 4, 2010** - Todd Helwig made a motion to accept the Minutes of the Meeting of February 4, 2010 as submitted. Andy Clark seconded, vote unanimous.

**Adjourned at 8:30PM.**

Respectfully submitted,

Elaine Rowe  
Board Secretary