



TOWN OF NORTHBOROUGH Community Preservation Committee

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Approved 2/25/13

Community Preservation Committee Meeting Minutes January 10, 2013

Members in attendance: John Campbell, Chairman; Michelle Gillespie; Todd Helwig; Debra Comeau; Chris Kellogg; Sean Durkin; Andy Clark (arrived at 7:30PM); Kathleen Polanowicz (arrived at 8:00PM)

Members excused: Peter Martin

Others in attendance: Kathy Joubert, Town Planner; Elaine Rowe, Board Secretary; Andy Dowd, Town Clerk; Allison Lane, Recreation Director; Fred Litchfield, Town Engineer; Jason Perreault, Financial Planning Committee; Roger Leland, Financial Planning Committee; Mia McDonald, Conservation Agent; Wayne Baldelli, Conservation Commission; Bob Mihalek, Trails Committee; Rae Carlson, Northborough Affordable Housing Corporation

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

Public Hearing to Consider FY2014 CPA Applications:

Historical Category

- **Preservation and Storage of Town Records (\$30,000)**
- **Historical Resources Preservation Fund (\$50,000)**
- **Historical Markers (\$4,000)**

Open Space/Recreation Category

- **Memorial Field Viewing Deck Renovation (\$37,415)**
- **Assabet Park Shading Project (\$57,345)**
- **Conservation Fund (\$150,000)**
- **Bartlett Pond Weed Management (\$16,000)**
- **Hiking Trail Preservation Plan (\$6925)**

Housing Category

- **Northborough Affordable Housing Corporation (\$50,000)**

Assabet Park Shading Project (\$57,345) – Recreation Director Allison Lane discussed the request. She explained that the park lost a major source of shade when the large maple tree was destroyed during Hurricane Sandy. She also noted that the one remaining tree in the walkway between the basketball court and splash pad will need to be removed, resulting in little to no shade over the playground and splash pad areas.

Ms. Lane stated that Assabet Park is the most heavily used park during the summer months. She discussed Club Assabet, an 8-week summer program for children ages 3 to 5 years, and noted the

importance of providing some type of shading system for both the program participants and the residents who use the park.

Ms. Lane explained that a private citizen had conducted his own fundraiser last year to raise money to purchase umbrellas to provide shade at the park. However, she noted that the DPW and Recreation Department had expended numerous hours to put the umbrellas up, take them down, and maintain them, so she would like to find a better solution.

Ms. Lane indicated that there are three very nice trees that create lots of shade, but they are not connected to the playground area because of the existing fencing. Her proposal is to remove the existing black fencing and install new fencing that goes all the way back to encompass these trees. By doing so, and installing benches under the trees, it will provide shade and resting areas for everyone using the park.

Andy Clark arrived.

Mr. Kellogg asked about the aspect of the sun during the summer months, and questioned whether the trees provide sufficient shading. Ms. Lane noted that there are certain times during the day when the shade is insufficient, but it is typically during those times when it is too hot to use the playground anyway. She commented that the trees are sufficient during the spring, fall, and later in the day during the summer months.

Ms. Lane continued her presentation with a discussion about a proposed pavilion to be constructed on the splash pad. She noted that, at this point, there is absolutely no shade over the splash pad. She explained that, in addition to providing shade, the pavilion is important from a safety aspect as it provides shelter in the event of an unexpected storm. Ms. Lane stated that she has received an estimate of \$47,975 to build a pavilion similar to the one at Ellsworth-McAfee Park, but she hopes to be able to do it for less by using the roof line on the existing shed and extending it out a bit.

Ms. Comeau asked if the sides of the structure will be open or closed. Ms. Lane confirmed that they will be open. She noted that the summer camp program does move indoors if there is bad weather forecast, but on occasion they do get an unexpected storm. Ms. Comeau asked if the structure will be erected over concrete. Ms. Lane noted that pavilion will not cover the concrete of the splash pad, but will be over pavement.

Ms. Gillespie asked Ms. Lane if she is proposing construction in the fall because the funds are not available until July 1. Ms. Lane confirmed that, while she would love to have the pavilion in place before the summer, she does not have access to the funds in order to do so.

Chairman Campbell discussed changes in the legislation, which now allow for CPA funds to be used to rehabilitate existing facilities, and asked Ms. Lane if she has given any thought to developing a priority list for other projects in town. Ms. Lane explained that she plans to seek funding for a recycling system for the splash pad in the future. Mr. Durkin noted that the Recreation Commission has initiated conversations about developing such a list. Chairman Campbell asked that the list be shared with the Community Preservation Committee when available. Ms. Lane reiterated the critical need for shading at Assabet Park. She also complimented the town on the quality of its park system and noted that she frequently gets compliments about the parks.

Jason Perreault, Chairman of the Financial Planning Committee, asked Ms. Lane if she understands enough about the water recycling system to know that it won't impact the shading project. Ms. Lane commented that there should be no conflicts, as the recycling system will be installed in the garage with a well underneath it, but agreed to investigate thoroughly before she moves forward with the shading project.

Mr. Litchfield explained that the recycling system will be similar to those installed in car wash facilities, with a holding tank on the end where the drainage pipe comes out.

Bartlett Pond Weed Management (\$16,000) – Mr. Litchfield introduced Mia McDonald, the town's new Conservation Agent, and Conservation Commission member Wayne Baldelli, who lives on Bartlett Pond and has extensive knowledge about the weed problem and management options. Mr. Litchfield explained that the Conservation Commission is seeking \$16,000 to do an herbicide treatment on the pond to control invasive weeds. He noted that the Commission has been doing such treatments every 3 to 4 years since 1999 using funds from their own operating budget but were hoping to fund it through the CPC this year. He explained that Ms. McDonald had submitted the application along with information about other communities doing similar projects using CPA funds.

Mr. Durkin asked if more frequent treatments would be beneficial. Mr. Litchfield explained that the cycle is every 3 years with a cost of about \$30,000. He noted that much depends on the weather, with better results being seen during dry spells. He also commented that the Commission has gone as many as 5 years between major treatments by doing spot treatments as needed.

Mr. Baldelli explained that the pond had gone untreated for so long that a new weed was introduced, and it is now becoming more prevalent and problematic. He explained that doing herbicide treatments more often enables the use of a lower dosage of chemicals and allows you to keep better control.

Kathleen Polanowicz arrived.

Chairman Campbell asked if there are any additional water and land preservation projects and, if so, where the Bartlett Pond project falls in order of priority. Mr. Litchfield noted that the Trails Committee has done a great job with development and maintenance of trails and there are no other ponds in town in need of such treatment, so Bartlett Pond is the priority. Chairman Campbell asked about addressing issues in portions of the Assabet River that appear to have invasive weeds. Mr. Litchfield explained that the Assabet is owned by the state and certain residents who live along the river, so there is not much that the town can do. Mr. Baldelli also noted that the flow of the water makes treatment difficult.

Mr. Clark asked if the herbicides used are plant-specific. Mr. Baldelli confirmed that the treatment will involve use of a unique mixture that targets invasive species.

Mr. Corbin suggested seeking support from the Historical Commission, since Bartlett Pond is a historical resource.

Chairman Campbell voiced his understanding that a precedent exists for this use of funds. Ms. McDonald provided a list of 39 communities that have been using CPA funds for management of their water resources. Ms. Joubert noted that the DCR often refers communities to the CPA for funding pond treatments.

Memorial Field Viewing Deck Renovation (\$37,415) – Sean Durkin discussed the Baseball Association’s proposal for the repair/replacement of the observation platform at Memorial Field and provided pictures for reference. He stated that the DPW Director has offered his full support of the project. Mr. Durkin explained that he had brought this proposal to the Committee in the past but it did not meet the criteria for funding. Given the recent legislative changes, he believes it now does.

Mr. Durkin noted that American Legion Post 234 is an aging post, and many of the veterans attend games at Memorial Field but must sit in the parking lot because of inadequate accessibility to the field. This proposal would enlarge the structure and enable wheelchair access to the viewing deck and the snack shack. Mr. Durkin noted that the existing structure will be replaced with a concrete structure with metal guardrails and a ramp for access. He commented that the new structure will be safer and will be ADA compatible. Ms. Polanowicz asked if the railing will interfere with the view for people sitting on the deck. Mr. Durkin stated that the railings must meet code.

Chairman Campbell asked if the Baseball Association has ever considered reopening the bathroom facilities. Mr. Durkin explained that the existing system is on a cesspool, and that Title 5 requirements will be difficult to meet so porta-potties will continue to be used.

Hiking Trail Preservation Plan (\$6925) – Bob Mihalek from the Trails Committee discussed the need for funding to preserve hiking trails in town. He explained that when the Trails Committee was founded by Art Cole in 2001, there was a substantial amount of work done to allow year-round access through the wet areas. He noted that many of the bog bridges installed at that time are approaching the end of their life span and need to be replaced, specifically in the areas of Bennett Trail and the Cold Harbor floating bridge. Mr. Mihalek also noted that the MWRA had granted access to a 4.2 mile long segment of what will become an aqueduct trail, in the Cedar Hill area, and the Trails Committee is working with the MWRA to have the “no trespassing” signs removed and will install trail signs and informational kiosks. He stated that the group received a \$500 grant from Harvard Pilgrim which, combined with \$500 from the CPC, will be used for the construction of the kiosks and installation of signage.

Mr. Mihalek commented that the Trails Committee utilizes 100% volunteer labor, so is able to stretch funding pretty far. He also noted that a good deal of work is done by Eagle Scout candidates.

Mr. Corbin noted that the aqueduct is listed on the National Historic register, so the Historical Commission would support this effort and is willing to provide a letter indicating that they do so. Roger Leland voiced his gratitude to those who have donated land over the years, and for the work of so many community organizations and volunteers to preserve these lands and enhance the community.

Conservation Fund (\$150,000) - Bob Mihalek explained that the preservation of large parcels of open space requires resources, and the Conservation Fund is maintained so that the town will be able to act quickly should a parcel become available. He cited the recent purchase of 55.6 acres from the Schunder family as a shining example of the value of maintaining a reserve fund. Mr. Mihalek reiterated that keeping the conservation fund at or near \$500,000 has been instrumental in successful acquisition of valuable parcels, and noted that this request is simply to rebuild the fund that was depleted after the purchase of the Schunder parcel.

Preservation and Storage of Town Records (\$30,000) – Town Clerk Andy Dowd discussed his request for funding for the preservation and storage of historic town documents. He noted that the CPC had funded over \$100,000 in the past which allowed the town to preserve a large majority of the historic

documents. He voiced his appreciation for the past support, and stated that the documents have been scanned and are now electronically accessible.

Mr. Dowd commented that his office has recently identified some additional materials for preservation. In addition, he is seeking funding to establish an appropriate storage area for the records. He explained that there is a small vault located underneath the front stairway that is accessible from the basement, where he is proposing to replace the existing wooden shelves with adjustable metal shelves. Mr. Dowd also noted that this project has received the support of the Historical Commission.

Mr. Clark asked if this is the final step in the records preservation process. Mr. Dowd confirmed that it is.

Historical Markers (\$4,000) – Norm Corbin discussed the request for funding for historical markers, which will help to educate town residents about the historical attributes of the town. He provided a list of some of the signs to be considered in the years to come, and noted that there are two signs that they wish to obtain funding for this year. Mr. Corbin stated that the first would be Assabet Park, which is both historical but also continues to get a great deal of use. The second would be a sign for the Wachusett Aqueduct, which he suggests placing near the bridge.

Ms. Joubert mentioned recent work she had done with the “Walk Boston” group, in which they developed a brochure highlighting sidewalk trails through town. She noted that one of the walking routes is around Hudson Street and there are various historic markers along the route, so this proposal will tie in perfectly with that effort.

Historical Resources Preservation Fund (\$50,000) – Mr. Corbin explained that the Historical Commission is looking for \$50,000 to add to their fund. Chairman Campbell asked Mr. Corbin if there are any target properties that the Commission would seek to preserve. Mr. Corbin noted that the Commission needs to put together a preservation plan that would include details of those properties in town that they would seek to preserve. He also noted that the historical inventory that was previously compiled is proving beneficial to have. Mr. Helwig asked where the inventory list is located. Mr. Corbin stated that it is on the Historical Commission’s website and online with the state, with hard copies located in Town Hall and at the Historical Society. Ms. Gillespie voiced her desire to see a historical marker for the Brigham Street Cemetery.

Northborough Affordable Housing Corporation (\$50,000) - Rae Carlson discussed the request for \$50,000. She explained that, after 3 long years, the NAHC was selected through RFP to build 4 new affordable housing units at the site of the former senior center. She explained that, due to some changes to the building code that were effective in 2012, there are some necessary design changes that will increase the cost of the project above the \$652,000 that has already been appropriated, including the requirement of sprinklers and two means of egress in each unit. Ms. Carlson stated that the project has been approved by the Zoning Board of Appeals.

Ms. Carlson explained that the NAHC had received \$52,000 in 2011 as a contingency fund, which would be used only if needed in the event of over-runs on the project. She noted that the \$50,000 being requested this year will be used to cover the specific costs discussed this evening, only if needed, and any unused funds will be returned to the CPC.

Mr. Clark suggested that the design changes discussed represent the types of things that a contingency fund would be used for. Ms. Carlson stated that these costs were not included in the original estimate,

and noted that the contingency is to account for unexpected overages. She voiced her desire not to have the project well underway and discover that there are insufficient funds, which would then stall the project.

A member of the Financial Planning Committee asked about the timeline for the project. Ms. Carlson estimated that the project will take 12 to 18 months to complete.

Other business - Ms. Joubert stated that one of the town's first approved CPA projects was for the installation of lights at Ellsworth-McAfee Park. She explained that Mr. Durkin had donated his time and equipment to complete the project, so the \$1322 appropriated in 2006 needs to be returned to the CPC's unreserved account.

Chris Kellogg made a motion to close out the project and return any unspent funds to the unreserved account. Kathleen Polanowicz seconded, vote unanimous. Committee members voiced their appreciation to Mr. Durkin for his efforts and donation of time and equipment.

Members of the Committee asked Ms. Joubert to include a discussion of CPC signage for the next meeting.

Committee members noted that the grant for Affordable Housing needs to be a minimum of \$52,000 by law.

Chris Kellogg made a motion to appropriate \$52,000 from FY2014 money to the Northborough Affordable Housing Corporation. Kathleen Polanowicz seconded, vote unanimous.

Debra Comeau made a motion to appropriate \$4,000 from FY2014 money for historical town markers. Kathleen Polanowicz seconded, vote unanimous.

Michelle Gillespie made a motion to appropriate \$30,000 from FY2014 money for the preservation and storage of town records. Kathleen Polanowicz seconded, vote unanimous.

Sean Durkin made a motion to appropriate \$50,000 from FY2014 money for the Historic Reserve Fund. Kathleen Polanowicz seconded, vote unanimous.

Todd Helwig made a motion to appropriate \$37,415 from FY2014 money for the Memorial Field viewing deck renovation. Kathleen Polanowicz seconded, vote unanimous.

Andy Clark made a motion to appropriate \$16,000 from FY2014 money for the Bartlett Pond weed treatment. Todd Helwig seconded, vote unanimous.

Kathleen Polanowicz made a motion to appropriate \$57,345 from FY2014 money for the Assabet Park improvements. Andy Clark seconded, vote unanimous.

Chris Kellogg made a motion to appropriate \$7,000 from FY2014 money for hiking trail preservation. Debra Comeau seconded, vote unanimous.

Debra Comeau made a motion to appropriate \$150,000 from FY2014 money for the Conservation fund. Michelle Gillespie seconded, vote unanimous.

Michelle Gillespie made a motion to appropriate \$25,000 to the Community Preservation Committee's administrative fund. Kathleen Polanowicz seconded, vote unanimous.

Next Meeting – After polling the members of the board, it was agreed that the next meeting will be held on April 4, 2013.

Adjourned at 9:10PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Elaine Rowe
Board Secretary