



# TOWN OF NORTHBOROUGH Community Preservation Committee

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Approved 4-3-14

## Community Preservation Committee Meeting Minutes February 6, 2014

**Members in attendance:** John Campbell, Chairman; Chris Kellogg; Debra Comeau; Peter Martin; Michelle Gillespie; Andy Clark; Kathleen Polanowicz

**Members excused:** Todd Helwig; Sean Durkin

**Others in attendance:** Kathy Joubert, Town Planner; Elaine Rowe, Board Secretary

**Chairman John Campbell called the meeting to order at 7:15 PM.**

Chairman Campbell explained that an allocation to the CPC Administrative Fund had not been made, and noted that the bylaw requires that 5% of new revenue must be allocated to that fund.

**Memorial Field** – Chairman Campbell stated that DPW Director Dan Nason has indicated that he has not received any new information. Also, when asked to comment on the Committee's \$75,000 estimate, he suggested that the cost would likely be closer to \$100,000. Chairman Campbell asked members of the Committee if, given this new information, they are still interested in moving forward with this project at this year's Town Meeting.

Mr. Kellogg voiced a desire to move the project forward, and made a motion to amend the article to approve granting \$75,000 from new money and \$25,000 from the unreserved fund balance for the viewing platform at Memorial Field. Chairman Campbell stated that he would not be in favor of going to Town Meeting for anything more than \$75,000. He also suggested that approving up to \$100,000 will simply encourage bids to come in at that figure. Ms. Comeau questioned whether Mr. Nason is simply not interested in this project. Chairman Campbell voiced his opinion that it is just not a priority, given the other things that the DPW is working on. Mr. Martin commented that nobody would spend this amount of their own money for this project. Ms. Gillespie asked what the \$15,000 was used for. Mr. Kellogg noted that it was used to obtain an engineering specification in order to draft a bid packet. Ms. Joubert stated that a bid package was not sent out, but she believes that Mr. Nason provided the spec to one individual for input. Ms. Polanowicz asked if it is possible to put the project out to bid without the money being allocated. Ms. Joubert confirmed that it is, but suggested that contractors will lose interest in submitting a bid once they learn that the money is not yet allocated. Chairman Campbell noted that, in the absence of a formal quote, the applicant is seeking \$100,000 for the project.

Mr. Kellogg voiced extreme frustration, and asked why the DPW Director would not have put the project out for bid. Ms. Comeau reiterated that town staff does not have the time to commit to this project. Mr. Kellogg stated that the \$100,000 estimate is better than a \$75,000 guess.

Chairman Campbell struggled to understand the process in Town Hall. He noted that the Committee had paid for an engineer to provide a detailed spec because town staff did not have the time to do that. It was his understanding that, in doing so, it would enable staff to get the project out for bid and he questioned the delay in doing so. Ms. Joubert explained that the process is lengthy and must be done by a Procurement Officer, and noted that the town currently has only three staff members with the appropriate qualifications. Committee members voiced concerns that this project is currently not a priority for town staff.

Ms. Joubert reiterated that the process is not difficult, but is time consuming. She also stated that she has asked Mr. Nason specifically if he would like to pull this project given current circumstances. Ms. Gillespie stated that funds are taken from taxpayers, who have an expectation that the town will address issues in a timely manner. She also commented that the project is going to end up costing three times what was originally proposed.

Ms. Joubert noted that Mr. Nason does not have an Administrative Assistant to support him, and his resources are limited. Ms. Polanowicz indicated that the Committee can either vote to fund the project or not, but if we opt not to then it will never happen at all. If the Committee has any interest in making this project a reality, she would suggest funding it at some level now, with a stipulation that the money be returned if it is not expended within a certain period of time. Chairman Campbell voiced his opinion that we will end up overspending if we ask the town to approve before we have a legitimate bid. He suggested moving forward with the request at \$75,000 and re-evaluating if the bids come in too high.

Ms. Gillespie asked if the DPW Director intends to ask for additional staff support at Town Meeting. Ms. Joubert explained that the town has recently just gone through a staffing study, the results of which have not yet been released. Mr. Kellogg suggested that the Committee consider not accepting applications for projects that require town staff support. Chairman Campbell noted that the Committee was asked to follow a particular process for municipal projects, which is why they approached the Memorial Field platform in phases. He voiced frustration that phase 1 is complete and we are now not able to move forward with phase 2. He questioned whether the project should be pulled.

Mr. Martin stated that the Committee's role is to take a position that this is an appropriate use of CPC funds and to create conditions to make it happen. Ms. Comeau commented that she is comfortable with the \$100,000 estimate since it was provided by someone who had seen the specification. Mr. Martin voiced his opinion that the Committee still does not have sufficient, reliable information to move from \$75,000 to \$100,000. Mr. Kellogg agreed, and noted that the basketball court project poses similar concerns. He also questioned whether the Memorial Field project at \$100,000 is worth

building. Chairman Campbell voiced a desire to bring the project to the voters, since it involves improvements to a park that is heavily used. Mr. Clark stated that providing access for disabled individuals and veterans is worthwhile, and given the amount of use this project is preferable to the splash pad project.

Chris Kellogg reiterated his motion to amend the warrant article to request \$100,000 (\$75,000 from new revenue and \$25,000 from the unreserved fund) for the Memorial Field viewing platform. Ms. Comeau seconded, vote unanimous.

Ms. Polanowicz suggested having a funding agreement in place for town projects similar to the funding agreements with non-town entities. This may provide an impetus to keep projects moving once funding is approved. Several town projects have not been started and it's been a few years since the funding was adopted. Ms. Joubert believes the funding agreements are only for when funds are provided to a non-town organization such as the Historical Society and Northborough Affordable Housing Corporation. Chairman Campbell noted that the Committee has the ability to vote to repeal. Ms. Polanowicz voiced a desire to look at all funds not spent to identify those that should be repealed.

**Funding for the Administrative Fund** – Ms. Joubert stated that the Committee had allocated \$25,000 to the Administrative Fund last year. She noted that, if they wish to do the same this year, they need to modify the allocation to the Conservation Fund as follows:

\$333,600 from the unreserved fund  
\$ 66,400 from new revenue

Chris Kellogg made a motion to amend the warrant article to appropriate \$66,400 from new revenue and \$333,600 from the unreserved fund. Peter Martin seconded, vote unanimous.

Debra Comeau made a motion to allocate \$25,000 from new revenue to the Administrative Fund. Kathleen Polanowicz seconded, vote unanimous.

Chairman Campbell stated that, based on the vote on the Memorial Field article, he would like for the Committee to write a letter to the Town Administrator and DPW Director indicating that the action was taken with some reservations. In addition, while the board is still in favor of moving forward with the project, it would be best to have updated information before Town Meeting. Therefore, he would respectfully ask whether town staff can devote some time to put the project out for bid prior to Town Meeting and, if needed, utilize the CPC Administrative Fund to aid in that effort. He emphasized that this Committee has supported the process they were asked to follow by the Town Administrator, and is now simply seeking support for our efforts as well. Ms. Joubert agreed to draft a letter for Chairman Campbell's review.

**Review Minutes of the Meeting of January 9, 2014** – Peter Martin made a motion to approve the Minutes of the Meeting of January 9, 2014 as submitted. Debra Comeau seconded; vote unanimous with Kathleen Polanowicz abstaining.

Chairman Campbell explained that he would like to discuss a process for developing a Community Preservation Conservation Plan. He noted that the town has a recently revised Open Space Plan to draw from, as well as the Historical Preservation wish list. He expressed interest in learning more about the status of the affordable housing movement in town. Ms. Polanowicz stated that she suspects that the Housing Corporation will continue because they own the newly constructed Senior Housing units. She also noted that there is a 5 year waiting list for senior units, so there is still a need to focus our efforts on housing. Mr. Kellogg asked if the housing groups can develop an action plan and what role the CPC might play. He suggested that the Committee and townspeople would appreciate having some type of priority structure. Ms. Comeau noted that the Historical Commission has developed such a list. Chairman Campbell voiced a desire to be more proactive, taking into consideration the ultimate goals of the various groups.

Ms. Joubert provided copies of Conservation Preservation plans from other municipalities, and noted that Sharon seems to have the best plan of those that she has seen. She suggested that the Committee consider using money from the Administrative Fund to have a plan drafted. Chairman Campbell suggested continuing the discussion at the April meeting. Mr. Kellogg stated that he will be away for a good portion of April, but will be back in time for Town Meeting.

Ms. Polanowicz asked if the Housing Corporation has provided a recent update on the status of their project. She noted that a lottery will be held in March, with hopes that the units can be occupied by May. Chairman Campbell stated that he would like to see more permanent signage recognizing the use of CPC funding for the project, and asked for volunteers to draft the language. Ms. Polanowicz suggested that Rick Leif be asked for input, and offered to touch base with him about it. Ms. Polanowicz also suggested that the CPC be included in the ribbon cutting event.

Adjourned at 8:30PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Elaine Rowe  
Board Secretary