



# TOWN OF NORTHBOROUGH Community Preservation Committee

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Approved 11-6-14

## Community Preservation Committee Meeting Minutes October 2, 2014

**Members in attendance:** John Campbell, Chairman; Chris Kellogg; Kathleen Polanowicz; Todd Helwig; Michelle Gillespie; Andy Clark

**Member excused:** Peter Martin; Debra Comeau; Sean Durkin

**Others in attendance:** Kathy Joubert, Town Planner; Elaine Rowe, Board Secretary; Trish Settles, CMRPC; Norm Corbin; Robert Berger; Rick Leif

**Chairman Campbell called the meeting to order at 7:09PM.**

### **Community Preservation Plan Discussion with Trish Settles, Principal**

**Planner, Central MA Regional Planning Commission** - Trish Settles informed the committee members that the contract is done and she is ready to move forward with the Community Preservation Plan. She noted that Ms. Joubert had provided her with reports going back to 2006, which she will put on a map to illustrate a geographic representation of what we currently have. She explained that she is here tonight to discuss guiding policies and get a sense as to the board's comfort level about the direction the CPC has taken to date and any changes the members may envision. In addition, she plans to meet with some of the other boards and committees in town. Ms. Settles noted that in her proposal she has budgeted for 5 to 6 different meetings and one public meeting.

Chairman Campbell questioned where the process should begin. Ms. Joubert voiced her opinion that it would be most effective to get 2 or 3 boards to meet together if possible. She indicated that she will try to arrange meetings with the following:

Open Space Committee  
Parks & Recreation Department  
Historical Commission  
Conservation Commission  
Town Administrator

Trails Committee  
Various housing groups  
Historical Society  
DPW Director

Chairman Campbell suggested that individual meetings may prove more successful. He also suggested that a meeting with the Open Space Committee would be a low priority. Ms. Settles expressed her desire to hold as many of these meetings as possible before year end. Ms. Joubert agreed to assist with scheduling of these meetings.

Ms. Settles asked the board for their overall guiding thoughts as a committee. Chairman Campbell explained that the CPC has been somewhat reactive to what comes before it as opposed to doing much outside advocacy. He noted that, in the past, the CPC has been responding to and acting on applications brought forward, primarily from those committees represented by a member of the CPC. He also explained that there will often be multiple applications submitted by a committee, and the CPC will seek to get their input about the prioritization of the applications. Mr. Kellogg stated that the CPC also asks each group to provide information about their specific goals, which allows the members to measure requests for funding against those goals. Ms. Settles noted that the Historical groups appear to have come in with a phased approach to their projects.

Andy Clark arrived.

Chairman Campbell indicated that the committee has sometimes approached projects in phases because of the need for engineering studies. He commented that the committee has come to appreciate the importance of proper planning and is looking to better manage this going forward. Mr. Kellogg explained that each application is evaluated against the understood priorities and how well they meet the criteria for use of CPA funds. He voiced his opinion that it would be beneficial if each committee would provide an organized priority list but noted that, to some extent, the board does not get that much specificity.

Ms. Settles asked about outreach for the program. Chairman Campbell explained that, other than Town Meeting presentations, the CPC does not have consistent outreach. Mr. Kellogg noted that the CPC does request permanent signage for projects funded with CPC funds. Ms. Settles asked about media coverage. Chairman Campbell stated that we have had very little in the past. Mr. Kellogg suggested use of a website to publicize the work of the CPC. Chairman Campbell contemplated a Facebook page, but Ms. Joubert explained that the town does not have a Facebook policy, so we would not have that ability.

Mr. Helwig voiced his desire to see more diversity in terms of projects, both with the types of projects and the people presenting. Ms. Settles asked if the projects that have been funded are reaching a variety of town residents. Chairman Campbell confirmed that they are. Ms. Joubert commented that projects may not be as diverse because they are generally proposed by individuals who are active in town government. Mr. Kellogg voiced his opinion that there has been a fair amount of diversity, as well as some public projects being brought forward by private individuals or organizations.

Ms. Joubert explained that many projects that are brought before the CPC are actually capital projects that are not a high enough priority to be included in the town's capital planning process. Chairman Campbell noted that the CPC had learned the hard way that capital and town projects involve a longer process. Ms. Settles questioned whether the CPC is currently capturing the needs of a broad section of society. Mr. Kellogg voiced his opinion that the CPC has done so. Ms. Settles expressed a desire to establish goals that will be considerate of doing so. Mr. Kellogg stated that he would like to see more private citizens approach this committee for a conservation restriction to preserve their property. Ms. Joubert voiced her understanding

that other towns have done buy downs on private houses with deed restrictions in order to help people remain in their houses when they could no longer afford to do so.

Ms. Settles suggested pursuing historic preservation restrictions as well. Ms. Joubert expressed a desire to determine where the gaps are and how we can address them, based on what the CPC has funded in the past. She also questioned what type of creative things can be done to educate ourselves and the public about the CPC. She discussed her struggles when applicants apply for CPC funding before exhausting other budget sources first and also applicants do not meet with the other boards as suggested in the application guidelines. Ms. Settles suggested adding more information about alternative resources to the website.

Chairman Campbell agreed with the importance of increasing outreach to make the public more aware of the efforts of the CPC. Mr. Clark suggested that, once the plan is developed, it would be a good opportunity to have a casual, open forum meeting to present the plan and gain input. In addition to educating the public, this meeting would also be worthy of media coverage. Mr. Kellogg suggested holding an annual CPC workshop where residents can bring in their ideas and team up with a CPC member who can help them understand and better navigate through the process.

Ms. Settles stated that she will be back before the CPC once she has met with other town staff and committees. Ms. Joubert agreed to provide Ms. Settles with meeting schedules for October and November.

### **Public Hearing to Consider FY2016 CPA Applications**

- **Historical Category**
  - **Historical Resources Preservation Reserve Fund (\$200,000)**
  - **Old Brigham Street Burial Ground GPR Search & Mapping (\$15,000)**
  - **White Cliffs Preservation Restriction (\$427,000 - \$642,000)**
  - **Historical Markers (\$12,500)**
- **Open Space/Recreation Category**
  - **Algonquin Regional High School Track & Turf Project (\$190,000)**
  - **Conservation Fund (\$400,000)**
  - **Northboro Youth Basketball Association Court Repair Project (\$60,000)**
  - **Peaslee Elementary School Playground (\$68,162)**
- **Affordable Housing Category**
  - **Affordable Housing Reserve Fund (\$500,000)**

Chairman Campbell explained that the basketball court repair project will be presented at the November meeting.

Norm Corbin commented that he would like to find a way to have joint meeting with the Open Space Committee and the Historical Commission, since every open space project has some sort of historical character.

Mr. Corbin discussed the following applications in the historical category:

#### **Historical Resources Preservation Reserve Fund (\$200,000)**

Mr. Corbin discussed the potential for some very large programs, resulting in a request for \$200,000 for the reserve fund. He noted potential expenditures as follows:

- Preservation restrictions
- Repair/Preservation of Cold Harbor Bridge at Church Street
- Wachusett Aqueduct – There is a proposal to locate trails over the aqueduct, and Mr. Corbin expressed a desire to be involved with any repair and/or restructuring in order to retain its character. He noted that the aqueduct is on the National Historic Register, so the Commission can apply for 50/50 funding.
- Howard Street Cemetery – Mr. Corbin noted that the Commission already has funding for a portion of the work, but the next set of gravestones to be done will be costly.

#### **Old Brigham Street Burial Ground GPR Search & Mapping (\$15,000)**

Mr. Corbin explained that he has received a new estimate of \$18,600 due to the trees on the property. He noted that this is the oldest cemetery in town that was forgotten and neglected and needs to be brought back. He voiced his belief that there could be as many as 100 burials on the site, and the land deserves respect. He explained that GPS can be used to locate the burial sites, as well as any stones that might have fallen and grown over. Once the locations have been determined, further research can be done to define who may be buried there. Mr. Corbin also noted that Ms. Comeau has a list of town volunteers who are willing to help, which may affect the eventual price. He stated that the CPC had previously funded a new sign for this burial site.

In response to a question by Mr. Berger, Mr. Corbin stated that the cemetery is just over 3 acres in size. Ms. Polanowicz asked about the number of companies providing this type of service. Mr. Corbin indicated that Ms. Comeau is trying to obtain three quotes.

#### **White Cliffs Preservation Restriction (\$427,000 - \$642,000)**

Mr. Corbin explained that the Massachusetts Historical Commission has determined that the White Cliffs does not meet the guidelines for a historical preservation restriction because of renovation work done to the structure when the function room was added. He noted that, if a buyer could be found who will restore it to its original character, there is a possibility that they could then apply and potentially get a restriction and funding. Ms. Polanowicz asked if the current owner would allow those changes to the building. Mr. Corbin stated that the owner

has not shown any interest in a preservation restriction, so we will need to try to encourage a buyer to do so. He noted that he is not optimistic about the proposed preservation restriction for Town Meeting but he is hesitant to withdraw the application in case something promising comes up. He indicated that the end result is that we are looking at a 2 million dollar sale price and approximately 4 million dollars to upgrade the property, and the numbers simply did not work. Ms. Polanowicz asked about the possibility of partitioning the property. Ms. Joubert explained that the town has tried to get the owners to meet with the Town Administrator about some potential scenarios, but they don't appear to have an interest in doing so. She also noted that most of the acreage is in front of the building, with the house itself being located in a residential zone while the front section is in the commercial zone.

Ms. Polanowicz commented that many people are talking about this issue but nobody has provided any solutions. Mr. Helwig stated that, given that the CPC will be voting on this application in January, there would need to be an enormous amount of information brought forth before then for him to vote in favor of spending \$500,000 in taxpayer money. He voiced doubt that this could happen between now and January. Ms. Polanowicz indicated that there is no harm in keeping the application in the queue for now. Chairman Campbell agreed.

Rick Leif explained that Harold Naughton attended the recent meeting of the Historical Commission and there was some discussion about a possible housing use. Mr. Leif commented that, if there appears to be any opportunity for an affordable housing use, the Northborough Affordable Housing Corporation (NAHC) will be happy to use CPC funds to bring that to fruition.

### **Historical Markers (\$12,500)**

Mr. Corbin discussed plans to locate three markers along the Assabet River (Chapinville, Woodside, Assabetville) and one in the new historic district (Peter Whitney parsonage).

Mr. Corbin commented that he has not seen an application for funding for the old fire engine. Ms. Joubert explained that one of the town's first pieces of fire equipment has been located in a museum in the Lowell area and there has been some interest in returning it to Northborough. She voiced her understanding that it is in pristine condition and can be purchased for approximately \$5,000. Ms. Polanowicz asked what we would do with it. Ms. Joubert stated that there has been discussion about exhibiting it in the foyer of the new fire station.

Applications for the Open Space/Recreation category were presented as follows:

### **Algonquin Regional High School Track & Turf Project (\$190,000)**

Robert Berger and Lori Borden appeared to discuss the proposal. Mr. Berger noted that poor conditions of the track and grass field, lack of lighting, and frost heaves on the track itself are negatively impacting the school's sports programs. He explained that the school is currently

paying approximately \$15,000 each year to rent inside turf fields for practices. Ms. Borden noted that a small group of private citizens is trying to address the situation, and have secured funds through the Booster Club to get a plan for the project. Ms. Polanowicz asked if the School Committee has seen the plans. Ms. Borden indicated that they have not, though the group had previously met with Charles Gobron to discuss the idea.

Ms. Borden stated that she has a list of other school systems that have used CPC funds for similar projects. Ms. Gillespie asked if the applicant has presented the proposal to the Southborough CPC. Ms. Borden indicated that they have not, and noted that they had received an email from Southborough indicating that they did not feel that this project would qualify for CPC funding. Ms. Borden also voiced her impression that the Southborough CPC assumed that the group was proposing to build a stadium, which is not their intent. Ms. Joubert agreed to follow up with the Southborough CPC. She also stated that turf itself cannot be funded.

Mr. Berger explained that the conditions of the playing field is excluding Algonquin from the ability to host championship games, since the MIAA does not allow the use of grass fields. Ms. Polanowicz asked if field improvements are included anywhere in the capital plan. Ms. Borden indicated they are not.

At the request of Chairman Campbell, Ms. Borden provided the following list of other communities that have installed turf fields or are in the process of doing so and used CPA funding for the lighting, subsurface, drainage etc. but not the for the purchase of the actual turf: Norwell, Medway, Georgetown, Concord-Carlisle, and Dudley-Webster.

Ms. Borden reiterated that CPC funding cannot be used for turf fields, but can be used for the substructures and other work.

Chairman Campbell asked for details of other towns that have installed similar projects using CPC funds and under what criteria they did so. Ms. Borden noted the following:

- Norwell installed lighting and tracks
- Medway installed lighting, concrete curbing, and the stone base for drainage
- Concord-Carlisle installed a third turf field and used CPC funding for Musco lighting, new baseball fields and new tennis courts
- Dudley-Webster is paying for fields with CPC funding

Mr. Kellogg asked about contingencies to ensure the project will be fully funded, and expressed a desire not to end up with a bunch of light poles and an unfinished project. Ms. Borden suggested that the CPC could award funds for the lighting and walkways contingent upon the rest of the project being completed, with the money to be returned to the CPC if the project does not move forward.

Mr. Helwig asked if the new track and field will be open to the public. Mr. Berger stated that other community organizations (youth athletics, Special Olympics, town residents) will also benefit from the new field. Ms. Borden reiterated that the current conditions are extremely

dangerous, so a patch job is needed in the very least. Mr. Kellogg suggested that the CPC will need to see what type of buy-in the School Department will provide. Ms. Borden indicated that the project already has buy-in from the Athletic Director and the Principal, and the Regional School Committee has been very supportive as well.

Mr. Berger discussed the possibility of using the school's roof for solar power, which could reduce energy costs and provide funds to be put towards future maintenance. Mr. Kellogg stated that this is a capital project on town land, so the project will need to comply with prevailing wage laws. Ms. Polanowicz commented that it is beneficial to get this project in front of as many people as possible prior to ramping up for Town Meeting.

Mr. Kellogg stated that, once the bids come back, the board will have a more accurate number with which to work. Ms. Borden noted that engineering costs will be approximately \$600,000, and reiterated that they are hoping to work out a way to use the solar option to fund the engineering work, leaving approximately \$190,000 from each town to do the actual construction.

Chairman Campbell suggested that this work could be covered by the CPC as a capital improvement of a recreational facility. He asked about the timing of the project, and whether the Booster Club is organizing the entire thing. Mr. Berger explained that the Boosters are a group of extremely interested parents who contributed some funding to get the proposal but have made it clear to the Superintendent that this will be a school project. Chairman Campbell voiced his understanding the group would like to start the project next summer and suggested that the schools will also need to be in agreement with that timeline.

Chairman Campbell asked if the lighting project can stand on its own. Ms. Borden stated that it cannot, but is best done as a component of the entire project. Ms. Borden asked if funds can be rolled over to the following year if the group is not able to initiate the project within the fiscal year when they are awarded.

Chairman Campbell explained that it took three years to get the viewing platform built at Memorial Field. He also suggested that, realistically, this project may not be approved at the next Town Meeting but it might be possible to move it forward to be ready for the 2016 Town Meeting. He reiterated that the CPC needs sufficient data and details before bringing it to Town Meeting.

Ms. Polanowicz commented that Ms. Joubert may be able to help get the project in front of the necessary boards and town staff. She also asked what the first funding requirement will be. Ms. Borden confirmed that money for the engineering costs would be the initial need. Ms. Polanowicz questioned whether engineering costs would qualify for CPC funds. Chairman Campbell asked whether this should be covered by the school's budget. Ms. Borden noted that her group was advised to investigate other funding options. Ms. Gillespie discussed the outdoor classroom project that was previously brought before the CPC. She recalled that it had been taken back to the schools and nothing ever materialized. Ms. Borden explained that Chris Johnson, Superintendent of Schools, had encouraged her to come to the CPC.

**Conservation Fund (\$400,000)** – Discussion of this application was delayed to the next meeting at the request of Chairman John Campbell.

### **Peaslee Elementary School Playground (\$68,162)**

Maggie Byron, Liz Nolan, and Jill Barnhardt presented plans for a new playground at Peaslee School. A PowerPoint slide presentation was used to illustrate existing conditions and the new structures that are being proposed. They explained that they are also working on additional fundraisers in hopes of adding even more equipment.

Ms. Byron noted that the current structure is over 20 years old, has no shade on any of the structures, provides limited accessibility, and is in considerable disrepair. She also commented that the playground equipment is used by town residents outside of school hours. She stated that they had originally considered repairing the existing wooden structure but decided that it would be more beneficial and cost effective to replace it.

Ms. Byron explained that the group has done a fair amount of research and selected Site Specifics as their vendor. She noted that the town Recreation Department has previously worked with this vendor and has provided great feedback. She stated that the custodial staff will continue to observe and assess the existing equipment until it can be replaced. She voiced her desire to do a community build with volunteer labor. She also expressed her opinion that the budget is accurate based on the research they have done.

Ms. Polanowicz asked if a contract has been signed with Site Specifics. Ms. Nolan stated that they have not yet done so, but have confirmed that they are on the state's approved vendor list. Ms. Polanowicz asked if the group had spoken to Kaboom. She explained that they had done quite a few playgrounds in Worcester and will give significant discounts for community build projects. Ms. Nolan indicated that they have interviewed other vendors. She also indicated that, since funds are being donated directly to the PTO, they are not required to go through the bid process. Chairman Campbell asked about renovating playgrounds on school land. Ms. Joubert agreed to research the matter. She also voiced surprise that other schools have not come to the CPC for this type of funding.

Chairman Campbell voiced support of the proposal and asked how the CPC can best guide the applicant through process. He also questioned what types of roadblocks to implementation might exist. Ms. Joubert agreed to investigate further. Mr. Clark asked how it is possible for this group to use volunteer labor when the Youth Basketball Association was not able to do so. Chairman Campbell voiced his desire to get confirmation that this project will not encounter issues similar to those of the basketball court project. Ms. Joubert agreed to discuss the situation with the town's Procurement Officer. Ms. Polanowicz suggested that it would be helpful to get a letter from the Superintendent of Schools voicing her support.

Mr. Clark asked if the PTO has raised any funds. Ms. Nolan explained that the group is hosting a fun run next week, and has already raised \$10,000. Chairman Campbell suggested that the



application be updated to reflect the fundraising being done by the PTO. Mr. Kellogg encouraged the applicant to follow-up with Ms. Joubert once she has had a chance to speak with the Procurement Officer.

### **Affordable Housing Reserve Fund (\$500,000)**

Mr. Leif introduced George Pember, who recently joined the NAHC board to provide legal advice. He also noted that Ms. Polanowicz had recused herself during the construction project, but will soon be returning as an active member. Mr. Leif explained that there are some minor issues to address with the project on Centre Drive that will exhaust the remainder of the primary funds awarded for that project. He noted that there were two contingency grants in the amount of \$52,000 each that will be returned to the CPC Housing reserve account. Ms. Joubert agreed to speak with the Town Treasure about how this should be handled to ensure that it is done correctly.

Chairman Campbell asked Mr. Leif to clarify whether he is asking the CPC for \$500,000 to be put in the reserve account or to award \$500,000 to the NAHC to be held by the town. Mr. Leif explained that the NAHC's goal is to define the next affordable housing project between now and next July, and to have the money available once they find something. He noted that many towns have a municipal housing trust to manage CPA monies, which allows them the ability to act without the need for a special town meeting.

Chairman Campbell noted that there is currently \$104,000 left over from the Centre Drive project, and suggested that the CPC vote to reallocate it to the NAHC since putting it in the reserve account will require a town meeting vote in order to use it.

Chairman Campbell explained that he had misunderstood the current application and believed it to be a request for funds to be placed in the Affordable Housing Reserve fund. Mr. Leif clarified that the request was for funds to be awarded to the NAHC to be held by the town.

Mr. Helwig stated that he is not in favor of this approach as he believes it is an abdication of the CPC's role and it is not clear if the money will be spent in accordance with the plan. Chairman Campbell voiced his opinion that housing could come up quickly, and the NAHC wants to be poised to react. Mr. Leif confirmed this to be a major concern. He noted that having \$500,000 awarded at Town Meeting would allow the NAHC to actively search for available real estate.

Chairman Campbell asked if the application can be written to reflect potential properties that might be available for purchase. He also questioned how this application differs from the one that the CPC approved for funding the purchase of two units at Hitching Post Lane.

Mr. Clark voiced support of the concept, but agreed that good intentions only go so far. He suggested that the difference with the Hitching Post Lane application is that there was a specific property that was being pursued.

Chairman Campbell commented that the town retains control over the money. Mr. Helwig asked who will make the decision about spending it. Ms. Polanowicz recalled that the way the warrant article was written for the purchase of the unit at Hitching Post Lane made it possible for the NAHC to use the funds elsewhere. She voiced her opinion that this circumstance is exactly the same and agreed that the board should grant funds to the NAHC and allow them to decide how best to use them. Mr. Helwig reiterated that he would not be in favor of this approach, which allows a small group of people to decide how to use taxpayer money. Ms. Polanowicz commented that, while she can appreciate Mr. Helwig's concerns, she also recognizes that the group in question has demonstrated their ability to use taxpayer money responsibly in the past. Mr. Kellogg agreed that this proposal moves the vetting process and decision making to a very select group, and the CPC needs to decide if they are comfortable in doing so.

Michele Gillespie left the meeting.

Ms. Polanowicz asked if there is an entity that falls under governmental authority that can act in this capacity without cause for concern. Mr. Leif suggested that a municipal housing trust would fall under the town's control and could then direct funds appropriately to an affordable housing trust. He explained that, when the NAHC was formed, there were CPA monies being reserved for affordable housing year after year with no projects ever being brought forth. During discussions, it was decided that the money could be used more effectively through a private non-profit than a municipal housing trust. Mr. Leif explained that the challenge is that a property needs to become available during the window of time when CPC applications are being submitted. He suggested that the NAHC provides a vehicle for the use of housing funds, and is willing to work with the town regarding the decision making process for allocation of CPC monies.

Mr. Kellogg asked about the possibility of working with the NAHC, given the projects that they have successfully completed to date and the confidence that the CPC has that they will invest in projects that will meet with the CPC's approval. Mr. Clark asked if there exists sufficient legal framework. Mr. Kellogg voiced his opinion that Mr. Leif has gone to some trouble to define restrictions. Mr. Leif stated that the NAHC is agreeable to bring the issue to a legal town entity, with the condition that funds not be disbursed until the entity has agreed to the expenditure. Mr. Helwig requested that the CPC solicit Town Counsel for an opinion. Mr. Leif noted that there are towns that have funded non-profits in advance of a particular project being identified, with a list of criteria to be met before the money is released. He questioned who in town the NAHC would need to go to with a project to gain support of it as an effective use of the money. He also stated that the warrant article and funding agreement can specify that all criteria must be met before the funds can be expended.

Chairman Campbell asked Mr. Leif to come back with some refinements to the application. Mr. Leif stated that he was unclear about what else he needs to do. Ms. Joubert indicated that she will contact the Community Preservation Coalition and the Town of Yarmouth for additional information regarding this approach. Chairman Campbell stated that Mr. Leif needs to be clear in his application that he is seeking a grant for the NAHC for the acquisition of affordable

housing. Mr. Leif agreed to work with Ms. Joubert to satisfy the CPC's request. Ms. Joubert agreed to investigate the details of the NAHC application for the unit at Hitching Post Lane. Ms. Polanowicz expressed appreciation to Mr. Leif for his efforts, especially with regard to the four new senior affordable units.

Meeting adjourned at 10:00PM.

Respectfully submitted,  
Elaine Rowe  
Board Secretary