



# TOWN OF NORTHBOROUGH Community Preservation Committee

Town Hall Offices • 63 Main Street • Northborough, MA 01532 • 508-393-5019 • 508-393-6996 Fax

---

Approved 1/28/16

## Community Preservation Committee Meeting Minutes December 4, 2014

**Members present:** John Campbell, Chairman; Todd Helwig; Chris Kellogg; Michelle Gillespie; Andy Clark

**Members excused:** Peter Martin; Sean Durkin; Debra Comeau; Kathleen Polanowicz

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

**Chairman Campbell called the meeting to order at 7:18PM.**

### Continued 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)

**Peaslee Elementary School Playground, update from Playground Committee** – Chairman Campbell noted that the Playground Committee has provided an update, but suggested tabling the discussion until the board is ready to make a final decision.

**Northboro Youth Basketball Association Court Repair Project** – Chairman Campbell indicated that no further discussion is needed for this application.

**Conservation Fund** – Chairman Campbell indicated that he has nothing concrete to share other than the Open Space Committee is pursuing properties as part of the tri-town partnership and is trying to determine what funding may be needed.

**Algonquin Regional High School Track & Turf Project** – Chairman Campbell noted that the CPC does not currently have a project on which it can act. Mr. Berger explained that the Superintendent of Schools has expressed interest in forming their own subcommittee, so the project is on hold until they do so. Chairman Campbell commented that the CPC will be passing on the application for this year's cycle.

**Historical Markers & Historical Resources Preservation Reserve Fund** – Chairman Campbell noted that the discussion of these two applications is complete and ready for a decision by the CPC.

**White Cliffs Preservation Restriction** – Chairman Campbell indicated that this application is not actionable, given the current situation.

**Old Brigham Street Burial Ground GPR Search & Mapping** – Mr. Berger explained that he had dropped off a competitive proposal and would welcome the opportunity to do the work. Ms. Joubert stated that each member of the Historical Commission has been provided with a copy of Mr. Berger's quote as well as those from other vendors. She noted that, if the project is funded, it will need to go through the regular bid process. Chairman Campbell commented that the project seems feasible and does fall within the guidelines for allowable use of CPC funds.

Chairman Campbell asked Mr. Berger how he can determine when he has located a gravesite. Mr. Berger explained that his equipment is able to differentiate disturbed soils from non-disturbed soils from the original burial. Ms. Joubert asked if it is possible to determine the number of bodies in a grave. Mr. Berger indicated that he cannot usually do so, but it is sometimes possible to surmise that a large mass might be more than one body. Mr. Kellogg asked Mr. Berger if he has experience with surveying graveyards of this antiquity. Mr. Berger noted that the technician he employs is well known in Virginia for his work on Civil War gravesites. Chairman Campbell explained that this committee will decide if this is a viable project, and suggested that Mr. Berger discuss his proposal and qualifications with the Historical Commission.

**Affordable Housing Reserve Fund** – Rick Leif agreed to work with the Northborough Housing Authority to try to get some specificity around projects they might be interested in doing. He suggested that allocating funds to a reserve fund is similar to what was done by the Town of Yarmouth when Habitat for Humanity did not have a specific address for a project but did have details about the type of project they were interested in pursuing.

Mr. Leif explained that he has had some general discussions with the Northborough Housing Authority about the possibility of developing additional senior housing on a vacant parcel adjacent to Village Drive, and they have some interest in doing so. He suggested that CPC money could be used for some of the pre-development work for that project, fundraising efforts could support the development of some home ownership opportunities for low income families, and \$500,000 from the CPC could help fund a more costly project to get more people off of the Housing Authority's waiting list. He also voiced his desire to do this project as a town partnership with the state, where all units could be subsidized units.

Mr. Leif reiterated his desire to locate available properties in town to create home ownership opportunities for low income families. He also voiced his understanding that Habitat for Humanity has a need for 3-bedroom housing for families, given that state law stipulates that siblings of different sexes over the age of 6 must have separate bedrooms. He stated that, if an opportunity for renovation of an existing property or acquisition of a parcel of land presents itself, he would be interested in working with Habitat for Humanity to develop it. He noted that the \$500,000 being requested for the affordable housing reserve fund could be used for these types of projects and suggested following the Yarmouth model, which would require the NAHC to come back to the CPC to present details of the project for approval before moving forward.

Mr. Clark discussed his understanding that the Cambridge CPC puts 80% of their funding toward affordable housing, and has some creative ways to get these projects done. Ms. Joubert agreed to follow-up with the Cambridge CPC for further details.

Ms. Joubert discussed her conversation with John Coderre about the NAHC's proposal and the Yarmouth model. She noted that his concerns were:

1. Is it legal?
2. How is the interest of the town protected?
3. How can the matter be properly vetted?

Ms. Joubert voice her opinion that it should be legal to do so under some sort of funding agreement, which Mr. Coderre suggested might need to be tightened up a bit more. In addition, he believes that the Board of Selectmen might need to be involved in the process so that they could make the ultimate decision about use of the money without the matter having to go back to Town Meeting. Ms. Gillespie asked why Mr. Coderre does not think the CPC is qualified to make that decision. Ms. Joubert indicated that Mr. Coderre would be more comfortable with the decision being made by the Board of Selectmen since they are our chief elected officials.

Chairman Campbell asked if the discussion about the Housing Trust has been abandoned. Ms. Joubert suggested that it is a discussion that this board should have with the Town Administrator. She noted that the formation of a Housing Trust was presented and approved at Town Meeting years ago, but was never acted upon.

Mr. Kellogg asked how the board should move forward with this matter. Chairman Campbell voiced his opinion that the Town Administrator and Board of Selectmen will look at what we have in place and determine the criteria by which the Selectmen will decide whether a project is an appropriate use of CPC funds. He also commented that the money will stay with the town and will only be released when a project is approved.

Mr. Kellogg disagreed with the concept of the Board of Selectmen policing CPC money, and suggested that this board is more closely aligned with overseeing the objectives of and keeping with the spirit of the CPA. Mr. Clark agreed that an elected board would be better suited, as they were elected to be responsible for taxpayer interests. He suggested that, if the CPC has already authorized the NAHC to spend the money, then the Board of Selectmen is a valid choice to actually sign the check. Mr. Kellogg commented that he would not be in favor of a municipal housing trust.

Mr. Leif discussed the benefit of the CPC having the authority to disburse the funds. He noted that, throughout the process, there is much discussion and the result is that this board has a good feeling about what the ultimate objective is. Therefore, when it comes time to seek disbursement of the funds, it makes sense that this board would be better prepared to make such a decision given their historical knowledge of the applicant and the project. He voiced concern about the extra burden that the NAHC will face when trying to convince the Board of Selectmen of the viability of a project. Chairman Campbell agreed, and suggested that perhaps the CPC could present the case to the Board of Selectmen on behalf of the applicant.

Mr. Helwig suggested that the approach may be similar to getting a construction loan from a bank, where a portion of the funds are distributed throughout the various phases of the project as opposed to one lump sum at the onset. He stated that he would not be in favor of such an approach, but he is also not in favor of awarding funds just because the applicant has furnished the board with an address. He also asked if the town would get a return on anything with a Habitat project. Mr. Leif indicated that, to the extent that any of the monies were not used, they would be returned to the town.

Mr. Kellogg commented that, if the CPC were the disbursing authority, it would not be difficult to quickly convene a quorum to review a project. He questioned how easily the Board of Selectmen can do so. Ms. Joubert noted that the Board of Selectmen is a 5 member board that meets twice a month.

Mr. Leif suggested that he, John Campbell, John Coderre, and Kathy Joubert meet to work through the mechanics. Mr. Kellogg emphasized the importance of such a meeting taking place in the immediate future. Mr. Clark stated that, while he is not opposed to the CPC being the authorizing agent, the charter of the Board of Selectmen is specifically to distribute funds. Mr. Leif expressed agreement with whatever method the town decides is best. Mr. Campbell asked Ms. Joubert her thoughts on the process. Ms. Joubert voiced her opinion that Mr. Coderre would ask the CPC Chair to appear before the Board of Selectmen to present the project and make a recommendation. Mr. Clark suggested that Kathleen Polanowicz would be the logical designee to advocate for the NAHC with the Board of Selectmen.

Mr. Helwig stated that he is not in favor of the NAHC bidding on a property at a foreclosure auction. Mr. Leif suggested that the NAHC could obtain funding from sources for those types of purchases, and agreed not to use CPC funds to bid on auction properties.

Mr. Leif reiterated that, while he has no objection to the Board of Selectmen making the final decision about disbursement of funds, he would like a recommendation from the CPC to be part of the process. Chairman Campbell stated that, if the agreement stipulates that the NAHC should come back to the CPC prior to the project being presented to the Board of Selectmen, it would provide a means for overcoming any obstacles before they arise.

Mr. Kellogg asked for clarification of the amount coming back into the housing reserve. Mr. Leif voiced his understanding that it will be \$156,000, but noted that John Coderre did not openly agree with that figure. Ms. Joubert explained that the two contingency grants of \$52,000 each (2011 and 2013) that were not used will need to be voted on at Town Meeting in order to move the funds from one account to another. Mr. Kellogg commented that there will be a balance of \$344,000 from new money that will need to be allocated, for a total of \$500,000 for the Housing Reserve Fund.

**Community Preservation Plan** – Chairman Campbell asked when Trish Settles will be ready to come back to the CPC. Ms. Joubert explained that Ms. Settles has expressed a desire to work up a draft to be discussed at the February meeting.

**Next meeting** – January 8, 2015.

**Minutes of the Meeting of November 6, 2014** - Chris Kellogg made a motion to approve the Minutes of the Meeting of November 6, 2014 as submitted. Todd Helwig seconded; vote unanimous.

**Adjourned at 8:38PM.**

Respectfully submitted,  
Elaine Rowe  
Board Secretary