



Approved 1/17/19

**Community Preservation Committee
Meeting Minutes
November 2, 2017**

Members in attendance: John Campbell, Chairman; Kathleen Polanowicz; Leslie Harrison; Sean Durkin; Norm Corbin; Todd Helwig; Andy Clark; Peter Martin

Others in attendance: Kathy Joubert, Town Planner; Elaine Rowe, Board Secretary; Jason Little, Town Accountant; Allison Lane, Recreation Director; Rick Leif, Northborough Affordable Housing Corporation; Rae Carlson, Northborough Affordable Housing Corporation; Tim Firment, Habitat for Humanity; Chris Lindquist, Northborough Public Library; Gordon Hart; Unitarian Church; Donna Morris, Unitarian Church; George Pember, Unitarian Church; Amy Poretsky, Town Common Committee; Diane Smith, Town Common Committee

Chairman Campbell called the meeting to order at 7:05PM

Consideration of Minutes – Peter Martin made a motion to accept the Minutes of the Meetings of April 6, 2017 and October 5, 2017 as submitted. Kathleen Polanowicz seconded; motion carries by unanimous vote.

Review of Community Preservation Fund (budgeted revenue and reserve & fund balances) with Jason Little, Town Accountant – Mr. Little discussed the report that he prepares annually for the board that shows the estimated revenues from the Community Preservation Act (CPA). He noted that the town is going into the 14th year of the CPA and, to date, the town has realized over 2 million dollars in state matching funds because of the adoption of the CPA.

Mr. Little noted that the state currently reimburses at a rate of 17% and the percentage will likely continue to decrease as more towns adopt the CPA. For FY19, he estimates \$549,000 in revenues and noted that the spreadsheet provided (copy attached) shows the reserves and fund balances, with an unreserved balance of \$698,000. Mr. Little instructed the board to be cognizant of the costs for White Cliffs. Chairman Campbell indicated that he would like to have the borrowing discussion at the next meeting. Ms. Joubert noted that the board will need an article on the Town Meeting warrant for the White Cliffs debt payment. She also noted that there is some question about whether the town will continue to own it. Mr. Little indicated that, if the property were to be transferred, the town would have to call the debt and pay it off. In response to a request from Chairman Campbell, Mr. Little agreed to attend the next meeting to further discuss the matter.

Public Hearing RE: FY2019 CPA Applications

- **Recreation Department**
 - **Field Lighting at Melican Middle School - \$602,250**
- **Northborough Free Library**
 - **Preserving the Gale Library Building - \$34,750**
- **Northborough Affordable Housing Corporation - \$200,000**
- **Northborough Town Common Committee**
 - **Town Common – Phase III - \$229,920**
- **Open Space Committee**
 - **Conservation Fund - \$200,000**
- **First Parish Church @ 40 Church Street**
 - **Handicap Access Ramp - \$52,142**
 - **Restore or replace windows - \$103,815 (restore) or \$49,077 (replace)**

Recreation Department, Field Lighting at Melican Middle School, \$603,250 – Recreation Director, Allie Lane discussed her request for funds. She explained that there has been lighting at the Middle School since the 1980's and recently a pole fell over during school hours and all of the lights smashed on the basketball court. She noted that the town had all of the other poles tested and all are equally rotted so they were removed immediately. Ms. Lane indicated that the costs will be shared between the Recreation Department and the School Department.

Ms. Lane noted that she immediately started to investigate replacing the lights that are needed for the football and soccer programs. She explained that temporary lights were secured at a cost of \$8600, which puts Northborough/Southborough Football at a disadvantage by having to come up with that money. She emphasized that the football program cannot survive without lights.

Ms. Lane expressed a desire to create a full-size football field, and noted that lights today are much more specific and will not impact the neighbors. She also indicated that the lights will not be illuminated after 10:00PM.

Ms. Lane commented that the estimate of \$602,250 is the worst-case scenario. She also confirmed that the School Superintendent and the schools support this project.

Ms. Polanowicz noted that the field is used by Northborough/Southborough Football and questioned whether there will be an issue with the Lacrosse organization seeking to use the field. Ms. Lane noted that the Lacrosse group is happy with their Southborough location. She also commented about the quality of the fields at Melican Middle School, and voiced her desire to encourage more groups to use them.

Mr. Corbin noted that multiple bids are required, and asked when Ms. Lane expects to see more. Ms. Lane noted that, since funds are not available until July 2018, she did not obtain multiple quotes. She also stated that it will not be possible for the lights to be up before football season. She mentioned that she is hopeful that the work can be done before the onset of winter weather next year so that the lights can be ready for use in the spring of 2019.

In response to a question from Mr. Corbin about why we cannot secure quotes prior to Town Meeting, Ms. Joubert explained that quotes are only valid for a certain period of time, depending on the vendor. Ms. Lane noted that work cannot start while the football season is in session. Mr. Corbin asked if Ms. Lane has included an allowance for a year of inflation. Ms. Lane confirmed that she has.

Mr. Helwig voiced concern that there does not appear to be a big user base for the fields, so the cost per public user is high. He also asked if the soccer groups using these fields include NYSA, and Ms. Lane confirmed that it does. She noted that soccer groups will be there every day of the week that football is not. Chairman Campbell commented that the users of the Schunder field are likely fewer than those for the Middle School fields. He voiced his opinion that the proposal is a good idea, and will improve the safety of a well-used field. He mentioned that the board has been lectured not to go to Town Meeting without valid cost specifics, and asked town staff to weigh in on the process. Ms. Polanowicz asked if it is possible to go in with a “not to exceed” figure.

Mr. Durkin explained that the Recreation Department has opted to go with Musco as the vendor for the field lights as they are state of the art, and will handle both the design and installation. He noted that, years ago, a benefactor purchased the lights and he installed them, but it is not possible to do so now. Ms. Lane commented that the estimate to hire an electrical contractor, provided by Musco, is \$125,000 but she is hoping it will be much less. Chairman Campbell asked about excavation and restoration of the area. Ms. Lane indicated that the DPW does not foresee any issues. She also voiced her opinion that there may be ways to save money on the project, but she provided the worst-case scenario.

Chairman Campbell voiced skepticism about the amount of engineering work that is needed, and suggested that the project would involve a two-year CPA cycle in order to adhere to the process that the town has told us we must follow in the past. He also emphasized the need to find a way to get good numbers, which is impossible without a bid specification. Mr. Helwig voiced his opinion that the project is not affordable.

Chairman Campbell reiterated that the Town Administrator has previously advised the board that when we do not know the real costs, the project needs to go to a two-year process. Ms. Joubert noted that the Recreation Department and DPW went through the exercise, and Ms. Lane went with the best available information. Ms. Lane explained that she is legally required to award the project to the lowest bidder. Ms. Polanowicz asked if it is possible to bond for this project, given the cost. Mr. Helwig suggested that the board also has the option of denying the project. Ms. Harrison asked what would happen if the project were denied. Ms. Lane indicated that the cost to participate in the football program would need to be raised to cover the lighting costs or the football program would need to find another field in Southborough. In response to a question from Mr. Durkin, Ms. Lane stated that she believes the Middle School is still on septic, but agreed to confirm that fact.

Northborough Free Library, Preserving the Gale Library Building, \$34,750 – Library Director Chris Lindquist provided the board members with a notebook containing details of the application and the work that is needed. He noted that he had received updated information since the October 1 application submission, and had provided a memo earlier today to convey the updates.

Mr. Lindquist explained that the library is a historic building dating back to 1894 and the front portion has experienced some water penetration over the past 8 years resulting in damage to the plaster walls, interior molding, and ceilings. Photographs demonstrating the damage were provided to the board.

Mr. Lindquist indicated that he had received quotes from several contractors (masonry, roof, paint, plastering). He also noted that the results of lead testing were included in the application packet, and, though they show no lead was found in the paint, the plaster did test positive for lead. Mr. Lindquist commented that the work will be done next fall if funding of the project is approved at Town Meeting

Ms. Polanowicz asked if there are interim repairs that can be done to prevent further damage through the winter months. Mr. Lindquist stated that the issue is not urgent, but agreed to ask what can be done in the interim.

Ms. Polanowicz asked about the revised quote. Mr. Lindquist noted that his original estimate was based on verbal quotes, but formal quotes require the cost to be revised to \$48,070. Mr. Corbin asked if the quotes received are valid for 8 months. Mr. Lindquist indicated that he did not ask. Mr. Corbin reiterated his preference to have bids in hand now.

In response to a question from Ms. Polanowicz, Mr. Lindquist confirmed that the entire roof has been inspected. Ms. Polanowicz expressed a desire not to be facing additional roof work in the next few years.

Mr. Corbin commented that the project will be presented to the Historic District Commission, but does not fit the criteria for use of historical preservation funds. Ms. Polanowicz asked if the Friends of the Library can participate in the funding. Mr. Lindquist explained that the Friends contribute about \$20,000 annually, and those funds go toward programmatic needs. He voiced his opinion that the Friends are likely not in the position to undertake this type of funding. Ms. Polanowicz suggested that the library consider establishing a foundation board.

Chairman Campbell asked Mr. Corbin about the prioritization of the historical projects. Mr. Corbin indicated that the question will be addressed at the Commission's next meeting.

Mr. Lindquist advised the board that 127,000 people use the library annually.

Northborough Affordable Housing Corporation (NAHC), \$200,000 – Prior to addressing the FY19 application, Rick Leif and Tim Firment explained that they are seeking approval of an extension of their 2015 \$100,000 and 2016 \$100,000 funding into 2019. The CPC had previously voted to extend the 2015 funding to July 2018. Mr. Firment expressed his appreciation to the board for allocating the money for the project to renovate the two houses.

Mr. Firment noted that students from Assabet Valley Regional Technical High School are onsite every day they can be and are currently focusing on the smaller house that is 50% complete, which allows the Habitat team to focus on the larger building. He stated that the downside is that they must work within the school schedule. He explained that the larger house has proven to be a challenge and had to be rebuilt floor by floor. He stated that the smaller house is expected to be completed by Spring 2018 but the larger house will likely take all of next year to finish.

Mr. Leif explained that Habitat for Humanity has been paying expenses through funding they already have and had agreed to hold off on spending CPC money, but it is now obvious that they will likely need to spend the \$100,000 they were awarded. He expressed a need to work out a process for making those payments. He noted that the \$100,000 likely won't be expended by year end and asked the board to extend it to December 31, 2018.

Kathleen Polanowicz made a motion to extend the funding for Habitat for Humanity to December 31, 2018. Todd Helwig seconded; motion carries by unanimous vote.

Mr. Leif explained that the NAHC has \$100,000 left from the \$500,000 allocated in 2016. He noted that the NAHC was awarded an additional \$100,000 in both 2016 and 2017 for future development so they currently have \$300,000 and there is a requirement that the funds be spent within 2 years. He indicated that, last year, the board had granted an extension of the 2015 funds to July 1, 2018, which is also the deadline for spending the 2016 funds. Mr. Leif requested that the deadline for spending this \$200,000 (2015 & 2016 funds) be extended to July 1, 2019.

Mr. Leif discussed the possibility that funds could be used for one or more of the following:

- acquisition of land near the sewage treatment facility
- take control of property at the Westborough State Hospital
- development of an open lot on Colonial Drive for more senior affordable housing

Kathleen Polanowicz made a motion to approve an extension of the 2015 and 2016 funds to July 1, 2019. Peter Martin seconded; motion carries by unanimous vote.

Mr. Leif next addressed the application for FY19 funds. He noted that, in 2015, the board approved \$500,000 for a reserve fund for future development. He voiced his opinion that \$500,000 is still a good number to have available to allow the NAHC to act should an opportunity present itself. He commented that the \$200,000 being requested will be added to the reserve balance of \$300,000 to rebuild the fund. He also noted that, should an opportunity be identified, the NAHC is required to come back to this board for approval of the project and then to the Board of Selectmen for authorization to spend the money.

Chairman Campbell cited the NAHC's previous work, and commented that it is hard to debate the merits of the application, but it is simply a matter of what the board has available to allocate. Mr. Leif stated that, at a minimum, the 10% required to be set aside could be awarded to the NAHC as opposed to being put in the general fund. Chairman Campbell mentioned that the board allocates funds to the unreserved fund when it does not see a strong need for it to be used elsewhere, but does support allocating to the NAHC because it recognizes that it is being used actively. He commented that he does not see any reason not to continue to follow that path.

In response to a question from Ms. Polanowicz about additional volunteers being sought for the Habitat for Humanity project, Mr. Leif indicated that there may be a need for more as the project progresses. Ms. Harrison asked about the sweat equity that is typically required for Habitat projects. Mr. Leif noted that the families for these homes have been selected and will be required to do 500 hours of work each, some of which has already begun.

Northborough Town Common Committee, Town Common – Phase III, \$229,920 – Ms. Poretsky explained that, in 2016, the board had approved phase 1 of the project, which included purchase of the property and demolition of the existing structure. She noted that, just after the 2016 Town Meeting, the owner of 20 Rear Gale Street had expressed an interest in donating the parcel to the town, and that information was passed on to Ms. Joubert to work out how that donation can be done. She voiced her understanding that the owner is currently working to place the land into a trust, and everything else was put on hold until all of the parcels can be combined.

Ms. Poretsky indicated that she had spoken to the DPW about the budget to add to the construction of the project after the land is donated and they provided an estimate of \$229,000. Ms. Smith commented that several of the plants on the properties can be saved, and waiting to do all of the work at once will enable the group to save money.

Ms. Poretsky reminded the board that the Town Common Committee had received a grant from the state, and Ms. Joubert discussed the possibility of acquiring additional grant monies in the future. Mr. Corbin recognized that the increase will put the project at a cost of over one million dollars, and voiced surprise that it is that high. In response to questions from Ms. Polanowicz about reimbursing the municipality for work done by town staff, Ms. Joubert agreed to ask the DPW Director to come to a future meeting to address these questions and any other concerns.

Ms. Polanowicz voiced her opinion that the design costs seem high. She also commented that she supports the project but noted that the cost of the project seems to have increased exponentially. Chairman Campbell agreed, and expressed concern about going back to town residents for a great deal more money, which he believes will be difficult to defend. He emphasized that the citizens deserve a closer look at the project and its costs. Ms. Polanowicz questioned why the budget increased so much, especially given that the 20 Rear Gale parcel is to be donated. Ms. Joubert agreed to have the DPW Director come to the December meeting to discuss the budget and project.

Open Space Committee, Conservation Fund, \$200,000 – Chairman Campbell explained that the Open Space Committee is interested in adding to the Conservation Fund to allow them to continue to pursue opportunities as they arise. He commented that they do not see a project of the magnitude of the Schunder parcel on the immediate horizon, but there are a few things that may come up over the next few years. In response to a question from Mr. Helwig, Chairman Campbell indicated that the balance in the Conservation Fund is currently \$800,000. Mr. Clark asked if this is the only open space request for this round of funding. Chairman Campbell commented that the lighting project proposed by the Recreation Director may also fall in this category, depending on how the board views it. Ms. Polanowicz reiterated that Open Space is entitled to the 10% allocation as required by the CPA.

First Parish Church @ 40 Church Street, Handicap Access Ramp at First Parish Church, \$52,142 - Gordon Hart, Donna Morris, and George Pember all appeared before the board to discuss the request. Mr. Hart noted the need for a handicapped accessible ramp on the west side of the Meeting House. He indicated that they plan to make use of an existing window to create a doorway, and confirmed that the ramp will be ADA compliant as well as architecturally harmonious with the structure. He explained that they have received one bid at this time, resulting in the request for \$52,142 that reflects the amount needed after the church contributes 10% from their own funds. Mr. Corbin recalled that the board had awarded \$9,000 last year for a ramp. Mr. Hart indicated that the money has not yet been spent and can

be subtracted from this request. Ms. Morris provided the board with a list of groups/events that use the facility, and emphasized the importance of having a ramp. In response to concerns voiced by Mr. Corbin, Ms. Joubert explained that the church is a private entity and is not subject to prevailing wage laws. Mr. Corbin expressed a desire to get additional quotes.

First Parish Church @ 40 Church Street, Restore or replace windows at First Parish Church, \$103,815 (restore) or \$49,077 (replace) – Mr. Hart discussed the church’s second application, which is a request for funds to restore or replace the windows in both buildings. He noted that they were previously before the board and were advised that it would not be possible to install modern windows. He explained that Harvey makes a historic looking window for which he obtained a quote (15 windows in Parish Hall and 22 in the Meeting House). In addition, he has found a contractor who restores old windows using the same materials. He noted that this was found to be very labor-intensive and costly but definitely meets the goal of restoration and improved efficiency. Mr. Corbin commented that the oldest windows are likely from the 1940s, so not really that old.

Mr. Clark asked how the applicant arrived at a 10% contribution from the church. Mr. Hart explained that they thought they should pay something and that was what they determined they can afford.

Chairman Campbell asked if the replacement windows qualify to funding by the CPC. Mr. Corbin voiced his opinion that they do. Ms. Joubert agreed. Mr. Helwig asked if there is a preservation restriction in place for the work done on the steeple. Ms. Joubert confirmed that there is.

Mr. Corbin explained that the church will go before the Historic District Commission for review of their projects, and the Commission will confirm that they meet the requirements in the historic district and will provide a letter of support.

In response to a question from Chairman Campbell about the priority of the two projects, Mr. Hart indicated that handicapped-accessible ramp would be the top priority.

Mr. Hart suggested that the window project might be possible to do in two phases. Ms. Polanowicz asked about other funding sources for the church. Mr. Hart noted that they church receives contributions from its members, rental income from the cell tower, and an endowment. Ms. Polanowicz asked about a capital improvement plan. Ms. Morris explained that they have done them in the past but the latest one is not recent. She also mentioned that the church has done significant improvements including replacement of the crumbling marble stairs, installation of vinyl siding and a new heating system, new roofs, and removal of asbestos shingles.

Next Meeting Date – December 7, 2017

White Cliffs Committee – After a brief discussion, it was agreed that the White Cliffs Committee will comprise the following:

- Kathleen Polanowicz – CPC designee
- Norm Corbin – Historic District Commission designee
- Bill Pantazis – Board of Selectmen designee
- Two at-large members to be named

Meeting adjourned at 9:20PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Elaine Rowe
Board Secretary