



TOWN OF NORTHBOROUGH Community Preservation Committee

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Approved 4/18/16

March 21, 2016
Community Preservation Committee
Meeting Minutes

Members Present: John Campbell, Chairman; Todd Helwig, Norm Corbin, Kathleen Polanowicz, Peter Martin, Chris Kellogg, Michelle Gillespie

Others Present: John Coderre, Town Administrator; Albert Rex, MacRostie Historic Advisors; Kathy Joubert, Town Planner; Jason Perreault, Board of Selectmen member; Leslie Harrison, Planning Board and Historic District Commission member

Meeting began at 6:00pm.

Discussion RE: Purchase of White Cliffs, 167 Main Street

John Campbell and Todd Helwig provided a summary of activity to date:

- At the March 9, 2016 CPC meeting, it was decided to pursue leasing the property. The seller rejected the offer from the Town to lease the property. Leasing is no longer an option.
- Seller willing to sell property to the Town for \$1,750,000.
- Seller has removed the stained glass windows and brass fireplace box and these items are being stored off-site. Town would need to repurchase these items for \$20,000.
- Seller would charge \$5000 per month from April to closing date.
- If Town is interested in purchasing the property, an appraisal needs to be done.
- CPA administration funds cannot be used to pay for the monthly cost prior to the closing date. Might be possible to use CPA administrative funds to pay for access agreement for month of April.

Mr. Campbell asked each member to state their opinion regarding the potential purchase of the property utilizing CPA funds.

Kathleen Polanowicz - strongly recommends the Town purchase this property.

Norm Corbin - agrees with the purchase, believes the Town should do the due diligence to determine if the Town should retain the building and property or should the building be sold to a private party. The vote should be brought to the voters at town meeting.

Peter Martin - in favor of having town meeting vote on the purchase. Where are funds coming from? Mr. Campbell explained there is approximately \$800,000 of CPA funds available. Approximately \$500,000 from historic reserves \$300,000 in unreserved funds.

Todd Helwig – the preservation of this building has been discussed with CPC for over two years. Priority of the historic preservation groups, it should be brought to town meeting for a vote.

Chris Kellogg – in favor of bringing to town meeting for a vote.

Sean Durkin – what is the Town going to do with the building? How much will cost to renovate the building? In favor of going to town meeting.

Michelle Gillespie – in favor of bringing it to town meeting. Town has invested heavily in open space and affordable housing with CPA funds. Historic groups are in favor of purchasing the property. Timely purchase as the Town celebrates its 250th anniversary.

Mr. Campbell shared a message from Andy Clark who was not able to attend the meeting this evening. Mr. Clark recognizes the significant historical importance of this building. What will the Town use the building for? Has contacted a group of restaurant owners in Worcester to discuss their possible interest in the property.

Mr. Campbell concluded there is unanimous support of the CPC to bring forward an article at town meeting to purchase the property.

Members discussed many outstanding questions:

- What could the building be used for?
- Costs to renovate the building? Coed compliance costs?
- Who will maintain the property if the Town votes to purchase the site?
- Would the Town be interested in leasing the property to a private party?
- Should only CPA funds be used? Should general funds also be used?
- What is the best use of the property?
- Should bonding be utilized?

John Coderre addressed some of the questions/concerns:

- Maximum term for bond is twenty years. Cannot exceed life expectancy of the project.
- Need to weigh impact of cost implications.
- All prior projects on the CIP have had unanimous support of the Board of Selectmen, Financial Planning Committee and Appropriations Committee. This project is not following the standard process for capital expenditures. Understandable as to why it's not but will raise many questions at town meeting we need to be prepared for.
- Need to explain to town meeting that we are in the middle of the process.
- If bonded, CPA revenues are guaranteed until the debt is paid off.

Albert Rex addressed some of the questions/concerns:

- Best approach is to mothball the building and find an individual or group interested in a long-term lease arrangement.
- Town makes minimal investment up front and takes time to determine renovation costs.
- Utilize town funds to make building attractive for someone to lease it.
- Will provide CPC with approximate costs for code compliance; costs to demolish the additions; costs to mothball the building; and costs for application preparation for National Historic Register.
- There are different options for public and private sectors regarding financing and tax credits.

- In order to make the building work, revenue sources need to be diversified. Also need to look at outside of property – how to make the exterior of the site work such as use of the landscaping for outdoor functions.
- This opportunity to purchase this property is an opportunity for the community, not a burden.

For town meeting Mr. Rex will prepare:

- Inspection of building, determine existing condition of building
- Carrying costs including heat, electricity, insurance, bond costs
- Measure building for exact dimensions
- Condition of boiler and other systems
- Insurance costs

Jason Perreault asked what is different from 2015 town meeting? Votes will need information as to what has changed since last town meeting.

Mr. Durkin recused himself from voting on this matter.

Ms. Polanowicz made motion, second by Mr. Corbin, to place article on town meeting warrant to purchase the property located at 167 Main Street and 0 Rear East Main Street. Seven members in favor, one recusal.

Mr. Campbell reviewed CPA funding available for this purchase based on CPA proposals being brought forth at town meeting: present funds include \$252,300 (new revenue being transferred to unreserved fund account) + \$117,000 (remaining unreserved) = \$369,300 + \$526,813 (in historic reserve) = \$896,113.

Future CPA needs include phase II for town common which is \$369,000.

Mr. Helwig suggested the funds in the unreserved account should be left for the town common project.

Mr. Campbell discussed taking a more specific vote as to where the funding for the White Cliffs would come from and Mr. Coderre discussed those specifics are not necessary for the vote this evening. He needs to speak with bond counsel and the Finance Director regarding bonding scenarios.

Mr. Kellogg made motion, second by Mr. Martin, to utilize \$174,000 from new revenue, \$526,000 from historic reserve, and 1.1 million to be bonded. Seven in favor and Mr. Durkin had left the meeting. \$195,000 now remains in unreserved.

Ms. Polanowicz made motion, second by Mr. Corbin, to approve the March 9, 2016 minutes. All in favor.

Next meeting will be March 24, 2016 at 6:00pm.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:30pm.

Submitted by Kathy Joubert, Town Planner.