

TOWN OF STOW
Community Preservation Committee

FINAL Minutes, February 23, 2009

Community Preservation Committee Meeting

Present: *Community Preservation Committee members:* Bob Wilber (Chairman), Kathy Sferra, Mike Busch*, Linda Stokes, Laura Spear, Dave Walrath, and Bob Larkin *.

Administrative Assistant: Deb Seith

The meeting began at 7:35pm with a quorum in Town Building.

BILLS & MINUTES

VOTE: Laura made a motion to accept the Minutes from February 9, 2009 as amended, Kathy seconded, and approval was unanimous.

** Mike joined the meeting at this time.*

Sontag Pump Company Invoice for Well for Community Recreation Facility Project

Sontag needs to create a new invoice because the original invoice is incorrect amount. The depth of the well needs to be verified and the CPC is awaiting approval from Eric Bachtell.

HISTORICAL COMMISSION (Susan McLaughlin & Ralph Fuller) – PROPERTY INVENTORY

The main purpose of the Historical Commission is to keep a historic property inventory. The last inventory for Stow was done 27 years ago and there are only 3 copies. Many of the documents are type written with Polaroid pictures attached.

Susan and Ralph submitted a proposal to use \$45,000 of CPA funds to update the inventory and catalog it digitally. \$5,000 to scope the project and \$40,000 to do the inventory (based on \$200/site and 200 sites).

The Historical Commission intends to apply for a Massachusetts Historical Commission (MHC) 60/40 Grant but feels this project needs to be done - regardless whether Stow is awarded any state matching funds.

** Bob Larkin joined the meeting at this time.*

Discussion:

- The CPC agreed this is an allowable use of CPA funds and the current inventory needs to be updated.
- How confident is the Historical Commission that there will only be 200 sites & that \$40,000 will be enough funds to do the actual inventory?
- Can the Historical Commission have the scope completed by Town Meeting if \$5,000 of CPA administrative funds is granted now? Ralph thought they could have a consultant working by mid-March or April.
- The Historical Commission still needs to take a formal vote to approve this project prior to the CPC voting on it.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING DISCUSSION

The CPC briefly discussed the proposal that was made at the February 9th meeting, by the Stow Community Housing Corporation (SCHC), for new supportive affordable housing for seniors at Plantation apartments and expansion to the Pilot Grove affordable apartment complex.

Discussion:

- SCHC needs to firm up requirements/details of the grants and development funds.
- There is a demand for supportive housing, but that is a broad term. What services will it include?
- The units all need to be affordable in perpetuity.
- It is unclear what agency will monitor the units.

** The Stow Municipal Affordable Housing Trust (SMAHT) joined the discussion at this time.*

- Both the CPC and SMAHT like the idea of the project but feel the numbers need to be flushed out.
- SMAHT is concerned about missing out on other affordable housing projects while waiting to see if this one can work.
- Should the Town fund a project that is owned by a private entity?
- If the Town is involved in the project how much say can it have in the decisions (buffers, density, configuration, etc)?
- The committees agreed that a mechanism needs to be in place to protect all the Plantation units, including the existing units, as affordable in perpetuity.
- What does the SCHC need from the Town in order to move forward?
- In general people understand why SCHC want to package Plantation & Pilot Grove expansions but this is really two projects. If SCHC has to focus on one project which will it be?
- There is a risk that the project may not succeed.
- Perhaps a consultant should be hired to research realistic funding sources, amounts/requirements of grants, and create a schedule. Will there still be funding sources available?
- Will there be support from the residents?
- If this goes forward will there be funds for other projects? Perhaps with bonding.
- Does a project like Whitney Homestead make sense?
- SMAHT's consultant has not started the Affordable Housing Production Plan yet.
- At present there does appear to be sufficient funds to address the proposed projects.
- To date; the Town has not decided to bond CPA funds – the school project is on the horizon and this might not be an ideal time to do so.
- In general the discussion was positive and the committees look forward to further such sessions on the subject of provision of additional affordable housing.
- Members for both committees showed strong enthusiasm for concept and want to encourage further advance/exploration.
- Members agreed the project(s) need much more definition before ready for consider for public funding (CPA and/or Housing Trust).
- Although members understand why proponents desire to present/advance both at same time – they are skeptical that both could or should actually come to fruition at same time (for a variety of reasons: financial support, project oversight, community acceptance). More discussion with project proponent needed on this subject.
- Given that existing developments were created without local funds, we need to sort out what the appropriate level should be here (note: purchase of affordability restrictions may be a good way to both validate public investment and ensure functional affordability in perpetuity).
- More understanding of possible sources of grant funds and other non-municipal funds is needed.
- As the potential magnitude of dollar amounts comes into better focus, we will need to sort out the impact that may have in terms of advancing other affordable housing projects within the timeframe of this project(s).
- The project proponents will need to do necessary public outreach prior to decisions on funding.

In summary - the group(s) was unified in its expression of enthusiasm and encouragement for the project to be pursued, and also the belief that many additional details needed to be clarified before it could be ready to consider for funding (certainly not at the Annual Town Meeting). They look forward to working with the proponents along those lines.

Action Item: Bob will contact SCHC (prior to the Board of Selectmen's on February 24th) and relay the CPC's thoughts about their project.

NEWS & VIEWS

- The Planning Board is redoing their rules and regulations. Dave took copies of the documents.

The meeting ended at approximately 9:20pm.
Respectfully submitted by,
Deb Seith (CPC Administrator)