

TOWN OF STOW
Community Preservation Committee

Minutes, February 6, 2017

Community Preservation Committee Meeting

Community Preservation Committee members present: Cortni Frecha (chair), Dot Spaulding, Mike Busch, Bill Byron (vice chair), Vin Antil, Rick Connelly, Ernie Dodd, Bob Larkin, Atli Thorarensen

Admin. Assistant: Krista Bracci

Liaison: Brian Burke - not present

Other attendees: Kathy Sferra, Bob Wilber, Ingeborg Hegemann-Clark, Susan Crane, Richard Perkins and Jesse Steadman

The meeting began with a quorum at 7:30 PM

MINUTES

VOTE: Rick made a motion to approve the minutes of January 23, 2017 as amended, Bob seconded. The vote was unanimous.

INVOICES

VOTE: Bob made a motion to approve invoice #4177 from McGinley Kalsow & Associates for \$2,346.99 instead of \$2,448.50 (mtg 1/23/17), Ernie seconded. The vote was unanimous.

Discussion about Polatin Invoice: Kathy Sferra explained that this invoice was for additional removal of invasive species at Captain Sargent (year two work).

VOTE: Bob made a motion to approve an invoice from Polatin Ecological Services (Mapping Invasive Species Project) for \$1,975.60, Ernie seconded. The vote was unanimous.

CARVER HILL CR APPLICATION DISCUSSION

Kathy Sferra and Bob Wilber provided the committee with additional handouts. They gave a quick presentation explaining the handouts and opened up the floor for any additional questions the members may still have.

Presentation Points:

- Kathy explained that the state does not like to issue Agricultural Restrictions on land that does not have prime soil. Carver Hill only has pockets of prime soil, whereas the Sullivan property has much more.
- Bob told the members that most farmers prefer a CR over an APR because it does not permanently cap the land's resale value. The owners of Carver Hill preferred a CR over an APR.

- Carver Hill is considered a hybrid property with only 1/2 being farmed. There are two homes on the property (Lot 15 - predates the zoning bylaws).
- The CR was written so that there will be allowance for a range of agricultural activities: does not need to remain an orchard, there will be an easement with parking so that the public can access the town forest and future farmers will be able to build farm related buildings.
- Both the Open Space Committee and the Open Space Recreation Plan stipulated this as the top land in Stow to conserve. This was based on a few key factors: near a water source, close to the town forest, historic and very scenic area.
- The point was raised it is important to take into account what future farming may be like.
- Bob mentioned that the owners did not initially jump at their offer made by SCT and the terms that we have after careful negotiation are as good as they get. If the CR does not work out then the owners will be selling the property due to financial issues.
- Lot 30 on the Carver Hill property is 3.2 acres. This lot is not covered by the CR. If the owners decide to sell this at some point the town has the right to buy it (on Box Mill Road).
- Kathy mentioned that past CPA expenses showed that most CPA money was spent on Affordable Housing and Recreation coming in second. The CR will be purchased with not only CPA funds. They are going to apply for a grant and also raise donations.
- Bob reminded everyone that keeping this land provides jobs to our youth and helps the carbon footprint. It is not to stop developers.

Q&A:

Q. Can homes be built on this land if a developer buys the property?

A. Yes, but hard to guess what a developer would end up doing. They could build fewer larger homes or may choose to put up as many as 150 units (40b). As a comparison the Villages are on 30 acres and have 200 units. Carver Hill is 80 acres with about 40 as forest.

Q. Can the property be divided and sold off?

A. No, the CR restricts this.

Q. How much has the town spent on open space?

A. Nothing since CPA was adopted in 2001.

Q. Are we able to buy the land outright to use as open space?

A. The price tag would be too high. The appraisal for the property was 3.7 million. Two appraisals were done both coming in within 5% of each other.

Q. Could the town purchase the land and lease it to farmers?

A. No, this would be much too costly and the town is not set up to farm themselves.

Q. What other CR's exist in Stow?

A. Several parcels on Boxboro Road, Shelburne Farm (APR) and some parcels on/near Acton Road (trail easement from Flagg Hill to Captain Sargent).

Q. Is the contract contingent on all the funding?

A. Yes, SCT will not be asking CPC for any additional funds.

Q. What is the time frame?

A. SCT should hear about the grant request by the end of December. Precedent shows when the town has a good relationship with the land owner they may get as much as \$600,000. SCT is hopeful, but they could come up short.

Q. What is the urgency?

A. The owner had a serious accident last year and would like his son to take over the farm (there are financial concerns).

2017 ATM PROJECT APPLICATION DISCUSSION

The committee has decided to vote on five of the project applications that have been submitted. There are seven in total. They cannot vote on the library and town center park until more information is received. The Historical Commission had some questions regarding the library and the Recreation Committee needs to discuss the maintenance cost issue for the town center park. Dot asked about the Small Farm appraisal. Bob said that they should have that by town meeting.

Affordability Safeguard Program, Habitat for Humanity and Historic Preservation Applications

VOTE: Bob made a motion to move forward on the above listed three project applications (ASP, Habitat and Historic Preservation), Mike seconded. The vote was unanimous.

Carver Hill CR

VOTE: Ernie made a motion to move forward on the Carver Hill CR application, Vin seconded. The vote 6 yes, 2 no and 1 abstained.

Small Farm CR

VOTE: Bob made a motion to move forward on the Small Farm CR application, Atli seconded. The vote was unanimous.

PROJECT UPDATES

Dot mentioned she will have an invoice for the next CPC meeting.

NEWS & VIEWS

Bob informed the committee that the Stow Housing Authority met and is proceeding with dismantling the committee. Town council is informed and is looking into how we handle this. Krista raised concerned that this may be an issue with the Community Preservation Act.

MEETING SCHEDULE

February 27th

Rick made a motion to adjourn at 9:05 PM, Dot seconded, and approval was unanimous.

Respectfully submitted by: Krista Bracci

