



TOWN OF NORTHBOROUGH Community Preservation Committee

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

Approved 2/10/11

Community Preservation Committee Meeting Minutes January 13, 2011

Members present: Chris Kellogg, Todd Helwig, Don Haitzma, Michelle Gillespie, Andy Clark, Sean Durkin, Peter Martin

Members excused: John Campbell, Chairman; Kathleen Polanowicz

Others present: Kathy Joubert, Town Planner; Elaine Rowe, Board Secretary; Norm Corbin, Historical Commission; Marie Nieber, Historical Commission

Chris Kellogg, acting Chairman, called the meeting to order at 7:10PM.

Review Minutes of the Meeting of December 2, 2010 - Mr. Kellogg commented that there was a lengthy discussion during the last meeting about drafting an agreement between the CPC and Housing Corporation relative to funding. Mr. Kellogg asked for an update on the status of the document. Ms. Joubert explained that the draft document has been reviewed and should be all set, though it has not yet been signed. She also noted that the Town Administrator had provided the Housing Corporation with a letter for submission with their RFP packet. Mr. Kellogg questioned the contract terms relative to monetary awards. Ms. Joubert voiced her understanding that the Town Administrator has been asked to appear at a future CPC meeting to discuss the document.

Michelle Gillespie made a motion to accept the Minutes of the Meeting of December 2, 2010 as submitted. Todd Helwig seconded, vote unanimous.

Mr. Kellogg informed the committee members that Chairman Campbell had expressed his regrets for his absence this evening. He also noted that the Open Space Committee has requested a postponement of their presentation until the January 27th meeting in hopes of having some more definitive progress on the Green Street parcel. Members of the committee agreed to table the matter to a future meeting.

Public Hearing to consider FY2012 CPA applications

Police Department/\$29,076/Open Space Category/ATV equipment – Police Chief Mark Leahy and Detective Bill Lyver appeared before the committee to present their application for funding for the purchase of ATV equipment. Detective Lyver commented that, relative to the preservation of resources, it is necessary to protect our recreational and open space resources from harm and/or destruction. With over 25 miles of trails and hundreds of acres of conservation land, only those areas that are accessible by bicycle are patrolled. He voiced his opinion that having the ability to put police officers on trails, open space, conservation land and parks will go a long way to prevent degradation of the resources and increase public use of those areas. Detective Lyver

cited numerous fires, acts of vandalism, arrests, and unsavory activities on town lands that were the subject of verbal outrage at a past Town Meeting, with the Policy Department being questioned about why they don't take a more proactive stance. He stated that, while the Police Department is charged with enforcement of laws on these properties, they are not given the tools to allow them access to much of that land.

Detective Lyver explained that the Police Department is requesting \$29,000 for the purchase of two all-terrain vehicles and a trailer to transport them to give police officers the ability to patrol the trails. He voiced his opinion that it will not take long for the vandals to begin fearing apprehension once they discover that these patrols are in place.

Detective Lyver explained that the Environmental Police Service provides training on the use of these vehicles and how to do so without causing any undue damage to the trails. He also noted that, while it is difficult to know exactly how much of this undesirable activity these patrols will prevent, it is easy to see what activity is not prevented by the lack of police presence.

Detective Lyver stated that he could not find any written evidence that this type of purchase is a prohibited use of CPA funds. He noted that the Community Preservation Coalition's website indicates that it is left to the town's discretion to determine how to use CPA funds in order to preserve the town's assets and resources. Detective Lyver voiced his opinion that the best way to preserve the character of the town is to make the trails and recreations lands safer.

Chief Leahy stated that, as a town resident, he is in favor of acquiring open space. That said, as the town continues to acquire properties he is tasked with ensuring that those properties do not become a "hotbed" for illicit activities but is not provided with the tools to do so. He stated that it is not possible to adequately patrol and protect these resources using officers on mountain bikes. He noted that the Fire Department has a gator, which is a useful tool but only applicable for certain things. In many cases, such as a recent incident at Mt. Pisgah, the gator proved too slow and cumbersome to be effective.

Detective Lyver noted that he was asked to provide a precedent for this type of use of CPA funds, and he argued that the precedent was set in Northborough when funding was awarded to the Fire Department for the gator. Since that purchase was not contested, he believes that the town's residents would support approving this request.

Mr. Martin asked why the Police Department is seeking two vehicles. Detective Lyver commented that two man patrols are preferable to ensure officer safety. He also noted that, if purchased, the two vehicles will belong to the town and would therefore be available for use by other town departments.

Chief Leahy explained that staffing at the Environmental Police has been cut by approximately 33%, and they are a weekday, 9AM to 5PM operation, so there are no guarantees that they would be available to respond to every incident in town.

Mr. Kellogg asked where these vehicles fit on the Police Department's priority list. Chief Leahy explained that the department has sufficient quantities of essential equipment, all of which is in good condition, and reiterated the value of having these vehicles.

Ms. Gillespie voiced her opinion that it is important that we feel certain that this is something that residents will stand behind at Town Meeting. She also agreed that it is not reasonable for anyone to expect the Police Department to send two officers into the summit at Mt. Pisgah on foot to break up a drinking party. Chief Leahy stated that he is very comfortable going to Town Meeting with this request, and noted that his department has a good track record of being fiscally responsible.

Mr. Helwig commented that, while he has previously voiced some concerns about the applicability of this type of expenditure, as a Howard Street resident he understands the need. Mr. Durkin commented that Northborough's approval of funding for the Fire Department's gator is often used by the state as an example of what towns should not do with CPA funds. He also stated that, since there are always groups that will challenge the use of CPA funds, it makes it difficult to support any questionable use of those funds.

Detective Lyver discussed the irony of the fact that CPA funds are available for the purchase of open space but the unintended consequences are that those lands and the public that uses those lands need to be protected. Mr. Kellogg asked about the Board of Selectmen's opinion about purchasing this type of vehicle, and questioned whether it could be worked into the departmental budget. Chief Leahy indicated that he has not had the capacity to do anything new for several years with regards to the budget.

DPW/\$50,000/Historic Category/Church Street stone wall repair evaluation and design –

Ms. Joubert explained that Kara Buzanoski was appearing before the Financial Planning Committee, so has requested that the CPC move past her application at this time. She will present as soon as she is able to be before this committee.

Historical Commission & Library/\$750/Historic Category/plaque for library -

Norm Corbin explained that the application requests funding for a plaque at the Library, which will explain who Cyrus Gale was and why the Library is named for him. He also noted that the Historical Commission supports this application. Mr. Kellogg suggested that the plaque should also indicate that the Library project was partially funded with CPA money. Mr. Corbin agreed.

Mr. Kellogg asked Mr. Corbin to follow-up with the library regarding including a reference to CPA funding on the proposed plaque. Ms. Joubert agreed to do so. Mr. Corbin voiced his understanding that the library has some estimates for the cost of the plaque. Mr. Kellogg suggested that they should have a couple of quotes. Ms. Joubert agreed to discuss the proposed wording with Jean Langley, Library Director, and will also ask her for copies of the estimates she obtained.

Historical Commission/\$1500/Historic Category/plaque for John Brigham's saw mill site –

Marie Nieber noted that the request for funding for a plaque is pretty straight-forward, and confirmed that she has already obtained a quote. Mr. Corbin explained that the only unknown is the location for the town-owned sign on private property. Mr. Helwig asked if the town residents will be able to view the plaque if it is located on private property. Ms. Nieber indicated that they will. Mr. Corbin discussed the footbridge to be constructed over the brook, and Mr. Kellogg suggested that the plaque could be located somewhere along the bridge. Ms. Nieber voiced her understanding that the town Administrator has concerns about the plaque being placed on private property. Mr. Clark suggested mounting the plaque on a large boulder. Mr. Corbin explained that the reason for the proposed plaques is to mark resources in town that have some historic significance.

Historical Commission/\$100,000/Historic Category/reserve fund – Mr. Corbin explained that the application is for additional funds for the reserve fund to bank against future requirements. Mr. Corbin noted that building up the fund will allow the Historical Commission to pursue something of significance should the opportunity present itself.

Given that there are no other applications to be heard tonight, Ms. Joubert suggested that the DPW presentation be postponed until the next meeting.

Michelle Gillespie made a motion to continue the public hearing to January 27, 2010. Sean Durkin seconded, vote unanimous.

Ms. Joubert explained that March 3rd is the tentative date for the CPC to meet with the Financial Planning Committee to present what they will be voting to recommend for funding.

Adjourned at 8:00PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Elaine Rowe
Board Secretary