



TOWN OF NORTHBOROUGH Community Preservation Committee

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Community Preservation Committee Meeting Minutes January 27, 2011

Members present: John Campbell, Chairman; Todd Helwig; Michelle Gillespie; Peter Martin; Kathleen Polanowicz; Andy Clark (arrived at 7:35PM); Sean Durkin

Members excused: Chris Kellogg; Don Haitsma

Others present: Kathy Joubert, Town Planner; Kara Buzanoski, DPW Director; Elaine Rowe, Board Secretary

Chairman Campbell called the meeting to order at 7:15pm.

Continued Public Hearing to consider FY2012 CPA applications

Open Space Committee/\$250,000/Open Space Category/land acquisition – John Campbell discussed a document that was provided to the committee which addresses the timeline and budget for the acquisition of the land on Green Street. He noted that a formal Purchase & Sale Agreement is in the hands of the attorneys for the two sellers, and that the \$1.5 million purchase price is not being challenged. He explained that the purchase price is contingent upon a new appraisal. While the Open Space Committee will not offer to pay any more than \$1.5 million, they will reduce their offer price if the appraisal supports doing so.

Mr. Campbell discussed details of the financing for this purchase as follows:

Devote nearly the entire balance of the Open Space Reserve account	\$550,000
Funds from the Conservation fund (this will leave a balance in the conservation fund for any unforeseen needs)	\$200,000
2012 CPA Open Space Request	\$250,000
Balance to be funded through a 5 year bond to be paid using future streams of CPA revenue from the Open Space allocation	

Mr. Campbell explained that the Open Space Committee's intention is to apply for a LAND grant from the state, which cannot be done until a signed P&S is in hand. Mr. Campbell also voiced his opinion that the project has good applicability for the grant program, but he does not yet have any information about the availability of funds. He noted that any grant money will be applied to the bond, with the balance to be paid as previously indicated.

Mr. Campbell stated that the Open Space Committee would like for any supporting expenses for this purchase, such as the revised appraisal, environmental testing, title verification, and any legal fees, to be covered using the CPC's administrative account.

Mr. Helwig questioned legal fees for Town Counsel. Ms. Joubert explained that there will be a request to use the administrative fund to pay those expenses. Mr. Helwig explained that the Open Space Committee hopes to do all of the legal work themselves, so that Town Counsel

simply has to do a brief review and approval. Mr. Campbell noted that Mr. Helwig has offered his services to the Open Space Committee, and voiced his appreciation.

Andy Clark arrived.

Mr. Campbell explained that the Open Space Committee will be requesting \$1,507,000 for the purchase, with \$7,000 of it to be devoted to the construction of trails and related work to create a recreation area similar to Chestnut Hill Farm in Southborough. He commented that this parcel fits the criteria that was developed for open space projects nearly perfectly as it abuts other conservation land and was one of the targeted properties in the open space plan for the town.

Ms. Polanowicz asked about bonding, since this will be the town's first experience with it. Chairman Campbell explained that he had previously spoken to the Town Administrator to ensure that he was comfortable with the bonding as proposed. He noted that the project was presented to the Board of Selectmen last year, and more recently to the Town Administrator, and both have voiced their support. Mr. Campbell also confirmed that CPA legislation allows for the payment of a bond with CPA revenue.

Mr. Martin asked if there are any concerns about committing any LAND grants to pay off the bond. Ms. Joubert explained that any grant would likely be awarded prior to bonding, so the town would simply bond for that much less. She also voiced her opinion that there should be no issue with a transfer of revenue either way. Mr. Campbell explained that the town is committed to buying the land regardless of the outcome of any grant requests, with an anticipated closing date of December 1, 2011.

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

Kara Buzanoski explained that she is seeking funding to do a design for the stone wall and culvert in the center of town. She noted that the, since the area was included in a recent historical inventory and was identified as a historical resource, the Historical Commission approached her in an effort to do something to repair it while retaining its historical character. Ms. Buzanoski explained that the bottom part of the structure dates back to the Civil War and the rounded stones on top date to the early 1900s. She also noted that, given the increase in traffic over the culvert, she is concerned about its structural integrity and, therefore, would like to have it studied to make sure it can withstand the increased load. She also voiced her desire to have it widened so that any widening of Church Street in the future would not jeopardize the historical nature of the culvert.

Ms. Buzanoski explained that the town will soon be installing a signal light at the intersection of Hudson and Main Streets, and she would like to do the culvert study in conjunction with the signal work in order to use the same contractor and benefit from some cost savings.

Chairman Campbell asked Ms. Buzanoski if she believes that it will be possible to widen the road and still protect the portion that is historical. Ms. Buzanoski voiced her opinion that this will be possible. Chairman Campbell asked if it is possible to add to the bridge structure in a way that would retain the historical appearance. Ms. Buzanoski explained that a new stone wall could be constructed to the west of the existing to extend the culvert. Mr. Clark asked if it is possible to use historical construction practices so that the new portion would match the existing. Mr. Buzanoski noted that it would be difficult to find a contractor to do so, but they should be able to make it as historically accurate as possible. Chairman Campbell questioned the sidewalk, which Ms. Buzanoski indicated will be untouched. Chairman Campbell asked if Ms. Buzanoski expects to be back next year seeking funding to do the actual work. Mr. Buzanoski commented that she hopes to be.

Chairman Campbell asked where Ms. Buzanoski obtained the estimate for the project. Ms. Buzanoski explained that she had worked with the engineering company, GPI, who is working with the Town and the State on the downtown traffic signal project for the estimate. Ms.

Polanowicz inquired about the house located near the culvert. Ms. Buzanoski stated the town's right of way goes up to the toe of the slope on that property.

Ms. Polanowicz commented that most town residents are not aware of the historic significance of the culvert, and voiced her opinion that it will be important to explain why it is a valuable resource to maintain.

Mr. Clark asked if it will be possible to incorporate improvements to the intersection of Church & Whitney Streets into the expansion work being done by Mass Highway. Ms. Buzanoski explained that the right of way does not extend that far down Church Street. Ms. Joubert commented that the town had more leeway when it was assumed that the Stop & Shop project would be moving forward, as private funds would have enabled the work to go as far down as Whitney Street. Ms. Buzanoski commented that, once the design is completed and we have a firm estimate for the work, she can better determine the cost and where the money will come from.

Mr. Clark questioned whether expansion of the bridge would be allowable under the CPC guidelines, or if only the restoration portion of the project would be. Chairman Campbell explained that, if only a portion of the cost would be covered under CPC spending guidelines, then any CPA grant would be contingent upon the DPW securing the balance of funding for the project.

Affordable Housing Corporation/\$50,000/Housing Category/expenses related to demolition of former senior center – Chairman Campbell explained that Rick Leif had requested permission to come before the Committee to discuss this application, which was not submitted prior to the Committee's deadline. Chairman Campbell voiced his opinion that it is suitable for Mr. Leif to do so, and that the circumstances are logical.

Mr. Leif stated that, when he came before the Committee in December to provide an update, he had explained that the Housing Corporation was in the process of responding to an RFP for the conversion of the old senior center. He noted that the RFP was issued in November 2010, with a response date of December 29. He stated that the RFP was seeking a developer to create 3 to 5 affordable senior rental units on the site of the old senior center, with the developer to be the owner of the building and the Housing Authority to retain ownership of the land and issue a 50-year lease at a nominal cost. The RFP also stated that the developer would have to demonstrate, through operations and maintenance, an ability to operate and maintain the property through monthly rent that would both support the operation and qualify for affordable status. In addition, new utilities would need to be brought to the site and not share with the adjacent senior housing complex.

Mr. Leif noted that the Housing Corporation had secured the services of an experienced architectural firm who provided three drawings as follows:

1. Existing conditions – Mr. Leif noted that the Housing Authority is responsible for demolishing the existing building at their own expenses, with the building, pad and anything beneath the pad to be removed. In addition, there is an existing wall that separates the senior center from some housing units that will need to be modified so that it is an adequate exterior wall. The responsibility for that work will also fall to the housing authority. Ms. Polanowicz indicated that the Housing Authority has determined that they have sufficient funding to demolish the building.
2. Proposed new, separate bldg – Mr. Leif noted that the proposal is to construct a one-story building for four units, with three entrances facing Centre Drive and one facing Hudson Street. He also noted that one of the units (unit #2) is proposed to be somewhat larger than the others as it is designed to be handicapped accessible.

3. Interior detail – Mr. Leif commented that the design of the units is fairly consistent with the existing housing units on Centre Drive.

Mr. Leif explained that constructing a separate building will be easier and less disruptive to the existing tenants. He also noted that DHCD had previously deemed the project feasible, and it was their suggestion that demolishing the existing structure and building new would be the better option and the architect concurs.

Mr. Leif stated that, as of now, the Housing Corporation has not been selected as the developer, but he is aware that they are the only responder to the RFP. He noted that the Housing Authority had submitted some questions about the RFP submitted, and that the Housing Corporation has responded to those questions.

Mr. Leif discussed the cost estimate breakdown. He noted that they have contracted with the architect in three phases – RFP response, detailed design work, and creation of bid documents/contractor selection/co-management of construction - and that those fees are fairly firm. The architect recommended that the Housing Corporation use Waterman Design, and they have estimated their work at \$12,000. In addition, the cost of the building permit will be 1% of the construction cost. There are also water and sewer betterment fees, and those figures were proved by the DPW.

Mr. Leif explained that the existing 32 units were done under a comprehensive permit in the 1980's, so the Housing Corporation will need to request a modification to the comprehensive permit through the Zoning Board of Appeals. Mr. Leif stated that the Housing Corporation intends to ask the town to either waive or reduce some of these fees, but he understands that this request may not be granted.

Mr. Leif indicated that the \$480,700.00 estimate was deemed reasonable, though potentially a little low. However, since the Housing Corporation will be able to have this bid privately, they expect to be able to obtain some competitive bids.

Mr. Leif also noted that there was some concern that the \$25,000 contingency built into the estimate submitted to the Housing Authority may not be sufficient. Since 10% of the CPA funds must be allocated to Housing, and since no other housing applications were submitted, Mr. Leif questioned whether it would be reasonable and appropriate for the Housing Corporation to request an additional \$50,000 in case the project goes over budget. Mr. Leif stated that he would agree to sign an agreement with the town to stipulate that the \$50,000 would be used exclusively for this project. In addition, the Housing Corporation would draw against the additional \$50,000 only after the initial \$600,000 is exhausted, and would return it to the reserve account if it was not needed.

Chairman Campbell asked if it would be acceptable to treat the additional \$50,000 in the same manner as we treat awards to other beneficiaries of CPA funds, where the money essentially stays with the town and the Housing Corporation would submit their invoices for payment. Mr. Leif agreed that this would be a less complicated way to handle it and reiterated that they would only draw against it after exhausting the \$600,000 in the bank.

Legal agreement – Chairman Campbell discussed the need for a formal legal agreement to utilize when the CPC awards money to an entity other than the town. He will be meeting with Town Administrator John Coderre and Rick Leif tomorrow to resolve any remaining issues so that the finalized agreement can be ready for the February 10th meeting.

Ms. Gillespie asked when the Housing Corporation will hear if they have been selected. Ms. Polanowicz indicated that the Housing Authority expects to make a decision at their meeting in approximately 2 weeks. Ms. Gillespie questioned the timeline, and voiced her opinion that it

would be beneficial if we could say at Town Meeting that construction will commence this year. Ms. Polanowicz agreed, but noted that the Housing Authority is taking a very cautious approach so that the process is not compromised, so would like to refrain from rushing to say that construction will start if they are not really prepared to do so. Mr. Leif noted that the project is expected to take 42 weeks to construct.

Library Plaque – Ms. Joubert explained that she had provided the members with a copy of the cost estimate and the wording for the Cyrus Gale plaque for the library. She also noted that an additional line needs to be included in the plaque to indicate that a portion of the project was supported through CPA funding. Ms. Joubert indicated that the Committee has received a letter from the Historical Commission voicing support for the funding request for the plaque.

Chairman Campbell suggested that the Committee postpone deliberation on the applications until the February 10th meeting to allow Chris Kellogg to participate.

Adjourned at 8:16 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Elaine Rowe
Board Secretary