

**RECEIVED***By Karen Wilber/Assistant Town Clerk at 1:54 pm, Feb 16, 2023*

TOWN OF NORTHBOROUGH Community Preservation Committee

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Community Preservation Committee

January 5, 2023 Minutes

Approved February 5, 2023

Members Present: John Campbell, Chair; Andy Clark, Sean Durkin, Leslie Harrison, Jeff Leland, Andy Dowd, Millie Milton

Members Absent: Peter Martin, Todd Helwig

Others Present: Scott Charpentier, DPW Director; Laurie Connors, Town Planner; Rick Leif, Ashley Davies, Amy Poretsky, Gordon Hart, Dave Sherman, David Roman, Mike Duchesneau, T. Scott Rogers

This meeting was held in-person in the Selectman's Meeting Room, Town Hall, 63 Main Street; broadcast live on television channels Verizon 30 and Charter 192; and broadcast with a Live Stream link on YouTube. The meeting opened promptly at 7pm after an introduction by the Chair for the continuation of public hearings regarding FY2024 CPA applications.

Affordable Housing Reserve Fund & Request for Extension of Funds for NAHC—Rick Leif presented.

As the application states, \$950,000 was approved from 2015 through 2019 for future use by the NAHC. \$450,000 of that was approved for projects on Main Street next to Trinity Church, which were done in partnership with Habitat for Humanity. The Town funded half of the project through CPA money and Habitat for Humanity funded the rest of the project. That reduced the \$950,000 down to \$500K. In 2020, again with Habitat for Humanity, the Town approved \$50K to be spent on the renovation and restoration of a condominium at 24 Hitching Post Lane that had gone into foreclosure. The bank donated the property to Habitat, and Habitat rehabilitated it as low-income housing. The project came in under budget and now \$473,144.35 remains of the \$950,000 approved in warrant articles from 2015-2019. Since that time, the NAHC has not requested any other additional money to go into reserve because their feeling is that \$500K is appropriate to address any future issues. 10% has been set aside each year since 2020 and will be again in 2023. They are required to go before Town Meeting for approval for projects, but the \$473K was approved on the basis if something came up in the short term.

He added that the warrant articles approve the money to be spent in two years, otherwise the NAHC has to go before the CPC for an extension of the unspent money; therefore, the purpose of this request is to ask the CPC to extend the money until June 30, 2024. He believed there are a number of potential uses for the money that justifies doing so. NAHC and Habitat for Humanity have been negotiating for another property on Hitching Post Lane to see if the bank will donate that property. If that happens, it will be a project similar to the one at unit 24.

Another potential project is located on Boundary Street. Not all of the Town-owned land on Boundary Street will be used for the Dog Park; once that was apparent to the NAHC, he and Ms. Connors met with the Executive Director of Habitat for Humanity. Habitat will evaluate whether that can be developed into additional affordable housing. After the evaluation has been completed, and if NAHC thinks it's viable, that could be another joint where some of this money that's in reserve could be used.

Additionally, at the time this application was submitted, NAHC was not aware of the proposals for redevelopment that came before the White Cliffs Committee, one of which is to create affordable housing. If that proposal is selected, the developer said the Town would have to provide some funding in order to get the state and federal funding, and most likely CPA affordable housing funds could be used to do that.

Mr. Campbell said the CPC has supported these requests in previous years to re-up the funds for an additional year. He saw no reason why it wouldn't be supported again.

Mr. Leland made a motion that based on the information included in this application, NAHC requests that the \$473,144.35 in funding remaining unallocated from 2015 through 2019 approved funding be extended until June 30, 2024.

Mr. Dowd seconded the motion. A vote by show of hand was 7-0.

Aqueduct Multi Use Trail Feasibility Study (\$100,000)—Ms. Davies and Ms. Poretsky were back with new information. Ms. Davies said that Mr. Charpentier worked with the BSC Group to get a new proposal and scope of work.

Ms. Davies said they'd learned that a letter of support was required from the property owner (MWRA) as part of the Mass Trails Grant. The Conservation Agent reached out to the MWRA but was told they were not able to commit yet. Ms. Davies hoped for a response before the CPC makes its final determinations.

Ms. Connors had conversations with the MWRA over the summer in which they had indicated their support of having the trail go over the bridge, however they were not fully in support of having pavement throughout the extent of the trail. They may consider stone dust. The individual they've been speaking with needs to elevate that request. Right now, the trail is on grass so it has its limitations.

Mr. Charpentier thought a fourth alternative from the MRWA's perspective may be the use of pavement for specific crossings and connections.

Mr. Campbell said the scope from BSC presented tonight was well-prepared, with much more detail than what had been presented before. He hoped Ms. Davies would have more information by the next meeting.

First Parish Church Steeple Repairs (\$200,000)—Gordon Hart and Dave Sherman presented. Mr. Campbell said the Committee did a preliminary review at the CPC's December meeting with Mr. Corbin providing some information. The funding request is for structural repairs to be made to the steeple. CPC funds were provided five years ago for external repairs. Their request is for \$200K, the Church would pay the balance. After looking into funding from the Massachusetts Preservation Projects Fund, they learned that the Church does not qualify as it is not registered on the State's Registry of Historic Places.

Mr. Hart shared images depicting the deterioration. The goal of the project is to restore full structural integrity of the steeple, prevent future water leakage into the steeple, and to have the bell operational.

Mr. Hart noted that the Northborough Historical District Commission is in support of this project.

The basis for the costs are largely based on a proposal from last June from Minuteman Building and Preservation. They added 10% to account for increases in inflation.

Mr. Durkin remembered that part of the problem was from the telecommunication companies and their installation. Mr. Sherman believed they would have some cooperation, although it was noted in the contracts that they were not responsible for rebuilding.

Ms. Harrison asked if different materials were being considered since the louvers are not water tight. Mr. Sherman said that a water-diverting system will be in place.

Mr. Campbell said he had asked via email about the possibility that the cell phone companies contribute in the in the name of maintenance of the structure that they're using; he was told that Janet Ruggeri of the Church's Governing Board wasn't optimistic that they would get that help without litigation.

ARHS Athletic Complex Project, Tennis Court Restorations (\$352,701)—David Roman, Co-Chair of the Algonquin Athletic Complex Project Committee, presented an update. He didn't attend the first CPC meeting where he believed they were asked to scale the project back. He said he was trying to explore what the appetite is of this so he could balance that out with Southborough.

Mr. Campbell said aspects of the application are applicable for CPA funding with the exception of synthetic turf. The revised request for the tennis court restoration is \$352,701. The Committee needs to determine where this fits with urgent priorities and the other obligations. While not impossible, the CPC has a full slate and a challenge of determining what is affordable.

Mr. Campbell said if members were to support the application, they could consider making approval conditional on it being approved by Southborough's CPC and at Southborough's Town Meeting.

Mr. Roman said while the approval has not gone through yet, he believed Southborough was interested in leveraging 'even deeper coffers' from the CPC because of the opportunities presented. He expected warrants to be presented in both towns. Southborough hasn't announced its Town Meeting date yet.

Mr. Durkin asked, in terms of the level of urgency, would replacement of the track be first? He thought the fields were in good shape, the tennis courts appear to be well-used and well maintained. Mr. Roman said that there will be a phasing of the various projects.

Mr. Roman asked what the current feeling is on the application. He wasn't familiar with the process.

Mr. Campbell said that what differs between both towns is Northborough's planning for the historic preservation category, primarily what may be needed for White Cliffs, as Northborough has spent a lot of time on that this year. As he'd indicated earlier, this project is applicable.

Ms. Harrison had a question with regard to the distribution between Northborough and Southborough.

Mr. Campbell asked if the application to Southborough is a commensurate amount less than \$352,000; Mr. Roman said it was significantly larger, and they might even possibly increase that. They are looking at improvements to the grounds, tennis courts, track, all of what can be eligible and pare down from there. While the turf is still not eligible, there is some of that pre-work that is.

When Mr. Campbell asked if there were plans to bring forth a warrant article in each Town regardless of CPA participation, Mr. Roman said he didn't think they had a choice otherwise.

Construction of ADA Accessible Trail at Senior Center (\$370,000)—Mr. Charpentier provided an update.

The revision to the trail from what was previously submitted is related to the extent of the bituminous concrete surfacing. They'd gotten an additional topographic survey. He pointed out an area of problematic wheelchair access which they are working to correct by amending the geometry. They are progressing through the design but development of the permit drawings has slowed because of those attempts.

There will be no change in the budget request. Other avenues for funding were being considered, such as a grant through Mass Trails, though he noted he would not submit two grants from the same community to the same entity, and ARPA. Those grants would require full funding by the local community because they're reimbursement grants.

Mr. Durkin addressed the comment that Mr. Charpentier wouldn't submit two grants from the same community [to Mass Trails] and asked, if given a choice, which project he would prefer to submit a grant for. Mr. Charpentier said that would be for the Multi-Use Trail, it would be a phase one of a project and like a lot of grant-awarding entities, they favor the phase two when they've already funded the phase one.

Ms. Connors added that it would also be a more competitive application. They tend to appreciate multi-community trail projects over single community trail projects so it has a greater chance of funding.

Northborough Dog Park (\$347,500)—Mr. Charpentier provided an update. Marlborough is not allowing a potable water connection there. Although they'd initially indicated support, a separate request made regarding water and sewer connections for a proposed Habitat for Humanity project in that area was brought before the mayor, who said no utility connections outside of the city limits would be allowed.

Mr. Charpentier said since one of the requirements for a Stanton Foundation Grant is potable water to the dog park, a well will have to be installed. An updated plan was shared, the issue now is the cost. They've decided to amend the surface at the smaller dog area with a base bid that includes stone dust instead of the artificial turf ('canine grass') proposed before, which will help with the cost differential.

Water services there will include a type of dog bowl station and a yard hydrant for maintenance purposes, but there will be no water fill station for human consumption or a hose that could open for public use per Mass DEP regulations; if more than 25 people a day are served by a groundwater source, it is considered a transient non-community public water supply.

Mr. Dowd said that the Housing Authority met the previous evening and again expressed their concern for the family with children in the house that will directly abut the dog park. He asked what the distance is from that residence to the fence line, and said he was asked to request the possibility of having a more solid type of barrier type fencing along that side to hide the view. He knows there is fairly thick brush there but it not there year round.

Mr. Charpentier said the distance was approximately 109'. Types of fencing were discussed, however, it didn't need to be decided before the CPC's decision or at Town Meeting.

Window Restoration and Preservation of Historical Society Building (\$71,300)—Ms. Harrison thought there were some unanswered questions about the project covering multiple years or perhaps restoring just some of the windows. Mr. Duchesneau said in reviewing those numbers, he estimated that the cost of the street level windows to be \$36K and the cost of the museum level windows roughly \$35K. The quote is just for the windows; the trim, sills and enclosures will be done separately.

He added that he was pursuing a grant through Mass Preservation Project funding. However, he'd learned there was a requirement for preservation restriction in perpetuity on the building for the use, and was worried it would be an issue for funding. That building is the only asset the Historical Society has and he was concerned that restriction could encumber a future sale if that were to have to happen. Discussion followed. Ms. Connors thought it had more to do with the preservation of certain aspects of the building and not the use; it would have to retain the historic character.

Status of Public Hearing—Mr. Campbell said the Committee should make a determination if the public hearing should be closed, traditionally done after presentations made by the various applicants.

Ms. Harrison made a motion to close the public hearing. Mr. Leland seconded the motion. A vote taken by hand showed members were unanimous, 7-0, to close the public hearing.

Old/New Business

Minutes—The draft minutes from December were discussed. Minor edits need to be made. Mr. Leland made a motion to approve the minutes as amended. Ms. Harrison seconded. All were in favor.

Any Other Business—Mr. Durkin referred to an email sent previously by Mr. Campbell. He asked how much money is available to disburse this year. Mr. Campbell said there is \$770K in projected new revenue. The total available including reserves is about one million eight hundred thousand.

Next Meeting, February 2—Mr. Campbell anticipated using a whiteboard or chart to work backwards a little bit with the minimum obligations, the White Cliffs bond, and start from there. He said members should be mindful of any new information that may come from the White Cliffs Committee; he assumed Mr. Helwig, as Chair, would bring forth any discussions.

Mr. Leland made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Dowd seconded. All were in favor.

Meeting adjourned at 8:52pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Michelle Cilley
Recording Secretary