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By KWilber/Assistant Town Clerk at 5:16 pm, Jan 30, 2024

TOWN OF NORTHBOROUGH Open Space Committee

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**Open Space Committee
Zoom Meeting Minutes
December 20, 2023
Approved January 29, 2024**

Pursuant to Chapter 2 of the Acts of 2023, An Act Relative to Extending Certain COVID-19 Measures Adopted During the State of Emergency, signed into law on March 29, 2023, this meeting will be conducted via remote participation. No in-person attendance by members of the public will be permitted.

Members in attendance (remotely): John Campbell, Chair; Brian Belfer; Dan Clark; Paul Cacciatore, Paul Tagliaferri, Leslie Harrison, Ashley Davies

Members absent: Anthony Ziton, Lisa Maselli

Others in attendance (Remotely): Vincent Vignaly, Conservation Agent

The meeting began at 7:00 p.m.

Consideration of the Town's Right of First Refusal for 432 Whitney Street (Map 15, Parcel 22) upon withdrawal from the Chapter 61A Program.

The Town currently has a 120-day right of first refusal on this property. The Committee considered purchasing this property in 2021 when it was under a Purchase and Sale Agreement. Mr. Campbell explained where the property is located, its status and the abutters. It also abuts conservation property in Berlin and could create a corridor of conservation land. Mr. Campbell indicated that the property meets the criteria of the Open Space Committee and should be considered for purchase since it would prevent development on the parcel, is contiguous to other Open Space parcels and would enhance conservation opportunities. The purchase price is \$1,700,000.00. The members of the committee expressed their views. Mr. Clark believed the purchase should be pursued as it completes the corridor between two parcels of conservation land. Ms. Davies agreed that it should be purchased as it has many natural resources. She asked whether the town needs to maintain the current use of the property, because selling a portion could offset the cost to purchase it. Mr. Campbell believed the Town could use the property as it sees fit; however if purchased with designated CPA funds, then it would be under their restrictions. If purchased with other funding, it would depend on how the town acquires the property. Currently there are \$664,000.00 in open space-designated funds from prior CPA grant money, and \$64,000.00 of other conservation fund money available. An application was made last month for an additional \$350,000.00 of CPA funding to bring the available funds to the target amount of \$1 million.

Ms. Davies indicated that the referenced price may not need to be matched because the Town must purchase the property at the price without contingencies. The Purchase and Sale submitted has contingencies.

Ms. Harrison asked about the previous vote. Mr. Campbell related the past history of the parcel. In 2021 property at 432 and 429 were considered for acquisition by the town. The OSC recommended that the Town purchase the 432 Whitney Street property, but not the 429 Whitney Street property. She agreed that the property should be purchased.

Mr. Clark indicated that the property is zoned commercial, not residential, which would justify a higher market value for the land.

Mr. Belfer indicated that the property should be purchased.

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Ms. Tagliaferri indicated that the property should be purchased as well since it meets the goals of the Northborough 2020 Open Space and Recreation Plan.

Mr. Tagliaferri made a motion to recommend that the Town of Northborough exercise the Right of First Refusal and to purchase 432 Whitney Street upon its withdrawal from the Chapter 61A program; seconded by Brian Belfer. Roll call vote: Tagliaferri – yes; Clark – yes; Harrison – yes; Belfer – yes; Cacciatore – yes; Davies – yes; Campbell – yes; motion approved.

Mr. Campbell asked Mr. Vignaly to draft a brief note regarding this vote to the appropriate Town Boards.

Consideration of September 25, 2023, minutes for acceptance.

The minutes for September 25, 2023, were reviewed.

Ms. Davies made a motion to approve the minutes, and it was seconded by Mr. Belfer. Roll Call Vote: Tagliaferri – yes; Clark – yes; Belfer - yes; Cacciatore – yes; Davies yes; Campbell-yes; motion approved. (Ms. Harrison abstained because she did not attend the meeting).

Next Meeting

The next meeting will be at 7:00 on Monday, January 22, 2024.

Ms. Harrison made a motion to adjourn the meeting and it was seconded by Mr. Belfer. Roll Call Vote: Tagliaferri – yes; Clark – yes; Harrison – yes; Belfer – yes; Davies-yes; Cacciatore-yes; Campbell-yes; motion approved.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:22 p.m.

Respectively Submitted by

Brenda M. DiCeglie

Board Secretary