

## **Community Preservation Committee**

**February 7, 2023**

### **Minutes**

**Members present:** Chair - Christopher Feeley, David McNeill, Wayne Simarrian, Rick Power, Phyllis Messere-Malcolm, Michael Giardino and Lisa Oxford. Monique Doyle and Jeffrey Livingstone were absent.

**Town Staff in attendance:** Town Administrator Jamie Hellen

### **Chairman Christopher Feeley called the meeting to order at 7:00PM**

#### **1. Approval of minutes**

- a. The minutes of the December 6, 2022 meeting were approved unanimously.
- b. The minutes of the executive session on December 6, 2022 were approved unanimously.

#### **2. Public Hearing**

- a. A motion was made, and seconded, to open the public hearing.
- b. All members present voted to open the hearing.
- c. Mark Minichelli of 31 Longfellow Drive addressed the committee. Mr. Minichelli noted that Franklin is home to many green spaces with trails. He explained that his 93 year old mother, who is wheelchair bound, is unable to access the trails. Mr. Minichelli asked about the possibility of making some of these trails ADA compliant in order that those who are wheelchair bound may enjoy them. He noted that in a community where he lived previously, such adaptations were made and it was very beneficial to people who would otherwise be unable to make use of green spaces and trails. He was uncertain whether such a request falls under the purview of CPC, but felt that he needed to ask the question. Mr. Minichelli suggested that DelCorte's would be a possibility due to it being relatively flat, and wonders if a small portion of our funds could be used for this purpose.

**Mr. Feeley:** Commented that it is a valid request.

**Mr. Hellen:** CPC wouldn't be involved in the design of such a project or choosing the location as much as funding it. Location and design would fall under the purview of the Conservation Commission. Con Comm at this time is currently going over their open space and recreation plan process, which is a seven year plan. There are several concepts being looked at relevant to this issue. They will be looking at greater ADA compliance at some town properties. Although at this time he's not sure which properties and where, ADA will be a large component.

Once the plan is approved by Con Comm and Town Council, it is then forwarded to the state. The state will comment and, once the plan is approved, Mr. Hellen imagines there will be more ideas and proposals brought before CPC than we will likely be able to fund. On another note, the town has been increasing accessibility at playgrounds, citing Nason Street as a recent example. Again, compliance is certainly on the town's radar.

**Mr. Simmarian:** Mr. Simmarian commented that he appreciates the input, and he will bring the matter up at the next Recreation Department Advisory Board meeting.

**Mr. Minichelli:** Explained that it wasn't his intention to make all outdoor spaces ADA compliant, but rather a small subset.

**Mr. Power:** Explained that he used to work for a wheelchair company and knows that people with disabilities would love nothing more than to be able to get out in nature to look at leaves and foliage. He thanked Mr. Minichelli for his input.

**Mr. Feeley:** Asked if anyone on the committee had any projects that they would like to bring forward. Seeing none, he asked if anyone watching at home had any projects they would like to bring forward. Seeing none, he called on Mr. Hellen.

**Mr. Hellen:** Mr. Hellen received an email from Alan Earls. Mr. Earls was unable to attend the meeting, but had some ideas to share with the committee, as follows:

- He noted that there are rumors regarding the possibility of a proposal for development at Maplegate Country Club. He believes there may have already been a meeting or two in Bellingham. The land is a Chapter 61 property. Mr. Hellen pointed out that whatever is being proposed, whether industrial or residential, the price is not something we could budget for given that it is a very large parcel of land. Mr. Earls suggests that perhaps CPA funds could be used to create some sort of public access to the property. This of course depends upon the use of the land. If it is industrial, it would be unlikely, but perhaps if it is residential we could work with them to create access. Mr. Feeley asked if we know how much of the property is in Bellingham and how much is in Franklin. Mr. Hellen said he believes that most of it is in Franklin, although he's not sure of the exact acreage.
- The second of Mr. Earls' ideas is in regard to Mr. Johnston's house, the Oliver Pond Home. It has been on the market for quite some time, and Mr. Hellen believes it is one of the five oldest homes in Franklin. He asked Mrs. Malcolm, who said she believes it is one of the oldest. Mr. Hellen explained where the house is located, noting that to some it may appear to be an abandoned house. Mr. Earls is suggesting preservation of the home. Mr. Hellen said he agrees with the concept, however the difficulty is in regard to the price of the home, where it would go and what could be done with it. It's challenging given the



price of a historical property, and without a use it would just sit idle. Moving the house would not be simple given the expense involved.

- Mr. Earls' third suggestion is to use CPA funds for additional digitization of records preservation for the Town Clerk's office, Historical Commission/Museum or the library. Mr. Earls didn't specify which records should be preserved. Mr. Hellen explained that right before the pandemic, the town archivist had the state archivist come in to do an assessment of our historical resources. One of the suggestions in her report was to have an internal staff working group among those entities to decide on an archiving policy for the future as well as what needs to be digitized, what needs to be stated in public records law in print, and to gather all of our files, including the Planning Board, and determine what needs to be digitized. We can't preserve them all, nor do we need to, but we need to prioritize what's needed. He noted that Nancy Danello did a great job with her money, and he predicts there will be more such proposals in the future.

Mr. Hellen explained that there were no formal recommendations before the committee for a vote at this meeting, but there will be next month. There are a few projects that the town will be requesting funding for, as follows:

The Recreation Department will be requesting \$325,000.00 for projects: Fletcher's Field, the Nason Street tot lot due to cost overruns and Beaver Pond to complete the challenge course.

We're also most likely going to see a proposal from the Housing Authority for upgrades. He reminded us that the last 2 years we gave 10% to the Franklin Ridge project, which helped secure more money from the state. There will also likely be a proposal relative to the Old South Church on Washington Street.

Regarding proposals, Mr. Hellen reminded the committee and viewers that we no longer need to have deadlines for proposals as we did in our first year. Although we have to publicize notice of hearings two weeks prior as per state law, proposals are now on a rolling basis.

Mr. Feeley proposed a motion to close the hearing. Mr. McNeill made the motion, and Mrs. Malcolm seconded. The hearing was closed at 7:18PM.

Mr. Hellen then went on to explain a CPA Tracking Spreadsheet that he had handed out to committee members. He noted that Maple Hill, Schmidt Farm and the Dalzell property have been properly recorded in the Registry of Deeds, and that in 18 months, CPC has protected 200 acres of open space.

Updates on other projects:

- Much of the work at the Red Brick School has been completed. Supply chain issues have delayed delivery of windows and doors, but hopefully they will arrive soon.
- The vault project in the Town Clerk's Office is wrapping up.
- Work on the cupola at the museum has not been started at all, and is not expected to start until summer.

- The Pare Corp, an effort to enhance the entire parcel at King Street Park, continues.

Mr Hellen reviewed totals and balances, and noted that with the exception of the housing commitment, which we undershot in year two, all 10% requirements have been met for the first two years of CPC. That deficit will have to be made up. This spreadsheet does not reflect FY 2024. Mr. Hellen hopes to have that budget at our next meeting.

Mr. Feeley asked if we would receive CPA money for FY 2024 in November of 2023, which Mr. Hellen confirmed. Mr. Hellen explained that it is anticipated that the state match will go down for FY 2024.

Mr. Giardino asked for clarification of the deficit for housing, and Mr. Hellen explained that we underfunded and underspent in the area of affordable housing. He explained that eventually we will be asked to appropriate the deficit amount to Franklin Ridge in order to resolve the deficit. Mr. McNeill asked for clarification of the Dalzell Land line item, as he had been absent from the previous meeting, and Mr. Hellen explained.

A motion was made to adjourn the meeting at 7:27 PM. The motion was seconded, and the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,  
Lisa Oxford