

Community Preservation Committee

May 25, 2006 - Meeting Minutes

Committee members present: George Bailey, Corey Snow, Janet Sargent-Tracy, Arnold Cohen, Robert Young, Arnold Kublin. *Committee members absent:* Peg Arguimbau. *Guests present:* Jane Desberg.

The minutes of April 26, 2006, were approved by unanimous vote.

Mr. Young said the Historical Commission was waiting for more information from the state concerning an inventory of historical houses, and thus would not present a proposal by May 31 but would wait for the “next round.”

Mr. Young said he was “disturbed” that the proponents of Article 19 (passed at May 2006 Town Meeting, for the Town’s purchasing an easement on, or a portion of, the King Philip Estates land) had stated at a Conservation Commission meeting that the CPC and the Historical Commission were “enthusiastic” or “very much interested” in supporting the purchase. Mr. Kublin felt this was immaterial because, in fact, that project had not been proposed to CPC. Mr. Bailey said that if it had been, a “more thorough analysis” would have been conducted. A packet of opinion letters about the archeological and historical status of the King Philip’s Estates land was distributed to the committee, for its information, at the chairman’s request.

Mr. Bailey asked the committee to again consider whether “smart growth” principles [see attachment 2] should be added to the guidelines. He excerpted some from the Mixed Use Overlay District (MUOD) of the Zoning bylaw [see attachment 1]. Mr. Young mentioned that MLURA (Massachusetts Land Use Reform Act), now called CPA II, or Community Planning Act, was moving along, and that “it might help to pay for a planner.”

Mr. Snow asked for details of the eligibility for CPA historical funds of the pump station building at well #1, which is over 100 years old. Mr. Bailey had spoken to DPW Superintendent Eric Hooper about it; restoration but not maintenance would probably be eligible, but no proposal for it will be submitted by May 31. Mr. Bailey said that Ms. Arguimbau had informed him that the Conservation Commission would submit a request for CPA funds by May 31 for a consultant to update the Open Space and Recreation Plan. In answer to Mr. Kublin’s inquiry about what the cost of that might be, Mr. Bailey said that he thought the last such plan had been funded by the Planning Board for the Conservation Commission in the 1980s, and that the only recent, somewhat comparable planning project was the state-funded, year-long \$30,000 EO418 project for the Planning Board, which involved considerable research and public meetings and was quite different. In addition to the Open Space and Recreation Plan, available Town planning reports include EO418 and Housing Production Plan, both posted on the Planning Board Web site.

Ms. Desberg answered the committee’s questions concerning the two proposals that the Housing

Authority (HA) has submitted (flooring replacement, South Pleasant Street family apartments, \$12,000; and roof repair, Hixson Farms elderly apartments, \$136,600). She stated that no asbestos or lead was present. Ms. Sargent-Tracy asked whether HA had applied to other funding sources. Ms. Desberg reminded the committee that HA is an independent agency, not part of the Town. She said HA gets a small subsidy from the state, but state funding is dollar-level-funded and hard to get, available only in emergencies and on a tight rein. Hixson Farms roofs are 35 years old and need updating; HA has asked three times, last in 2003, for state funding, which was not forthcoming. The flooring at South Pleasant Street apartments was last rehabilitated in 1982. Expenses like electricity go up, but rent amounts set by the state do not. Many Housing Authorities are applying for CPA funds. Mr. Kublin said HA had asked Sen. Timilty and Rep. Kafka about the possibility of state funding for repairs, but this did not work out. The HA had managed to get painting done at Hixson Farms by inmates from the Norfolk County work release program.

Mr. Snow thought the bid price for plywood (flooring project) sounded high.

There was discussion as to whether housing repair proposals were truly eligible for CPA funding: how would one ensure this? Mr. Bailey said the committee could (1) check the statute and the sample projects in the CP Coalition packet distributed by Coalition Acting Director, Kathy Roth; (2) ask Kathy Roth for guidance; and (3) if necessary, check with the state Department of Revenue (DOR).

Mr. Young suggested that the smaller HA request be part-funded by the encumbered 10% of historical funds because the South Pleasant Street building is in a Historic District and is itself historical. He will confer with the Historical Commission to get its endorsement of this idea. There was consensus that the committee “looks favorably” on this suggestion.

Mr. Bailey suggested, and the committee agreed, that all CPC recommendations be listed in one warrant article for the November Town Meeting; each recommendation can be voted separately by Town Meeting. A placeholder article can be requested before the warrant closes, but decisions on the CPC’s recommendations should probably be made in June and July, to be ready for timely Finance Committee review. Mr. Bailey will seek more definitive information on the FinCom schedule and when the warrant closes. He clarified that a public hearing on these particular projects prior to FinCom review is not required; a public hearing could be held in September, for instance, on “what we’ve done” rather than “what we’re doing.”

Next meeting dates are scheduled for Thursday, **June 22**, and Thursday, **July 27**. A regular schedule for CPC meetings will be listed on the Web site as “4th Thursday of each month.”

The meeting was adjourned at 8:20 p.m.

*Submitted by Alice Cheyer
Interim Secretary*

ATTACHMENTS

(1) Chair's report for May 25, 2006, meeting

To: Community Preservation Committee
Fr: George Bailey

May 23, 2006
Update on CPC/CPA related activity

1. Two Housing related Project Submissions have been received from the Housing Authority. Both are Housing related, one totals \$12,000; the other \$136,000.

It will be up to the committee to establish eligibility, prioritize, and establish process for recommendation relative to disbursement of funds.

2. A brief discussion was held with Eric Hooper as to the eligibility of the pumping station building at Well #1 (RR Station) for CPC funding.

3. The discussion on Article 19 at Town meeting firmly established the question of eligibility for CPC funds of any project already voted by town meeting.

The possibility of dealing with King Philips Rocks seems to be remote. The move by School Committee member Sam Liao to remove funding altogether so that it would be possible to use Community Preservation Act funds failed at the third night of town meeting.

The copies of materials presented to the Planning Board, Board of Appeal, and Housing Appeals Committee which were referenced at the 26 April CPC meeting will be available. Two additional memoranda felt by proponents to challenge the position of the State Archeologists' refusal to verify historic site eligibility will be added to the packet. This is for information only and will illustrate, at the very least, the challenge in evaluating proposals for public funds.

4. Vis-à-vis the discussion begun at an earlier meeting about adding "smart growth guidelines" for the CPC, I extracted the following from the [Mixed Use Overlay District—MUOD] Zoning by-law for possible discussion under "other business":

increases the availability of affordable housing, provides housing alternatives to meet local needs, promotes walkable neighborhoods, takes advantage of compact design, fosters distinctive and attractive village settings, preserves critical environmental assets, including drinking water supply quality and quantity, surface and groundwater quality and quantity, wetlands preservation and air quality, and supports economic revitalization in the Town Center and other commercial, transit-oriented locations.

5. Future meetings need be scheduled no more frequently than monthly. The fourth or last Thursday of the month is suggested.

Submitted, George Bailey

(2) Smart Growth Principles

Protect and preserve environmental resources, open space, working landscapes and unique natural environments, and reduce air and water pollution.

Promote diverse housing types in all communities to enable households from a wide range of economic levels, cultures and age groups to live and work within their boundaries.

Foster economic and social equity and provide choice and opportunity for all Massachusetts residents.

Reinforce our tradition of compact, walkable cities, towns and villages by encouraging lively, mixed-use development near existing infrastructure and promoting efficient land use that minimizes sprawl.

Invest in transportation choices, including high quality public transit services, which provide alternatives to automobile use.

Encourage fiscal policies that allow all communities within a region to share in the benefits and responsibilities of growth.

Promote local, regional and state planning and investment to promote smart growth.

Promote sustainable, shared prosperity through economic investment and development policies that provide jobs and opportunity, strengthen communities, and streamline development processes that avoid sprawl.

Encourage development that conserves resources, minimizes waste, utilizes good design, promotes health and enhances the community in which it is located.