



Town of Southwick

454 COLLEGE HIGHWAY, SOUTHWICK, MA 01077
Community Preservation Committee

Telephone (413) 569-6056 - Fax (413) 569-5284
Town Web Site: www.southwickma.org



Minutes

March 18, 2019

ATTENDANCE: Bob Horacek, Chairman
Chris Pratt, Vice Chair
John Whalley III
David Gunn
Karen DeMaio
David Sutton
Joanne Horacek
Maria Seddon
Sue Fox

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE: See Attachment

Mr. Horacek opened the meeting at 7:00 P.M. for public comments.

Public comments:

Michelle Pratt of 152 Berkshire came forward to thank the committee for meeting once again for the North Pond project. She wanted to remind everyone that it doesn't matter if you are for or against this project, that no one wants the town to bond for this.

Deb Herath of 3 Shore Drive came forward from the CRC to let the committee know that her members are very much in favor of saving North Pond and hopes that the committee approves the request.

J. Reopel of Mort Vining Road said that she's confused about how the town is going to be putting up more money that we don't already have towards this project?

Mr. Horacek explained that the request is for a bonding through the Community Preservation Committee. She went on to ask that this will be money that we will end up paying back if it goes forward? Mr. Horacek stated that was correct. Ms. Reopel was concerned that if the committee does approve the request, that there won't be any more money for future projects. Mr. Pratt and Mr. Horacek stated that there will still be money in the account, just not as much for other projects. Mr. Gunn interjected and said that the Historical and the Housing portion will not be affected, that money will still be there. It's the other categories that may be.

Mr. Pratt mentioned that the states matching funds will not be affected and that the 3% surcharge will be used for bonding. Ms. Reopel went on to say that the citizens that have raised all the money to save North Pond is not enough and we need more. Mr. Pratt and Mr. Horacek agreed that was correct. Ms. Reopel ended the statement that she is still not for the project.

Bernadette Oliver of 550 Griffin Road, Suffield, came forward and stated that she is a member of the Four Town Beach Association which is located in Southwick. She went on to quote the

Open Space and Recreation master plan of 2012, which mentions that the main goal is to maintain the quality and quantity of the aquifer.

Marcus Phelps of 28 Depot Street came forward and stated that he is a trained forester and previous Town Planner for five years. He presented an analysis he came up with. (**See attached**) Kimberly LaMarche of 27 Granville Rd. came forward and stated that a lot of what the CPC has funded in the past is non usable by the town of Southwick. And stated to the committee that if they can fund non usable land, why can't you fund something that the people can have access to. Joanne LaBlanc of 38 Reservoir Rd. came forward and asked the committee if we guarantee that the taxes will not go up if we bond with the CPC? How many parcels are actually buildable, will a perc test pass? Mr. Pratt mentioned that it is sandy soil, which will perc. And her last question was how does the town plan to pay for clearing out trails, purchasing port-o-potties and picnic tables? Mr. Pratt mentioned that most of the trails we currently have are done by volunteers and would most likely be the same here.

Alain Peteroy of Franklin Land Trust came forward to state that the land will have a land restriction. Coming from the Wildlife Fish and Game, the land will allow hunting, fishing, hiking and other recreations. The Town will own the land and it will probably stay forest land. Mr. Horacek mentioned that there is costs involved for this project and will cost approximately \$14,000/year.

Art Pinnell of Mort Vining Road came forward and asked about the appraisal. It stated that there was endangered species within the area and that Mr. Pinnell wasn't aware of any. And is it a formal appraisal. Mr. Hubbard of the Franklin Land Trust stood up and explained that wildlife was put into the appraisal. Mr. Pinnell disagreed. Mr. McLaughlin of North Longyard Rd stood up and mentioned that the Appraiser for this property is exceptional and very detailed.

Mr. Whalley interjected with that thought and stated that the committee doesn't have to spend a dime on this project unless the Town agrees to it. We don't have to put in port-o-potties or a parking lot. We don't have to do a darn thing. But, we do have to preserve it, in his opinion.

Tracy Meczywor of 155 South Loomis St. came forward and stated that she's lived in Southwick most her life. When she went to school here, they taught about the lake and how to preserve it. She felt how important it is to keep preserving it the way it is.

Mr. Horacek closed the public comments to continue on with the committees meeting.

Mrs. DeMaio made a **MOTION** to accept the January 31st minutes and Mrs. Fox seconded. (The vote was 8- For; 1-Abstained- Mrs. Seddon)

Mr. Sutton made a **MOTION** to accept the February 13th minutes as amended and seconded by Mrs. DeMaio. (The vote was 6- For and 3-Abstained, Mr. Horacek, Mrs. Horacek and Mr. Whalley)

North Longyard APR Project

Mr. Horacek invited Tom McLaughlin, owner of the North Longyard property farm, to speak. Mr. Horacek explained the scenario from the January meeting when Barbara Hobsen came before the committee in January.

Mr. McLaughlin stated that the properties original appraisal went from \$675,000 fair market value to \$905,000, based on a transaction right next door. They have until the end of June 2019 before they will have to reapply. MDR is in it for \$445,000 and the towns share was originally \$44,500. However, now they will need \$67,500 and \$115,000 in supplemental to preserve the property.

Mr. McLaughlin wanted to re-assure the committee that he is not up to something, that he didn't create the appraisal and that he is reacting to a change in the market. He also wanted to state that he will live with the decision the committee makes.

Discussion:

Mrs. DeMaio asked again how much they're asking for us to commit. Mr. Horacek stated that it is \$115,000 right now as long as the other \$115,000 is given from the Federal Government. Otherwise, it will be \$230,000 that they will need. Mr. Gunn questioned how many acres is it in total? Mr. McLaughlin stated that there is 58 acres in its entirety. There is a percentage residential and a percentage of Agricultural, which puts an Agricultural restriction on it. Mrs. DeMaio wanted to confirm that, by law, they can't go with the original agreement? Mr. McLaughlin stated that he never agreed or accepted the original agreement. That it was just proposed.

Mr. Horacek asked Council, if the committee voted to approve the \$115,000 and the government does not match, can the town vote to increase the amount at the town level. Mr. Coyle stated that it would be up to the Town Moderator.

Mr. Horacek stated that the committee needs to make a decision tonight if it is to go to town warrant, if we are going to participate.

Mr. Whalley made a **MOTION** to approve \$115,000, Mr. Gunn seconded. (Vote was unanimous)

Cemetery Commission Request for Preservation Program for the Old Cemetery

Gene Theroux came forward and thanked the committee for allowing him to be here. Mr. Theroux has been working at the Old Cemetery for over 41 years. He had walked through with Mr. Hamburg of the Historical Commission, showing him the damages to the stones. He stated that the cemetery has been in disrepair for far too long. There is close to 60 veterans in the cemetery, some from 1776, and their headstones are in fragments on the ground and he believes it is shameful. Mr. Theroux is requesting to the committee that they do something about that. Mr. Theroux had spoken to a Conservator in regards to pricing the restoration of the headstones. The Conservator gave him a breakdown of the training costs to the workers who will be restoring and also the volunteers. Some of the headstones are too far gone because they are made of sandstone. Mr. Theroux is leaving the committee with a binder that shows pictures and will give the committee a scope of what needs to be done. Mr. Theroux is requesting \$40,000 for the first two years.

Discussion:

Mrs. DeMaio questioned that this is just for two years? Mr. Theroux stated yes it is, however, there will be recurring maintenance. Mr. Gunn asked if Mr. Theroux did an application for the CPC yet? He responded that he did not. Mr. Gunn stated that this would be a good fit into the historical portion of CPC funds, yet Mr. Theroux needs to approach the Historical Committee first and have it approved.

A **MOTION** was made by Mrs. Fox for the \$40,000 and seconded by Mr. Whalley. (Vote: 8-For, Mr. Horacek recused himself because his wife is on the Cemetery Commission)

Mr. Horacek made a **MOTION** to table the Community Preservation Coalition program. Mrs. Horacek seconded. (Vote was unanimous)

Franklin Land Trust to discuss additional \$1.2M application

Mr. Hubbard stated that FLT was encouraged to submit this application to give the town options.

He stated that if the CPC were to approve this application, the taxes would not go up, because the money would be coming out of future obligations. If it does not pass tonight, then it will go to bond under General funds at tomorrow's town meeting.

Discussion:

Ms. Seddon asked if this was in addition to the \$1M that the town has put aside and the \$500,000 that is going to be up for vote tomorrow night. Mr. Hubbard responded yes. Mrs. Seddon added that, it would be a total of \$2.7M from the CPC. Mr. Hubbard responded yes, however, the \$1.2M would be bonded against future obligations from the CPC fund.

Mrs. Fox asked if FLT went to the property owner to see if she would negotiate. Mr. Hubbard stated that she would not, because she felt that the price was a bargain sale.

Mr. Pratt stated that there is a petition going around to bond through the general fund, which would alleviate that burden. This is not unprecedented. Mr. Pratt understands that this is a great deal of money, yet he believes it is worth it for a great use of CPC funding.

Mr. Gunn stated the committee is generally giving the town two choices, that if we don't bond using CPC money, the warrant article that is going to vote tomorrow night to come out of the General fund, then it would raise the taxes. Yet, if we vote to approve it for the special warrant meeting, the taxes won't go up. Mr. Hubbard agreed and stated that if the committee votes against using CPC money, there will only be one option tomorrow night.

Mr. Pratt wanted to remind the towns people, that this money comes from the taxes raised from the town and not the matching funds, because those aren't guaranteed as to what rate we get from the state. Those funds will still come in and we'll be able to use those for other projects.

Mrs. DeMaio asked what the annual payment would be. Mr. Pratt answered that the committee doesn't know that quite yet. Mr. Horacek interjected stating that it depends on what bond the town chooses. She agreed, yet we take in from taxes about \$400,000 and from matching, and \$80,000 from that has to go into low income and historical. Mr. Pratt interjected and stated that we have about \$233,000/year not counting the housing, historical or administrative.

Mrs. DeMaio was concerned, depending on the bond chosen, how will the committee be able to award future projects that may be needed if the committee approves the second application. Mr. Pratt stated that they would be able to use the Open Space and the unreserved funds.

Ms. Seddon asked how much money has the FLT raised and from the town. Mr. Hubbard stated that they have approximately \$275,000, plus expenses. Ms. Peteroy stated that the state has put in \$1M towards the 85 acres that they already preserved. And they have another \$600,000 waiting to put towards the conservation restriction. They awarded a land grant to the town for \$400,000.

Mrs. DeMaio asked FLT to explain how \$800,000 was taken from the state portion and moved to the town's portion. Mr. Hubbard stated that you can't look at it like that. Because it's one appraisal. That's the money the state had at the time. If we didn't take the money then, it would have gone somewhere else and FLT would have been needing more than that.

Mr. Whalley made a **MOTION** to bond the additional funds, Mr. Pratt seconded. (For- 4- Mr. Whalley, Mr. Pratt, Mr. Gunn, Mr. Sutton; Against- Mr. Horacek, Mrs. Horacek, Mrs. DeMaio, Ms. Seddon, Mrs. Fox) (The vote was not passed)

Discussion:

Mr. Pratt stated that he's concerned that the committee just voted for \$115,000 for the McLaughlin property and yet we can't grant any to our own town. Why can't the committee let the town decide what to do with that money. Mr. Horacek stated that it's overpriced. Mr. Pratt disagreed. Mr. Pratt asked Mr. Horacek if he thought the North Longyard property was overpriced or how many houses could go on his property. Why didn't you ask him those

questions. Yet we're debating over the North Pond project. Mr. Pratt stated that this project is for our own use forever. The North Longyard project is for just him and him alone.

Ms. Seddon exited the meeting before the end of the agenda and adjournment. Mr. Horacek stated that appointing the Vice Chair will be tabled and put off to another meeting, yet didn't ask for a vote.

Mr. Horacek made a **MOTION** to adjourn and no one seconded. Some of the members wanted to finish the agenda and didn't understand why Ms. Seddon left. Mr. Horacek stated that she just left. Mr. Sutton stated to Mr. Horacek that this whole board is a farce. He's never been so disappointed in so many people before, especially you. Mr. Horacek stated that he'd like to have a conversation about that. Mr. Sutton stated that he would not, ever! Mr. Pratt asked if we still have a quorum. Mr. Horacek stated that he's not going to bother with that. Mrs. DeMay asked the committee to officially adjourn. Mr. Horacek made a **MOTION**, again, to adjourn and was seconded by Mrs. Horacek. Mr. Gunn didn't agree with the adjournment. The other members just left, so it wasn't unanimous.

Next meeting April 3, 2019

Respectfully submitted,

Cindy DeMay
Secretary - CPC

Bob Horacek, Chairman

Chris Pratt, Vice Chairman

John Whalley III

David Gunn

David Sutton

Karen DeMaio

Joanne Horacek

Susan Fox

Maria Seddon
