



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



ANNUAL MEETING

Minutes

May 3, 2017

ATTENDANCE: John Whalley III, Chair
Marcus Phelps, Vice Chair
Karen Reed
David Gunn
Chris Pratt
Patrick Roche
Bob Horacek
Karen DeMaio
Dennis Clark, Consultant

Introduction of Committee Members

Community Preservation Act Funding

Mr. Whalley explained how the CPC acquired funds for a 3% local tax and a percentage match from the State CPA funds. He said that 10% of the funds go to Open Space projects, 10% goes to Historical projects, 10% goes to Housing projects and the remaining 70% is put in a General Unreserved Fund which can be used for any projects in those three areas including recreation. He said since the Town is a 3% giving community the State match is the maximum amount. He said we do not the amount the CPC will receive until it arrives in October or November.

Ongoing Projects

Mr. Whalley said the Town has been making Prifti Park Playscape ADA compliant. He said the Housing Authority Projects are replacing lights and repairing water damage to one building. The Town Clerk is working on preserving/archiving Town Historical documents. Additional lights are being installed near the ball parks at Whalley Park.

Pending Projects

The McLaughlin property will be in a Agricultural Preservation Restriction (APR) which means the farm will remain a farm in perpetuity. The CPC pays \$73,000 10% of the value of the property and the owner receives 90% match of \$657,000 from the State.

The Community Preservation Committee voted to preserve North Pond property and to dedicate 1 million dollars to the cost He said \$280,039 will be drawn from Open Space and \$719,961 will be taken from the General unreserved Fund.

Mr. Whalley introduced Alain Peteroy a representative of the Franklin Land Trust. She said she is the Director of Land Conservation for the Franklin Land Trust. She said they were to help with the preservation of over 140 acres of land off North Pond that is the subject of the 1 million dollar vote. She said it is the last remaining frontage on North Pond. She said they have been working with Town Officials, the Conservation Commission and the Department of Fish and Game to preserve this property. She said they have entered into a contract to buy the land for the appraised value of 5 million dollars. It had been appraised twice coming in at the same amount. She said as it stands now the Department of Fish and Game is prepared to put in 1.6 million dollars for the 84 acres of property that abuts the preserve. The Town has supported purchasing the remaining 62 acres which includes the waterfront, vernal pools, wetland areas and forested area. The Community Preservation Committee (CPC) has voted to spend 1 million dollars toward the purchase of the 62 acres. She said the Franklin Land Trust is fund raising for the project. She said they have the 1.6 million from the State Fish and Wildlife plus the Town's 1 million, plus a \$400,000 grant from the State which can be used to purchase the property. She said the Department of Public Works has supported the project put in \$25,000 for the water resources. The Franklin Land Trust and community members are organizing private fund raising, writing foundation grants to make up the 2 million dollars shortfall. She said the project will not happen without the Towns portion. She said she is supporting the Town asking for a Town positive vote. She said the Town is not paying 5

million. She said this is an amazing project. She said that if it succeeds it will be the largest preserve in New England. She said both pieces of land will be open to hiking fishing and hunting. She said the preserve will protect water quality. She said that it is already popular place. There will be a waterway easement along the border of the two pieces of property. It will be a 20 foot easement. Mr. Whalley said the funds are there. Mr. Whalley said the land will be divided into two parcels. He said one part consisting of 52 acres which will be owned by the Town and include the waterfront and the remaining 84 acres will be owned by the State Fish and Game Wildlife. He said the entire 136 acres will be put in a Conservation Restriction Preservation area in perpetuity. Alain Peteroy said that it cannot become a school a soccer field or anything else. Mr., Art Pinell asked what are the expected costs for the Town. Alain Peteroy said she is hoping the will be minimal costs for the Town. She said the hiking trails already exist. She said the Town will define a parking area on Sheep Pasture Road. Mr. Horacek said that this property will now be under the insurance umbrella that he estimated at \$25,000 a year not including the loss of taxes from development at the waterfront. He said it would not be developed the way the appraisers have outlined. He said the construction of about 12 houses would generate approximately between \$180,000. Mr. Pratt said it is not just the lakefront property that will be preserved but also the property behind it. He said there is no other parcel around the lake that has not been disturbed. This is the last chance to save it. He said they have been looking at his parcel of land over the last 15 years. He said this is a last ditch effort. He said the owner wants to sell the land and the Community Preservation wants to preserve this land not just for us but for the wildlife, the quality of Town water and for future generations. Mr. Whalley said it is the only place on the lake where people can anchor there boat and the kids can swim. It becomes a place to socialize especially for families. Mr. Phelps said that in regards to development the cost of community services must be taken in to account. He said any kind of subdivision will cost the Town money. He said usually for every dollar the Towns receives it costs the Town a dollar seventeen to support the development. He said with open space it usually costs fifty six cents. He said that in the future the water

supply will be critical. Ms. Peteroy said the development plan 24 house lots could be built on the land. She said fire, police and DPW services would be the Town's responsibilities. She said there are many other places in Southwick where developments can be built. She said it is a balance between where land should be preserved and where land should be developed. She said she loves that the property will open for everyone to enjoy. /// said that houses would bring in so much work for the DPW. He said the waterline has to come in first because if the land it is bought for preservation the water line cannot be built. Mr. Gunn said as a tax payer and resident of Southwick he does value open space. Mrs. DeMaio said she voted for the project but has a lot of concerns about the cost of the project. She said if we can get all this land with the Town paying a million dollars it is fine. She does have questions about it being a well site. She said there are several alternative sites in town that could be preserved. She said she did not want people to think that this is the only site available. Mr. Whalley said he wants to see this property preserved He does not live on the lake and does not own a boat but it is a beautiful piece of land. He said he cannot think of another piece of land that is more important than to preserve than this. Mr. Pratt said that he believes the reason that the people of Southwick voted in the CPC was because they wanted land preserved. He said it is cultural integrity. He said he believes this is one of those parcels the Town would like to preserve.

Community Preservation Committee Project Selection

Mr. Phelps reviewed the handout provided to those in attendance. He said it included the Community Preservation Act, the project application form and the Selection Criteria that is used for the selection for a project. He said it included a copy of the annual report which will be in the Town of Southwick annual report for 2017. He said when we do an APR, Agricultural Restriction the Town pays 10% and the State pays 90 %. He said the last page is a list of all projects completed and the amounts of money received and spent. He said the CPC reviews project applications whenever they are submitted. The CPC will recommend a project for a vote at Town meeting.

Public Comments:

Mr. Fox said he has concerns with the school playscape at Powder Mill School. He said the playscape was in dire need of repair or replacement. He said there are younger children at the school and the playscape is located in a wet area making it unavailable to the children. He said he hope the CPC would consider supporting the project. He said the school is working to come up with capital funds. The PTO is working on Fund raising. The school could not come up with the required funds. He said the community is being negligent to not assist with this project. He said the CPC gave money for the construction of the track and it is being used by citizens of though community day and night. He said if the playscape was put closer to the track there would be more use of both the playscape and the track because parents could watch their kids on the playscape as they use the track.

He said he feels the Farmington Canal should be protected with CPC Historical funds. He said the canal made the Town. He said a Historical Society project will soon be placing a sign in Southwick to indicate where the canal is located. He said dredging the canal would help protect our drinking water. He said there are funds in the CPC Historical Funds to assist with this project. He said CPC funds are from Town tax dollars and he hoped the Committee would reconsider and fund the canal project. He said this would be a great first step. Mr. Gunn said it should be considered but the proposal made by Mr. Grannells presented to the CPC an engineering design which could not guarantee funds for the dredging would be available. He said if it was put forward as a lock preservation project they would look to see how much of the project the CPC as s historic project. He said he did not see how dredging qualifies for a CPC project. Mr. Pratt said that Mr. Grannells said that he wanted to dredge the canal back to its original depth. He said he agreed with the project and would love to see it done. He said it is important not only from a historical point of view but also from a conservation point of cleaning it up. He said our concern is that it was paying for paperwork for the project. Mr. Horacek said the CPC will not be getting as much of a match from the State as in the past so we have to be very careful and prudent as to how the PC spend money. Mr. Whalley said that no one

on the committee felt that dredging was a bad idea. He said it should be done. He said the committee did not want to be put in the position to put money into a project that might not have the funds to be completed. He said it was left up in the air as to where the millions of dollars to dredge would come from. He said so all we would be buying was some engineering drawings and some permits. He said he was very afraid that our critics of the see us paying \$150,000 CPC for a pile of paperwork and not getting any guarantee that anything would be done. He said that was the reason the Committee did not vote for the application. Ms. Peteroy said that other canals have been revitalized such as the Erie Canal.

A MOTION was made by Mr. Gunn and seconded by Pratt to close the CPC Public Hearing. The motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Ruth Preston
Administrative Assistant - CPC

John Whalley III, Chairman

Marcus Phelps, Vice Chairman

Patrick Roche

Karen Reed

David Gunn

Chris Pratt

Robert K Johnson

Karen DeMaio

Bob Horacek