

CPC Meeting – August 11, 2015
7:30 pm
Kingsbury Room – Police Station

The Wellesley Community Preservation Committee met at 7:30 pm in the Kingsbury Room of the Police Station.

Present were the following CPC members: Barbara McMahon (Chair), Allan Port (Vice Chair), Joan Gaughan, Catherine Johnson, Susan Hurwitz, and Steve Burtt. CPC Assistant Nicole Ng was also present.

CPC Chair called the meeting to order at 7:32 pm.

Citizens Speak

No citizen was present.

Conversation with the Wellesley Conservation Council (WCC) -- Fred Fortmiller, Jean Wiecha, Pete Jones

Mr. Fortmiller, President of the WCC, summarized for the committee the purpose of the Council.

From its website (<http://www.wellesleyconservationcouncil.org/about.html>):
The WCC is a private, non-profit, land trust and conservation education organization incorporated in 1958. The mission of the WCC is to:

- *Protect and preserve the natural environment in Wellesley*
- *Maintain sanctuaries open to the public for study and enjoyment*
- *Educate youth and interest adults in matters of conservation*

The Council currently has a total land holding of 48 acres, valued at about \$13 million, and 3 preservation easements. Easements are privately owned but cannot be developed in exchange for a tax deduction. The Council generates some income from selling publications, such as *Walks in Wellesley*. Its biggest challenge is to garner donations for purchases.

Going forward, WCC seeks to educate the town's residents on the purpose of the Council as a land trust, and hopes to build relationships with other committees (NRC, CPC, etc.) with common goals. Two examples of recent town projects in which the WCC could play a role was 1) 900 Worcester and 2) 135 Great Plain Avenue. For 900 Worcester, the WCC was approached because it could serve as an incentive to potential developers who would receive a tax deduction in exchange for donating some land as easements but in the end it was decided that the land would be leased with the town retaining ownership. For 135 Great Plain, the Council

approached the developer to discuss possible land donations in exchange for zoning changes under the rules of Article 28.

Ms. Johnson pointed out that the subdivision of the 135 Great Plain Ave. project will be coming before Planning soon and 50% must be open space although it is undecided yet how ownership of the open space will be determined.

Mr. Jones emphasized that the Council can do things outside of Wellesley, like in Weston, while town committees like NRC is tied to only land in Wellesley.

Ms. Gaughan stated that she admires the Council but is concerned because it sold off a piece of wooded land on Dinsmore Rd. that could have remained wooded or become a 'pocket park' like numerous others in town. And that the NRC was interested in obtaining it. Owners had promised to leave it wooded but it is now a lawn. She asked if the Council has any future plans to sell other land. Mr. Fortmiller responded no and clarified that the deed followed original restrictions and open space is defined as natural, lawn, playground, etc.

Mr. Port suggested another possible opportunity for WCC. North 40 will have possibly 15-18 acres under Conservation Restrictions (CRs). State laws mandate that a town and its official bodies (such as CPC, NRC) cannot hold or enforce the restrictions. The Selectmen will need to assign a nonprofit organization that is not part of the official town committees, such as Trustees of the Reservation or WCC, to hold the restrictions. In return for taking on this responsibility, the organization is usually paid a fee.

Mr. Fortmiller asked if CRs are easements. Mr. Port and Ms. McMahon explained that CRs are not easements. It is a responsibility that a nonprofit organization assumes in writing to defend the restrictions against violations. The final selection of such nonprofit will rest with the Selectmen, with input from CPC.

Mr. Port offered to send more information about CRs to the WCC. Ms. McMahon stated that CPC would be happy to discuss further the possibilities of this role for the Council, but there is still a lot of time before that selection needs to be made.

Guests leave at 8:20pm.

Invoice Approval

The committee voted to approve the invoice for the archival processing of the Margaret Urann Collection for \$620.00 (out of \$6,200 total granted). Mr. Burtt moved to approve the invoice for \$620. Ms. Gaughan seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous.

New Business/Project Updates

The Wellesley Natural Resources Commission (NRC) submitted today a short form preliminary application for \$5,000 to complete a study on current use of the tennis courts at Kelly Field and evaluate future needs of the site.

The timing of the application coincides with the Park and Recreation's plan to introduce pickleball to its offerings. Mr. Burt explained that pickleball is similar to tennis but is played with wooden paddles and a wiffle ball on a new or relined court.



The game originated in Washington and is gaining popularity in other states. Since the Kelly Field courts are in need of repairs, maybe they can be turned into pickleball courts. However, Park and Recreation can also explore other courts in town to repurpose for pickleball if Kelly Field is not an option.

Ms. McMahon reminded CPC that the Kelly Field portion of an earlier NRC request was denied to await a town wide assessment of fields in relation to the North 40 project.

Ms. Gaughan replied that the court has been waiting for funding for 9 years and it is deteriorated and neglected. NRC is seeking funding for a study of options for the land: tennis, pickleball, community garden, etc. and will seek neighbors' input.

Discussion ensued about timing of applications in relation to the fall and spring town meetings and other possible ways, such as using administrative funds, to finance the Kelly Field project.

Ms. McMahon suggested that they talk more at another meeting when other members of CPC and Brandon Schmitt from the NRC will also be present.

Other updates include:

Ms. Gaughan noted that part of the Fuller Brook trail on Paine is presently closed for construction. The dredging of the pond is in progress.

Request for proposals for the Comprehensive Pond Plan and Morses Pond Erosion study has been sent out. Bids are expected in soon.

No response yet on the second library Hills branch chimney.

Upcoming Year/CPC Leadership

The plan is to keep the second Wednesday of the month for CPC meetings. Ms. McMahon will email the group to confirm.

The Committee voted to keep CPC leadership as is with Ms. McMahon as Chair and Mr. Port as Vice Chair. Ms. Johnson made the motion. Ms. Gaughan seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous.

Approval of Minutes: June 16, 2015

Ms. Hurwitz moved to approve the minutes with minor edits. Motion was seconded by Mr. Burt. The vote was unanimous.

Adjourn

A motion to adjourn was made at 8:55pm by Mr. Port. It was seconded by Ms. Gaughan. The vote to adjourn was unanimous.