

CPC Meeting - May 13, 2014
7:30 pm
The Warren Building

The Wellesley Community Preservation Committee met at 7:30 pm in the Warren Building.

Present were the following CPC members: Allan Port (Chair), Joan Gaughan, Kathy Egan, Jim Conlin, Susan Troy, Tony Parker, Tad Heuer, and Deborah Carpenter. Absent was Barbara McMahon. Mason Smith was present from Advisory Committee.

Also present from the Board of Selectmen were Barbara Searle and Ellen Gibbs, and Hans Larsen, Executive Director.

The Chair called the meeting to order at 7:30 pm

Citizen Speak

Citizens were present but none chose to speak.

Discussion of options to support acquisition of part or all of the Wellesley College North 40.

Tony Parker recused himself from the discussion due to a possible conflict of interest and left the room.

The Chair explained that he had sent out questions for the Committee to think about with regard to CPC willingness to contribute to the possible acquisition by the Town of the Wellesley College North 40 for open space, recreation land and possibly affordable housing. Those questions asked the Committee: (i) is the CPC willing to borrow to support the acquisition of the North 40; (ii) is the CPC willing to borrow for an extended period of 20 years or more, (iii) is the CPC willing to commit more than 50% of the local levy to debt service (keeping in mind that debt service for open space and/or affordable housing satisfies CPC's 10% requirement for those uses.

Hans Larsen presented an overview of the proposed acquisition by the Town. No purchase price has been set yet, but the Town and the College will be doing separate appraisals to establish the price. Mr. Larsen stated that the acquisition of this land by the Town presents an opportunity to make a real difference in the Town for years to come on many fronts. The Selectmen are forming a Visioning Committee composed of representatives of key Town stakeholders (Boards and Departments) and neighbors, and will be supported by members of Town Staff. The purpose of the Visioning Committee will be to evaluate the range of potential municipal uses of the land. The Selectman have a draft charge that will go to the Visioning Committee in the next couple of weeks. Mr. Larsen stated that the work of the Visioning Committee will be completely transparent. All meetings will be open and the public are welcome to attend.

The Selectmen also propose engaging a Consultant to work with the Visioning Committee once it is formed to assist in its work. The current thinking is that the Selectmen would go to a fall (October/November) Special Town Meeting for approval of the acquisition and funds for the purchase. A January vote is possible but is not ideal. The Town will need to use all available funds, and would require a debt exclusion that would go to the voters. A January vote is possible but not ideal and not preferred.

Mr. Larsen briefly described the recent meeting held by Wellesley College to explain the sale. Many concerns were expressed, including with regard to traffic, loss of open space and general anxiety about the ramifications of development of the land. There will be another meeting next week to discuss the sale by Wellesley College of the Rollins Parcel, which consists of five single family lots, two of which are in a Historic District. Mr. Larsen said that the Town is not interested at this point in purchasing that parcel and is not pursuing that option.

Ms. Searle explained that the process of considering the acquisition will necessarily be short, and that when the Selectmen go to the Special Town Meeting in the fall, there will not be an actual project on the drawing board. Rather, the Visioning Committee will have studied the alternatives, which would be part of the presentation to the STM, but what the land would actually be used for will only be determined after the land is purchased, if that happens. She also explained that the Visioning Committee will not be studying how to finance the project. The will be handled entirely by the Selectmen.

The Chair stated that CPC needs to know the potential options for which CPC funds would be used so it can be assured the contribution would be permitted. He also referred to the 900 Worcester Street project, which is still on hold pending Vatican approval, and the fact that CPC could only have contributed more money if there had been more open space. Uses of the funds is a concern to CPC and influences how much money it can contribute to a project. Mr. Larsen mentioned that the Selectmen did recently sign a one year extension of the 900 Worcester Street agreement, and would plan to address that as part of the presentation at the Fall STM.

The Chair said he feels this is a great opportunity and is willing to push his comfort zone to support it. He handed out his calculation of possible debt service figures using level principal and level payment formulas over a range of years, up to 30 years.

Mr. Conlin explained that Wellesley is in the "1% level", meaning that Wellesley imposes a 1% surcharge on the local real estate tax for the CPC. He queried whether CPC should consider asking the voters to go to a 3% level, which would generate an incrementally greater state match, and which, going forward, would allow CPC to contribute to projects that it would like to do and not be constrained by having allocated a significant portion of its funds the debt service for the North 40 acquisition. He also posed the question of whether the Fall STM might be the time to propose the increase to the 3% level. The Chair stated that at the 3% level, CPC also would have access to other sources of revenue from the Town. Mr. Larsen commented that taking additional revenue from other sources would really just be a shifting from one pocket to another, and that the "new" funds would really come from the increased state match. The Chair indicated he will speak with Stuart Saginor, Executive Director of the Massachusetts Community Preservation Coalition, to better understand the formula for 3% level funding and calculation of the state match.

Mr. Larsen also pointed the possible follow-on impact of using the land to consolidate schools, which would leave the current school sites available for affordable housing and other development. As an aside, Mr. Larsen mentioned that the Town is embarking, with WHDC, on a rethinking of the affordable housing policy in an effort to reach the large "middle" group of people between the low income group now eligible for affordable housing and the Wellesley residents who can afford to live in Wellesley.

Mr. Heuer asked if the scope of the Visioning Committee's work includes getting a broad overview of all available and potentially available sites in Town. Mr. Larsen said the Committee will focus primarily on the North 40, and will not be charged to take that broad overview. Ms. Searle said the work of the

Committee is going to cost money, specifically for the consultant, and asked if CPC wants to use some of its administrative funds to support that work. She explained that the Selectmen are soliciting financial support from every Board/Committee. The Chair said that said CPC can contribute administrative funds for a use that will help CPC do its work. He indicated that CPC has \$50,000 of administrative funds that would be available. Mr. Larsen requested that CPC contribute \$25,000 from its administrative funds to support the work of the Visioning Committee. Susan Troy made a motion to appropriate \$25,000 of administrative funds to support the engagement of a consultant to work with the Visioning Committee. Joan Gaughan seconded the motion. After a vote, the motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Larsen reminded CPC that it needed to select a representative for the Visioning Committee. He and Ms. Searle indicated that the Committee will do its work over the summer and will entail frequent meetings, the intent being to conclude it works in time for the Fall STM.

The Chair took a general poll of the Committee members and all were in favor of potentially contributing CPC funds to the acquisition by the Town of the North 40.

Ms. Gibbs, Ms. Searle and Mr. Larsen left the meeting. Mr. Parker returned to the meeting and the Chair briefly explained the discussion and noted that CPC has moved to appropriate \$25,000 for the Visioning Committee.

The Committee discussed who to appoint to the Visioning Committee. There was general consensus among the members that Allan Port would be the ideal representative from CPC. Joan Gaughan made a motion to appoint Allan Port. Tad Heuer seconded the motion. After a vote, the motion carried unanimously.

Library Chimney

Mr. Heuer said work is progressing and that structural work is essentially complete. There was problem with one of the elements to be installed on the chimney, but that a new one had been ordered. There is a ribbon cutting on Saturday, May 17th, and the goal is to at least have some or all of the scaffolding down by then.

Perrin Park Playground

Ms. Gaughan said that Janet Bowser of NRC has a design proposal for review. Installation is expected to happen late this summer. She will check for an update on the cost of the project and report back to CPC.

ADA Dock Extension

Mr. Conlin said that the new ADA compliant dock will be installed before the beach opens. The Committee congratulated him for the successful completion of that project.

WHDC

Ms. Troy said she met with Deb Guyot, the new Executive Director of the Wellesley Housing Authority, who previously had attended a CPC meeting to introduce herself to the Committee. At that prior meeting, Ms. Guyot said she would likely have to do a Town wide assessment in order to figure out what work had to be done for the Morton Circle housing. Ms. Troy said that Ms. Guyot now thinks that a Town wide assessment will not be necessary, and that she is considering just updating the 2003 Town wide assessment. Ms. Egan said she is not certain that an update will be sufficient and indicated that the matter would be discussed at an upcoming meeting of the WHA. Mr. Parker cautioned that he wants to

be sure that whatever is done is actually useful. Ms. Egan and Ms. Troy agreed and said they would report back to CPC after the matter was further discussed with the WHA Board and WHDC.

Fuller Brook

The Chair reported he was not certain whether or not a construction contract had been signed yet for the Fuller Brook work. His information from Rose Mary Donahue is that her committee is still working on resolving some final issues, which they expect to happen shortly, and that they expect to get the final Order of Conditions from Wetlands this week. .

Update on \$25 million for State Match

The Chair said the MA House of Representative has passed the budget with the \$25 million for CPA in it, but that it has not yet gone to the Senate. He indicated he will write a letter of support on behalf of CPC and will ask the Board of Selectmen to do that same, as they have done in the past.

Future Projects

The Chair said there are no specific projects other than the North 40 that CPC might want to consider.

There were no invoices to consider.

Mr. Heuer said that the HDC has extended its plaque program to houses built before 1914. He explained that there is a group of about 80 homes in the Abbott Road, Clovelly Road, Belvedere Road area that are eligible and expects most of those homeowners to participate in the program at their own expense. He said that HDC may come to CPC at some point for a small amount of funding to support the plaque program. Mr. Heuer also said that HDC had found the sign from the original Wellesley Square train station, and they are looking into where it could be installed.

General discussion ensued about how the North 40 could tie up CPC funds and inhibit CPC's ability to do other projects. Ms. Troy reminded the Committee about the successful recent projects that speak to the Committee's accomplishments that benefit the entire Town.

Jim Conlin made a motion to approve the minutes from the March 12 meeting. Tony Parker seconded the motion. After a vote, the motion carried unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 9:15 with a motion to adjourn by Kathy Egan and seconded by Susan Troy.