

CPC Meeting and Public Hearing – January 14, 2015

7:30 pm

The Kingsbury Room, Wellesley Police Station

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

Present were the following CPC members: Barbara McMahon (Chair), Allan Port (Vice Chair), Deb Carpenter, Kathy Egan, Joan Gaughan, Tad Heuer, Susan Hurwitz and Susan Troy. CPC Assistant Nicole Ng was also present.

Also present were Mason Smith, CPC Advisory Liaison, and Michael Tobin, Friends of the North 40. David Wright and Joshua Doran of the Historical Commission arrived at 7:45. Brandon Schmitt and Steven Murphy representing the NRC arrived at 8:15.

CPC Chair called the meeting to order at 7:30 pm.

Public Hearing

North 40 property purchase

Michael Tobin, precinct 2, Cottage Street, community garden user, voiced in favor of the purchase, suggested that 50% not be the maximum left as open space and expressed concern about the impact of traffic on Weston Road.

Public Hearing closed at 7:32.

North 40 Presentation and Discussion

Guests: Hans Larsen, Town of Wellesley Executive Director; Barbara Searle, Don McCauley, Wellesley Board of Selectmen.

Handouts: Full application and supplemental attachment

Mr. Larsen went over the details of the attachment. He reiterated the flexibility of the land for use as open space and affordable housing. He also talked about the 3 sources of finance for the purchase: \$10 million from CPA funds and \$25 million from general funds both taxable and tax exempt.

Ms. McMahon asked how many acres would be required to develop affordable housing for the 55+ group.

Mr. McCauley explained that there is no minimum requirement. A development can be as small as the recently built Waterstone which is around 5 acres. Depending on the size of the units, 12-13 acres could accommodate up to 300 units.

Mr. Port asked whether a building with 3 or 4 stories on the North 40 would violate the Dark Skies requirement. Guests responded that they didn't believe it would be a problem.

Mr. Larsen updated that they are working on different scenarios of land use under the Conservation Restrictions (CRs) and will seek feedback from CPC. They are also further investigating the possibility of capping or remediating the landfill for playing fields. Although it is possible that it doesn't need to be capped, the expectation is that something will be done to make it safer and more useable. The affected area is about 30ft deep, much deeper than Sprague field, which was capped. Ironically, the most forested part of the North 40 is the landfill and the hope is to preserve it as much as possible.

Mr. Larsen also reported that a geo probe east from the former pump house found more waste extending into town land. It is not clear how far but results should be available in a week. If it doesn't extend too far, then it will be removed. It is not clear how it got there and how long it has been there. Wellesley College believes that there is no connection between the pump house and the town but this will need to be resolved after further study.

Discussion then proceeded to the approval of CPA funds for the purchase. Mr. Port expressed concern in the wording of the Selectmen's draft motion for the upcoming Special Town Meeting (STM). It doesn't specify the number of acres to be placed under CRs and Mr. Port noted that 20 acres was the number that had been agreed upon in past meetings. Mr. Larsen didn't recall that being the case. He said the number is closer to 13.1 acres, calculated from the percentage of CPA funds (28.6%) towards the purchase price (\$35m). Mr. Port contended that 13.1 acres is too low, especially because the undevelopable 6 acres and small vernal pool area should not count toward it.

Mr. Larsen said that the wording was copied from the 900 Worcester project. Ms. McMahon explained that we knew specifically how many acres would be covered by CPA funds in 900 Worcester but it is more of an estimate for North 40.

To proceed with the vote, CPC proposed the following changes to the Selectmen's draft motion: CPA funded acreage will be 1) commensurate with the purchase price, 2) total at least 13.1 acres and 3) CRs will be decided in consultation with the CPC. The Selectmen agreed.

Mr. Port made the following motion: The CPC recommends that the Wellesley Special Town Meeting appropriate \$10,000,000 towards the purchase of the North 40 to be paid for by borrowing, such recommendation being subject to two provisions:

1. The annual debt service shall not exceed \$610,000
2. "Said portion of restricted land being **at least** commensurate with the percentage of the purchase price funded through *The Community Preservation Act* funds (13.1 acres), said restrictions to be approved by the Board of Selectmen, in consultation with CPC."

Ms. Carpenter seconded the motion. Motion passed by 8 in favor, 1 opposed.

Lastly, Mr. Larsen clarified that the Town will be voting on the \$10,000,000 figure, not the \$610,000 debt number. Since the debt service number depends on the interest rate, he wondered if \$610,000 would be enough. CPC members reiterated that \$610,000 already accounts for any cushioning necessary from interest rate fluctuations. Any amount over \$610,000 should be covered by general fund because CPC cannot borrow more than the \$610,000 annual debt service.

Guests leave at 8:45.

Historic Plaques – Wellesley Historic Commission (WHC)

Guests: David Wright, Historic Commission; WHC Advisory member Joshua Doran.

Handout: Short form preliminary application

Before presenting the application for the historic plaques, Mr. Wright explained that he is also here to support the \$6200 grant application from the Historical Society for the archival of the Urann collection previously presented in November.

Mr. Wright and Mr. Doran presented the plaque application which is seeking \$95,000 to promote and expand the historic building date plaque program. Funds will be used to research and verify the dates of buildings and to subsidize the manufacturing cost of the plaques. Buildings must be 100+ years old and currently applications from owners are mostly via word of mouth. The plan includes creating and updating the public records of all historic buildings as well as marketing the program to the community.

Mr. Port suggested giving the requested funds over separate years since they don't need to make all 900 plaques right away. WHS explained that the funds are needed for immediate and ongoing research and with marketing, there could be a significant increase in requests for plaques.

CPC members felt that the \$10 application fee is too low and devalues the plaques. Many suggested that applicants pay the full \$50. WHS members wanted to keep the fee low as an incentive for owners to apply. It was then agreed by both CPC and WHS that the fee from the owners should be \$25 and CPA would subsidize the other \$25, with the option for owners to pay the full fee.

Mr. Port moved to approve the new lower grant total of \$82,000. Ms. Hurwitz seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Mr. Port moved to approve the grant of \$6,200 from the Historical Society for the archival of the Urann collection. Mr. Heuer seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Guests leave at 9:25.

Discussion of Natural Resources Commission's Pond Study Request

Guest: Brandon Schmitt, Director, NRC, Steve Murphy, Vice Chair, NRC
Handouts: Supplemental Report, Letter from DPW

Mr. Schmitt followed up on the pond application with the additional handouts noted. He explained that the study would allow the town to be less reactive and more proactive in the management of its smaller ponds, modeling after the success of Morses Pond. Hopefully, the study will help DPW prioritize needs and implement measures other than last resort dredging.

He walked through the steps Dr. Ken Wagner, Pond Manager, takes to monitor Morses Pond by doing analyses of sediments before, during and after a rain storm.

Ms. Hurwitz voiced that she is in favor of proactive pond management but wonders what measures are available for the smaller ponds.

Mr. Schmitt explained that Reed Pond has cement walls under water at input points to collect sediment for removal. Other measures include bio retention ponds and rain gardens. The challenge is gaining access to check inflow on private properties.

Ms. Hurwitz suggested that future plans should involve pond neighbors as stewards of the ponds and asked how the success of Morses Pond is measured.

Mr. Schmitt reported that there is less algae, the weed harvester is ridding more weeds with fewer trips, the amount of phosphate is also down. He will summarize Dr. Wagner's annual report to the NRC on Morses Pond and send it to CPC. He estimated that the project for these smaller ponds will take about 2 years, not as long as the 10 years for Morses Pond.

Guests leave at 9:40.

New Business

The Library Board of Trustees and Board of Selectmen will be requesting \$2500 for a study of the second chimney on the library.

Approval of Minutes

September 25, 2014

November 12, 2014

December 10, 2014

December 29, 2014

Mr. Port moved to approve the minutes. Motion was seconded by Ms. Egan with minor changes. The vote was unanimous.

Adjourn

A motion to adjourn was made at 9:50 by Ms. McMahon and seconded by Mr. Port. The vote to adjourn was unanimous.

Mr. Port moved to amend the motion to the plaque grant to include "funds will be from the Historical Preservation Reserves." Motion was seconded by Ms. Carpenter. The vote was unanimous.