

Town of Harwich  
Real Estate & Open Space Committee  
February 19, 2016  
Minutes

Members Present: Kathy Green, Bob Thomas, Marcia-Thorngate-Smith, Elaine Shovlin

Guests Present: David Spitz (Town Planner), Mike Lach (HCT), Amy Usowski (Conservation Agent)

Meeting called to order at 8:40 AM.

Minutes of the January 15th site visit and meeting were reviewed and approved as is - all in favor.

Discussion on the proposed sub-division between Forest and Sisson Rds. - The Harwich Conservation Commission has approved acceptance of Lot#8 for conservation. A letter from an abutter was sent to the BOS and copied to the REOS in objection of the sub-division. The letter was discussed. Amy stated that any litter in the area on the Forest Rd. side of the lot was not thought by her committee to be an issue. In January, REOS had unanimously voted to approve the acceptance of Lot#8, as long as the Harwich Conservation Commission approved. An email was sent to Peter Hughes (Chair of the BOS) stating these facts and asking that this issue be an agenda item at a future meeting.

The 2011 warrant article setting aside \$50,000 in CPA funds for tax title research has had difficulty being used due to various interpretations of the article. To try and address this the current Community Preservation Committee has decided to submit an article for the current May 2016 Town meeting that will rescind the 2011 article and redirect those funds back into a CPA account that will make it easier to use these funds for expenses directly related to legal research needed to pursue 'owner's unknown' properties and other legal work ; on properties that would qualify for CPA funding. This article is currently under review by the CPC before it is to be submitted to the BOS.

Hawksnest Property - Mike Lach shared an overlay of this property with relation to the Zones of Contribution, Pleasant Bay Watershed, and the Six Ponds Protected areas. Bob Thomas reported that he had met with Town Administrator, Chris Clark - Chris would (if requested by REOS) consult with Town Counsel regarding the taking of that property by eminent domain. The term "for public purpose" came up in discussion - David Spitz commented that it would seem as if converting land to conservation "should" in fact be for public purpose. The question of how CPA funds could be used was discussed. More questions need to be answered before we take any action on this.

Marini Property - the warrant article has been submitted and will come before the May 2016 Town Meeting.

Hall Property - the deed has been signed and registered.

New Business - Kathy Green submitted a simple write-up on the REOS to be included in the annual town report.

Central Avenue Property - Bob Thomas met with Chris Clark for advice. It was thought by the REOS committee that to go through the expense of selling (appraisal costs and legal fees) such a small town parcel of land may not be worth it. The question was raised as to the assessed value vs. the appraised value when preparing to sell. Chris suggested there might be a precedent for selling town property that is only worth \*\$15,000 or less without having to go through the more expensive process. Bob Thomas agreed to get further clarification from Chris and town counsel on that issue. It was noted that currently at least one of the abutters had expressed interest in perhaps buying the parcel. Kathy Green was to check with the Rec. department as to any interest for them to take it over, perhaps for beach parking or as a sitting area.

\*The REOS committee at this time has no idea as to any value of this particular property.

With no further business to discuss, a motion was made by Elaine to adjourn, seconded by Marcia. Meeting adjourned. Next meeting scheduled for 3/18/16.

Respectfully submitted by Robert Thomas, Acting Clerk.