

TOWN OF HARWICH
COMMUNITY PRESERVATION COMMITTEE

Community Preservation Committee Regular Meeting Minutes

October 12, 2023

Recording and Taping Notification: As required by law the Town may audio or video record this meeting. Any person intending to either audio or video record this open session is required to inform the chair.

I Call to Order

Harwich Community Preservation Committee Meeting called to order with quorum of committee members present by Chair Dave Nixon at 6:01 PM, on Thursday, October 12, 2023 at the Harwich Town Hall, Donn B. Griffin Room.

Present: Chair Dave Nixon, Vice-Chair Kathy Green, Bob Doane, Mary Maslowski, John Ketchum, Kelly Barber, and Marcy Vigneau

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Pursuant to M.G.L. c.30A, § 21(6), to consider the purchase, exchange, lease or value of real estate if the Chair declares that an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the negotiating position of the public body – A Land Purchase.

A motion was made by Mary Maslowski, seconded by Bob Doane, to move into Executive Session Pursuant to M.G.L. c.30A, § 21(6), to consider the purchase, exchange, lease or value of real estate if the Chair declares that an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the negotiating position of the public body – A Land Purchase.

The Community Preservation Committee will return to public session following the Executive Session.

ROLL CALL VOTE: Chair Dave Nixon – Aye; Vice-Chair Kathy Green – Aye; John Ketchum – Aye; Bob Doane – Aye; Mary Maslowski– Aye; Kelly Barber – Aye; Marcy Vigneau– Aye.

Motion carried.

Exited Regular CPC Meeting to move into Executive Session.

Returned to Open Regular CPC Meeting at 6:28 PM in the Donn B. Griffin Room, Harwich Town Hall.

REGULAR CPC MEETING

o Welcome Guests

A. No Public Comment

B. Emily Brutti introduced herself to committee. She will be joining the CPC once she has been officially appointed.

o Approval of Minutes:

A. CPC Meeting – September 12, 2023

A motion was made by Mary Maslowski, seconded by Kathy Green to approve the minutes of the September 12, 2023 meeting.

VOTE: Chair Dave Nixon, Vice-Chair Kathy Green - Aye; Mary Maslowski - Aye; Bob Doane - Aye; Marcy Vigneau – Aye; John Ketchum – Aye; Kelly Barber – Aye.

Motion PASSED unanimously.

o New Business:

A. Update Status Reports continued:

Brooks Academy Museum Commission

- 2019 Article #41 Assessment & Restoration of Foundation, \$130,000
- 2021 Article #31 Structural Improvements Project, \$1,150,000
- 2023 Article #27 Brooks Academy Exterior Preservation & Windows Restoration Project, \$690,000

Handout Facility Manager of the Harwich DPW Sean Libby presented the update as he has taken on the leadership of the restoration projects of the Brooks Academy over this last month.

- 2019 Article #41 Assessment & Restoration of Foundation, \$130,000

This project is complete. All the funds have been spent.

- 2021 Article #31 Structural Improvements Project, \$1,150,000

One more invoice, some \$133,602, is expected to come, concluding this project; all funds will have been spent.

- 2023 Article #27 Brooks Academy Exterior Preservation & Windows Restoration Project, \$690,000

This project has just begun. No funds have been spent. OPM Selection Board will be set up by next month to select the architect. RFP to go out soon.

Mr. Libby acknowledged David Spitz and his leadership, saying Mr. Spitz left the project in good shape to begin the restoration project.

Harwich Affordable Housing Trust

- 2023 Article #25 Harwich Affordable Housing Trust Fund, \$500,000

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Handout HAHT Chair Larry Ballantine and Trustee Brendan Lowney presented update.

- The provided budget shows their funding is acquired from CPC funds and cell tower proceeds. Cell tower proceeds from 2019 to 2021 have been spent. Interest is included in account. The fund has a balance of \$1.4 million, not including future cell tower funds.
- The CPC members thanked Mr. Ballantine for providing the requested financial figures.
- The HAHT has worked with JM Goldson LLC creating their Affordable Housing Trust Strategic Plan for FY 2024-2028. The 9.5.23 draft was included in the handouts.
- The HAHT is working with Laura Shelton on the RFP. They have worked with Ms. Shufelt, Director of Community Assistance at Massachusetts Partnership Fund (MHP), before. The RFP will get the conceptual plan to move forward, focusing on the Marceline properties.
- The HAHT has had discussions with the Harwich Fire Association, working on affordable housing opportunities in the second story of the Old Firehouse.
- The HAHT is working on their list of other potential affordable housing projects. They recently held a workshop with the Harwich Conservation Trust and HCT Executive Director Michael Lach focusing on how to work with open space in affordable housing projects. Density isn't always a bad word if one can combine open space and housing.
- The HAHT has met with the Harwich Housing Committee to see if they have mutual goals.
- The CPC members thanked Mr. Ballantine for all the HAFT results – creating a strategic plan to move forward and providing a financial statement. The detail was much appreciated.
- Mr. Ballantine stated he plans to come to more CPC meetings in the future and provide updates.
- **Follow-up:** Where are the short-term rental tax monies? Mr. Ballantine acknowledged he was asked this before but he will find the answer to this question and get back to us.

B. Presentations of the 2023/2024 CPA Funding Requests:

Each applicant will be given 5 minutes to present, followed by a 15-minute increment of time for discussion with CPC members.

APPROX: 6:45 PM

CH 3 Harwich Affordable Housing Trust Funds

Applicant: Harwich Affordable Housing Trust Chair Larry Ballantine

Project Manager: Harwich Affordable Housing Trust Chair Larry Ballantine

Amount Requested: \$500,000

Application additions include Financial Statement; Drafted RFP; Drafted Strategic Plan

Mr. Ballantine presented application request.

- The purpose of this project is to have enough money in their account so the Trust is able to act quickly if something comes up. Opportunities happen throughout the year. Housing is desperately needed in Harwich. For example, the HAHT may be able to work with the Harwich Fire Association in their housing project. A lot can be done before next year's funding becomes available.
- The HAHT has a REOS committee member attend their meetings to keep the line of communication open.
- The HAHT is looking at partnerships as well as land purchases.

APPROX: 7:05 PM

OS 1 North Woods & Water Supply Protection Project

Applicant: Harwich Conservation Trust Executive Director Michael Lach

Project Manager: Harwich Conservation Trust Executive Director Michael Lach

Amount Requested: \$100,000

HCT Executive Director Mr. Lach presented application request.

- This open space project will preserve this sensitive forested land containing rare species habitat, within Public Water Supply Well Recharge Area. They hope to continue working in partnership with the Town of Harwich through the CPA Open Space funding.
- The HCT has been in discussion with the landowner for over fifteen years concerning potential conservation for the property.
- The property is 10.3 acres, with 3.3 acres in Brewster and 7 acres in Harwich. This project would just cover Harwich's acreage.
- The HCT is working with the Brewster Conservation Trust to secure the 3.3 acres in their town, connecting to their 900-acre Punkhorn Parklands.
- Following a successful model, the land would have a permanent conservation restriction.
- A Harwich town water well is 1,500 feet from the border of the property. That well services 13,000 households.
- The Harwich REOS and Harwich Conservation Commission support this project.
- The property connects to town owned land creating a larger conductivity of open space.
- The State recognizes this land as having significance for Habitat for Rare Species, mapped for Priority Habitat for Rare Species, including Eastern Box Turtle. Also, the State mapped this land as has having Core Habitat and Critical Natural Landscape.
- Regional benefits include the connectivity of the town owned lands. The trails map is in the submitted application.

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- An appraisal included in the application estimates one lot for \$335,000. The lot has a lack of road frontage, which currently creates an issue with the development. If it did have road frontage, the price would be much higher. But, in the future if the property is not protected, access could change and the price would be much higher.
- For the requested \$100,000, the town would have a permanent conservation restriction. It would cost less than \$14,300 per acre for the conserved land.
- By working with the Compact of Cape Cod Conservation Trusts, the HCT can work on their funding of this project and others to meet their estimated completion date of the land purchase. The Compact can act as a holding company as HCT secures their funds. Their fundraising includes CPA funds and allows HCT time to apply for State grants and acquire private donations.
- The HCT do not currently plan to build any new trails on this land. There are trails on the abutting town owned land.
- This project is to preserve open space, protect the natural land and animal habitat, and protect the town's water supply.

APPROX: 7:25 PM

OS 2 Red River Valley Land & Water Supply Protection Project

Applicant: Harwich Conservation Trust

Project Manager: Harwich Conservation Trust Executive Director Michael Lach

Amount Requested: \$150,000

HCT Executive Director Mr. Lach presented application request.

- This open space project will preserve this sensitive land within the Red River watershed protecting drinking water supply and preserving rare species core habitat. This acreage is located along the State Highway Route 28, this project would also protect the scenic view.
- Following a successful model, the land would have a permanent conservation restriction.
- This property project is to conserve 2.24 acres in Harwich, of the 2.74 acres on the northside of Rt. 28. The remaining half acre is in Chatham.
- On the southside of Rt. 28 is a separate project for the HCT, (not part of this CPC request) to raise the \$2.25 million to own approximately 9.6 acres that includes a house.
- Both projects together would include some 12.34 acres, with a fundraising goal of \$4.25 million to cover the property purchases, the site plan process to chart out the use of the existing house, renovating that house to create a learning center/office for the HCT, and maintain that building over time.
- The CPC project would protect the water supply, Red River watershed.
- This North/South wildlife habitat corridor is the missing connector in this area.
- This is a scenic gateway along Rt. 28 for drivers as they travel between Harwich and Chatham, a forested green belt.
- The land is in two zoning districts, CH 1 and Residential. A warehouse can be built there. Up to 70% of the lot can be developed.
- This timeline is a bit longer, as they raise the funds for the overall projects.
- REOS wrote a letter of support for the project.
- CPC Members voiced concern over the loss of taxable income as land becomes protected conserved land. Many members value conservation and water protection but they also recognize a need for taxable income and housing.
- It was offered that this site was a better choice for protecting water supply and scenic views than housing.
- \$355,000 is the property estimation.
- If their fundraising doesn't succeed, the property could be sold to someone else on the open market. They will try to partner with the state, for a state grant.
- **Follow-up:** Priority of HCT submitted projects requested.

APPROX: 7:45 PM

R 1 Cold Brook Trailhead & Public Access Project

Applicant: Harwich Conservation Trust

Project Manager: Harwich Conservation Trust Executive Director Michael Lach

Amount Requested: \$250,000

HCT Executive Director Mr. Lach presented application request.

- This capstone element is to improve/provide public access for the 66-acre Robert F Smith Cold Brook Preserve, including handicapped accessibility for the CPC funded half-mile wheelchair accessible trail loop project, while addressing the stormwater runoff from the site to provide additional water quality benefits for the Cold Brook watershed and Saquatucket Harbor downstream.
- The Cold Brook Ecological Project is underway right now. HCT is working with the Town of Harwich, the US Department of Fish and Wildlife, the State's Division of Ecological Restoration (DER), and their newest partner, the Harwich Fire Association.
- The project would create 30 parking spaces, providing access to the trails, connecting to the wheelchair trailhead, and then leading to the great trails network beyond, create a scenic overlook, and create stormwater management.
- They have letters of support from the Harwich Youth and Recreation Department and the Harwich Conservation Commission.

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- The Harwich Planning Board has given a special permit for the parking lot. The PB also permitted the HFA 3 parking spaces for their workforce housing project on the firehouse's second floor. Without the 3 parking spaces in this proposed project, the HFA workforce housing project would not be able to receive occupancy permits.
- The parking lot will be jointly used by both the trailhead users and the visitors to the Old Firehouse, two different entities - the HCT and the Harwich Fire Association. The area is some 2 acres, consisting of four parcels. Both groups are working on a plan as to how best to divide the ownership of this land. They are currently thinking the HFA should own the lot the firehouse sits on and the HCT should own the remaining three lots, subject to an easement for parking and access in favor of the HFA use.
- Mass Trails awarded them \$100,000 for engineering and design work. They are now going to construct that design.
- If they cannot get enough funds, this would prevent public access to trail system, including handicap access to their special handicap loop. If the project was delayed, stormwater would runoff towards the wetlands.
- The prior project didn't address stormwater runoff. The 2-acre property was owned by the town, controlled by the Harwich Board of Selectboard. Now HCT owns the land. Now they have to address the stormwater runoff. Last month the Harwich Conservation Commission mandated stormwater runoff management.
- In 2017, town meeting approved \$2 million for the Cold Brook Ecological Restoration project. \$1.5 million is still available but directed for nitrogen reduction. Prior to that, town meeting authorized studying nitrogen continuation numbers through this area as the water flows down to Saquatucket Harbor. Addressing the reduction of the nitrogen levels reduces the town's need to sewage the water, which would cost more. In 2021, town meeting approved HCT's Phase 1 - the handicap trail loop project in Cold Brook. In 2022, town meeting approved HCT's Phase 2 – the boardwalk project in Cold Brook.
- This project completion is estimated by fall 2024.
- Both HCT and the HFA organizations are working on the fundraising to complete this project.
- The entry way apron will be a paved area. The parking area will be of permeable material. Swales will be created in the land, a shallow depression in the earth where stormwater will collect.
- **Follow-up:** Where is the proposed shed to be located?
- **Follow-up:** Stormwater restoration. The BSC Group Management Report addressed stormwater management. The 150-page report will be emailed to CPC. It will show what is being installed and created. Currently the site has no stormwater treatment.
- **Follow-up:** If Bank Street is going to be part of the town's sewer system in the future, it needs to be planned for.

4. Old Business:

A. Update: New CPC signs

- The signs received approval. Kathy updated the project to include 4 lawn signs and 3 banners.
- As the committee agreed to start small, these signs are a try out, the lawn signs are not permanent.
- Marcy will monitor the signs.
- The Brooks Park sign is huge, very visible.
- A QR Code could be added to the signs linking to the CPC page on the town's website. Kelly offered to create it.
- **Follow-up:** Are the lawn signs double sided?

5. Other:

Website:

- John will post the applications now to the website.
- Maybe a new list could be included on the website showing the complete list of CPC funded projects, with the total amounts spent in each category and the amount of funding the CPC received.

Social Media:

- Kelly will post about the complete funding list.

6. Next meeting's Agenda points:

- Discussion: Changes may be coming to CPC funding, a possible reduction.

7. Adjournment

A motion was made by Mary Maslowski, seconded by John Ketchum, to adjourn the meeting.

VOTE: Chair Dave Nixon, Vice-Chair Kathy Green - Aye; Mary Maslowski - Aye; Bob Doane - Aye; Marcy Vigneau – Aye; John Ketchum – Aye; Kelly Barber – Aye.

Motion PASSED unanimously.

Adjournment at 8:13 PM.