Community Preservation Committee Meeting Minutes

Town Hall – March 22, 2021

Sturbridge, MA

At 7:03 pm the Community Preservation Committee (CPC) Chair called the meeting to order. In attendance: Penny Dumas (PD), Ed Goodwin (EG), Kadion Phillips (KP), Jeff Adams (JA), Ed Neal (EN), Kelly Emrich (KE). Absent: Barbara Search (BS).

Guests: Jeff Bridges (JB), Town Administrator; Minxie and James Fannin (MF and JF), Fannin Lehner Preservation Consultants; Joshua Craine (JC), Daedalus Art; Brandon Goodwin (BG), Trails Committee; Peter Zeh (PZ); and Bob Briere (BB).

This meeting was held remotely pursuant to Governor Baker’s March 12, 2020, Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law, and the Governor’s March 15, 2020, order imposing strict limitations on the number of people that may gather in one place. The meeting was held via the GoToMeeting application and available for public access via the Town’s on demand video broadcast, on cable television, or by telephone access during the meeting.

Joanne Everson, CPC Clerk, read an introduction to the virtual meeting. PD read the meeting agenda.

**Approval of Meeting Minutes**

EG moved the motion to accept the February 8, 2021, meeting minutes as presented; KP seconds. Motion accepted 4-0-2.

Roll call vote:

KP, yes JA, yes EG, yes EN, abstained KE, abstained PD, yes

**Julia Mills Memorial**

PD moved the motion that the Julia Mills Memorial placeholder for the Annual Town Meeting be replaced with: To raise and appropriate up to $17,500.00 of CPA Historic Funds for the purpose of restoration of Julia Mills Memorial in the North Cemetery; JA seconds. Motion accepted 5-0-1.

Roll call vote:

KP, yes JA, yes EG, yes EN, abstained KE, yes PD, yes

PD explained that a tree limb had fallen on this memorial during a storm and JB had determined that the Town’s insurance would not cover the repair. She added that the estimate for the repair is $10,000.00 to $15,000.00. JC explained that the Mills Memorial is made of zinc, and these memorials were sold from a catalog between the late 1800s and early 1900s. He added there are not many in Massachusetts. He explained the zinc memorials were sold as replacements for bronze memorials; but zinc memorials are not quite as good as bronze memorials. JC explained that the iron structure inside corrodes from exposure to the zinc and that zinc is unable to hold its own weight. He recommended bringing the memorial to the studio and replacing the interior with stainless steel and refastening the zinc pieces independently so they are not sitting on each other. BB noted that there is a thin granite slab for the memorial to stand on and recommends a foundation be built under the slab by MF and JF at the cost of approximately $2,500.00. EG asked whether this project would have to go out to bid and how many other stones could be repaired with these funds. MF stated this is a unique memorial but about thirty stones could be repaired with the funds. JB explained that cost of the repairs would require seeking up to three quotes. Discussion followed whether the annual repair work of the Fannins would be included with the Mills foundation work or if they would be separate items. PD suggested keeping the articles separate but left that decision to the discretion of Town Counsel, the Board of Selectmen and JB. She added she supports this type of project as the CPC can support costly projects that maintain and preserve the cemeteries as outdoor history museums.

**48 Old Farm Road, 133, 137, and 139 Fiske Hill Road**

KP moved the motion to raise and appropriate up to $155,000.00 of CPA funds for the purpose of purchasing 48 Old Farm Road, 133, 137, and 139 Fiske Hill Road to be used for recreation land; KE seconds. Motion accepted 5-1-0.

Roll call vote:

KP, yes KE, yes EG, yes JA, yes EN, no

PD, yes

PD explained that the land has been in Chapter 61, the current landowner wants to sell, and the Town has the right of first refusal. She introduced PZ to present his proposal for this purchase. PZ explained that he is an abutter to property and believes it would be a good addition to the Town trail system. His vision is for trails to connect to Hall Road and the trail at Hobbs Brook, allowing residents to access the library, the Publick House, and events on the common. He added that 52 acres are available for $155,000.00. BG stated that the property has been heavily logged and would only require minor work to build trails. He added that he would like to see two fenced dog parks built on the north side of the property, one park for large dogs and one for small dogs. Discussion followed regarding the topography of the land, the previous heavy logging, and if the article could be placed on the Special Town Meeting warrant.

EG noted that the trail parking lots were filled with overflow parking on Sunday; PD added it has been the same at Wells State Park all year. She noted that people need to get outside and now they know what the Town has to offer for trails. BG said there will be 40-50 miles of trails in Town soon; he added fifty miles brings in events and activities and has been the Town’s goal for many years.

**Town Hall Storm Window Project**

PD explained that the change to the Town Hall Storm Window Project suggested at the February CPC meeting is not supported by Town Hall staff and that Robyn Chrabascz, the Facilities Coordinator, is not interested in changing the screens.

**CPC Annual Report**

EG moved the motion to accept the CPC 2020 Annual Report for the Annual Town Report; EN seconds. Motion accepted 6-0-0.

Roll call vote:

JA, yes KP, yes KE, yes EN, yes EG, yes PD, yes

PD stated she would like to end the report with “Respectfully submitted” followed by all CPC members’ names.

**Planning for Finance Committee Questions**

JB informed the CPC that Kevin Smith is the new chair of the Finance Committee. PD said she will send him an email and will keep the CPC members posted of the date when the CPC articles will be discussed.

JB indicated that a Finance Committee member brought alternative ways to finance preservation of cemeteries to his attention. He added that Town staff is looking into it for next year’s budget.

The April meeting will be announced at a later date once online scheduling can be determined. JB added that the Board of Selectmen (BOS) is returning to the meeting room for its April 5 meeting. He said it will be an in-person/remote hybrid meeting. PD expressed concern about the CPC meeting in the small conference room. JB stated the CPC would have to meet in the BOS meeting room if it decided to have an in-person meeting.

EG moved the motion to adjourn; EN seconds. Motion accepted 6-0-0.

Roll call vote:

EN, yes KP, yes KE, yes EG, yes PD, yes JA, yes

Meeting adjourned at 8:11 pm.

/jme