Community Preservation Committee Meeting Minutes

Town Hall – February 8, 2021

Sturbridge, MA

At 7:01 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), and Barbara Search (BS). Absent: Kelly Emrich (KE)

Guest: Jeff Bridges (JB), Town Administrator; Bob Briere (BB); Minxie and James Fannin (MF and JF), Fannin Lehner Preservation Consultants.

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 of 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**

EN moved the motion to accept the November 30, 2020, meeting minutes as presented; KP seconds. Motion accepted 6-0-0.

Roll call vote:

EG, yes JA, yes BS, yes KP, yes EN, yes PD, yes

EN moved the motion to accept the January 11, 2021, meeting minutes as amended; EG seconds.

Motion accepted 6-0-0.

Roll call vote:

EG, yes JA, yes BS, yes KP, yes EN, yes PD, yes

**Old Burial Ground, North Cemetery Restoration Work**

EG moved the motion to raise and appropriate up to $9,500.00 of CPA historic funds for the purpose of funding gravestone/monument conservation services for the North Cemetery and the Old Burial Ground; EN seconds. Motion accepted 6-0-0.

Roll call vote:

EG, yes JA, yes BS, yes KP, yes EN, yes PD, yes

BB introduced the Fannins, explaining that they have been preservation consultants to the Town of Sturbridge for over fifteen years. He added that this is a continuing project to keep the cemeteries well maintained. MF stated that this year’s proposal is similar to the previous year’s proposal. PD asked how the Fannins met their goal for 2020. MF answered that there are always surprises after winter ends and the first thing is to walk through both cemeteries and make substitutions in the work schedule if necessary; she added that they met the overall goal for last year. PD said that BB had taken her on a tour of the North Cemetery and she was impressed by the work that has been done. EN stated that he has investigated the work done by the Fannins over the years and the work done in the cemeteries is now into six figures.

BS asked if the all of the stones should be cleaned. MF stated that old stones are best left alone and only the stones they are working on are cleaned. Discussion followed concerning how cleaning could be done, but MF stated that cleaning should not be done unless the stone cannot be read. BS mentioned the recommendation to cut down trees in the Old Burial Ground. MF replied that the Tree Warden is reliable for deciding what to do about problem trees.

EN asked about an inventory of the stones; MF stated that the Town has been given a record of every stone worked on, including before and after pictures and a list of the chemicals used. JB stated that this record is at the library. BB said that the stones were documented by a volunteer many years ago; a new inventory will be completed by the DPW director. PD noted that the current proposal is not specific and asked if the work would be prioritized after winter. BB stated that the work was progressing from the oldest area first; he explained that the Fannins do quality work and this arrangement works well for Sturbridge. BS explained that the cemeteries are an outdoor museum.

JB stated that a member of the Finance Committee suggested using a grant to make repairs rather than CPC funds. MF said there are some grants available and asked if private funding is available in Sturbridge. BS stated that the Historical Commission is in the process of applying for a grant to create a preservation plan.

**Julia Mills Memorial Repairs**

EN moved the motion to add a placeholder funding restoration of the Julia Mills Memorial at the North Cemetery; BS seconds. Motion accepted 6-0-0.

Roll call vote:

EG, yes JA, yes BS, yes KP, yes EN, yes PD, yes

BB explained that there is a very unique monument in the North Cemetery in need of restoration. MF stated that the monument is made of zinc rather than stone. JF added that this is very specialized work, and the monument is not something they can restore. He explained that the monument is durable but not that strong; a tree fell on it, creating a hole and causing the seams to open up on the sides. PD said that it is estimated to cost between $10,000.00 and $15,000.00 to repair. Discussion followed concerning whether the damage was caused by the Town or by a tree company cutting down trees. JB asked for more information on the situation so he could determine whether it was an insurance issue or not. It was decided to use a placeholder for Town Meeting until more information could be brought forward.

**Town Hall Storm Window Project**

EG moved the motion to add a placeholder for the Town Hall storm window project; KP seconds. Motion accepted 6-0-0.

Roll call vote:

EG, yes JA, yes KP, yes BS, yes EN, yes PD, yes

PD stated that Robyn Chrabascz, Facilities Coordinator, sent an email indicating that more money may be needed for the Town Hall storm window project. BS said that the Historical Commission has looked at the storm windows installed at the Center Office Building and noted that the screens on the windows must be removed in the fall and reinstalled in the spring. She added that small slider screens are being used when the window screens are removed. She stated that there is no need to replace the screens at the Center School, but the Historical Commission desires to put permanent screens on the Town Hall windows. She added that the Historical Commission will be meeting and will vote on permanent screens for Town Hall prior to the next CPC meeting.

**Streeter Beach Access Road**

EG moved the motion to raise and appropriate up to $35,000.00 from General Fund Balance CPA fund, for the purpose of engineering services related to the feasibility, design, permitting, and development of a cost estimate for the new road to access Streeter Beach Recreation area; BS seconds. Motion accepted 6-0-0.

Roll call vote:

EG, yes JA, yes BS, yes KP, yes EN, yes PD, yes

JB stated that the Town is in the process of determining the feasibility of creating a new access road to Streeter Beach. He added that two quotes for engineering had been received, but new quotes will be needed due to the great differences in the quotes. He said he is requesting $35,000.00 for engineering services related to the feasibility, design, permitting and development of a cost estimate for the new access road. JB stated that G&F will donate funds to secure the land for the Town. He added that the Army Corps of Engineers is in favor of the Town’s using the facility but requires unfettered access to the beach.

**CPC Administration costs**

KP moved the motion to raise and appropriate up to $15,000.00 from General Fund Balance CPA fund, for the purpose of CPC Administrative Funds; EG seconds. Motion accepted 6-0-0.

Roll call vote:

EG, yes JA, yes BS, yes KP, yes EN, yes PD, yes

PD explained that this allows up to $15,000.00 to be used from the CPC General Fund Balance for various CPC expenses such as paying the CPC clerk and the coalition dues.

**CPA Coalition Dues**

EG moved the motion to pay $1,750.00 from CPC Administration fund for the annual Community Preservation Association dues; EN seconds. Motion accepted 6-0-0.

Roll call vote:

EG, yes JA, yes KP, yes BS, yes EN, yes PD, yes

PD stated that the CPA dues of $1,750.00 must be paid annually; she added that this allows access to lawyers and experts to help with the CPC’s questions. JA asked if this was in addition to the Administration costs just voted; PD explained the dues are part of that $15,000.00.

Next meeting will be announced at a later date once online scheduling can be determined.

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

Roll call vote:

EG, yes JA, yes BS, yes KP, yes EN, yes PD, yes

Meeting adjourned at 8:24 pm.

/jme