

The Sturbridge Community Preservation Committee held a public hearing, to study the needs, possibilities and resources of the community with regards to community preservation, on Wednesday, May 16th, 2018 at 7:00pm in Veteran's Memorial Hall in the Sturbridge Town Hall.

CPC members Penny Dumas, Ed Goodwin, Heather Hart, Kadion Phillips, Kelly Emrich and Barbara Search were in attendance.

Also in attendance were, Kathy Neal, Chair of Finance Committee, Ed Neal, James Waddick, Finance Committee, Rebecca Gendreau, Conservation Agent, Carol Goodwin, Chair of Open Space Committee.

Ms. Gendreau, Conservation Agent, suggested projects which the ConCom feels should take priority when considering future CPA funding as follows:

- Demolition of properties on Conservation Lands (Ms. Gendreau noted that these buildings all have asbestos.
 - Plimpton Shed
 - Leadmine Parcel, 1 barn, 3 outbuildings
 - Heins Cabin/Shed

- Habitat Management, mowing of fields on Heins Farm

- Land behind the former Hebert Candies along the Grand Trunk

- Track of land 153 Holland Road between two Holland Road CPA lands owned by Belanger family.

- Dog Park

- Pocket Parks

- Community Garden (Ms. Goodwin noted that the parcel in front of Host Hotel, adjacent to McDonalds would be ideal location. Ms. Dumas noted that this would add landscape to Route 20, which would meet the Commercial Tourist Plan). It was suggested that OSV owned land, former Chamber of Commerce would be an ideal location for a Community Garden.

- Invasive species treatment and management plan

Ms. Goodwin suggested the idea that the Streeter Recreation Swimming area was at one time a valuable passive recreational area, with swimming for families. The State closed the area and Ms. Goodwin suggested the town look into taking control and re-opening this public swimming/picnic area. Mr. Goodwin suggested that perhaps the State would be interested in a land swap, with two New Boston Road Town owned parcels, which the State may find valuable with their proximity to Wells State Park. These two parcels do not have frontage on New Boston Road.

The town owned building on the corner of Route 148 and Route 20 (former fire station) was discussed. The building has problems with flooding. It offers an ideal location for a Community Center and Community Garden.

Mr. Neal suggested that many seniors, on limited income, could potentially benefit by programs which could be funded by CPA funds. Ms. Dumas noted that the CPA Community Housing fund balance is \$778,887.32. Ms. Dumas noted that with a defunct Housing Partnership, due to lack of membership, the CPC lacks direction on Housing proposals. In the past the CPC worked on many proposals for use of CPA Community Housing funds and Town Counsel implied the proposals did not meet CPA requirements. The Habitat for Humanities proposal was a successful project, using CPA funds. Ms. Bubon, Town Planner, had looked into a second HfH project. HfH places priority on towns that have not already built a HfH home. P. Dumas noted that HfH requires fundraising, and this takes many volunteers, which are hard to find.

Ms. Dumas suggested that if anyone listening at home is interested in volunteering on the Housing Partnership Committee that they contact the Town Administrator. Mr. Neal noted that he had been encouraging residents to consider taking on the responsibility and volunteering for Housing Partnership. Ms. Neal expressed the importance of implementing CPA programs to use the Community Housing fund balance. All agreed.

Ms. Goodwin noted that Recreational ballfields are needed and convenient areas should be considered. K. Emrich noted that teams have to travel to Brimfield to practice and play, due to the lack of fields. K. Phillips noted that the Town Barn field proposal, if passes at the Annual Town Meeting, would be a step in the right direction.

Ms. Goodwin noted that additional trails and bike trails are important to consider as residents enjoy the trails and they offer a draw for tourism. Ms. Dumas noted that people who come to Sturbridge to enjoy the trails, dine at our restaurants and shop in various stores.

P. Dumas noted that a foot bridge connecting the Commercial Tourist District area on Route 20 to the Riverlands has long been discussed and would have a positive economic impact on the area.

E. Goodwin noted that there is a proposal, in early stage, for the parcel on the corner of Route 20 and Holland road which includes connectivity to the river.

Mr. Waddick explained a garden project, which has been cultivated behind Sadie Green's and Town Hall, on town land. The Rotary Club created a Community Food Collaborative, a community garden, working through the Rotary Community Corps of Sturbridge and Southbridge. Mr. Waddick explained that volunteers will care for the garden and the harvested vegetables and fruits will be donated to the food pantry in Southbridge.