**COMMUNITY PRESERVATION COMMITTEE**

**TOWN OF WEST NEWBURY**

**MINUTES OF PUBLIC HEARING AND MEETING**

**August 18, 2022 at 7:30 PM**

**This meeting was recorded for the purpose of preparing Minutes.**

A meeting of the West Newbury Community Preservation Committee (CPC) was held in person on August 18, 2022 - Wendy Reed, Chair called the meeting to order at 7:39 p.m.

Members in attendance: Wendy Reed, Bob Janes, Patricia Reeser, Ray Cook, Gary Bill and CPC Administrator, Barbara Gard. Wendy Willis, Judith Mizner and Angus Jennings were absent. Barry LaCroix in person and Elisa Grammar remotely were present to discuss the River Road Access project.

**Funding Application to** **create access to the Merrimack River for cartop recreational boats**

Reed moved an Agenda item to first review the Funding Application from the River Access Committee (RAC) to create access to the Merrimack River for cartop recreational boats, i.e., kayaks, paddleboards and/or canoes at the Greenbelt River Road Conservation Area.

LaCroix stated that he and Grammar took the suggestions from the Committee’s review of the Eligibility Application and addressed those items in this application. Lengthy discussion on a number of topics in response to CPC member questions and comments followed.

Letters of support - LaCroix stated it was premature to get letters of support at this stage, since the application is just to fund a study.

Description of Project – LaCroix stated that this application is for a study to install one or two parking spots, a path to the river, with signage to indicate to people that this is a good place to put in to the river. The study will include creation of a conceptual plan, obtaining input from other town committees such as Parks and Rec, Conservation Committee, Open Space, and the Harbor Commission as well as the public, and revising the conceptual plan accordingly. The consultant will identify permitting requirements and then draft an RFP or RFQ to complete the project.

Cost – CPC members commented that the cost seemed high to study a location that would only require minimal improvements to create. LaCroix explained how he came up with figures for the project, using hourly rates that he is familiar with for consultants (not a lump sum). He used $150/hr. as a fair estimate (the going rate in Massachusetts) at 200 hours not including the cost of the permits themselves. In response to questions about the extent of permitting that would be included, LaCroix stated that the project would include identifying the permitting as well as the technical support needed to obtain the permits. The need for Army Corps of Engineering and Natural Heritage and Endangered Species permitting was raised. LaCroix did not feel that these permit requirements would jeopardize the success of the project given that there are many residential docks in the area. The possibility of the access needing to be ADA compliant was also raised. LaCroix stated that this would be evaluated as part of the study.

Other River Access Locations in Town – LaCroix stated that the Select Board created the RAC to identify and evaluate the potential for creating river access for town residents. There are currently four potential points which have been evaluated. They include River Meadow Drive, Ferry Landing, Greenbelt’s River Road Conservation Area and Riverbend Conservation Area. The idea is to eventually have several access points along the river but the RAC decided to pursue the location with the fewest challenges to create a model for future creation of river access. The RAC considered factors such as parking, ownership, environmental permitting challenges and abutters’ concerns before deciding to pursue river access at the River Road Conservation Area. Additionally, it was pointed out that residents voted to approve use of CPA funds to support the purchase of this property in part because of the stated intent to create river access.

Lengthy discussion about the relative cost/benefit of evaluating other of the river access locations occurred. The challenge of parking and abutter concerns in past attempts to create river access were recalled. Reeser noted that she was not in favor of this study because of the high cost and her belief that River Meadow and Ferry Landing were better choices. The possibility of including all possible locations in this study was raised and discussed. The scope could be revised to evaluate the four locations noted for current permitting needs and access concerns, and then pursue permitting and public engagement at the most feasible location. Cook noted that this might help build public consensus. LaCroix agreed to consider revising the application to reflect this new approach. A placeholder for the Special Town Meeting Warrant will be submitted if the RAC is able to present any modifications to the application at the next CPC meeting. Reed polled CPC members and all agreed that they would approve such a revised scope at the next meeting.

**Phase 3 Historic Survey Project**

Next Agenda item was to discuss the Phase 3 Historic Survey Project previously approved. The discussion acknowledges the change in the sunset date and the amount requested and approved change, however, the difference in the funding amount was approved Town Meeting to fund from free cash. Reeser moved to accept all changes, Janes seconded, unanimous vote.

**Eligibility and Funding Application for the Almshouse Cemetery Scan**

The Committee then reviewed the Eligibility and Funding Application for the Almshouse Cemetery Scan presented by Janes of the Historical Commission. The purpose of this application is to find how many additional people are buried here. The end product would be a map or signage indicating any new information found. There were a number of issues regarding the completion of the application, missing Assessors’ Map, missing minutes of the Historical Commission supporting the project, etc. It was agreed to approve the Eligibility and Funding applications, with caveats that all corrections would be made and presented again at the September 15th CPC meeting. Gard agreed to making sure application was complete and all corrections made. Cook moved to approve the Eligibility and Funding Application with the caveats, Reeser seconded, unanimous vote to approve.

**Changes to the CPC By-law**

The Committee then discussed potential **changes to the CPC By-law** as follows:

establishing one year membership terms for each member, with the statement added until a duly appointed successor is named. It was also agreed to remove item

n) ***No person shall hold the seat of Chairman for more than one year in three consecutive years.***

which limited the number of years a chair could serve consecutively.

And Sec 3 was removed; following Sections were renumbered.

***Sec. 3 Requirement for a quorum and cost estimates***

***Recommendations to the Town Meeting shall include a fully developed time and cost plan.***

Gard said she would work with the Town Clerk to finalize this for Special Town Meeting. Cook moved to accept all proposed changes to the By-law, seconded by Bill, unanimous vote.

**Signage for CPC projects in Town**

Next Agenda item is signage for CPC projects in Town. Reed contacted David Rimmer of Essex County Greenbelt and he had no problem with Town putting up their own signs next to Greenbelt’s signs; they said they would be happy to install them and even help design them, suggesting 6x9 or 9x12 sizes. Bill indicated they should be somewhat permanent, treated wood or metal. Reed said she would draft something with the Town logo, and a brief statement indicating this project was funded by the citizens of West Newbury. She would forward it to the Administrator who could then get a quote from the Sign Company in Haverhill who have done signs for the Town in the past.

**Mill Pond All AccessTrail**

After a presentation by the consultant Trent Lloyd on the proposed project, the Select Board asked that a working group of relevant committees be created and come to consensus on how to move the project forward. The project could easily be separated into two phases, the first being the creation of additional ADA parking spaces, access improvements to the waterfront area and creation of the trail. The larger traffic rerouting and additional parking behind the building could be part of a Phase Two project. A member of the Open Space Committee (Reeser), Parks and Rec (Brad Buschur) and Mill Pond Committee (Robin Pendergast) were selected to form a working group and met August 17, 2022. There is $11,000 remaining in the original budget, and once the approach to the project is agreed on these funds would be used to pay for the development of plans and cost estimates.

Minutes were reviewed; minor corrections were made. Cook moved to approve the minutes as revised; Janes seconded. Bill abstained; all others approved.

Having completed the business before it, the Committee adjourned the meeting by unanimous consent at approximately 9:30 p.m. Next meeting will be September 15, 2022 at 7:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Barbara Gard, CPC Administrator