

**COMMUNITY PRESERVATION COMMITTEE
TOWN OF WEST NEWBURY
MINUTES OF MEETING
June 19, 2019**

A meeting of the West Newbury Community Preservation Committee (CPC) was held on June 19, 2019, in the First Floor Hearing Room. Members Bill Bachrach, Chair, Ray Cook, Mary Harada, Bob Janes, Judy Mizner, Rick Parker, and Sherry Pruyn were present. Angus Jennings, Ex Officio member and Jean Nelson, Administrator, were also present.

The meeting was called to order at 7:30 PM. Bachrach said the meeting is being recorded for the purpose of preparing minutes. He welcomed new member Rick Parker, and reappointed members Judy Mizner and Sherry Pruyn.

Minutes of April 18 and April 25, 2019

The Minutes of April 18, 2019, were reviewed and edited.

Motion made by Mizner, seconded by Cook, to approve the Minutes as amended. The vote in favor was 6-0 (Cook was recused).

The Minutes of April 25, 2019, were reviewed and edited.

Motion made by Cook, seconded by Mizner, to approve the Minutes as amended. The vote in favor was unanimous.

Nelson commended the Committee for the very cooperative and creative process in reviewing and revising the documents drafted in preparation for Town Meeting.

Review of Town Meeting

Town Meeting was discussed. The turnout was huge, and members considered it successful.

Discussion of potential meeting of stakeholders

Bachrach had suggested such a meeting several times. Mizner asked what he means by stakeholders. Bachrach said that we seem to develop projects in silos, and they are not being prioritized. This has been discussed at Parks and Rec. Parker said he finds it remarkable that he has not heard any discussions of affordable housing. He is not sure what entity in town would initiate this. Cook said an entity needs to be created.

Cook said there are funds that have been collected for Inclusionary Housing. He said the Board of Selectmen need to appoint a committee, then the funds can be expended. Nelson had obtained the amount of the Planning Board Inclusionary Housing funds prior to the meeting. The account

currently has \$88,500. Commitments from the Sullivans Court and Drakes Landing projects, when completed, will bring the account total \$201,200. She noted the amount in the CPA Account for community housing is \$280,979.

The Housing Production Plan was discussed. It contains goals and objectives. Cook said that he feels we cannot achieve the 10% required by 40B, but can work toward goals. Another resource could be utilizing Town-owned land and combining various funds which could be used for a project, and leveraging for grants.

The Mullen project was discussed. Cook said the mood of the Town can change. Parker said that he feels the current mood of the Town should be questioned, voters should be asked to agree in principle to affordable housing, and there should be a commitment from the voters to support affordable housing. He feels we should identify that we have a need in Town, and could serve a part of the population.

Cook said the Planning Board has discussed the pressing need to have a new Master Plan done, and that would take precedence. There could be uses for the Mullen parcel as a business center or a small wastewater plant. Nelson said that Elisa Grammer had recommended a Master Plan and Capital Improvement Plan in a recent letter. Mizner said that there is a need to form a broader committee under the Town Manager or Board of Selectmen to set priorities.

Bachrach said that there was a huge effort on the Mullen proposal and a lot of people got burned out. Bachrach said there was voter approval to purchase the property, and then there was a flip. There had been support to purchase the land for affordable housing. Nelson said she felt that the problem was due to the recession which hit in 2008, and a proposal to sell the parcel to a developer for a low price. Most felt that there was NIMBY opposition to the project. Harada felt that it was opposed by abutters, and Bachrach felt that NIMBY was the primary factor. The various aspects of opposition were discussed.

Cook said that there have been a lot of pieces created—Downtown Study, Housing Production Plan, Open Space and Recreation Plan--and a Master Plan would bring those pieces together. Nelson said she and Parker had met the day before and discussed CPA and affordable housing. She had compiled a list of CPC efforts in affordable housing since 2013. Those activities included scheduling meetings and workshops, meeting with Habitat for Humanity, a review of parcels, and recommendations to the Board of Selectmen for a parcel at the end of Church Street, part of the Mullen property, and a parcel on Coffin Street. She did not think that the Coffin Street parcel was a viable property, but she had been asked to research it. Nelson said that before she had finished the report, she, the Town Planner, Health Agent, and Conservation Agent had walked both properties.

She and Rick Bridges had attended a meeting of the Board of Selectmen in May, 2016. She had recommended the parcel at the end of Church Street. An article had been published in the Daily News about the discussion. There had been a discussion of forming a committee to address affordable housing, and after that nothing happened.

Parker said he had been on an ad hoc committee in 2001 to study Town-owned parcels, and they had concluded that the Mullen parcel was most viable.

Nelson continued it is her suggestion that the CPC recommend that the Board of Selectmen open the topic for review and initiate interest in affordable housing. A committee could perform review and recommendations for HPP goals, research, awareness, and PR to lead up to adoption of an Affordable Housing Trust. An article could be submitted to Town Meeting for a consultant to be hired to work with such a committee. This is how others towns have started, with baby steps.

Parker and Bachrach said they do not think this is the CPC's role. Mizner said a suggestion could be made to the Board of Selectmen. Nelson distributed a list of proactive steps that the CPC has taken with regard to affordable housing since 2013.

Cook said the Planning Board funds could be unlocked with the formation of a committee, and there is a chance we could do something good for the town here.

Jennings said that the Housing Production Plan (HPP) had been approved just before he came to work here, but affordable housing was not on the list of priorities provided to him by the Board of Selectmen at that time for his initial work plan. Nelson said that when she and Jennings had met for the first time last July, she had identified two priorities to him: affordable housing and the Carr Post. Jennings said that with the recent plan, the question can be asked, is there a role of the CPC to help implement the HPP? He said that once recent efforts are completed, he and the Board of Selectmen can work on a prioritized matrix and begin to look at affordable housing. Cook said he would be a proponent of a new Master Plan before affordable housing efforts. Jennings said that there might be elements in the HPP that could be addressed. He said you cannot offer a solution to 40B to voters.

Cook said affordable housing is tough. Jennings said it is hard to build consensus, due to a flaw in the state framework for housing, and the state policies make it hard. Restrictions on local preference are unbelievable. People might believe in it philosophically, but local preference is limited to a certain percentage of units, and it is not easy to qualify. You can't offer that to voters. Local preference requires rigorous demographic analysis. The state policies do not work. If you can meeting the income guidelines, you can't qualify for a mortgage. He said he had done a lot of work on housing in the past.

Mizner suggested contacting our state reps to see if there can be proposals to modify the policy, if they are discouraging affordable housing. Jennings said the state approach in the suburbs is heavily weighted to 40B, and there is new state starter home policy, which encourages zoning for homes on smaller lots. Jennings said to modify the regs is a big discussion, but it would be an uphill climb. He is reticent to see new committees created, but he would support an affordable housing committee.

Bachrach asked how keeping an aging population in town relates to affordable housing, and a discussion followed. Parker said that the COA might have more information on the needs of those on a fixed income with an older house, where there are maintenance and other expenses.

He suggested there may be strategies for dealing with the situation. Bachrach was looking for solutions for people to stay in their homes in town. Selling a house leaves one with more of an asset, and Pruyn agreed. Parker said there is a need, but we don't know how to get there.

Jennings said that there are things you can do if you are not aiming for increasing the Subsidized Housing Inventory. CPA allows for up to 150% of area median, but that market does not exist in West Newbury. Pruyn said it does not work here. She deals with this every day, and cannot do anything that involves first time homebuyers, or income requirements. \$500,000 is the median for a starter house here.

Jennings said that in the new fiscal year, goals and priorities will be established. Cook asked if the units behind the town Office Building are in demand, and the response was yes. He asked if a second floor could be added. He did not feel there would not be much opposition to that. Jennings said that if an opportunity comes along, there may be support. Harada said that the income level required is very low in the Housing Authority units.

Jennings said that he and Parker can take this to the Board of Selectmen. Nelson suggested that the CPC revisit the topic in three months.

Update on Current Projects

Brown Spring Farm: Jennings said that Greenbelt has started the fundraising program. They are about to sign a P&S with the farmer. They are moving forward with an Agricultural Preservation Restriction, and it will be ready in approximately a month. This is a state APR model, without federal or state funding. The buyer is seeking funding from the USDA.

River Road: Fundraising is going well for the River Road project, and the Conservation Restriction is being drafted.

Historic Sites Survey: Janes said that they have received approval of the state grant from Mass. Historical Commission. He would like to have Civil War documents stored at the Library digitized, and will be talking with Michael McCarron for information on digitizing. He is hoping to apply for a Fall Town Meeting. In response to Nelson's question, the Historic Sites Survey for Phase II has not started yet.

Update on legislation to increase CPA fees, and letter dated May 30, 2019 signed by Chief Executives of municipalities regarding CPA Trust Fund fees

A letter signed by over 100 municipal officials urging the legislature to vote to increase fees for CPA at the Registry of Deeds had been previously distributed. Nelson noted the letter also calls for funding from the current fiscal for the CPA Trust at the state level, which would increase the match for this fiscal year if approved.

Nelson related that a message from the Coalition urged writing letters to the editor of the local paper. She will respond and reach out to the Coalition for more information. Nobody has seen any letters to the editor yet. Parker said our representatives are been supportive of the fee

increase at the Registry. Mizner said we should contact our reps to remind them to support it. Bachrach said he can touch base with Lennie Mirra to see what he thinks.

CP Coalition Email List

Unless there are objections, Nelson will submit member emails to the Coalition, and each member should receive the Coalition newsletter.

Report of Vouchers Signed under Municipal Modernization Bill, 57-58

RPF Environmental, Asbestos Abatement Oversight, Page School Generator, \$1896.60

Discussion of potential Open Space, Recreation, Historic Preservation, and Community Housing projects for future discussions

Jennings said that he has been contacted by a resident interested in accessibility at the Page School playground. The current base is wood chips, and they would like to see a rubberized base for access to the swings. He said he told the resident that the project is eligible. Bachrach asked if it has to go through the Parks & Rec Commission. Nelson said that they should be consulted as required by the Guidelines—the Applicant should seek input from the Parks and Recreation Commission.

Administrative Details

Nelson said she has updated the webpage. The page has been reorganized since Town Meeting posts. She posts an updated Table of Projects, since the CP Plan is not being constantly updated and posted. If anyone would like to have a printed copy, she will print it for them.

Motion to adjourn, 8:40 PM.

Submitted by,

Jean Nelson

CPC Administrator

These Minutes were approved by the CPC on July 18, 2019.

List of Documents Reviewed:

Minutes of April 18 and April 25, 2019

Summary of CPC Efforts on Affordable Housing Since 2013