

**COMMUNITY PRESERVATION COMMITTEE  
TOWN OF WEST NEWBURY  
MINUTES OF MEETING  
August 15, 2019**

A meeting of the West Newbury Community Preservation Committee (CPC) was held on August 15, 2019, in the First Floor Hearing Room. Members Ray Cook, Mary Harada, Bob Janes, Judy Mizner, Rick Parker, and Sherry Pruyn, Chair, were present. Bill Bachrach was absent. Angus Jennings, Ex Officio member and Jean Nelson, Administrator, were also present.

The meeting was called to order at 7:30 PM. Pruyn said the meeting is being recorded for the purpose of preparing minutes.

**Applications for Eligibility and Funding, Historic Marker for Julian D. Steele, filed on behalf of the Historical Commission by Elisa J. Grammer, member**

Elisa Grammar was present for the Historical Commission. She said she has updated information: they now have authorization from the Historic District Commission, the Planning Board, and have seen the Building Inspector. He said the marker does not run afoul of the Signs Bylaw. The Historical Commission did discuss if there is someone else who might engender interest in competing signs, and did not find anyone. She ran the estimates of cost by Wayne Amaral, who did not find the estimates out of line.

Grammer continued that in the 1940s Town Hall was amazing. Mr. Steele set up a wide awake Town Hall Forum. He found and moderated groups with speakers each week. He brought a famous tenor, Roland Hayes, to bring concerts to West Newbury. Mr. Hayes also lived on Crane Neck Hill in the summertime. He arranged a fundraiser with Mr. Hayes to extend the water line to Crane Neck Street. There was a summer theater, and Mr. Steele was involved in that.

Mizner asked how will people be able to get other information about Julian Steele? Grammer said the Historical Commission will be posting a monthly story about him in January. She said his brother was a famous jazz musician, who has a Wikipedia page. Julian does not, so she is working on a Wikipedia article. Grammer said she would like to create a QR on the sign for people interested.

Mizner asked where the estimates for other items come from. Grammer said it is a conservative estimate. They do not know what they will find on the site when they go to install the sign.

Parker asked if there will be a ceremony when the sign is installed. Grammer said yes, they are planning an inexpensive event at Town Hall for this. There are relatives of Mr. Steele who will be invited.

Cook asked if this is the kind of thing we can do? Nelson said she did research, and CPA funds have been used for historic markers in many communities. The statute is written narrowly. The CP Coalition has written that this is a local decision and it is up to the committee to decide if this is a viable use. It is in the CP Plan to educate the public, and seems worthwhile as part of West

Newbury's history. Mizner said Mr. Steele was connected to real property. Grammer said Cambridge has spent \$40,000 on historical signs.

Cook said he thinks the QR symbol would unobtrusive and informative.

**Motion** made by Mizner to approve the Application for Project Eligibility. Seconded by Janes. The vote in favor was unanimous.

**Motion** made by Mizner to approve the Application for Project Funding for \$600.00. Seconded by Parker. The vote in favor was unanimous.

Nelson commended Grammer for an extremely well done application. The Committee agreed. Grammer thanked the group and left the room.

### **Review of revised Job Description for CPC Administrative Assistant, and Job Advertisement**

Nelson said she had edited the existing Job Description, as had been requested by the Personnel Committee. She, Mizner and Pruyn had met with Jennings in August. She had received comments from Pruyn, which were mainly grammar and punctuation. She said she can stay until a replacement is found.

The Job Description was reviewed, with revisions suggested.

Jennings said he would like to talk about the reporting structure. When we had met in August, he stated he appoints the CPC Administrative position. That is how the statute reads. There will be administrative oversight by the CPC. Personnel matters are his job. The language was changed to "provides dedicated support to a volunteer committee."

Pruyn said she sees the person who is hired as having some autonomy. Jennings said he would conduct annual personnel evaluations, with input from the Committee.

Providing assistance to applicants was discussed. Nelson said that if someone comes in with a messy handwritten application, she will type it for them. If they do not know what to write in a Narrative, she will review and suggest how it can be written. Cook said he feels this is valuable for a community like this.

Jennings asked if there is a conflict there. Nelson said she feels it is a big part of her job to help people. She said that not everyone is as well versed as the people in this room in using the computer, copier, with writing skills, and so on. As an example, if someone does not understand the requirement for proof of their board's support, she will explain what is needed, and perhaps copy a letter from another project as an example. She said that the Historic Marker application was 99% complete, and she had suggested that Elisa Grammer refer to the CP Plan, with a goal to educate residents, to add to the Eligibility section.

Jennings said there is a distinction between help and writing an applications. He said the position does not have enough hours to do this. Nelson said she does not do this with every application. Mizner said it has not been an issue in the past as far as time goes. Nelson said that it has been a matter helping people extract information and write a Narrative. Cook said it might

be going above and beyond, but if it works within the hours, it is nice to do. Jennings suggested it may be an issue of who gets support and who does not. He said it is a policy issue, and it should be done in coordination with the chair. Nelson suggested that the section be taken out of the Job Description—it has not been many hours. Pruyn said she does not see any evidence of disparate treatment. Jennings said for someone new coming in, there may not be time for this level of support.

Harada said it sounds as if you are trying to give the new person coming in no discretion. She said it should be up to the Committee, working with that person. Parker said that early on, this may tie up too much of a new person's time.

The language was revised to read: *Assist Applicants with preparing Applications, in coordination with the Chairman.*

Nelson had retyped the Job Description, and put it in a similar format to the new Planning Board Administrative Assistant Job Description. The position is Level 5. The cyclical nature of the hours was discussed by Parker, and refined. Nelson said that from January to April can be quite busy, then it begins again in the Fall.

Jennings said he favors signing time sheets because he is here. Mizner said if he signs them, it would be appropriate to notify the Chair. Nelson said it does not matter to her who signs a Time Sheet. Ultimately, she works as needed. If she does not need to work 8 hours, then she does not. Jennings said he is not looking to change anything at the present, and Nelson said this discussion is digressing from the discussion of the Job Description.

Nelson said that she has worked in several towns, and that nobody outside of Town Hall is aware of how much work goes into a Town Meeting Warrant, even for a Special Town Meeting.

Jennings suggested adding language that the Town is open to training. He said he would prefer to find someone with knowledge of M.G.L. Chapter 44B and the Open Meeting Law, but not necessarily procurement. We would prefer someone with municipal experience. He will send standard language to Nelson. Pruyn said the individual coming in should have some knowledge. Jennings said there is a lot of training available, and Nelson disagreed. She felt it will be on the job training. Jennings listed several planning groups that offer workshops, and Nelson said they do not offer CPA, or the trip is too long to make it worthwhile. In response to a question from Parker, an employee is paid for time and travel for workshops, which is a matter of time management, according to Jennings.

The Job Ad was reviewed. Various methods of advertising were discussed including in house posting, MMA website, Facebook, local newspaper, and list-servs such as a Town Manager's and Planners List Serv. Jennings said our Personnel Policy does not lay out a hiring policy. He said that the Town will be advertising two jobs currently.

It was decided to go with the shorter version, with a link to the Job Description. Jennings will work with Pruyn on wording.

### **G.A.R. Library Walkway Update**

The project is currently on hold by DPW Director Wayne Amaral, with input from the Library Trustees.

### **Update on Carr Post Assessment**

Jennings went through the report prepared by Sullivan, Spencer and Vogt on the screen. He said there had been a productive meeting yesterday. Janes said discussion had been made for upgrades to restore the exterior of the building. The interior of the building was not included.

They are suggesting creating two handicap accessible bathrooms where the kitchen is now. Another proposal is to put a lift between the first and second floors. There will be minimal construction to make the back of the building handicap accessible.

Jennings said a lot of progress had been made. The goal is to get a proposal to the CPC for the September meeting. What was prepared for half a million dollars is for exterior and stabilization. The amount shown is \$475,000. What is seen tonight is a working draft. The turret being rebuilt is a major cost. Cook said that the proposal looks well thought out.

Jennings said the next step will be the interior. He reviewed the slides. The lift will have access off the foyer. A different concept was shown, which includes an expansion. The architect will be working out something behind the building, which was suggested at meetings over the Summer.

Limitations on occupancy will be based on code requirements. Zoning, building code, ADA must be addressed, and there are many pages of code analysis.

Jennings said the Carr post committee will be digging into the details here. Cook said it would be redundant to review before the final submittal. Cook said the bigger question is what will be the final use of the building. Jennings said he is checking with the Board of Selectmen for dates to hold a meeting to discuss the topic. The meeting will be widely advertised to discuss use and a dedicated owner. Jennings said that assembly and office use are being used by the architect as the basis. Cook said this will generate a lot of discussion, because some people in town think the building is not worth it.

Jennings said, for example, Parks & Rec does not have a home. It could be used as a workstation for registrations, etc.

Nelson asked if proposed costs to maintain the building have been requested of the architect. Jennings said that it is not part of the scope, but is something that Wayne (Amaral) could look at.

Jennings said that funding for the initial work has been obtained, so the architect has been able to proceed. He hopes to have a packet ready for the Board of Selectmen so they can approve it for submittal by September 12<sup>th</sup>, for the CPC September meeting.

Jennings continued that It will be a major decision point for the community. It will be a major investment, and the voters will know a full cost. The general sense is that this is the opportunity. If a decision is made not to fund it, that is a decision to walk away from the building.

### **Administrative Funds Use**

Mizner said they when she had talked with Stuart at the Coalition, he questioned if Admin Funds should be used for the kind of use discussed at the last meeting. He questioned why there is an application for funds, since the funds are for the Committee to use. If it is appropriate to use Admin Funds to obtain the information to evaluate a proposal, then she does not feel it is inappropriate to have a form for a group to explore an application. She feels it is helpful. The understanding should be that this is not another request for funding.

Nelson said Stuart had told her when she talked with him after Town Meeting that he does not know of any Town with an Application for the funds. She continued that the intent of the legislature is for Town Meeting to vote on projects. And Stuart had said that if we have an application, that indicates to people that they can apply for CPA funds in a different way. She pointed out, as he has written, that funds are limited, so you do not have enough money to perform all of these studies that Michael McCarron referred to in his memo.

Cook said it is a two stage process: apply for funds to perform a study, then apply for funds for the project.

Nelson said that at the last meeting, which Cook had missed, Admin Funds had been approved for the Carr Post assessment. Yes, many projects could be two part: first for the initial assessment, then to carry out a project. Mizner said that the CPC is charged with studying the needs of the Town, and can use the Admin Funds for those purposes.

Nelson referred to the statute, which states the committee shall confer with various departments in conducting such studies. It does not tell you to hire consultants to do this. In a further section of the statute, the Admin Funds are described as the operating expenses. Nelson said that in preparing the Community Preservation Plan, she had relied on the Open Space Plan, Housing Production Plan, met with groups such as the Historical Commission, and gathered information in that way.

Harada asked why have an application? Jennings said he feels the situation is unique, because there was no way to go to Town Meeting without a study by architects and engineers Nelson said the issue was extremely political, and there was no way to disapprove the application. She felt the committee's backs were against the wall. Cook referred to the project at Pipestave, where more study was needed.

Jennings recapped the recent application for Admin Funds for Cook. Nelson said that the committee is now left with approximately \$150 in expense funds for the rest of the fiscal year after deducting staff wages and dues. Nelson suggested to Pruyn that this can be thought about and discussed at another meeting.

### **Page School Playground**

Jennings asked to take the Agenda out of order to discuss the Page School Playground. He had given an initial summary in the June meeting. He had been contacted by parents at the Page School regarding accessibility of the playground. Currently there is a small playground in the front and one in the back. The front playground is not accessible. At his request, the building Commissioner had reviewed all of the playgrounds and given him a four page summary. The equipment is old, tired, and not accessible.

In the back playground, there is a wooden sill. There is a problem with stormwater and drainage. For 4-5 months of the year, the playground is either wet or iced. There is limited funding in the Pentucket budget for maintenance, and the agreement with the school district is that anything over \$10,000 is a capital project, and that is the Town's responsibility.

Thanks to Senator Tarr and Representative Mirra, there is \$20,000 in the Commonwealth budget earmarked for accessibility. There is support of the administration and parents for this project.

He reviewed a PowerPoint presentation. He has met with a prospective contractor who is doing work in Groveland and Newburyport. They come highly recommended. They specialize in accessible playgrounds. He said are we considering basic accessibility, or something more modern, and one playground, or both? He said it might make more sense to address the back playground, and leave the front playground for now, or does it make sense to do both? Age groups for playgrounds have to be separate.

He asked for general sense of the Committee tonight, and will be providing the Board of Selectmen with information on Monday night. There will be a meeting with Parks and Recreation Commission.

He said he has a good feeling about this vendor, O'Brien. They will prepare conceptual plans and a cost estimate on spec, and if the project is approved he will work with them through the project. Nelson asked if he will have to put the project out to bid and Jennings said he will work with Mike [McCarron] on that, and he believes it is exempt from 30B requirements because it is design services.

He will be submitting CPC applications for the September meeting. Mizner asked for an estimate of cost. Jennings said it could be a half a million dollar project for something great. You could do something for something accessible for less, but it is a six figure project.

Cook said that you've got to be able to move through the playground on a wheelchair, and make some structures function well. Jennings said the known stormwater issues are costly. Nelson asked if the playground is open to everyone all the time. He said yes, but not during school hours. It is a public resource. He said the Children's Castle playground is not included.

Parker asked if the front playground is pre-K. It was determined it is not. Page does not have pre-K. Jennings said there is currently a child in Kindergarten in a wheelchair.

Nelson said she feels it would be very important for the playground to be open for all. At some schools, the playground is locked when school is closed. She suggested that Page be restricted to not locking the gate, but leaving it open for all to use. Jennings said that is already in the

lease. Harada said the front playground is fenced and locked. She took her grandchildren up to see the school during the Bi-Centennial, and it was locked up. She was surprised.

Cook said so much of CPC money has been spent on the Page School area and we will run into that again. That is a good chunk of CPC money. He feels Action Cove is more accessible. It could feel a bit awkward to drive up, by the basketball courts, to use the facility at Page. He thinks a lot of people will say this should be part of the school budget. Jennings said that is why he wanted to make it clear that maintenance over \$10,000 is the Town's responsibility.

Jennings said his thought is to start with a great project with the understanding it can be pared down based on the level of support. Cook suggested starting with a Plan A and a Plan B. Jennings said that is very useful. Cook noted the structures that are inclusive are remarkable these days.

### **Update on funding from CP Coalition Webinar**

Nelson summarized the webinar held in August. The increase in fees at the Registry will begin on December 31, 2019. It is expected that the new fees will generate \$36,000,000 in new revenue.

For this year, the state can expend excess receipts in a Supplemental budget until October 31, 2019. After that, the legislature will decide how to expend excess receipts, if any, and might fund the FY2019 CPA Trust Fund as they have done in the past. It is estimated that the FY18 State match would have been 74% if the new fees had been charged. The Coalition will not estimate receipts for FY2021, due to various factors.

### **Minutes, July 18, 2019**

Cook and Harada left the meeting. The Minutes were reviewed and edited.

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

Motion made to adjourn, 9:40 PM.

Submitted by,

Jean Nelson  
CPC Administrator

These Minutes were approved by the CPC on November 21, 2019

Documents reviewed at the Meeting:

Minutes of July 18, 2019

Carr Post PowerPoint

Page School Playground PowerPoint