

**TOWN of HOLLISTON
COMMUNITY PRESERVATION COMMITTEE MEETING**

Wednesday, February 2, 2022. 7:00 P.M.
Remote Participation Meeting

MINUTES

The meeting was called to order at 7:10 P.M.

Frank Chamberlain read the Opening Statement:

Pursuant to the Governor's Order Suspending certain provisions of the Open Meeting Law G.L. c 30A paragraph 20, as well as the Select Board's Emergency Order dated 3/16/2020..... the CPC will be using remote participation for this meeting. The audio of this meeting is being recorded and will be posted to the Town's webpage within 24 hours in accordance with the Governor's Emergency Action requirement of keeping the public informed of actions during this meeting. I would ask that all participants remotely attending this meeting please state your name for identification purposes each time you speak throughout the meeting.

Frank Chamberlain called the roll for each member:

Responding Present: Frank Chamberlain, Chair; Warren Chamberlain; Melissa Kaspern; Eva Stahl; John Vosberg; Thomas Dumas (7:23)

Absent: Chris Bajdek, Michael Pelon,

Also present: Town of Holliston IT; James Keast, Town Facilities Manager; Geoffrey Zeamer; Paul Saulnier; Representing the Blair Square Project: Ben Sparrell, Board of Selectmen; Regan Andreola; Inge Daniels; Robert Weidknecht; Kevin Conley; Representing the Holliston Community Farm: Kristine Westland, Dennis Prefontaine.

ACTION ITEMS

1. Potential new CPC members

Frank Chamberlain introduced two candidates

Paul Saulnier has been a regular visitor to the committee with proposals, and has forty years of service to the Town in various committees

Geoffrey Zeamer has been on Conservation & Planning committees, and was instrumental in acquiring the Fairbanks property

2. CPC leadership position(s) and CPC leadership structure for 2022/2023

Frank Chamberlain noted that the Committee should hold elections for leadership as soon as the roster is complete. A vice-chair would be helpful, as well as a secretary to keep up the records and website. He requested that members consider the structure and whether they would be willing to take on responsibilities.

3. Re-authorize chair to sign payment vouchers on CPC's behalf:

Frank Chamberlain described the process of signing paper documents on behalf of the committee, and requested a motion to re-authorize chair to sign payment vouchers on CPC's behalf,

MOTION to re-authorize chair to sign payment vouchers on CPC's behalf: Warren Chamberlain. Second: Ms Kaspern.

VOTE Approved by role call: Warren Chamberlain, aye. Ms. Kaspern aye. Ms. Stahl aye. Mr. Vosberg aye. Frank Chamberlain aye.

4. Review of CPA balances

Frank Chamberlain posted a detailed spreadsheet with the current CPA Balances.

NEW PROPOSALS

5. Sign Reconstruction – Holliston Historical Society

Mr. Saulnier withdrew the proposal for replacement of the Historical Society front sign because it does not strictly comply with CPC criteria. Frank Chamberlain mentioned other ways the CPC could help the Historical Society.

5. Town Cemetery Preservation - Facilities

Proposal:

Mr. Keast presented a shared screen detailing the proposal. The request is for \$500,000, to be spent over the next three years.

- The Town of Holliston has 5 historic cemeteries (Central Burying Ground, East Holliston Cemetery, Old North Cemetery, South Cemetery, West Cemetery) all of which are in various stages of decay. He shared photos of the disrepair of several sites. These cemeteries represent a critical part of the Town's rich history and are what defines a small New England town.
- The plan is to systematically restore these cemeteries by repairing broken headstones/markers, straightening tipped headstones/markers, removing overgrowth, filling in sunken grave areas, and cleaning off moss and lichen from the porous headstones and markers.
- This project is focused on the preservation of the cemeteries rather than a complete restoration to "like new" condition, to maintain the historic character and weathered appearance of the sites while bringing them back to a condition that pays tribute and respect to our past Town's residents.
- The process, with funding approval, will be to seek qualified preservation companies and invite them to submit sealed bids through the Massachusetts Office of Inspector General public procurement process, and then to enter into a multiyear contract with the winning bidder. The preservation process will begin with the most visible sites, with a goal of getting them in good shape for the Town's 300th Anniversary.
- Maintenance: The general grounds maintenance will be taken care of by the DPW Ground Division. Perhaps a "Friends Of" group will help maintain headstones and do other potential repairs outside of general grounds maintenance.
- CPC Alignment - This project falls into two categories in the CPA criteria: Open Space, with respect to recreational use lands, and Historic Preservation.

Discussion

- Frank Chamberlain noted that the Historical Commission has met and approved the proposal.
- Mr. Dumas asked to be sent directions to the sites. Mr. Keast agreed, and stated that the Historical Society's site has a lot of information about each cemetery.
- Mr. Saulnier asked how the priorities would be structured. Mr. Keast responded that the recommendation of the consultant was to go site by site, starting at the Central Cemetery.
- Ms. Kaspern asked about past projects on cemeteries.
- Ms. Stahl asked about other funding sources, and Mr. Keast said they are researching that.
- Frank Chamberlain explained that if funds are approved for several years, it would be possible to find additional funds in the future.
- Frank Chamberlain explained that proposals are heard in Committee meetings and then final approval is voted in a Public Meeting. He recapped the history of Major Miller in the West Cemetery, and Mr. Keast showed a photo of that burial site, which needs repair.
- Warren Chamberlain asked about the causes of the deterioration. Mr. Keast replied that most of it was from natural environmental processes.
- Frank Chamberlain mentioned the new Grounds Division of the DPW, and Mr. Keast reassured the Committee that crews would be instructed in the appropriate care of burial grounds.
- Mr. Saulnier mentioned the extensive research and documentation done by Paul LeBeau, which Mr. Keast said was available online.
- Frank Chamberlain spoke of future research into ground radar scans to identify unmarked graves. Mr. Keast said that equipment is available already and has been used and set to identify graves.
- Mr. Vosberg asked about the budget of the new DPW division. Mr. Keast said that it would be passed through Town Meeting.

UPDATE ON CURRENT PROJECT

6. Holliston Community Farm

Ms. Westland explained the details of the project's progress as follows:

- The greenhouse heat units and garage door are installed (this is not CPA funded)
 - The well is installed, but not connected to the pump yet
 - Parking hard-pack is added
 - The Facility Sign is installed
 - The Boy Scout Nature Trail is cut and established
- Challenges include:
- Costs of the trench and electric to the well and greenhouse are exceeding original estimates, due to supply chain issues
 - Pavilion Construction - they are still looking at this
 - Rest room facilities - the Clivus Multrum system may not be economically feasible. Some new ideas must be developed.

Discussion:

- Mr. Prefontaine stated that the farm is catching on in the community. They are now working on making the facility visible and encouraging townspeople to use it. In order to do that, rest room facilities are needed. He asked if the CPC could

help with an adjustment to their original plan, perhaps to stand alone flush toilets to replace the Porta-Johns they are using, noting that Parks and Recreation collaborates on the Potties for their classes.

- Frank Chamberlain replied that Town Meeting would have to be consulted, but that additional plans submitted in this cycle might be possible.
- Ms. Kaspern mentioned the history of restroom facilities and funding that the Parks Department has found workable.
- Mr. Prefontaine asked if the reallocation of funds would be possible because the purpose is recreation.
- He stated that the house has a new septic system that would support the structure of the toilets. Mr. Saulnier had designed the septic, and he stated that he believed a small structure could be constructed for seasonal use, given Board of Health permission.
- He agreed that Clivus Multrum systems do have issues. but that he would be willing to help with that..

NEW PROPOSAL

7. Blair Square Project - Blair Square Committee

Proposal:

Ms. Andreola, of Beals and Thomas, summarized the Blair Square proposal. The proposal was submitted as a 65 page document, including an application for funding from Beals and Thomas, with multiple addenda illustrating details.

- The proposal is requesting \$585,000 from the CPC. This number includes total anticipated project construction costs, and a 20% contingency based upon the engineer's cost estimate. Opportunities for alternative funding sources have been identified.
- The goal of the Project is to construct an improved Blair Square, intended to create a defined Town Common for Holliston, providing open, green space for civic events, entertainment, and recreation while enabling the Rail Trail to safely pass through.
- It is a popular, well-used space. Over the years Blair Square has accrued many donated site amenities, and the design should become more cohesive.
- Due to its prominent location, Blair Square has long been envisioned as a town common or more formalized public open space, designed with a purpose of central use for the Town but also a gateway to the town, to benefit businesses.
- The most current Blair Square Committee, along with design consultants providing pro bono services, developed a Conceptual Master Plan for Blair Square which was presented to the public on February 3, 2021. An online survey was available to the public throughout the month of February. At the 2021 Spring Town Meeting, the Town approved funding to advance the Conceptual Master Plan to permit and construction level documents. In

November 2021 the Project received Planning Board Site Plan Review and Special Permit Approval. The Select Board has provided support.

- The plan does fulfill all the criteria of the CPA legislation. This project is a priority area, since it is identified in various planning documents of the Town. Although the Project is categorized primarily as recreation, unofficially it does serve multi-purposes, as it provides public open space. Furthermore, although the site does not technically meet the definition of a historic site, there is much history associated with the former railbed and surrounding neighborhoods.

Ms. Daniels shared details of the design plan:

- She discussed how traffic on the rail trail, open space, and varied public use would be compatible.
- Details included a relocated trail, event space and green space with enhanced landscaping, a stacked granite amphitheater and benches, a covered pavilion, a new kiosk and various wayfinding signs. Other site amenities include backed benches, a water bubbler, a concrete pad for as-needed event portalets, electrical outlets, water spigots, relocated dogipots, and a relocated and refurbished bike rack and flagpole.
- She listed the materials that would be used, and noted that they would be permeable, traffic calming and ADA compliant. The railroad was originally called The Pink Granite line, and the use of pink granite will be featured for fixtures such as the benches that separate the open space from the rail trail.
- The park is narrow and is buffered by plantings.

Ms. Andreola discussed Funding:

- She shared a spreadsheet of the specific figures. “Other Funds” have been identified as estimated donated goods or services, totalling 15% of the Project’s construction cost. It is expected that local businesses, and civic organizations will donate goods and services related to site preparation and tree clearing, rail trail construction, electrical and water connections, landscaping, and signage/wayfinding. Funds will also be raised through the sale of inscribed memorial pavers and sponsorship opportunities of benches and other site furnishings.
- She stated that fundraising through the sponsorship of pavers, benches, trees, requires that the project be permitted in order to go forward.
- Donations and grants have been identified and will be sought.
- The construction will be phased, so that the park will be in service to the public as much as possible.

Discussion

- Frank Chamberlain asked about discussions with public safety officials. Mr. Conley stated that he had reviewed the process with the police and fire chiefs, and that they were in favor of the project
- Frank Chamberlain asked about crossing Central Street. Mr. Weidnecht responded that the existing signals will be

- upgraded to motion detection and upgraded soon.
- Mr. Vosberg suggested that signage directing parking should be considered, especially for those out of town. Ms. Andreola stated that they felt signs and publicity would be critical.
- Ms. Kaspern asked about maintenance. Ms. Daniels discussed some features designed to ease ongoing maintenance. Rain gardens, permeable paving, simplified woodland edge planting emphasizing natives will provide ease of maintenance. Flowers will include the Downtown Marigold Project. She concluded that maintenance will be minimal but will be the responsibility of the Town DPW and funded by the Town, as Blair Square is a Town-owned property.
- During a Board of Select Meeting on January 10, 2022, it was confirmed that DPW would continue to maintain Blair Square with any proposed improvements, with the exception of dog waste removal and snow blowing. Maintenance will include regular mowing of the lawn, management of two new trash and recycle receptacles, and general annual as-needed landscape maintenance. Division of the DPW labor will be passed through Town Meeting.
- It is expected that volunteer labor will be requested of various local organizations for maintenance of rail trail and flower beds.
- The Rail Trail will continue to be maintained by the Friends of Holliston Trails.
- Frank Chamberlain asked about how big an event could be as compared to Goodwill Park, and what will happen to Goodwill Park. The response was that improvements to Goodwill may be another project that comes to the CPC, brought by the Parks Department. Mr. Sparrell noted that the Town is looking at how the Green street area could be used, as part of the Long Range Recovery Plan.
- Ms. Kaspern asked about the project timeline, noting that grant cycles are often varied. Ms. Andreola agreed.
- Frank Chamberlain stated that since the funding would come from the CPA, the committee must consider what additional projects may be coming from the Parks Department, so that the requests will be balanced within the CPA guidelines. Ms. Kaspern noted that the Parks Department's plans for the next three years contain some bigger projects. Frank Chamberlain stated that the CPC will ask for a report on what is coming along for the sake of balance.
- Mr. Dumas asked Mr. Conley if there was anything in writing from the Chiefs of Police and Fire affirming they will actively support the project. He stated that he is concerned about traffic management in Town already, and that he would like to see a concrete statement from them. Mr. Conley agreed to provide that.

- Ms. Stahl asked if this group was a 501C3. She suggested that it would open some additional grants for charitable foundations.
- Mr. Saulnier asked about the existing gazebo. Ms. Daniels replied that it will be relocated to another spot on the rail trail. Frank Chamberlain suggested locating it at Cross Street, as another access to the trail.

Frank Chamberlain thanked the presenters. He suggested that CPC members may find more information by reviewing the proposals that had been submitted. The Committee will vote at the public hearing.

Frank Chamberlain asked if there was any new business.

- Mr. Zeamer commented that he felt the traffic had not been seriously considered, and that he wanted more planning input about the connection with the schools. He said he feels the small vendors may lose parking to the increasing capacity of the site.
- Frank Chamberlain agreed that public safety should be important and suggested that the vendors should be consulted.
- Frank Chamberlain would like to know more specifics about the neighbors' opinion.
- Warren Chamberlain stated that he had been at the Planning Board meeting where questions about traffic and parking were discussed, but that they were not thoroughly resolved. There was also a concern about the impact on the neighborhood.
- Mr. Zeamer asked how to know the consensus of the downtown community.
- Mr. Dumas asked about porta-johns. The information from the proposal was provided. Mr. Saulnier mentioned the current study about the sewer downtown.
- Frank Chamberlain stated that the Committee should let the planners know what our concerns are, so they can respond specifically. He will compile a list of questions from CPC members.
- It was suggested that we start the next CPC meeting with a review of current budget line items to see how upcoming open space and parks funding may be balanced within CPA criteria.
- Frank Chamberlain has reached out to Brian Clancy at the Housing trust to see if there are any affordable housing requests coming in. He will follow up.
- Mr. Zeamer asked about the well on the farm, which he had heard was contaminated by the old circuit company, and suggested that a water test should be required. Mr. Saulnier will look into it.

There was a discussion of the CPC meeting schedule, so that the Committee can complete recommendations by the deadline for closing the warrant.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The clerk stated that the meeting notes were too lengthy to read and approve at that time, so the draft will be sent to members.

- She requested prompt replies about changes, so corrected minutes will be ready for approval at the next meeting.
- She also suggested that members who were not present would benefit from reading the draft and the proposals, so that the numerous questions and answers would not have to be repeated at the next meeting.

Committee members agreed.

MOTION to adjourn: Ms Kaspern. Second Mr. Dumas.

VOTE Approved by role call: Warren Chamberlain, aye. Mr. Dumas aye. Ms. Kaspern aye. Ms. Stahl aye. Mr. Vosberg aye. Frank Chamberlain aye.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:30 PM.

The next meeting will be Wednesday February 16 2022. .

Respectfully submitted,
Susan Woodrow
Clerk