

TOWN CLERK

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DUXBURY, MASS.



Town of Duxbury Community Preservation Committee

Minutes of January 23, 2020

The Community Preservation Committee (CPC) met on Thursday, January 23, 2020 at 8:15 AM in the Mural Room at the Duxbury Town Hall.

Members Present: Holly Morris; Tag Carpenter; Cynthia Ladd Fiorini; Tony Kelso; Kathy Palmer; Sarianna Seewald

Members Absent: Paul McCormack

Staff Present: Joe Grady, CPC Administrator; Susan Ossoff, CPC Administrative Assistant

The meeting was called to order by Chair Holly Morris at 8:20 am.

OPEN PROJECT UPDATES

Holly Morris asked Tag Carpenter for an update about the status of the Myles Standish Cellar Hole project. Tag Carpenter said the survey work was suspended but he was not certain why that is the case.

PROJECTS SUBMITTED FOR 2020 UPDATES

None

CPA SURCHARGE INCREASE: DISCUSSION

Holly Morris said that there will be an article on the Town Meeting warrant that was placed on the warrant by Citizens Petition to increase the CPA surcharge from its current 1% to 3%. There are 2 exclusions that apply; the first \$100,000 value of the real estate value is exempt, and in addition there are exemptions for people who would qualify for low income housing or low or moderate income senior housing. Currently, each year the CPA generates about \$500,000 through the local surcharge; in addition there is a state match. In a town where land values are \$300,000 - \$350,000 per lot, only having \$500,000 in revenue severely limits what projects the CPC can fund. Currently the average surcharge is about \$70; increasing it to 3% would increase this to \$210.

Holly Morris referred to a handout prepared by the Community Preservation Coalition (using 2018 data) that shows the additional revenue the Town will receive if the surcharge is raised to 3%; this also makes the Town eligible for additional rounds of funding that only towns at the 3% surcharge level are eligible for. In Duxbury approximately 23 million dollars in CPA funds have been spent since it was adopted around 2002; of that 9 million dollars were state matching funds. For the Town to restore the surcharge, a vote of Town Meeting and a vote at the polls is required.

Sherm Hoyt of 51 Abrams Hill asked how much extra revenue the Town would get at 3%. Holly Morris said now the Town generates about \$500,000 in local revenue; at 3% this would increase

to \$1,500,000. The State match which was about \$96,000 this year would increase by a factor of 3; then additional rounds of state matching funds would increase the match even further; in the example handout from the Coalition the total match in 2018 would have increased from \$96,000 to \$333,000.

Lisa Sprague of 25 Shepherds Crook said that residents don't understand and aren't informed about the CPA tax and all that gets accomplished with CPA funds. It is important to 'spread the word.' Holly Morris said Letters to the Editor of the Clipper can be helpful, in addition an informational meeting will be held at the Senior Center at night.

Leslie Hart of Plumfield Lane said that there will be opposition to a tax increase but she thinks people need to be better informed about how small the increase actually will be. Having more CPA funds gives the Town more control over affordable housing projects and land development because the town has not reached the 10% threshold of affordable housing that will exempt it from Chapter 40B development. Cynthia Ladd Fiorini said the 0 East Street land that the Town intends to acquire through the Right of First Refusal process could have been a large affordable housing development; the Duxbury Affordable Housing Trust is buying the land so now the Town will have control over the amount and type of affordable housing that may be built there. There are also lots of project requests for recreational projects; the pickleball court conversion project is an example. Joe Grady commented that using CPA housing funds perhaps a part-time staff person to work on affordable housing could be hired by the Town, right now it is handled by a volunteer board and it is complicated and would benefit from professional help.

Priscilla Chandler of 602 Lincoln Street said that the surcharge increase will result in a tax increase, but so will development because of the demands it places on town services. She believes a fact sheet should be put together. Greg Morris of 187 Keene Street said the fact sheet could be printed and placed around town, in addition a bumper sticker could be distributed saying something like 'buying land keeps taxes low.' Tony Kelso pointed out that for the additional \$140 in taxes on the average home from the increase, open space projects, recreation projects, affordable housing projects, and historic preservation projects can all be funded.

Peter Rapelye of 95 Eagles Nest Road said he thinks the educational component should address what the funds have been used for, and also emphasize the importance of matching funds. Ellen Barrett of 240 Evergreen Street said the challenge is to explain to people why protecting land is less expensive than development because many people don't understand this. Holly Morris said it is because the taxes on new houses don't cover the cost of additional services (costs such as schools, police, fire, etc.). Protecting open space also protects groundwater; important in a town that gets all its water from wells.

Leslie Hart asked what efforts would be helpful in advocating for this increase. A group of dedicated people have to take on this task. Suggestions included: weekly letters to the editor, social media outreach, flyers, bumper stickers, holding signs, passing out flyers at the grocery store, a table with information at Town Meeting, and having eye-catching signs. Pam Walsh asked where other town boards such as the Finance Committee and Board of Selectmen stood on the issue; Holly Morris said they haven't discussed this yet. Jeff Chandler of 602 Lincoln Street, Chairman of the Agricultural Commission, said the Ag Commission fully supports this and submitted a letter to the Board of Selectmen stating their support. It was suggested that trying to get as many boards, committees, groups, and organizations as possible to publicly support the increase would be helpful. The need to make sure all information that is distributed is accurate was emphasized.

Approved February 13, 2020

Leslie Hart said she thinks some people believe this increase is focused on the Simmons Farm off Temple Street, and she believes that the issues need to be kept separate. Holly Morris said nobody knows what will happen with that property. It is possible CPA money will be used to purchase the land but there is no current project and nobody knows what is going to happen.

Joe Grady reviewed the history of land acquisition using CPA funds in Town. He said there was a group that worked on land acquisition, including reaching out to landowners, but when the surcharge was decreased to 1% it seemed that the message was that the people did not want to continue to buy land, so the group stopped contacting landowners. And as the Board of Selectmen asked for input regarding Chapter 61 Right of First Refusal opportunities, the recommendation was to not exercise the Right of First Refusal because acquiring land no longer seemed to be a priority.

Joe Grady said the cranberry industry is in decline, and Duxbury has many large cranberry bogs and there should be thought given to the future of those lands. He said many landowners want to preserve their land and want a fair price for it. Jeff Chandler said farmers want to preserve open space but want to get a reasonable price for their land.

Holly Morris will determine a date and time for a meeting at the Senior Center and will let everyone know as soon as possible.

ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

Minutes for approval:

Cynthia Ladd Fiorini made a motion to approve the minutes of January 6; the motion was seconded by Tony Kelso and approved by a vote of 6-0.

Cynthia Ladd Fiorini made a motion to approve the minutes of January 16; the motion was seconded by Sarianna Seewald and approved by a vote of 6-0.

Invoices and requisitions approved since the last meeting:

None

Next Meeting: The CPC will meet next Thursday, February 13 at 8:15 am.

ADJOURN

On a motion by Cynthia Ladd Fiorini, seconded by Tony Kelso, it was voted 6-0 to adjourn the meeting at 9:45 am.