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TOWN CLERK

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DUXBURY, MASS.



Town of Duxbury Community Preservation Committee

Minutes of February 6, 2020 Public Information Meeting

The Community Preservation Committee (CPC) met on Thursday, February 6, 2020 at 7:00 PM in the Ellison Room at the Duxbury Senior Center.

Members Present: Holly Morris; Tag Carpenter; Cynthia Ladd Fiorini; Tony Kelso; Paul McCormack; Kathy Palmer

Members Absent: Sarianna Seewald

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

The meeting was called to order by Chair Holly Morris at 7:02 pm.

ARTICLES FOR MARCH 2020 MEETING

Softball Field Dugouts: CPC Chairman Holly Morris introduced Jane Carroll who is speaking about the Softball Field Dugouts project (Article 32 of the Town Meeting Warrant). Jane Carroll said she is a parent and volunteer coach who noted differences in the softball and baseball field conditions and met with the Town Manager about it which led to improvements. The addition of dugouts and a batting warmup area will increase safety for the players and coaches. The project consists of 4 concrete pads, dugout fencing and dugout benches. Holly Morris explained the original request was for \$79,000 and CPC approved \$76,000 for this project.

Train Field Picnic Shelter: Holly Morris explained that Tim Ayers, an Eagle Scout candidate, came to CPC last year with the Picnic Shelter project but the project needed work so CPC did not approve it. He returned this year with a very complete project. Tim Ayers said after applying last year, he came back to CPC this year with some matching funds and more complete engineering. This will be a picnic shelter at Train Field. He requested \$5,500 for the project that will include a slab, metal roof, and ADA compliance picnic tables. He has raised over \$6,926 by collecting recycling and selling fundraising bricks for the project. He has been working closely with the Municipal Services department and the Facilities Manager. He hopes to complete the project this summer. This is Article 35 of the Town Meeting warrant.

Town Clerk Records Project: Holly Morris said this Records Preservation project (Article 36 of the warrant) is the third request of a 3-phase project to preserve historic records in the Town Clerk's office. The request is for \$25,000.

DeLorenzo Agricultural Improvements Project: Joe Grady described this project which is Article 37 on the Town Meeting Warrant. In 2018, the Town using CPA funds purchased ~28 acres on Summer Street with the goal of restoring it to a working farm. This project is to get the land ready for farming. This request is for funds to clear approximately 7 acres at \$7500/acre for a total of \$63,000, permit and dig 2-2" wells (\$5800) and remove debris (\$3500).

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The mission of the Town of Duxbury is to deliver excellent services to the community in the most fiscally responsible and innovative manner while endeavoring to broaden our sense of community and preserve the unique character of our town.

Housing Trust Transfer: Holly Morris said this project is Article 38 of the Town Meeting warrant and is to transfer remaining funds from Article 26 of the 2008 Annual Town Meeting which was for a Housing Assistance program to the Affordable Housing Trust. This transfer is for \$318,782.

Conservation Land Purchase: Holly Morris said this project is for 761 Temple Street. The Town is exploring options and working with Town Counsel. She said there is no further information about this project at this time.

COMMUNITY PRESERVATION ACT FINANCES

Holly Morris explained that the CPA surcharge was reduced from 3% to 1% in 2014. There are 2 exemptions, one for the first \$100,000 of assessed value and the second for people who live in low income housing or seniors in low or moderate income housing. The reduction in surcharge resulted in a significant decrease in local receipts. This year local receipts will be about \$540,000 and is about \$73 in taxes for the median family home. The state match this year was 14% and now an additional match is expected from the state budget surplus. Estimated receipts for FY21 are \$557,012 with a 15% match of \$83,550; the match may increase because fees at the Registry of Deeds have been increased.

Historically, 67% of expenditures have been for Open Space, 20% for Historic Preservation, 9.8% for Housing, and 3.6% for recreation. There have been 76 articles totaling 25 million dollars since CPA began in Duxbury; of that \$9.5 million came from State matching funds and \$5 million in donations and from other sources.

Holly Morris reviewed some of the many projects that have been completed using CPA funds. She said CPA money directly benefits the Town. It is used to protect important resources like drinking water, and having the matching funds from the State make it an outstanding investment.

She said there is a demand for affordable housing and senior housing, and land acquisition projects can provide land for open space, housing, and recreation purposes. In terms of affordable housing, to reach the 10% level at which the Town is no longer subject to 40B development requires approximately 253 more units. CPA funds could be used to hire a professional housing consultant to help the Town manage and take control of its affordable housing program. When land costs \$250,000-\$300,000 an acre, having perhaps \$550,000 a year in CPA funds isn't adequate. It is possible to borrow money for CPC projects, for instance for Temple Street, but that would tie up funds for many years. Returning the surcharge to 3% will enable the Town to become proactive and less reactive to land development projects.

CITIZEN'S PETITION ARTICLE FOR 2020 TOWN MEETING: INCREASE CPA SURCHARGE

Leslie Hart of Plumfield Lane did a presentation about the Citizen's petition to increase the CPA surcharge. She said the median single family home in Duxbury currently pays about \$73 for the CPA surcharge; at 3% this would be \$211 or an increase of \$131. She said development results in increased costs due to infrastructure, sewage, fire, police, and school services which costs more than the added taxes from development. If the Town takes control of its affordable housing and builds it, all the units can be designated as affordable; through the 40B process only 25% of what is built is affordable. She emphasized the importance of protecting the Town's drinking water, and 40B development can bypass local protective regulations. She said it is important for the Town to take control over the types of affordable housing building built.

Kathy Robinson of Laurel Street, who recently moved to Duxbury, said she moved here because of the nature of the Town and hopes the Town continues to protect its unique character. She believes increasing the surcharge is an investment in the Town.

Priscilla Chandler of 602 Lincoln Street, who is a farmer, presented some data from the American Farmlands Trust website that says a number of studies have shown that tax revenue from farms, ranches, and forests covers the public service costs, while for each dollar of tax revenue raised by residential development, the Town must expend \$1.15 in services.

Sheila Lynch Benttinen of West Street said it is important for the Town to get to the 10% level of affordable housing to control 40B development. The Town needs a plan of how to get to 10%. There is a big need for affordable senior housing.

Kathy Cross of Bay View Road, a member of the Open Space Committee, said the Open Space Committee has voted to support increasing the CPA surcharge to 3%.

Betsy Sullivan, member of the Finance Committee, said that some of the debt exclusions that have been previously approved are likely 'coming off the books', and the debt payments decrease with time. John Adams, Finance Director, said that on the Town's Finance Department webpage, there are debt charts that will show the level of debt reduction.

Pam Walsh of 70 Humphrey's Lane said there are many 'under the radar' auxiliary apartments in Duxbury that aren't allowed by zoning. If the zoning was changed, these could be counted towards the affordable housing limit because they are rental units.

Betsy Sullivan said the change from 3% to 1% was a small change on a tax bill that eliminated choices in Duxbury. She said increasing the surcharge back to 3% would allow the Town to make choices, and she believes the Town historically makes good choices.

Holly Morris said the first hurdle is a vote at Town Meeting to reinstate the 3% surcharge. Then this goes to the ballot in November, which will require continued momentum to educate folks about the CPA and what this increase will provide in benefits to the Town.

ADJOURN

On a motion by Tag Carpenter, seconded by Kathy Palmer, it was voted 6-0 to adjourn the meeting at 8:27 pm.

Next Meeting Date: Thursday, March 12, 2020 at 8:15 am.