

Meeting Minutes

Stoughton Community Preservation Committee (CPC)

Meeting held in the SRA Office, 7 Pearl Street

Wednesday, March 1, 2023

Members Present: Chairperson Mark Zamanian, Treasurer Michael Barrett, Members John Linehan and Rich Terry, Program Administrator (PA) Barry Kassler.

Members Attending Remotely: Vice-Chair Dwight MacKerron, Members John Morton, Donald Brady, Laurice Rubel and Bunmi Olotu [at 7:10]

Members absent: None

Others Present: None

Preliminary Items:

Mr. Zamanian read the Governor's Order authorizing remote meetings, and announced the remote link information for the meeting, and explained that Town Hall is temporarily unavailable for meetings, which is why we are meeting at the SRA Office.

1. **Call to Order:** MOTION: Mr. Barrett moved to open the meeting at 7:05 pm; seconded by Mr. Terry and so voted unanimously, 8-0: Mr. Morton, Aye; Mr. MacKerron, Aye; Ms. Rubel, Aye; Mr. Terry, Aye; Mr. Brady, Aye; Mr. Linehan, Aye; Mr. Barrett, Aye; Mr. Zamanian, Aye.

2. **Chairperson's Report:** Mr. Zamanian reported that Select Board Vice Chair Cavey informed him that the Select Board had voted to no longer require annual approval for Stoughton Youth Baseball to turn on the lights at Miller Field. Mr. Zamanian noted that this had been the reason for his vote against recommendation, and that it now is no longer an issue. *[Ms. Olotu logged on at 7:10.]*

3. **Administrator's Report:** Mr. Kassler reported on the status of the six unresolved items at Glen Echo which he had asked DPW Superintendent Paul Giffune about. The camera at the gate, which was the first item on the list, is working, but does not transmit to the Police Station yet, and so is not completed. He was told that they are waiting for a part to come in, and noted that this was supposed to have been completed last summer. The second item, the intercom, is working, so that is complete. The third item, the solar lights, have been ordered, but are on backorder. The fourth item, reinstalling the LED strip on the entrance gate, has not been taken care of. He has not been able to get an answer on the fifth item – the capacity of the gate motor to handle the extended arm – so he asked Mr. Giffune to check the manufacturer's

specifications. The sixth item, installing a defibrillator, has not yet been done because the Fire Department requested that it be enclosed in an all-weather case to protect the battery from cold temperatures. The Fire Department is looking into finding an appropriate case. In summary, the only item that can be crossed off the list is the intercom.

Mr. Kassler also mentioned that he believes the committee should consider instituting grant agreements, at least for the three non-municipal recipients approved for CPA funding at this year's Annual Town Meeting (ATM). They would be signed following Town Meeting approval. Mr. Barrett recommended using a grant agreement for all applicants, including municipal ones, in order to spell out in writing what the expectations are; this was also the opinion of Messrs. Terry and Linehan. Mr. Morton concurred, noting that the Conservation Commission requires the Town to go through the permit granting process just like every other applicant. He added that having a signed agreement is our way to ensure that the funding is used in a manner consistent with our recommendation. Mr. Zamanian noted that as Town employees come and go, the agreement keeps everyone on the same page no matter who is filling the position of, for example, the DPW Superintendent or the Recreation Director.

Mr. Kassler explained that the existing grant agreement form was designed to be used for non-municipal applicants, as the Town itself is a party to the agreement. He added that the form could be modified to be used for municipal applicants, and to provide for more detail regarding the specific conditions associated with a particular project. Mr. Zamanian asked Mr. Barrett to work with Mr. Kassler to come up with a municipal project grant agreement. Mr. Morton added that there should be a provision requiring the applicant to return to the CPC for project changes which occur after the original approval, to ensure that those changes are within the original scope.

4. Treasurer's Report: Mr. Barrett presented his report page by page, reviewing the projects we are recommending to Town Meeting, the CPA Fund Debt Schedule, Authorized but Unissued CPA Debt, and the detailed FY 2024 CPA Budget. He noted changes since his report of February 1st, including the BAN for the railroad station. He added footnotes explaining each item on the Unissued Debt sheet. He noted the new bond issues expected in June for projects previously approved. Mr. Zamanian stated that we will go right to Item 6 on the agenda as a logical continuation of this presentation.

New Business:

6. Updates to CPA Budget: Articles 27 and 69: Mr. Zamanian explained the genesis of an issue that arose subsequent to our last meeting regarding the budget. He

had asked the Town Accountant to explain the BAN that appears in this year's budget. Mr. Rowe explained that BAN stands for "Bond Anticipation Note", which in this case is for Stoughton Depot renovations which were authorized as a bonded expense in 2015, have been completed, and were paid for using deficit spending. We are now required to begin paying the BAN down. Normally, the Town would issue a bond to cover this, but because the eventual use of the property has not yet been determined – specifically whether that use will be municipal or not – we cannot issue a bond, due to the different rules regarding municipal vs. non-municipal bonds. We must now pay at least \$20,000 annually toward the \$320,000 principal of the BAN. Originally, this \$20,000 was included in the CPA budget which the committee approved at our last meeting on February 1. Mr. Rowe explained that having a BAN is far less than ideal, as opposed to issuing a bond.

Since that point, Town Accountant Bill Rowe, in discussing how to best deal with the BAN with Committee Treasurer Michael Barrett, Chair Mark Zamanian, and Program Administrator Barry Kassler, explored the feasibility of instead paying down the entire BAN, and thus avoid having to continue to pay interest every year for the life of the BAN. We decided that because Town Meeting had authorized the bonding, there needed to be an article to finance the payoff, which was submitted as Article 69. The following day, Mr. Rowe realized that an even simpler way to accomplish this would be to include the full payoff as part of the CPC budget, in Article 27. The only caveat is that we need to make it clear to Town Meeting that they are being asked to pay off in cash what they had previously authorized as bonding, back in 2015. The Town Accountant, Committee Treasurer, Committee Chair, and Committee Program Administrator all agree that the CPA Fund can easily afford to pay the entire BAN off in one cash payment.

Mr. Linehan asked why nobody had noticed the BAN prior to Mr. Zamanian asking Mr. Rowe about it. He expressed his concern that we retain the trust of Town Meeting, and be fully transparent. Mr. Zamanian agreed, and stated that we will need to provide a complete explanation of what we are proposing and why. Mr. Barrett noted that the interest expense saved would be over \$100,000 over the life of a 20-year bond, and that Town Meeting will most likely see this as a positive move. He noted that we will be presenting this to the Finance Committee tomorrow, and expects that they will understand this and support it. Mr. Kassler stated that the point needs to be made that Town Meeting had originally authorized this project with bonding, and needs to be made fully aware that it would now be authorizing that it be paid in cash instead.

The committee is being asked to vote on and recommend to Town Meeting a revised budget which now includes a full \$320,000 payoff of the BAN.

MOTION: Mr. Linehan moved that the CPC address the BAN issue openly at Town Meeting, and to include the \$320,000 full payoff of the BAN in the FY 2024 CPA Budget. Seconded by Mr. Terry and so voted unanimously, 9-0: Mr. Morton, Aye;

Mr. MacKerron, Aye; Ms. Rubel, Aye; Mr. Terry, Aye; Mr. Brady, Aye; Ms. Olotu, Aye; Mr. Linehan, Aye; Mr. Barrett, Aye; Mr. Zamanian, Aye.

MOTION: Mr. MacKerron moved to accept the Treasurer's Report, including the revised CPA Budget. Seconded by Mr. Morton and so voted unanimously, 9-0: Mr. Morton, Aye; Mr. MacKerron, Aye; Ms. Rubel, Aye; Mr. Terry, Aye; Mr. Brady, Aye; Ms. Olotu, Aye; Mr. Linehan, Aye; Mr. Barrett, Aye; Mr. Zamanian, Aye.

Mr. Zamanian at first asked for a motion to dismiss Article 69. Mr. Morton asked what would happen if the budget article, Article 27, wasn't approved as presented. Mr. Zamanian then agreed that it would be safer to leave Article 69 as is and only dismiss it if the budget is approved as presented. If the budget isn't approved with the full BAN payoff, we would then need to have the option of funding the BAN payoff using Article 69.

5. Public Comments: None.

Continuing Business:

7. CPC Letter to State Representatives: Mr. Kassler noted that we have received a letter from the Recreation Department in addition to the letter from this committee. He explained that at this point, the citizen's proposal is a docket item, and not yet on the floor of the House nor in Committee. Mr. Linehan noted that the Open Space Committee voted to send a letter as well, but it hasn't been drafted yet. Mr. Terry noted that he had also requested the Planning Board to send a letter.

MOTION: Mr. Barrett moved to approve and send the draft CPC letter. Seconded by Mr. Linehan, and so voted unanimously, 8-0: Mr. Morton, Aye; Mr. MacKerron, Aye; Ms. Rubel, Aye; Mr. Terry, Aye; Mr. Brady, Aye; Mr. Linehan, Aye; Mr. Barrett, Aye; Mr. Zamanian, Aye. [Ms. Olotu temporarily lost her Internet connection and so was unable to vote.]

Project Updates:

8. Update on Student Engagement Project: While waiting for Ms. Olotu to reconnect, Mr. Kassler reported that Ms. Olotu had contacted the Director of the Arts Department for Stoughton Schools, and he is putting together a Fine Arts chapter of the National Honor Society (NHS) at the High School, which will work on the CPC Logo Project. [Ms. Olotu reconnected.] Ms. Olotu reported that she is still waiting for Mr. Mange, the Director of the Arts Department, to get back to her. Mr. Zamanian asked Mr. Kassler to draft a letter to the School Committee explaining our program and its intent, in order to spur some action in implementing the project, and to share that letter

with Ms. Olotu and Mr. Linehan. Mr. Kassler said that he recognizes that part of the delay is that the school first has to set up the NHS arts chapter.

9. West Street Barn Evaluation Update: Mr. MacKerron reported that he received an email from the consultant that she has been “extremely busy” and is exploring how best to stabilize the older part of the structure, with roof repairs being the “obvious first place to start”. Mr. Zamanian asked him to forward that information to the committee.

10. Capen Reynolds Grant Application Update: Mr. Terry reported that an application for the dog park grant was submitted to the Stanton Foundation in January, and that he is in communication with them. Stanton prefers stone dust to wood chips due to cleanliness issues, and they’d like the dog play areas to include benches for people, with trash cans located inside the fence. They have also recommended landscape architects, which is a good indication that they are looking at the application in a positive light. The \$5,500 cost for the landscape architect will be covered by the Friends of Capen Reynolds. Town Accountant Bill Rowe said to write to the Select Board to ask them to accept that as a gift. The next step, which would be to hear from Stanton whether they will award Stoughton the grant, is expected to take about a month.

Mr. Terry said he is encouraged by the positive feedback he is getting from his contact at the Stanton Foundation that Stoughton has a good chance of being awarded a grant for the dog park. Mr. Kassler reported that he recently visited Franklin’s dog park, and was impressed by the peaceful, relaxed atmosphere there, which he wasn’t expecting. He said that there were plenty of large shade trees inside the fenced area, which contributed to the area’s sense of serenity.

Administrative Items:

11. Approval of Minutes:

A.) Joint Meeting Minutes of January 17, 2023: MOTION: Mr. Barrett moved to approve the minutes as presented; seconded by Mr. Terry and so voted, 9-0: Mr. Morton, Aye; Mr. MacKerron, Aye; Ms. Rubel, Aye; Mr. Terry, Aye; Mr. Brady, Aye; Ms. Olotu, Aye; Mr. Linehan, Aye; Mr. Barrett, Aye; Mr. Zamanian, Aye.

B.) CPC Minutes of February 1, 2023: MOTION: Mr. Terry moved to approve the minutes as presented; seconded by Mr. Barrett and so voted, 9-0: Mr. Morton, Aye; Mr. MacKerron, Aye; Ms. Rubel, Aye; Mr. Terry, Aye; Mr. Brady, Aye; Ms. Olotu, Aye; Mr. Linehan, Aye; Mr. Barrett, Aye; Mr. Zamanian, Aye.

12. Other Unanticipated New Business: None.

13. Schedule Next Meeting: The first Wednesday in April is Passover, so the next meeting will instead be held on Tuesday, April 11, in the SRA Office. Mr. Zamanian noted that the State has not yet extended the temporary remote meeting provisions beyond March 31, so we will plan on all members being in-person unless we hear otherwise.

14. Adjournment: MOTION: Mr. Barrett moved to adjourn; seconded by Ms. Rubel and so voted, 9-0, at 8:21 pm: Mr. Morton, Aye; Mr. MacKerron, Aye; Ms. Rubel, Aye; Mr. Terry, Aye; Mr. Brady, Aye; Ms. Olotu, Aye; Mr. Linehan, Aye; Mr. Barrett, Aye; Mr. Zamanian, Aye.

Respectfully submitted,
Barry Kassler
Program Administrator, Community Preservation Committee

Approved on April 11, 2023