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By KWilber/Assistant Town Clerk at 1:41 pm, Mar 26, 2024

TOWN OF NORTHBOROUGH Open Space Committee

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Open Space Committee Zoom Meeting Minutes

January 29, 2024

Approved as Amended on March 25, 2024

Pursuant to Chapter 2 of the Acts of 2023, An Act Relative to Extending Certain COVID-19 Measures Adopted During the State of Emergency, signed into law on March 29, 2023, this meeting will be conducted via remote participation. No in-person attendance by members of the public will be permitted.

Members in attendance (remotely): John Campbell, Chair; Dan Clark, Paul Tagliaferri; Brian Belfer; Lisa Maselli

Members absent: Anthony Ziton, Leslie Harrison; Ashley Davies; Paul Cacciatore

Others in attendance (Remotely): Vincent Vignaly, Conservation Agent

The meeting began at 7:05 p.m.

Consideration of December 20, 2023 for Acceptance

There were no comments or amendments to the minutes. Mr. Belfer made a motion to approve the minutes of December 20, 2023; seconded by Mr. Tagliaferri. Roll call vote: Clark – yes; Paul yes; Belfer yes; Campbell – yes; motion approved.

Discuss Town acquisition of 432 Whitney Street (Map 15, Parcel 22) and possible CPA application

Mr. Campbell indicated that the Select Board approved the purchase of this property. A CPA Application has been filed by Ms. Laurie Connors and will be considered by the CPC on February 1, 2024. Mr. Campbell further addressed the sources of the funding for the purchase. He indicated that the property value needs to be verified and the CPA money provided must not exceed the value of the property. An independent appraisal needs to be made. The Town must commit to purchasing the property for Open Space or Affordable Housing purposes in order to use CPA funds. However, the property value and the portion of the land to be conserved doesn't need to be determined before it is voted at Town Meeting. This could be in FY2025. He explained the benefits of proceeding in this manner and the balance of monies in the Conservation and CPA-Housing funds. and the OSC earlier this year applied for \$350,000.00 to go to the Conservation Fund to bring the available funds set aside for open space purchase up to \$1million. Mr. Campbell stated that there is also \$1,060,000.00 available in unreserved CPA money. He indicated that the CPC will discuss alternatives for funding the acquisition. Ms. Maselli asked about the unreserved fund and what happens if it is used up. Mr. Campbell explained how the CPC process is funded through a tax and State matching funds to replenish and build the available funds. Mr. Clark explained that this fund has been built up for a land acquisition opportunity and that this property should be purchased. The property will need to have a permanent conservation restriction. Mr. Belfer agreed with the expenditure of the funds for the 432 Whitney Street property. Mr. Campbell explained that the CPC will determine what funds would be used for the purchase and the mechanics involved. He asked if the Committee would be open to amending the prior application to set aside \$350,000 to the Conservation Fund, to apply that \$350,000 toward the purchase of the 432 Whitney Street property that includes open space and a small affordable housing development and all were in favor. Mr. Vignaly indicated that Ms. Connors needs a letter in the package that the Open Space Committee is the sponsor of the acquisition of the 432 Whitney Street property. Mr. Campbell explained the general parameters of potential cost-sharing between open space protection and affordable housing of the application. Ms. Maselli asked what would happen to the application if the housing could not be built on the lot due to the wetland constraints. Mr. Vignaly

explained the location of the environmental restrictions on the lot and that the housing would be located close to Whitney Street to avoid wetland impacts. Mr. Tagliaferri asked how the process would work for the housing to be developed. Mr. Campbell explained that at this time the Town Meeting article would only approve that the property would be protected open space with a small portion of affordable housing. The town's Planning Director will provide a sketch or description of the proposed uses at the property and where they would be located. The details for who will develop the property are not needed right now, but that the amount of permanently conserved open space will be about 21 of the 23 acres. Mr. Clark suggested that the CPC application be amended to specify that the location of affordable housing is to be along Whitney Street. The Committee discussed and agreed that the housing needs to abut Whitney Street. Mr. Vignaly indicated that he will draft the support letter for sponsorship to include this need.

Mr. Clark made a motion that the Committee sponsor the request to acquire 432 Whitney Street and provide a letter that would support the application as written, provided that the portion of the property at 432 Whitney Street assigned to be used for affordable housing would be near Whitney Street and small enough so as not to impact the conservation value and the connectivity opportunity to other open lands; seconded by Ms. Maselli. Roll call vote: Clark – yes; Belfer - yes; Tagliaferri – yes; Maselli – yes; Campbell – yes; motion approved.

Mr. Campbell indicated that part of the CPC funding will be used for soil testing to confirm no hazardous materials are present and to get a general overview of where the housing could be built and to complete a survey to define the protected open space area from the affordable housing component.

Landowner Outreach Mailings

Mr. Belfer asked what the methodology is for preparing and sending the outreach letters to landowners. Mr. Campbell had reviewed Mr. Belfer's letter and there were few changes and is specific to one site. He explained the process in that the language needs to be agreed upon by the committee and then the general letters are mailed to the residents through regular mail. He would like to wait for the full committee to discuss these letters.

Next Meeting

The next meeting will be at 7:00 on Monday, March 25, 2024.

Ms. Maselli made a motion to adjourn the meeting and it was seconded by Mr. Tagliaferri. Roll Call Vote: Clark – yes; Belfer – yes; Tagliaferri – yes; Maselli – yes; Campbell – yes; motion approved.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:55 p.m.

Respectively Submitted by

Brenda M. DiCeglie

Board Secretary