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By KWilber/Assistant Town Clerk at 9:35 am, Oct 26, 2023

TOWN OF NORTHBOROUGH Community Preservation Committee

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Community Preservation Committee

September 7, 2023

Approved October 5, 2023

Members Present: John Campbell, Chair; Peter Martin, Andy Dowd, Andy Clark, Jeff Leland, Andy Clark, Sean Durkin

Members Absent: Todd Helwig, Millie Milton

Others Present: Laurie Connors, Town Planner

The meeting opened promptly at 7pm after an introduction by the Chair.

Old/New Business

Discussion of Chairmanship—Mr. Campbell acknowledged that he has been Chair since the inception of Community Preservation and asked if another member would be interested in taking on that role. He stated he was not resigning, he is willing to continue serving as Chair, but feels it is appropriate to revisit the chairmanship each year, as other boards do. Discussion followed. Ms. Harrison nominated Mr. Campbell as Chair; Mr. Dowd seconded. Roll call followed; Mr. Dowd—yes; Ms. Harrison—yes; Mr. Leland—yes; Mr. Martin—yes; Mr. Clark—yes; Mr. Campbell—yes. Discussion of Vice Chairmanship was tabled to next meeting.

Consideration of Meeting Minutes from 4/6/23 and 6/13/23—Mr. Martin noted that the second set of minutes were incorrectly named. Ms. Connors noted that staff had since corrected that. Mr. Martin made a motion to approve the minutes from April 6, 2023. Mr. Leland seconded. Ms. Harrison recused herself as she was absent. Roll call vote followed, all were in favor. Next, Mr. Clark made a motion to accept the minutes from June 13, 2023, as amended. Mr. Martin seconded. Ms. Harrison again recused herself. Roll call vote followed, all were in favor.

Discussion of Use of CPC Administrative Funds—Mr. Campbell said he'd spoken with Stuart Saginor, Community Preservation Coalition, regarding use of CPC administrative funds. Mr. Saginor said those funds should be used for the business of the committee only and not subject to outside requests unless it was agreed that was part of the business of the committee. Mr. Campbell said the most recent approval of the use of admin funds came a year ago in June when this committee received a request from the White Cliffs Committee to use funds to pay for the consultant who brought forth the RFP that led to Metrowest Collaborative's submission. At that time, members of this committee felt as though they were supporting the mission of this CPC and preparing for a possible CPA application in support of White Cliffs; members had anticipated that if that proposal was approved, a warrant article would be crafted for the next Town Meeting, but in the end, that was not the case. Mr. Campbell said it should be clarified how those funds should be used.

Mr. Martin asked, if they were to define the use of admin funds more strictly, what the anticipated expenditures out of that fund would be on a yearly basis. Mr. Campbell answered that one use is for

payment of staff or people that contribute to the business of the committee; in Northborough, some of the admin funds are used to pay staff for taking meeting minutes. Other uses have been for legal fees or appraisal fees with respect specifically to a property that's going to be part of a CPA article and other related administrative costs that are the business of CPC and the business of vetting an application. Mr. Martin said he understood that to mean that, in any event, it should be to support the operations of this committee and no other committee or body in Town. Mr. Campbell said that was his understanding.

Role of CPA for the Master Plan and Downtown Revitalization—Mr. Campbell said that although the focus of the committee is in taking applications, seeing if they apply and recommending them forward, there is no reason to not be proactive and collaborate with other committees to help craft an application. He noted discussions he'd had as Chair of the Open Space Committee regarding land acquisition for the purposes of conserving property and creating more open space, and if done in the Downtown, that it was an example of something proactive that could be done that checks off a box in the master plan and contributes to the revitalization of the Downtown, which is the current priority of the Master Plan.

Ms. Connors anticipated that the Master Plan Implementation Committee will choose to go forward with a phase one project and that it was likely there will be an open space opportunity. Open space options have been proposed by consultants, some of which are extensive and others more along the lines of pocket parks, which she believed would be a fantastic opportunity for the CPC to get involved with.

Ms. Connors provided background on a sign and façade program that she was due to present to the Select Board on Monday. She said she'd had conversations with Norm Corbin in which he'd suggested that the CPC might be able to fund improvements to historic commercial buildings. She said it would not be an ask for this year unless the Select Board decides not to fund the program, in which case she would scale back the project for submission to the CPC, with the understanding that it would be for historic buildings only. Discussion followed regarding details of Ms. Connors' proposal. Mr. Campbell said they would need to verify which items would qualify under historic. She hoped that the Select Board would endorse the project and if so, she would request CPC funds for phase two. Mr. Campbell suggested that she connect with Ms. Harrison and the Historic District Commission as they would be the sponsors for applications such as this.

CPC Applications Received to Date or Expected for FY24— Mr. Campbell asked Mr. Dowd if the Housing Authority intended to submit any applications. Mr. Dowd said there were no proposals currently, but that there is a new director at the Housing Authority, and he would bring it up for discussion at the next Housing Authority meeting in October.

Ms. Connors said that Rick Leif (on behalf of the Northborough Affordable Housing Corporation) and Habitat for Humanity will be submitting an application for the next round of funding for creation of an unknown number of units on Town owned property located on Boundary Street.

Ms. Connors said there have been discussions regarding bringing an application forward for White Cliffs. The Select Board allocated ARPA funds to do the mold analysis, which is still outstanding. She is aware that the Select Board wants her to apply for the Underutilized Properties grant program, due in the spring, which will include demolition of the additions, but that a CPC application may be submitted for mold remediation, demolition of additions and buttoning up the building.

Mr. Campbell said, related to that, he'd invited Stuart Saginor to attend an upcoming CPC meeting and would like him to address the topic of allowable uses of CPA funds for historic restorations, specific to White Cliffs, so they can have some guidance regarding the acceptable use of CPA funds.

Mr. Campbell asked Mr. Durkin if the Parks and Recreation Commission would be putting forth any CPA applications this year. Mr. Durkin said there have been discussions regarding submitting applications for improvements to the tennis courts and outside basketball courts at Melican Middle School. Mr. Campbell noted there was some precedent for that; the CPC had approved an application for renovations to basketball courts at the elementary school[s], which the Town voted in favor of. Mr. Durkin mentioned how the Rec's Women's Softball league has grown and that there has been talk of creation of dugouts at the ball field. He noted the improvements at the middle school done with CPC funding, such as the irrigation and the lighting project, and that the facility is being very well utilized with user groups that include a variety of ages and activities. Mr. Campbell said that it was rewarding to see those projects become visible over the years.

Next Meeting Date—Mr. Campbell wished to discuss the subject of in-person meetings. He was in favor of meeting in person for this committee, although he recognized that Zoom meetings can be more convenient. He asked for feedback on meeting in person for at least the fall CPC meetings.

Mr. Martin, Mr. Durkin, Mr. Clark, and Mr. Leland were in favor of in-person meetings. Mr. Dowd agreed and said there are plans in the not-too-distant future for true hybrid meetings to be held in Town Hall.

Ms. Harrison said she was in the minority; she appreciated the convenience of Zoom meetings and thought the presentations were more efficient when done online, but she will go with the consensus.

Discussion followed. The October 5th meeting will be held via Zoom, the November and December meetings will be held in person. He will try to have Mr. Saginor attend in November, and they will wait to find out when Mr. Little can attend. Mr. Martin thought that Mr. Saginor might appreciate a Zoom meeting, depending on his schedule.

Mr. Campbell noted the following CPC meeting dates: October 5, November 2, December 7, January 4.

Mr. Campbell asked Ms. Connors for the deadline to submit applications. Ms. Connors believed that to be either November 30 or December 1, but she would double-check. The blank application has been updated and uploaded to the Town's website.

Mr. Durkin made a motion to adjourn. Mr. Leland seconded. Roll call vote followed, all were in favor.

The meeting adjourned at 8:02pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Michelle Cilley
Recording Secretary