

Community Preservation Committee Meeting
October 5, 2006 - Thursday
McCulloch Building, Whipple Center Conference Room

Present: Walter Flynn, Chairperson
Arthur Mathews, Vice-Chairperson
Adrienne Gowen, Clerk
Larry Lambros
James Cunningham
Stephen Ford
Christopher Hannan
Tom Curtis

Not Present: Brian O'Halloran

Also Present: Jane Hackett, Chief of Staff
James Wilson, Chief Financial Officer
Scott Bois, Municipal Finance
Jim Clarke, Director of Planning and Community Development
Robert O'Connor, DPW Director
Thomas Slattery, Director of Maintenance

Recording Secretary: Mary Briggs

Chairman Flynn called the Budget Management Committee meeting to order at 7:30 PM.

Minutes - 9/12/06, 9/22/06

Christopher Hannan made a motion to table both sets of minutes and was seconded by Stephen Ford. Unanimously voted. Minutes from 9/7/06 are still tabled as well pending review.

Presentation

a. Recreation -Jane Hackett came to the table and gave a detailed overview of the Mayor's recreation plan and improvement plan for parks. She noted the Mayor's memo of 9/5/06 itemizing park and recreation work, and including the upcoming work being done with funding from the Host Community Agreement with Lennar. At the public hearing for the Community Preservation Committee, Sarah Brassil Park, Stella Tirrell Park and Fulton School Playground were brought up along with the town cemeteries. There is money earmarked through the HCA for cemetery improvements. Students from the alternative high school program who are fulfilling community service hours have been assisting cleaning cemeteries.

Following the public hearing on 9/21, Ms. Hackett and the Mayor walked Sarah Brassil Park, and were pleased with the conditions. Ms. Hackett contacted Gertie Gillen of the South Weymouth Neighborhood Association after the walk-through, and Ms. Gillen is withdrawing her request for more parking. The neighborhood does not want it.

Stella Tirrell Park- the field conditions are excellent, and it is being maintained well. The playground structure and basketball court need some work, and a small children's skate park may be a consideration. Prices are being obtained. Smaller children's structures are being looked at for several of the parks where games are played.

The largest of the town's parks, Legion Field is in the process of being worked on. The Mayor would like to see this restored as the centerpiece of the town. Once the fill has settled, there will be a variety of passive and recreational uses determined. Currently, an engineering assessment is being done to determine the structural integrity of the wall surrounding the park and based on the estimates, the town will need to determine what it can afford. Cost estimates could range from \$1-3M to repair, depending on what the study finds.

Weston Park, behind Tufts Library is budgeted for \$250,000 to replace the infield and benches by the third base line, and must be completed by June 2007 so as not to displace teams. Other improvements include safety fencing, installing irrigation and clearing overgrowth along the Washington Street side entrance.

Standardizing the specifications for field construction, from fencing to fill, fertilization, size of infields, materials, etc. so when going out to bid on any project, the contractors will have specifications and also so that a maintenance schedule can be adhered to was a fundamental part of the parks program. Materials will be standardized throughout the town, and the mayor's office plans to meet with user groups over the winter to go over what will be expected; how and what will be authorized in terms of work done by any groups on town playing fields.

There has been a considerable amount of work done on the younger children's fields at the primary schools. Infield and outfield work- "skin infield" (\$20-30,000) has been done at the Hamilton, Murphy, Seach and Academy Avenue Schools.

There was a lot of over-permitting done in parks this summer, and work will be done over the winter to see that all leagues have a fair chance playing on the fields. Gifford Park, on Thicket Street (Mosquito Park) has some issues with drainage, backstop condition and overgrowth. Determining how much of the overgrowth can be cleared to control the mosquito population will depend on several issues including abutters and conservation wetlands. They have also looked at installing a retaining wall along the third base line to reduce the slope by the sidewalk and to provide a buffer. There currently aren't funds, or plans to do anything about creating additional parking there.

Both Brad Hawes and Julia Road parks are offline and both affect the North Weymouth Little League. The baseball field (Brad Hawes) at Mutton Lane has been converted by the DPW to a softball field to accommodate the league.

Two groups have approached the Mayor and requested work to be done through the parks improvement program- the women's softball league for minor adjustments to the field at Pingree, and East Weymouth Little League for Wanzer and Webb on Schoolhouse Rd. (Central Jr.). Justifying why dugouts may be installed in some fields before rehabbing completed in others is a

consideration; however, the town may consider installation of dugouts in partnership with the leagues, and will be in accordance with the standardized schedule.

Julia Road park tests are being concluded, and results will be available shortly to the Town Council. It is still in the park improvement plan, and may be more expensive than originally planned depending on what the tests show.

There are currently more plans needed than there is funding for. Initial payment from the HCA (\$700,000) is also used for supplies such as equipment and fertilizer, and all work is being done along with a maintenance program to allow for upkeep of the fields.

Legion needs to be completed before other fields can be taken offline and work completed, especially as with the field Pop Warner uses at Nash. Stricter permitting with the user groups will also be a part of the plan.

There was a brief discussion with the committee on approximate costs for the identified next priorities for the active recreational facilities, and detailed estimates will be determined over the next few months.

Chairman Flynn asked if a listing of these could be prepared relatively quickly, irrespective of cost or priority, to include in any consideration of a needs assessment.

Design funding for Legion Field and the library is expected to go out in spring 2007. Ms. Hackett notes the town is about 3 months away from determining the needs and uses for Legion. Conceptual design is estimated at about \$4-500,000, and the town is not ready to commit those funds.

There was a brief discussion on how the HCA payments are made. The next payment (\$1.9M) will not be released until within 30 days of filing of the final Environmental Impact Report. The payment amount is dependent on the development of specific size. If the size is reduced, so is the HCA payment. \$1.2 of that is committed to pay off the bond for the replacement of the Chapman School boilers.

Chairman Flynn asked if a copy of the Host Community Agreement could be made available.

Arthur Mathews questioned whether the wall at Legion Field might qualify under the historic component of the CPA. He reminded the committee to make use of the handouts they received when determining what might be included in their needs assessment study.

Ms. Hackett also provided the committee with an overview of the streetscape planning in process; the Winter Street and Middle Street corridors in particular. Enhancing landscaping on Middle Street from the School Administration building to the Talbot amphitheater, cleaning up around the Cross of Grey, and unifying the zoning to encourage a village center schematic. The intent is to have the Middle Street corridor completed by Memorial Day.

b Open Space -Jim Clarke then reported on the Back River trail, and provided the committee with handouts and a power point presentation on the open space plan, the map which can be referenced for open space when requests start coming in. The map shows open space, conservation and recreational use. The housing and historic components will use a similar 11x17 sized map. He reported that the town currently has 12.5% of the total area in open space/recreation lands which includes the Whitman's Pond Watershed, which 75% is within the town of Weymouth. Other areas are Great Pond, the Circuit Ave. Wells, Swamp River and 430 acres of conservation land including Pratt Meadow, Great Esker Park, Phillips Creek, Norton St. marshlands, House Rock Park, Bradford Torrey Bird Sanctuary, with 90 acres, with walking trails that could potentially tie in to the new high school, Columbian Street, along the Mill River and Mercury Road and Mosquito Plain (Sara Brassil Park) regional state areas including Webb State Park, Abigail Adams Park, Pond Meadow Park (regional with Braintree), Grape, Slate, and Sheep Islands, (Boston Harbor Islands system) and the Back River Trail. This is the focal point of the work wanted over the next few years. The trail could connect Abigail Adams to Great Esker, and conservation land across Herring Run behind the new E. Weymouth commuter rail station to Water Street to Iron Hill Street. The total cost of the project is about \$3 million dollars. The work can be sectioned, and not all has to be done at the same time. We are currently working with the Division of Conservation and Recreation of the state, to make the connection at the Back River bridge, a gateway between Abigail Adams Park and Great Esker. We are also working with Hingham to make the connection, at Stoddard's Neck and the Bare Cove area.

The town has also negotiated with the T for a small park area for a small boat launch in Fore River, similar to one slated for the Durante property at Back River.

There was a discussion following the overview, particularly with regards to the funding of these projects, and what is eligible under the CPA, not supplanting funding. There are many unfunded areas of the project which can come under CPA. \$1.2 million could be sought for work at the Durante property, connecting the existing trails at Great Esker, and the boardwalk through the marshes. Also discussed was other areas of town, not under care of conservation, bike or rollerblading pathways, parking, and common-themed signage for the trail system. The open space purchase of the Sea Street parcel in 1999 was also brought up.

Mr. Clarke reminded the committee that the Back River Plan is on the town website, as well as the Master Plan for the town.

Capital Improvement Program- Discussion-James Wilson, Finance

Mr. Wilson came to the table with Scott Bois, and reported that over the next three weeks, he may not be available for all CPC meetings, and that Mr. Bois would be his designee.

Mr. Bois gave the committee an overview of the Capital Improvement Plan, and how the Community Preservation document would be tied into it. Mr. Bois noted the document is divided into three sections: projects, debt and inventory. Each section is then further broken down into comprehensive lists. For every project its affect on operating cost, its funding source and its priority in the schedule is listed. The Chairman noted that the document produced by the CPC will be reflective of needs assessment, and once evaluated, prioritized.

Mr. Clarke noted the CPC will be independent; it will have its own section in the CIP, with its own projects and priority schedule; however, by ordinance, it will coordinate with Capital Improvement.

The Chairman indicated that the document drafted by the CPC will need to mirror the Capital Improvement to complement it.

Mr. Bois then reviewed the Debt section of the plan for the committee. Borrowing capacity of the town, based on taxable real estate in town, 5% of which is debt limit. There is still \$244 million available. There are certain items which must by statute remain outside of that. The debt service cap is summarized, and includes the land acquisition discussed earlier.

The remainder of the document is an inventory of assets-structures, vehicles and land, the first two which depreciate in value over time.

Mr. Mathews suggested the committee go through the schedule and rule out all ineligibles as a starting point. It will be possible to conjoin projects with other agencies, but that any project currently in process is off the table.

There was a discussion regarding whether projects may be also conjoined with other towns, the prioritization schedule with particular regard to the vehicles, and the fleet replacement schedule the town utilizes.

Other Business - the chairman reported on correspondence from Irving Muerstein on refurbishing grounds.

Correspondence was also received from Mr. Gerard of the DOR on 100% funding eligible for FY07 with match funding available on 10/13.

Mr. Lambros provided handouts to the members for suggestions to include in criteria based on other town's questionnaires.

Mr. Mathews noted that the Budget Management Committee of the Town Council will be meeting on October 19, 2006, and that members of the CPC will be present, including himself. Mr. Clarke recommended the committee cancel its scheduled meeting the same night. On motion by Stephen Ford, seconded by CH, it was unanimously voted to cancel the 10/19/06 meeting.

Mr. Wilson advised the committee on the process the committee can anticipate at its first appearance before the Budget Management Committee. He noted the chair could make an opening statement for the committee, giving a review of the progress of work over the last six weeks, and then should expect to address questions posed by the committee. He recommended as many members be present at this meeting.

CH noted he could be available earlier, if the committee chooses to go back to a 7PM start time.

There was a brief discussion on when spending can start, and Mr. Wilson reported money can be spent so long as projects get included in the needs assessment.

Public Comment – Cathy Curran, who attended the public hearing several weeks ago, with a request for the purchase of the Babcock Avenue addressed the committee and asked for some clarification on the process of the application and review of projects for the needs assessment.

Adjournment

At 10:20 PM, there being no further business, a motion was made by Arthur Mathews to adjourn and was seconded by Tom Curtis. Unanimously voted.

Approved _____
Walter Flynn, Chairman