

TOWN OF STOW

Community Preservation Committee

Minutes, August 17, 2020

Community Preservation Committee virtual zoom Meeting

Community Preservation Committee members present: Vin Antil (chair), Andy Crosby (vice chair), Mike Busch, Erica Benedick, Bob Larkin, Roger Zimmerman, Ingeborg Clark, John Colonna-Romano.

Not Present: Krista Bracci (Admin. Assistant)

Guests: Kathy Sferra, Bob Wilbur, Dan Barstow, David Siewierski (Hallock Point Working Group)

Audience: Mark Jones

The meeting began with a quorum at 7:01 pm

Review of Minutes

VOTE: Roger made a motion to approve the minutes of July 13, 2020. Erica seconded. A roll call was taken and the vote was 8-0.

Invoices

VOTE: Bob made a motion to approve invoice from Green International Affiliates for survey work at Track Road (\$15,895.30). John seconded. A roll call was taken and the vote was 8-0.

Hallock Point Project

Kathy Sferra made a short slide presentation explaining the project:

She introduced the Town Administrator's Hallock Pt. Working Group (see guest list above).

The Town has Chapter 61 Right-of-First-Refusal on the property.

Due to Covid-19 Emergency, the regular 120-day clock on town action has not kicked-in yet. The 120 day clock will not start running until 90 days following the lifting of the state of emergency. This gives the town some more time to form the Working Group, piece together an acquisition plan, and do some fundraising. This should also give time for a Fall Town Meeting article if needed.

Property is located on a peninsula located on Lake Boon.

There are some existing trails on the property.

Lot 3 is a "high headland" at end of point. It has a "park-like" quality and would be attractive to the public. Other aspects include:

Large undeveloped land on a quiet, habitat rich portion of the lake.

Half mile of shoreline between third and fourth basin.

Across Sudbury Road from State Forest and Wildlife Refuge.

More than a thousand feet of frontage on a forested section of Sudbury Road.

Three houses already exist on adjacent lots. A subdivision plan for seven houses has already been approved by the Planning Board.

The property is 10.68 acres for \$1 million.

This works out to \$153,000 per lot, which Kathy said is quite a bargain.

Working group has been looking at fundraising options: CPA funds, Private Fundraising, sale of up to two lots.

Dan Barstow said the Lake Boon Commission strongly supports this project. They believe that increased development on the lake will have detrimental effect on difficult water quality.

John asked if there was a preexisting house on the Lot 3.

Kathy mentioned that that house was taken down about twelve years ago.

Have docks been permitted as part of the subdivision plan?

Kathy answered that up to four docks have been approved

Erica asked about public access on a protected site.

Bob Wilbur answered that public access is most likely part of the vision, particularly if the project is dependent on fundraising throughout Stow.

The Stow Conservation Trust would participate in coordinating private fundraising.

Bob asked regarding would this be passive recreation?

Kathy said probably passive. What sort of activities and whether there was a canoe landing or not has not been decided yet.

Mike asked about trespass, partying and illegal use if it does become public.

Kathy noted that this could be an issue. People around the lake seem to support the project. Being on a peninsula, there are only three direct abutters to the property. She mentioned that David Siewierski is still canvassing people around the lake.

Mike asked about the existing boat launch – Who owns that?

Kathy said the town owns the existing boat launch. She admits it needs some improvement but it seems adequate for boat access.

Mike comment that ownership would make the town an even more important stakeholder on the lake. He also said it looks like a neat project.

Erica asked about allowing boat access from the property but limiting the size of the boats.

Kathy said there are **no** plans to install another boat ramp, and access can be designed to encourage only small canoe/kayak use.

Mike, if you can't get a trailer back there it limits access to larger boats. They can use the existing access.

Kathy outlined the four likely funding components:

- 1) Request to CPC for up to \$400,000
- 2) Private Fundraising with a goal of \$100,000
- 3) Sale of two house lots for \$500,000 (\$250,000 each)
- 4) Cons Comm can cover some administrative costs for survey, legal, title.

This combination would get us the \$1 million asking price.

Vin asked about timelines.

Kathy outlined the following:

Selectmen's meeting is on September 8.

She would like to go to that meeting with a sense of our interest, not necessarily a commitment.

Bob wants to make sure when we do agree on an amount, there will not be the need to comeback for more.

Ingeborg said it sounds like a worthy project and the idea of using a combination of funding sources (including selling lots) makes sense.

Ingeborg asked if the lot is identified in the Open Space Plan.

Kathy mentioned protecting undeveloped lands around Lake Boon is identified as a priority. Also this property meets several of the resource criteria, including connectivity (Bob Wilbur).

Mike said it's important that this project get buy-in from the abutters. Giving the abutters an opportunity to be heard is key to any property acquisition project.

Both Ingeborg and Mike expressed the need to balance our commitment to this project with other projects that may be coming down the road.

Mike and Vin expressed a concern that long-term maintenance of properties, although this should not keep us from protecting important landscapes.

Kathy felt that the reception at this meeting that was encouraging and they will proceed on the next steps. She also made it clear that from the onset they had always envisioned this requiring multiple funding sources, and that the amount coming out of CPA needed to be balanced with future needs.

Vin said he will get our CPA balances to folks at the next meeting.

Planning Funds for Stow Acres Golf Course

Bob Wilbur is requesting funds for design and planning work related to the future development of the golf course. He presented a proposal:

Largest unprotected property in Stow – an opportunity to do some good things, but also a threat to see significant changes in the character of Stow, if done wrong. This is an opportunity to work with the landowner to plan a more creative and positive vision for development of the property, rather than waiting to respond to a developer's plans.

Kathy and Bob Wilbur have reached out to the landowner (Peter Brown). Bob has received a proposal from the landscape architecture firm Dodson & Flinker to create a master plan for the property. This planning process will include representatives from the town (Cons Comm and Planning) and Stow Conservation Trust, as well as the property owner. This will allow us to come out with a design that includes conservation, mixed use residential (including affordable), which has the participation of the landowner.

Dodson & Flinker is an innovative design firm which focuses on development around important resources and maintaining rural character.

Their proposal for this this planning amounts to \$25,000

This cost will be split between the Stow Conservation Trust and the Town.

\$12,500 from Stow Conservation Trust

\$ 6,250 from Town Conservation Commission

\$ 6,250 from CPA via Community Preservation Commission

Bob Wilbur believes that covering the full cost through the Trust and the Town, is important to keep the process focused on community needs.

Bob Larkin asked when he will need the funds for the project.

Bob Wilbur responded that he would like them approved tonight, and coming out of administrative funds for planning, they do not need to wait for a town meeting.

Vin informed the committee that we have about \$18,000 in administrative funds available.

Ingeborg thinks it's a genius idea and is 100% behind it.

Mike expressed concern about tapping out the administration fund. He suggested that maybe wording could be included in follow-up proposals (such as associated land protection) that money be included to reimburse the administrative fund.

Vin replied that any follow-up projects probably would be in a future fiscal year, and admin funds are re-set on a yearly basis. He also mentioned the CPA guidelines limit the percentage that is set aside for admin and may not allow reimbursement. Kathy agreed reimbursement would be difficult because the 5% limit on admin set in CPA.

Bob and Vin agreed this needs more research but can't be solved now.

John likes this idea but questions whether the landowner will follow the plan that results from the process. Bob Wilbur replied that there is no guarantee that the landowner will follow through, but if he is engaged in the process, sees that there is a viable plan with enthusiasm from the community, it will offer him his best path forward, as well as additional funds from town acquisition of certain parts for conservation. John agrees that this offers an opportunity to be more proactive rather than reactive, as the Planning Board often is.

Bob says there is a leap of faith in the process and neither the landowner, the town or the trust knows exactly what the outcome will be.

Mike mentioned that Planned Community Developments often result in conservation lands which are too small, and not of value. He would like the conservation component to include larger contiguous pieces. Kathy replied that updates to the town's PCD by-law have improved quality of open space from more recent projects.

Kathy informed us Conservation Commission portion of this project cost would come out of the CPA funds allocated to Cons Comm in an Article for Open Space and associated costs (including planning). Mike wondered if the full amount could be paid out of that fund and then have it replenished at the next town meeting, thus saving the CPC admin fund.

Bob said let's just do this straight up. John agreed.

VOTE: Bob made a motion to approve \$6,250 from administrative funds for the Stow Acres Planning Process. Roger seconded. A roll call was taken and the vote was 8-0.

Selection of Vice-Chair

Andy Crosby is leaving the committee and we need to select a replacement Vice-Chair. Erica nominated Roger Zimmerman. He accepted.

VOTE: Vin made a motion that Roger Zimmerman be approved as Community Preservation Committee Vice-Chairman. Bob seconded. A roll call was taken and the vote was 8-0.

There was general thanks to Andy Crosby for his service on the committee.

Project Updates

Vin will contact Mike K. from SMAHT to see how the Rental Assistance Program is going.

News and Views

None were given.

Meeting Schedule

September 14th and 28th

Erica made a motion to adjourn at 8:29 pm, John seconded. A roll call was taken and the vote was 8-0.

Respectively submitted by: Vin Antil, CPC Chair