

Town of Chelmsford
Community Preservation Committee
50 Billerica Rd. Chelmsford, Ma 01824

Meeting MINUTES
January 18, 2023
Approved February 15, 2023

Committee Members Present: Evan Belansky, Christine Clancy, Karl Bischoff, Ken Lefebvre, Linda Prescott, Connie Donahue, Judy Carven, Deirdre Connolly

Committee Members not Present:

Others Present: Town Manager Paul Cohen

Documents referenced in these minutes are available at the Community Development Office, 50 Billerica Rd., Chelmsford Town Offices. This meeting was hand recorded by the Recording Secretary, and recorded via Microsoft Team.

Call to Order

The Meeting was called to order at 6:32PM by Chair Prescott.

1. Public Comment

No one came forward at this time.

2. Darlene Lussier, Town Accountant's report

Reports provided are through Dec 2022.

Debt amounts for various projects were listed and described. The process of how things are funded was provided for the benefit of new members. Revenues and interest amounts, as well as state revenues were listed and described. The Committee did receive \$107,651.00 from the State's surplus. The debt schedule was provided to the Committee.

Ms. Lussier will provide guidance on how to fund the projects being presented tonight.

3. New grant request applications

a. Trisha Dzuris, Town Clerk, Historic Records Preservation Project

Ms. Dzuris is requesting funding to continue the next phase of this preservation project. Official Town records go back to the 1700's. Some of this request is to digitize and repair or restore more of the volumes. This phase has an estimated \$275,000.00 of work to be done. Prior work included a lot of repair and restoration; photos were included in the presentation. The storage rooms have been updated to allow

records to be found easily. Planning and Zoning Records have been organized, and Accounting records have also been improved. Fire suppression systems will be updated to a dry system through the Town's FY24 Capital Plan.

A retention schedule is used so some documents can be destroyed after a period of time. Some records are kept indefinitely. Databases enable people to be able to locate the files if needed. The estimate provided will complete 65 volumes in this phase. A total of 225 volumes were completed with the last round of funding.

Motion: by Ms. Carven to appropriate \$275,000.00 to continue archiving, restoring and digitizing historic records at the Town Clerk's Office, and to recommend support of this request to Town Meeting. Seconded by Dr. Connolly. **Motion carries, unanimous, 8-0.**

b. Steve Callahan, DPW, Highland Soccer Field Playground

Mr. Callahan explained that the playground is in North Chelmsford. The request is for improvements in the playground part of the field. Existing conditions were shown. Existing equipment is 15 years old, and has had some vandalism. The existing swing set is no longer compliant with safety regulations. A dome is now too close to the swings. This request will pay for new equipment, and moving things so the equipment is compliant. Slide 9 shows breakdown of costs. The \$46,200 total request includes a contingency. Most playgrounds last 15-20 years.

Dr. Connelly requested that the new dome be not enclosed, but open for better visibility. Mr. Callaghan agreed.

Motion: by Ms. Carven to appropriate \$46,200.00 to replace playground equipment at Highland Soccer Field Playground from the Open Space Account, and to recommend support of this request to Town Meeting. Seconded by Dr. Connolly. **Motion carries, unanimous, 8-0.**

c. David Boyle, Cemetery Superintendent, Forefathers Cemetery Stone Preservation

Mr. Boyle explained that a site walk was done to prioritize the work needed. He anticipates future requests will be needed. The request at this time will be to preserve and restore 16 stones this year, at a cost of \$8,000.00. Epic Preservation would do the work. They have done quality work in other towns.

The last preservation work for this cemetery was done 15 years ago. Mr. Boyle anticipates two more phases of similar work.

Motion: by Ms. Carven to appropriate \$8,000.00 from the Reserve Fund to preserve 16 historic cemetery stones at the Forefathers Cemetery, and to recommend approval of the request at Town Meeting. Seconded by Ms. Donahue. **Motion carries, unanimous, 8-0.**

d. David Boyle, Cemetery Superintendent, West Chelmsford Cemetery Fence and Rail Project

Mr. Boyle explained that this cemetery has not had much investment. The request is for funding to install granite post and rail fencing and make the cemetery look more historic. The area of work will be

replacing 192 feet of fencing between the old section to the new section from pole to pole. The rest of the fencing will remain chain link. The cemetery is full, and no further growth is expected.

Mr. Boyle called six companies, and received two quotes ranging from \$36,000-\$59,500.00.

Mrs. Prescott stated this was discussed by the Historical Commission. The proposed fence would have grey granite poles with white vinyl rails and black brackets. Fence will need maintenance over time with paint. Mrs. Prescott indicated that she prefers black rails that match the brackets. Mr. Boyle agreed to find out if black is available, and will look into wood, per the Historic Commission's request. Mrs. Prescott also requested confirmation that the posts won't fall over, in preparation for Town Meeting.

Discussion Continued to February, no Motion was done.

e. Evan Belansky, Community Development Coordinator, Center Village Brook Walk

Discussion tabled.

f. Deb Taverna, Chair of the Garrison House Association., School Street Freight House

Ms. Taverna explained the Garrison House Association has been approached to move the freight house to the Garrison House grounds. The funding request is for \$50,000.00, which includes renting a specialized truck, and \$22-25, 000.00 to dismantle the building to prepare it for the move. The move will include the stone foundation.

The roof would be taken off the building, and the clapboards will be disposed of and replaced, as they may have lead and asbestos. The rest of the dismantling is still being discussed. The Garrison House Association would absorb the costs of rebuilding and restoring the building.

The restored building would be installed to the right of the red barn. The Garrison House has 10 buildings in total, 6 of them were moved there.

Mr. Lefebvre suggested asking the Railroad to donate some rail to go with the house.

Motion: by Ms. Carven to appropriate funding of \$50,000.00 from the General Reserve Fund to the Garrison House Association to move the School St. Freight House from its present location to the Garrison House grounds, and to recommend approval of this request to Town Meeting.

Seconded by Dr. Connolly. **Motion carries, unanimous, 8-0.**

g. James Dergay, Agricultural Commission, Sunny Meadow Electric Service

Mr. Dergay, 42 Locust Rd. is, requesting funding to bring electric service to an area of Sunny Meadow where he is a lease holder. He is in year 5 of a 10 year lease. He owns and runs Cooking Buckets Sugar House. His trees are growing wonderfully, and now it is time to start tapping the trees for maple sap. Electric service is needed for the vacuum pumps to harvest the trees. The service is a capital improvement that will help make farming activity viable at Sunny Meadow.

National Grid has visited site and approved the proposal. The line will come from Acton Rd. The Town Electrical Inspector has also approved the proposed plan for work. The line will be trenched from the pole on Acton Rd. to a shed already in place.

The estimated cost will be \$7200.00.

Other parts of Sunny Meadow have electricity, but they are pretty far away. The trench would be deep enough to comply with code.

His lease area is about 2 acres. Other leaseholders already have their own electric service.

Open space improvement account will provide the funding. No town meeting is needed

Motion: by Ms. Carven to appropriate \$7200.00 from the Open Space Capital Improvement Fund to James Dergay to bring electric service to his leased area at Sunny Meadow Farm. Seconded by Dr. Connolly. **Motion carries, unanimous, 8-0.**

Mr. Dergay added that there are 60 buckets installed at the Gruber farm; Betty Gruber recently passed away and her service was today. Other trees are tapped in Town by owners who give permission.

h. Michael Raisbeck, Chelmsford Agricultural Commission, Wotton Street Electric Service

Mr. Raisbeck explained that this request is similar to the previous request.

A photo of the 10.8 acre property was provided. The land currently houses Community Gardens, and fields for Bits and Peas Farm, and another sub lease to Orange Cat Gardens CSA. Much of the land is wet.

Bits and Peas uses 5 acres of the parcel. Last year's production data was provided.

Power would be brought in from a pole on Wotton St. to benefit Bits and Peas and the Community Gardens to run irrigation pumps. The current well system described. Having electric service would automate and pressurize the existing system, and reduces the need to have volunteers keep the tanks full. It would also allow them to install security lighting and camera monitoring for the area.

They are also working on a proposal for a hoop house. This would require fans and lighting, with the potential for electric fences and weather monitoring equipment to help with frost issues. There could be some coolers in the future.

The current proposal is for 100 amp, 220 service at the driveway. Lines would be underground, and brought to the pump area. Equipment would include 300 feet of cabling, and 2-3 circuit boxes. Estimates for wiring and boxes are \$2963.00 and trench work at \$1400.00, making the total request \$4063.00.

Mr. Raisbeck would fund any cost over runs himself. He was not sure if any National Grid costs were included in the estimates.

Mr. Dergay will also need to look into this for his project. He was encouraged to return if more funding is needed for a drop fee from National Grid.

Mr. Raisbeck agreed to return next month with more detail about costs for dropping equipment from the pole.

Both applicants will get work order numbers for their projects.

Motion: by Ms. Carven to appropriate \$4,063.00 from the Open Space Capital Improvement Account to the Agricultural Commission for the installation of electric service at Wotton St. Seconded by Mr. Lefebvre. **Motion carries, unanimous, 8-0.**

e. Evan Belansky, Community Development Coordinator, Center Village Brook Walk

Mr. Belansky reported that this is the second section of the walk, behind the Oddfellows Building and the Town-owned parking lot. Some of the proposed walk is on private property. The application qualifies for CPA funding as “Creation of Open Space”.

DPW engineer Trevor Collins has created a budget for the project for \$40,000, plus a contingency for a total of \$47,267.00.

The section of the walk by Grist Mill Condominiums is the first section of the Brook Walk, and has a public easement already.

Detail sheets were provided to the Committee. There would be a gravel trail through a vegetated area, similar to the installation by Grist Mill, and several areas will need wooden guardrails. Many invasive plants will be removed and replaced with native plants. The Tree Committee and Center Village Master Plan Implementation Committee have provided comments. The project will need approval by the Conservation Commission.

A pocket park is proposed at the end of the trail, with benches will be installed. About 4 parking spaces will be removed for the pocket park. There are 70 parking spaces in the Town-owned parking lot.

Dr. Connolly advised that she is an abutter and will not be voting on this. She asked how this project will work with the retention pond. Mr. Belansky agreed to ask Mr. Collins for more detail. He wasn't aware of a pond in this area. Dr. Connolly suggested more grass instead of gravel. Mr. Belansky advised that gravel is proposed as it requires less maintenance. Final plans are still being developed.

Mr. Lefebvre supported prior discussions to install signs explaining why the brook was important.

The proposed bridge by the Bartlett Wood Lot was turned down by Town Meeting.

The property owners of Fishbones Restaurant and the Oddfellows Building could be approached about installing a small pedestrian bridge behind their buildings. Another bridge could be installed by Andiamo's Restaurant, however these are conceptual at this time.

The DPW can also complete some of the work.

Motion: by Ms. Carven to appropriate \$47,250.00 for the Center Village Brook Walk, to create Open Space, from the General Reserve Account, and the recommend approval at Town Meeting for the request. Seconded by Ms. Donahue. Mr. Belansky and Dr. Connolly abstained, all others in favor. **Motion carries, 6-0.**

i. Karl Bischoff, Conservation Commission, presentation for discussion of several properties

Mr. Bischoff announced that a parcel on Wilson Lane, by Main St. and School St. has been offered to town for its appraised value. The land is adjacent to Town-owned land by Stony Brook, and Meadow Brook Rd. Town Counsel has researched the Deed, and there are no easements to access the parcel. A full presentation and request should be ready for the February meeting. If approved and purchased, the parcel will need a Conservation Restriction. Access is proposed from a different lot owned by a Trust; negotiations are pending. The dam that is controlling Freeman Lake is nearby. The parcel was assessed at \$28,000.00, or \$33,000.00 based on most recent assessment. The parcel contains 1.34 acres of land. The second piece of property is 4 acres, and is assessed at \$4,000.00.

It was noted that the properties would require State Conservation Restrictions, and it may take some time to find an entity to hold the Restrictions.

Mrs. Prescott requested that an amount for legal fees be included in the final request for funding.

Discussion to be continued.

4. Preservation Coalition Annual dues, vote to pay

Mrs. Prescott described how the Coalition supports the Committee.

Motion: by Ms. Carven to approve the payment of the Annual Community Preservation Coalition Dues in an amount not to exceed \$5,000.00, from the Administrative Fund. Seconded by Mr. Lefebvre. **Motion carries, unanimous, 8-0.**

5. Minute approval

August 17, 2022 & November 16, 2022

The Minutes of both meetings will be re-sent to Committee Members electronically so they can review them again.

6. New Business

There is a vacancy on the Committee that needs to be filled.

7. Adjourn

Next meeting: February 22, 2023

Motion: by Ms. Carven to adjourn the meeting at 8:15PM. Seconded by Mr. Bischoff.

Motion carries, unanimous, 5-0.

Respectfully Submitted,

Vivian W. Merrill
Recording Secretary

Supporting Documents:
-Presentations for funding requests