

Community Preservation Committee
Minutes
August 16, 2016

Present:

Chairperson Helen Dunlap, Mark Pease, Louise Tremblay, Harvey Gagnon, John Hassan and Recording Secretary, Marylee Enos. The meeting was held at Dracut Town Hall, 62 Arlington St. Dracut, MA.

Absent: Debra DeWitt, Don Plummer, Linda Kawa and George Malonis

Also In attendance; Betsy Ware, Director of Community Development and Tom Paquette

Chairperson Helen Dunlap called the meeting to order at 7:05 pm

Community Input:

None

Minutes:

Tabled until the next meeting for lack of a quorum from the last meetings.

Historical Preservation:

324 Broadway Rd

Chairperson, Helen Dunlap explained to the board, that after Town Meeting when she gave her speech about 324 Broadway House, she stated she would not give up on this until the house is full of rubble, and is hoping someone with deep pockets and is a little crazy will come forward. Or, that Mr. Kuenzler would have a change of mind and would decide to keep the house and barn at the location.

Ms. Dunlap stated that, Todd Feathers from the Lowell Sun, wrote up an article on the house, this was what got Mr. Paquette's attention, also the fact that he drives by it daily.

Helen introduced Tom Paquette, Mr. Paquette said that Helen hit the nail on the head, stating that that he is a little crazy but he does not have deep pockets. He stated that he does have creative pockets though, and would love to work with the move and restoration if it turns out possible to do.

Mr. Paquette explained, this is something he has done before, he actually did a house like this in Mansfield, Louisiana, he found through a rumor and it turned out to be a two year labor of love.

It was an 1850 Louisiana Plantation House that was slated for the wrecking ball. It is now a bed and breakfast in Louisiana. The house had cows walking through it when they found it, Mr. Paquette stated. It was restored and moved fifty miles to a new location. Mr. Paquette passed out pictures of his work both before and after the house was restored and moved. The board agreed it was spectacular.

Mr. Paquette stated he is very hopeful, he stated this house is in a lot better shape than the Louisiana house. There is a lot more to work with here. The goal to turn the house into a bed and breakfast and to turn the barn into an event venue, with the accommodations in the house.

He explained he is doing his homework right now, and he has his hands out in every direction to see if this is possible, from the foundation people, the dirt work people, to the moving companies to try to pull all the figures together to see if this could be a reality. This is what they have in mind, there a lot of pieces to pull together and as you all know some time restraints.

Ms. Ware explained that she had a discussion with one of the developers of the project on the time restraints. Mr. Mike Wakeen explained to Ms. Ware, that the project is on a stand still right now because they are required by zoning to do three attached units. Mr. Wakeen took another look at the site, the elevations, and a number of other factors. He has come to the conclusion now that he wants to do duplexes instead as opposed to triplexes.

Ms. Ware stated, that Mr. Wakeen wants to come before Town Meeting in the fall, to try to change the zoning to allow for duplexes on ten thousand square feet. Ms. Ware explained, this will leave less open space as a result. Part of this whole thing as Ms. Ware explained, is that they are being held up by the state for a curb cut on 113. They also need to open up a road for the curb cut. Ms. Ware explained, her impression is he will not be moving forward until after Town Meeting because of the zoning change. Even after that, the zoning change could take up until April after all Attorney General acceptances come back.

Mr. Paquette, explained he did talk to Mr. Shane Wakeen and he stated to him, you need to give me a time line, the pressure is on Mr. Wakeen explained. Mr. Paquette explained he felt if he does give him a time line, he thinks he would work with him. That is the impression, Mr. Paquette got he stated.

Chairperson, Helen Dunlap stated the problem is, that we need a piece of land for the house to be placed at. Helen explained, she took Mr. Paquette around Dracut and showed him some possible sites. Mr. Paquette explained that the sites were not acceptable because of the neighborhood, locations, parking, demolitions, etc.

Helen also took Mr. Paquette to a piece of land in Pelham, N.H. on Jericho Rd. Mr. Paquette thought that was a beautiful site for the house. The only problem is that it would be out of Dracut and moved to Pelham, NH. No CPC funds would be able to be used for the move once it's out of state, Helen explained.

Louise Tremblay explained she thought it should stay in Dracut, since it's a historic building from Dracut. Louise suggested Mr. Paquette get in touch with Phil Thibault, who she thinks, would have valuable information on land sites for the house. Mr. Paquette stated he will continue to get everything in order, with the hope that this can be done.

Preservation restrictions

Beaver Brook Farm

Ms. Ware explained to the board she has been scrambling around to see who holds preservation restrictions for CPC projects. It is a requirement and we are being encouraged by the Community Preservation Coalition to try to find somebody to hold the preservation restriction and get them in there, and also to the specific property to determine what is worthy of preservation.

In addition to Beaver Brook Farm, there is one other property, the Town Hall Annex. Ms. Ware explained that she had a two hour meeting with the Town Manager today, her understanding from the Town Manager is that at some point he will be talking to the CPC about Community Preservation funds, and this may be premature, Ms. Ware explained, he might not address it at this fall Town Meeting, but he was talking about seeing if the CPC would fund One Million and a half dollars (\$1,500,000) roughly to rework the Town Hall Annex. Helen asked rework it for what, Ms. Ware explained, affordable housing.

Ms. Ware explained that his idea is to have the Lowell Vocational High School students do some of the work, then hire an architect to oversee the work. Or maybe hire a general contractor do the work and then have the vocational students come in and do some of the finish work.

Ms. Ware explained, her concern is that this has to comply with the Secretary of interior standards, they do not want you to remove original fabric, if there is a way there is you can use the original building without doing that. The crew that was discussing doing the project were talking about just ripping everything out on the inside. Ms. Ware has some strong concerns on both projects, the Annex and the Beaver Brook Farm Project.

On the Beaver Brook Farm project, Ms. Ware talked to the Building Consultant who did the building assessment and he suggested that Preservation Massachusetts might be willing to hold the restriction. Often times what communities will do is they will buy a property like this and deed restrict the house, then sell the house to a private entity to restore the house, then the Town will hold the restriction. In this situation so far, Ms. Ware explained, she has not heard that the Town will sell the house, in that case, we have to find somebody else to hold the restriction.

Ms. Ware stated, if we do hold on to the house, it will need Three to Four Hundred Thousand dollars' worth of work, being that we would have to deal with prevailing wage rates, public bidding process, etc.

Ms. Ware explained it's a complicated process, we are in a unique situation, most communities, who bought the piece of land for conservation or preservation purposes, if it included the building, they would spin off the building, and sell it off because they don't want to deal with the building.

Ms. Ware explained, she has very strong feelings based on some of the activity that is happening so far. She believes we should get a potential deed restriction holder to come in and talk to this group, and the Beaver Brook Farm committee should come into the CPC and have a joint meeting to see what can be saved and what should potentially go.

Ms. Ware explained, the first public hearing for the use of the Beaver Brook Farm will be October 13th.

Survey Work

Ms. Ware also explained that if the building is on a survey form with Mass Historical, and it's deemed to be eligible to be on the national register, then that may be helpful to us in the term of having the building inspector being able to provide some wiggle room in terms of the building code.

In the building code there is a section, chapter 34, that states if you have a building that is on the National register eligible, it allows the Building Inspector lots of wiggle room on what he can require a developer or what the Town can do to the building.

Ms. Ware explained, relating to this, last Friday she received one proposal for the RFP she had put out for survey work on historic buildings for the Historical Commission that the CPC funded. It is only one, but it is an extremely strong proposal. Ms. Ware explained she has a meeting tomorrow night with the Historical Commission to go over reviewing the proposal and making a recommendation to get that project going.

Chairperson, Helen Dunlap asked Ms. Ware if this survey can get written out in time, for the funding that the Town Manager might be asking for, we could hold it up until the survey form is done. Helen explained then this could be a handle to insist about the interior. Ms. Ware explained she could probably get the team to do a couple of high priority survey forms, Beaver Brook, 324 Broadway and the Town Annex. Helen explained that would be great, we could get a real handle on this and all our ducks in a row.

Ms. Ware explained the figures that the Town Manager received for the Annex, came in way over what he thought. Ms. Ware stated she is not sure what will happen with that as of now.

Open Space:

133 Phineas St:

Chairperson, Helen Dunlap explained she talked to the family and they have decided not to re-zone the property and have the CPC purchase and preserve the property.

They wanted to have it on the fall Town Meeting, Helen explained it was not good timing for that since we already have Avis Ave for the fall Town Meeting. John Hassan explained, they should come into a meeting soon, so we can get things moving for the appraisal.

Louise Tremblay explained that, it would be a perfect piece of land for the 324 Broadway house. Helen explained, she will get in touch with Mr. Paquette to have him look at the property.

Conservation/Agricultural Restriction

Yapp Farm:

Ms. Ware, explained she has heard back with comments from the Farm Bureau Foundation and their Attorney. Ms. Ware explained she is still reviewing the comments, but it looks like it will be workable.

Ms. Ware will update at the next meeting on this.

52 A Avis Ave:

Chairperson, Helen Dunlap explained, she has talked with Chris Chisolm, who stated they are in the process of getting the title done on the property, then they will start the survey. They are still on track for the fall Town Meeting.

Mark Pease asked if the family is still onboard with everything, Helen stated yes, very much on board. Mark explained we should have a Purchase and Sales on it before Town Meeting.

John Hassan stated we need to have an article drafted up soon for the Town Meeting on this.

Helen stated we will get that started at the next meeting. Ms. Ware stated, she will draw up a draft for the next meeting.

Affordable Housing:

Tabled until the next meeting

Recreation:

Dadak Land:

Ms. Ware, expanded that when the Dadak project went through on Methuen road, it backs up to Diana Lane. Ms. Ware explained that the Dadak's came in under the Open Space by Law, and landed up deeding eight acres to the Town. The Town did some estimates, and figured it was going to cost Two to Three Million Dollars to build a field there, so now the field has been sitting there and has become fallow, and actually starting to get grown in.

Ms. Ware stated, that a third to a half of that is prime farmland. Ms. Ware explained, she thought if they want to keep it open we could do an RFP for that property, assuming that the Recreation Department and the Agricultural Commission is on board. Then those eight acres, could be farmed until a decision is made and the money was gathered to do recreation on that. Someone could farm it, have access from Diana Lane. That would keep it open and it would be usable.

Ms. Ware explained, we should wait until one of the next meetings with a full board. Ms. Ware explained, she won't be doing the RFP's until November. Ms. Ware also explained that getting RFP's will bring in more competition from other farmers.

Procedural Issues:

2002 CPC Implementation Plan

Chairperson, Helen Dunlap explained that she had never seen this plan before and thinks it's an excellent document and beautifully done.

Louise Tremblay explained she thinks it was written by Bob Nicoloro, who was the ~~first~~ third Chairperson of the CPC. Helen explained it is a very valuable document and will help in the future, especially when the Board of Selectmen ask if we have any document that gives the CPC protocol.

Helen stated it was very well written.

CPC follow up on all projects:

Ms. Ware explained she has never staffed a CPC, but she has been going to several CPC workshops, and talked to several communities on how their CPC's are operated.

Ms. Ware explained that she believes there needs to be a shift in the processing of projects so that the CPC has more control over the projects and their funding.

Ms. Ware passed out a draft outline of what other communities do (this is included in the minutes). Ms. Ware believes that (a) there should be a very clear written understanding of why the Property is being acquired (b) then it should go to Town Meeting for a vote (C) after Town Meeting the project needs to be carried out.

Ms. Ware believes that this Committee should be reviewing all bills. Some situations have come up on other projects that CPC funds should have not been used for.

The CPC has funded a vision, that vision needs some checks and balances within that vision only. Ms. Ware stated, she can look over the bills and make a recommendation to the CPC, that way there will not be a lot of more work for the board as they are busy enough.

Mr. Pease asked does the CPC actually have any authority over the boards, stating how they spend the money. Harvey Gagnon stated, it should come to us for approval, if we fund it.

Ms. Ware stated, yes. This is how the other communities do this. Stuart Saginor and Kathy Roth from the Community Preservation Coalition went to a community and made it very clear for the CPC to monitor the funds, with the description and vision of what it was funded for.

John Hassan thought the draft looks great. Ms. Ware asked the members to look it over and when we have a full board, get their suggestions and vote if the board wants to keep it.

Chairperson, Helen Dunlap asked the secretary to mail out copies to the other members not present.

Old Business:

None

New Business:

**Draft update of Open Space section of Master Plan-
Tabled until the next meeting**

**Next Meeting:
September 6, 2016**

John Hassan made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:10 pm, seconded by Louise Tremblay, the Motion passed unanimously.

COMMUNITY PRESERVATION COMMITTEE

Allen Day

Louise Tremblay

John Hassan

Harvey Lagron

Mark H. Peon

