

**Community Preservation Committee  
Minutes  
September 20, 2016**

**Present:**

Chairperson Helen Dunlap, Mark Pease, Debra DeWitt Harvey Gagnon, Linda Kawa, John Hassan and recording Secretary, Marylee Enos. The meeting was held at Dracut Town Hall, 62 Arlington St. Dracut, MA.

**Absent:** Don Plummer, Louise Tremblay and George Malonis

Also in attendance; Betsy Ware, Director of Community Development

Chairperson Helen Dunlap called the meeting to order at 7:02 pm

**Minutes:**

John Hassan made a motion to approve the May 3, 2016 minutes, Debra DeWitt seconded the motion, the motion passed.

Linda Kawa made a motion to approve the September 6, 2016 minutes, Mark Pease seconded the motion. The motion passed.

**Community Input:**

**None**

**Open Space:**

**133 Phineas St:**

No new update

**Dadak Land:**

No new update

**52 Avis Ave:**

Chairperson Helen Dunlap stated to the board the Public Hearing for this article will be on October 4<sup>th</sup>, at our next scheduled meeting. It has been advertised in the Lowell Sun, and run twice.

Chairperson, Helen Dunlap stated she and Ms. Ware have been working on a draft article for this property, it has already been approved by Town Council.  
Helen stated her understanding is in the published warrant, that people see beforehand, you do not put monetary values. John Hassan stated, you don't have to. Mark Pease stated, this committee really needs to show a dollar amount.

Chairperson Helen Dunlap, read out loud a draft article for Town Meeting, that Ms. Ware drew up for the CPC funds to be used to acquire development rights at 52A Avis Ave.  
It reads as follows:

To see if the Town of Dracut will vote to approve \$750,000.00 (Seven-Hundred and Fifty-Thousand Dollars) in Dracut Community Preservation Act funds to be paired with \$521,314.00 (Five-Hundred and Twenty-One Thousand, Three-Hundred and Fourteen Dollars Of Commonwealth of Massachusetts Agricultural Preservation Funds, to acquire the development rights to and thus

Preserve in perpetuity the property located at 52A Avis Avenue (further described as Dracut Assessor's Map 29, Block 14, Lot 2 and Northern Middlesex Registry of Deeds, Book 28412, Page 81).Containing 27.7 acres (1,206,612 square feet) more or less, and to allow the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Agricultural Preservation Restriction Program to execute a permanent Agricultural Preservation Restriction on said property, pursuant to MGL c. 44B sec 12, MGL c. 184 sec. 31-33, and MGL c. sec. 23-26

Ownership is to be retained by Alden & Esther Fox family in the form of the Elm Terrace Family Trust, however, the Towns Community Preservation Act Funds and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Agricultural Preservation Restriction Funds are being used to acquire an Agricultural Preservation Restriction so that no non-agricultural development can take place on the land. Which will therefore be retained in agricultural uses in perpetuity.

The board agreed the draft article was well written. Linda Kawa, explained you don't want it to be wordy.

John Hassan made a motion to accept the article as written, Linda Kawa, seconded the motion. The motion passed.

Ms. Ware explained she has drawn up a draft copy of a one page handout for Town Meeting and the public hearing, the handout includes a brief description and a map of the property, and also how it is being acquired with the APR program using state funds, along with CPC funds.

**Recreation:**  
**No new update**

**Historical:**  
**Town Hall Annex:**  
Delayed till spring

**Beaver Brook Farm:**  
Chairperson, Helen Dunlap informed the board, there is a site visit scheduled for 761 Richardson Rd on October 8, 2016 from 10:00 am till 12:00pm. Debra DeWitt explained, that you will be able to walk the grounds, and look in the buildings windows, but you cannot access the buildings.

Chairperson, Helen Dunlap also informed the board of the Public Hearing and input session for the BBF. It is scheduled on, October 13<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 pm, at the Town Hall. Helen encouraged anyone who can make it to please attend.

Ms. Ware, explained to the board she has drafted up an article, for the BBFC for Town Meeting that is for the -----Lease of Town- owned farmland to area farmers.

The article reads;

To see if the Town of Dracut will vote to lease to a private and /or non-profit entity select and specific parcels of land, presently owned by the Town of Dracut and used for agricultural and /or open space purposes. The lease of farmlands owned by the Town of Dracut shall be subject to a request for proposals (RFP) and applicable local charter and bylaws, as well as the Massachusetts General Laws. Properties that may be considered for any Town-owned farm leases/licenses include, but are not limited to, the following properties.

650 Marsh Hill Road (Yapp Farm)

761 Mammoth Road (Beaver Brook Farm)

42 Diana Lane (Open Space of Dadak Drive Subdivision)

Or take any other action relative thereto

Ms. Ware, explained to the board she has also drafted up an article, for the BBFC for Town Meeting that is for the -----Lease of Town owned buildings and land at Beaver Brook Farm.

The article reads;

To see if the Town will vote to enter into a long –term lease agreement with one or more private and /or non-profit organization(s) who will lease specific portions of Beaver Brook Farm, located at 761 Mammoth Road (Assessors Map44, Lot106/ Registry Book of Deeds, Book 29306, Page 48.

The Beaver Brook Farm Committee is considering leasing a portion of the property for a stealth “water tank” wireless telecommunications facility (a replica of the former Beaver brook Farm water tank)entering into a long term lease with a curator who will restore the 1730a Abraham Varnum/Justus Richardson House and /or considering any other appropriate qualifying use of the property. The lease of the house and the land area owned by the Town of Dracut shall be subject to a request for proposals (RFP), applicable local charter and bylaws, as well as the Massachusetts General Laws.

Or take any other action relative thereto

### **Mass Historical Commission Grant Surveys:**

Ms. Ware explained that she is in the process on getting the contract signed. The Historical Commission has hired John Clemson, who is working with a team of three other people.

Ms. Ware will update the board at the next meeting on the status of the contract and surveys.

### **Grange:**

Ms. Ware explained that she talked with the Town Manager after the last discussion with the board about the Grange and its future, Ms. Ware explained that the Town Manager stated that he does not want the Town to take on another surplus building.

Harvey Gagnon explained that the Grange members are quite adamant about transferring the Grange to the church. The only thing he sees in the future is, if the church doesn't do anything with the building, the CPC can intercede and use some CPC funds to get the building up to its standards where it can be used. Mr. Gagnon explained it will be more difficult because of the church and state issue. Mr. Gagnon stated, he was told it can be done.

Chairperson, Helen Dunlap explained that no matter who owns the building, it is still a Town structure and it belongs to the community.

Chairperson Helen Dunlap stated, she is sorry that the Town Manager does not think that the Town should take on another building, Helen explained that he was very excited about the possibility of resurrecting this for a community center.

Ms. Ware explained that her only suggestion would be a petition warrant article, to see if the Town would take it for a dollar.

Ms. Dunlap explained, that the Grange members would have to offer that first.

Mr. Pease asked Harvey, what's is the real reason the Grange doesn't want the Town to have this building, they have been talking about this for years.

Mr. Gagnon stated the Town doesn't want it, the Town Manger doesn't want it.

Ms. Kawa stated just because the Town doesn't want it, doesn't mean the rest of the Town doesn't want it. Ms. Kawa stated this would be beneficial for the grange. Right now they are preventing us from wanting to rehabilitee it.

Mr. Gagnon explained his thought is if the Grange would be willing to donate it to the Town, and if the town would be sincere in accepting it, he thinks that would pass through the Grange.

Mr. Gagnon stated if CPC is serious in going forward, Mr. Gagnon stated he can convince them and have them hold off until springtime. Ms. Dunlap explained we would have to get a petition

Ms. Dunlap explained this would have to wait until the Spring Town Meeting.

MS. Kawa stated, to invite the grange members to one of our meetings to explain to them, the CPC wants to help them with their building.

Ms. Kawa asked Helen to keep it on the agenda through the spring.

### **Affordable Housing:**

Debra DeWitt explained that the AHC had a meeting last week that was a little disappointing to the board. They met with a person from the Women's Institute, the group that they had retained to help them through this whole process. Debra explained there has been a change in the DHCD policy regulations to have the housing authorities build additional housing of thirties.

Additional units for the residents. As a result this has sort of thrown a monkey wrench into the manner that they were going to proceed.

Debra explained that there was two different ways that they could proceed. One was with a tax credit and one was with a non-tax credit that would give them more control to control the process. DHCD isn't looking at that process as much anymore, they prefer us to go down a different route. Debra stated, she is being a little vague because at this point in time, they have to go back and revisit the other option they had, which was the tax credit. Partnering with a nonprofit.

Debra explained that when they met last night with the woman from the Institute, there was still a lot of questions that we had for her, and a lot of questions she didn't have answers for.

Debra explained that the board has a meeting with an attorney, who does some pro bono work, who works for a housing authority, he also does housing and development issues. They are going to try to meet with him very soon to see how they can progress, can we still maintain control over our property by doing this tax credit type situation, and if this can't be done, what are our options?

Right now, we are at a situation on how to reevaluate on how to proceed.

Debra stated she will update the board at the next meeting.

**New Business:**

**No new business**

**Old Business:**

**CP3 report**

Ms. Ware, explained to the board she has sent the report in electronically and will have a copy for the next meeting.

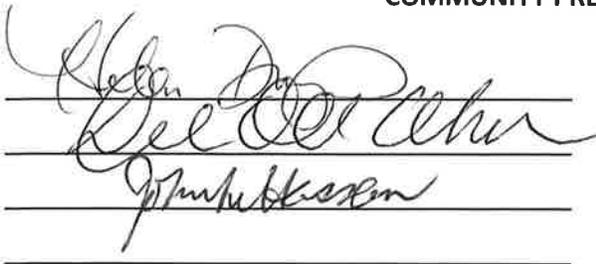
**Next meeting**

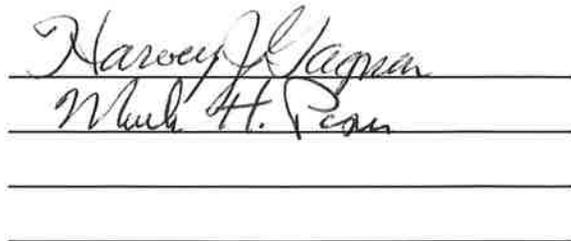
October 4<sup>th</sup>

Along with the Public Hearing for 52 A Avis Ave

Linda Kawa motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:40 pm, seconded by John Hassan, the motion passed unanimously.

**COMMUNITY PRESERVATION COMMITTEE**

  
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