

## **Community Preservation Committee Minutes of February 5, 2013**

Members present: Chairperson Helen Dunlap, Harvey Gagnon, John Hassan, Brian Bond, Louise Tremblay, Ken Lania and George Malonis. Also present was Glen Edwards, Assistant Town Manager and Samantha Carver recording secretary. The meeting was held at 1660 Lakeview Avenue in the Historic Hall Dracut, MA.

Absent: Jessie Forcier, Linda Kawa

The Chairperson called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m. The Committee began the discussion on the agenda items as follows:

### **Douglas Road Property**

Ms. Dunlap stated that at the last meeting when the Committee talked about this parcel she wanted to take a look at it. She did take a look at it and stated she spoke to the current tenant at the property. The parcel the owner is looking to sell is in the back of the property and is only a one acre lot but a nice wooded lot. There is however no access and Ms. Dunlap stated that the parcel isn't really big enough for consideration and the property owner would be splitting her parcel and creating a land locked parcel which is not allowed.

Ms. Dunlap will send the owner and the tenant a letter thanking them.

### **Fox Property**

Ms. Dunlap stated she worked on a long letter to the Fox Family of which she had Mr. Malonis and Mr. Edwards review. Ms. Dunlap reiterated what an important parcel this is and the need to preserve the historic nature of it. She also reached out to Chris Lapointe of TPL and showed him the letter. Mr. Lapointe was impressed by the tenacity of the Committee in trying to acquire the parcel. Mr. Lapointe also stated that part of what may have affected the negotiations with the Fox Family is the fact that as standard practice the TPL asks for a charitable donation to be made to their organization so that they can continue their work in preserving these types of parcels.

### **Needs and Possibilities Lists**

At the current time the Committee has not received any other drafts from Recreation or others on their needs and possibilities. Mr. Edwards reported that the Planning Board is working on their draft. The lists are due on March 5<sup>th</sup> which will be the next meeting for the Community Preservation Committee.

### **Capital Planning**

Ms. Tremblay reported that she attended the Capital Planning meeting and presented the CPC's list of possible projects for future consideration. It was brought to her attention at this meeting that when the Community Preservation Committee is considering projects that may have long term maintenance and/or operating budgetary cost, that the Committee should discuss these

issues when considering the project. The discussion should be had as to how and by whom the property will be maintained and where they will get the money for the operating costs such as electricity, sewer, water and the like.

Mr. Bond responded to this issue by stating that the Town would have to budget it or give up the control of the parcel to one of the sports groups and let them maintain it.

It was reported by Mr. Gagnon that Chairman Dave Paquin is working on a list of needs for the historical aspects of the Town. The other item Mr. Paquin is working on is the items to preserve in the old town hall to be incorporated in the new town hall. Mr. Gagnon also mentioned the stone wall which is currently behind the town hall and is looking to see if that can be preserved somehow.

### **Grange Building**

Ms. Dunlap asked Mr. Gagnon if there was any update on the Grange building. Mr. Gagnon has not had any update from the church. Ms. Dunlap asked if the CPC should write the Church a letter stating the CPC would be interested in purchasing the Grange. Mr. Gagnon stated he will try and have a meeting next week to get an update on what is happening.

### **Old Business**

Ms. Dunlap introduced Mr. Rich Cowan and asked Mr. Cowan to come in to the meeting to see what he could tell the Committee about things he's heard regarding the upcoming June Town Meeting and what the School Department and/or others are planning to suggest with the Community Preservation funds and/or suggestion of an override in place of it to help fund the school budget.

Mr. Cowan stated that he is working with a group of parents who have been involved in learning more about the school budget and raising awareness of what's going on with school spending. Mr. Cowan stated that he is trying to help people understand the school system's budget and how that plays into what gets funded and how costs are assessed and charged. He also discussed the rumors of the stimulus grant received by the School Department and is trying to understand how that money was used. Mr. Cowan talked about the School Department and how they are currently working on four proposals to save money in the School budget. One suggestion being to close the Parker Avenue School, the seconded suggestion is to suggest an override at Town Meeting which would replace the CPC Assessment. Mr. Cowan stressed that he is not trying to pit one group against another. He stated that the issue is the town's budget as a whole not just the school budget. Mr. Cowan stated that sometimes you have to spend money in order to save money such as spending money to insulate a school in order to save money on the heating bill.

Mr. Cowan had a hand out for the Committee which showed the General Fund Expenses for the Town; Dracut Vocational Spending chart and Dracut School Transportation History.

Mr. Cowan touched on the bus contract and the differences over the years on the contract and how the gas prices may be driving the increase. Mr. Cowan stated there seems to be two items that the School hasn't been able to manage: (1) employee health costs including retirees and (2) out of district tuition costs. The Committee thanked Mr. Cowan for coming in to share his insights.

### **CPC Video Project**

Ms. Dunlap stated to Mr. Bond that the video project needs to be completed before the June Town Meeting. Mr. Bond stated that he has a new helper in Ms. Tremblay and they will be working on it.

### **509 & 515 Hildreth Street – Plaintiff's Complaint**

The Committee reviewed the Plaintiff's Complaint filed in Middlesex Superior Court with regard to the two properties acquired by the Town. This is the lawsuit that Attorney Hall anticipated on this matter.

### **Bell Property**

The Committee received a copy of a letter penned by Attorney Hall making inquiry to the Estate Attorney for Regina Bell and reiterating the Town's interest in this property.

### **Kenwood Ski Tow**

Ms. Dunlap reported that she was contacted by Sallie Hand of the Burgess Family who was speaking on behalf of her mother and uncle who are both in their 90's and stated they are interested in preserving the land known as the "ski tow". Ms. Hand stated that they had had an appraisal done on the property and although she would not reveal what the figure was she said they were open to talking to the CPC Committee on the parcel. Ms. Dunlap stated she would be willing to go talk with them and looked for another member to go with her. Mr. Malonis stated he would go as well and asked Ms. Dunlap to set it up and let him know when.

Mr. Edwards reported that the net total appraised parcel value is \$514,500 however it is 61A land and is being assessed at \$15,000.

Ms. Dunlap mentioned a website known as New England Ski Areas where it talks about lost ski areas in the area and mentions the Dracut Ski Tow. Ms. Dunlap found this website very interesting.

### **Minutes & Executive Session Minutes**

The Committee reviewed the minutes of January 15, 2013. Mr. Hassan made a motion to approve the minutes of January 15, 2013 as presented. Ms. Tremblay seconded the motion. The motion carried with all members present voting in favor. Mr. Lania abstained.

The Committee was also given a draft of the executive session minutes for property now acquired: 144 Greenmont Avenue, 1530 Bridge Street, 509 & 515 Hildreth Street. The Committee will review these minutes for approval and release for next meeting.

Mr. Malonis had to leave the meeting at 7:34 p.m.

The Committee discussed the suggested edits by Mr. Bond on the minutes of October 30, 2012. After brief discussion on the changes the Committee moved to a motion.

Mr. Bond made a motion to accept the changes discussed on the minutes of October 30, 2012. Mr. Lania seconded the motion. The motion carried with all members present voting in favor.

#### **Next Meeting and Adjournment**

The Committee discussed the next meeting to be held March 5, 2013 at 7:00 p.m. Mr. Hassan mentioned that he would not be present for this meeting.

Mr. Bond made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:23 p.m. Mr. Lania seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

#### **Community Preservation Committee**

Helen Duplap  
[Signature]  
[Signature]  
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Absent: Linda Kawa

Harvey J. Segner  
Louise G. Tremblay  
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X Absent: Jesse Forcier