

COMMUNITY PRESERVATION COMMITTEE

January 18, 2022

MINUTES

Members Present: Christopher Feeley (remote), David McNeill, Lisa Oxford (remote), Michael Giardino, Rick Power, Wayne Simarrian, Phyllis Messere-Malcom, Jeffrey Livingstone, Monique Doyle

Town staff also in attendance: Town Administrator Jamie Hellen, Head of the Recreation Department Ryan Jette, Town Council member Cobi Frongillo, Veterans Service Officer Shannon Nesbit

Vice-Chairman David Mc Neill called the meeting to order at 7:02 PM

Approval of Minutes

The January 4, 2022, minutes will be discussed at the February 15, 2022, CPC meeting.

Continuing CPC Business

Mr. Hellen: This is the second of two public hearings. Only one is required.

Ms. Amanda Groh and Ms. Kim Sparks (audience): More pickle ball courts are needed. Pickle ball participation has grown 600% and is the fastest growing sport. Pickle ball is taught in the Franklin schools and people want more classes. A \$35 racquet is affordable to most people. At present, limited court time is available. A handout was passed to CPC members, "Recreational Pickle Ball Courts by Town/City in MA."

(<https://places2play.org/state/massachusetts?q=&p=200&order=city>) and

(<https://www.sec.state.ma.us/census2020/index.html>)

Mr. Power: Asked for an estimation of the number of players and peak times.

Ms. Groh: Not sure of the number of players and peak times.

Mr. Simarrian: Will follow up the Ryan Jette and noted that pickle ball courts are expensive.

Ms. Groh: Pickle ball courts are \$22-\$42 a square foot.

Mr. Hellen: The town lobbied the state for funding for the King Street pickle ball courts.

Mr. Power: Do the pickle ball courts need to be maintained? Mr. Hellen: The courts are new so it is not known but they probably be maintained like basketball courts.

Mr. Simarrian: Additional pickle ball courts should be located in different areas of town so more people would have access.

Ms. Groh: Noted that there are two indoor pickle ball courts at the Rec. Center.

Mr. Giardino: Asked if there were differences in the indoor and outdoor courts.

Mr. Hellen: Noted there were no differences.

Mr. Jette: It is difficult to estimate the number of players who play pickle ball and the peak time for participation is Saturday morning. At present, there are no evening hours. More courts are needed.

Maintenance for the courts cannot be gauged now. The existing courts are made from post-tension concrete and were expensive to construct but will last a long time.

Mr. Giordano to Mr. Jette: Will the indoor courts last longer as the indoor construction is different from the outdoor construction?

Mr. Jette: The indoor construction is not ideal as the indoor court is close to the wall.

Mr. Simarrian: Pickle ball courts will be discussed at the next Rec. Board meeting.

Ms. Nesbit: Spoke about monument restoration. There are 11 war monuments in town and four have concrete bases. All monuments need to be cleaned and reconditioned as do the bronze and concrete benches. The work must be done in a timely fashion to protect the monuments as they are used for educational purposes and occupy the historic area of the town commons. The "dough boy" monument has structural damage caused by water. Appraisals have been done for two monuments. The WW1 monument appraisal was \$26,000 and another estimate is being done. Not all monuments have been appraised but estimates for restoration range from \$12,000 - \$20,000. There is ongoing support for the projects from other groups but CPA monies are needed.

Mr. Simarrian: Are estimates still coming in?

Ms. Nesbit: A formal bidding process is necessary.

Mr. Hellen: Supports the monument restoration and noted that the town applied for a state grant but was not successful. Accurate cost estimates are necessary. It is also difficult to hire skilled workers because of the labor shortage. The CPC can look at two projects. The "dough boy" restoration will be intensive and expensive. The FY22 capital plan will use funds but the CPC ongoing plan could be used for the second part of the project and also for other monument projects. No annual maintenance costs can be funded by the CPC. The DPW operating budget will set aside \$5,000 for monument maintenance. Someone should be lined up for the summer or fall for restoration but again, it is difficult to hire contractors.

Ms. Messere-Malcom: Another grant might be available from the Massachusetts Historical Society at the end of March.

Mr. McNeill: What work has been done on the monuments?

Ms. Nesbit: No work has been done for a long time which is why the monuments are a top priority.

Rose Determan (audience): A student at Boston University presented her final term project: An Analysis of Franklin, MA CPA fund use for acquiring open space. The project focuses on systematic conservation space: forest, wetland, priority habitat, and nondeveloped land. CPC funds could be used for open space, a priority for the town. This study is posted on the town website. The information can be used to think about all options.

Mr. Hellen: Currently, the town lists 61 open space sites. A mandatory review of open space must be done every seven years. The next analysis will be done in 2023.

Peter Valentine (audience): Spoke in reference to Alan Earls' comments to the CPC on January 4, 2022. Mr. Valentine noted that there would be 100 abutters if a trail was put behind the houses near Mine Brook. Parking would be difficult.

Mr. Hellen: To connect a boardwalk to the Charles River Meadowlands would be very expensive. The Army Corps of Engineers owns the Meadowlands and it is a flood control mechanism and contains a lot of biodiversity. If the town built a boardwalk, the town would pick up the liability. Lots of legal hurdles already exist and there would be more hurdles if neighbors opposed the project. The Town Council would have to take action if such a project were to be done.

Alan Earls (remote): No one in the neighborhood of Meadowlands objected to walkers before dirt bikes were used. He also noted that anyone can legally access the area. In addition, a boardwalk would cost probably \$100,000.

Mr. Hellen: Boats can be used for wildlife viewing but it is not safe to enter the swamp on foot.

Mr. McNeill: Can CPC money be used for easements?

Mr. Hellen: Not sure.

Mr. Earls: The town owns land around Meadowlands so there is that would take care of parking and access points.

Mr. Valentine: Disagreed with Mr. Earls and noted that the Meadowlands is open space and should be left

Mr. McNeill: All side and perspectives should be considered.

Max Mongello (remote): There should be a uniform way to evaluate all proposals to ensure the most good for all residents. There should be equal access for all. Questioned if Davis Thayer could be used for affordable housing.

Mr. Hellen: The school district still owns the Davis Thayer property and there was no penalty for closing the school. The Town Council will take charge of the property and a "reuse" committee will be established to determine use of the property. The school is not suited for modern day work flow and does not have ADA access. It would cost between \$20 to \$30 million to bring the school up to today's codes.

Mr. Simmarian: The property is in a valuable location and the town should commit to keeping it.

Mr. Hellen: That location is paramount and has lots of potential. Retrofitting Davis Thayer for affordable housing would be extraordinarily difficult and expensive.

Susan Speers (remote): Wished the CPC good luck moving forward and expressed appreciation for the acquisition of the Maple Hill project, noting it was a brilliant project. Money for affordable housing should be used in year one. Historic resources need protection. The CPC plan should focus on recreation, history, and housing. Help from the public should be part of the process and letter of support from other agencies are important. She also thanked Steve Sherlock for putting the application for CPC projects online.

A motion to adjourn was made at 8:15 and the committee voted unanimously to approve.

Respectfully submitted,

Monique Doyle

Clerk, Franklin, MA, CPC