
COMMUNITY PRESERVATION COMMITTEE

MEETING MINUTES
TUESDAY, OCTOBER 17, 2022

I. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Roll-Call Attendance

Roll-Call Attendance; recognizing presence of quorum Glenn King, Chair called meeting to order at 6:30 PM; Barbara McNamee, Michael Proto, Rainer Forst, Jill Leonard, and Harry Berkowitz were in attendance. R. Gary Bechtholdt II, Town Planner/CPC Admin and Neil Vaidya, Town Accountant were also present; with Lenny Smith absent.

II. APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

September 12, 2022

Upon motion duly made (H Berkowitz) and seconded (B McNamee) the Committee approved the minutes of September 12, 2022.

III. 2022 FATM -ARTICLE #3, CASTLE HILL FARM PROPERTY (LAND ACQUISITION)

Castle Hill Road, Assessor Map 4 Parcel(s) 29 & 33 (portion of); Assessor Map 4 Parcel(s) 1 & 4
Community Preservation Act Fund -Vote/Recommendation

G King, Chair informed the Committee since the last meeting (09/12/2022) the third-party appraisal has been received from LandVest; accordingly, the appraisal value of the property is \$1,450,000.00. G King explained after receiving the appraisal he and G Bechtholdt meet with the property owner, Alex Vander Baan, where he agreed to offer property for \$1.45 million as appraised. In doing so, G King noted A Vander Baan is willing to provide the sum of \$50,000.00 at closing to be deposited into a maintenance and improvement account for the property.

G King reminded Committee members that CPA funded land acquisitions, such as this will require a Conservation Restriction be placed on the property in perpetuity, where the owner of the property (Town) cannot be the holder of the restriction. G King informed that Committee that ongoing discussions have been had with Metacomet Land Trust about their willingness and ability to hold the restriction where the Northbridge Conservation Commission would be the manage the land on behalf of the Town. G King noted that Metacomet Land Trust indicated a fee of \$100 per acre would be required to administer and oversee the Conservation Restriction for the Castle Hill farm property.

After some general discussions regarding appraisal, legal fees, potential need for additional study, Conservation Commission's role, and current balances of the Town's Community Preservation Act funds, the Committee confirmed acquisition would require a borrowing. G King and G Bechtholdt noted the warrant article if approved would be an authorization (by the Community Preservation Committee) to utilize CPA Funds for the purchase of property, the particulars such as borrowing terms, etc. would be reviewed and finalized after and subject to approval of Article #3, 2022 Fall Annual Town Meeting.

Upon motion duly made (H Berkowitz) and seconded (M Proto) the Community Preservation Committee voted (6-0) to borrow, for a term of up to 30-years, the sum of \$1,450,000.00 in Community Preservation Funds for the purchase of subject property known as Castle Hill Farms as identified and described in the Warrant (Article #3) and to appropriate the sum of up to \$50,000.00 in Community Preservation Funds for such

acquisition; including, but not limited to legal fees, costs to secure Holder of Conservation Restriction, additional studies/survey (if so required), and other associated expenses and costs incidental and related to.

G King informed the Committee that he will be presenting to the Finance Committee and the Board of Selectmen with the Community Preservation Committee's vote/recommendation at their joint meeting scheduled for later this evening (October 17, 2022).

IV. OLD/NEW BUSINESS

Correspondence & Communications

LandVest, Inc. property appraisal for Castle Hill Farm subject property dated September 23, 2022. Committee acknowledged receipt of the following communication(s) received by Barry Gallant, resident concerning Article #3, 2022 FATM: (1) email received 09/30/2022; (2) email received 10/02/2022; (3) email received 10/03/2022; (4) email received 10/04/2022; (5) email received 10/04/2022; (6) email received 10/05/2022; and (7) email received 10/06/2022. B Gallant expressed concerns with potential environmental status of the property (Castle Hill Farm) and the town's due diligence, recommending additional environmental studies be performed. G King explained that a Phase 1 Environmental Site Assessment was performed on the subject property which concluded no additional environmental review would be necessary based upon their findings. G King noted, an abandoned vehicle with no engine and empty gallon drums were observed on the property, however they are located on the portion of the property the owner intends to retain and construct a single-family home. G King advised that he along with G Bechtholdt spoke with Christopher Lapointe of the Essex County Land Trust, who offered some guidance on what to require and look for when acquiring farmlands, noting had Castle Hill Farm been an old apple orchid, then the environmental study would likely need to be more comprehensive, etc. Committee acknowledged receipt of email communication from Town Counsel (KP Law) received October 17, 2022 concerning the Phase 1 Environmental Site Assessment and drafting of proposed motion with borrowing for Article #3, 2022 FATM; G King suggested the Committee look to Town Counsel opinion on environmental study (completed) and whether or not additional review is necessary; G King concluded noting a reliance letter from the firm that conducted the Phase 1 will be provided to the Town. Committee also acknowledged email communications between G Bechtholdt, CPC Admin and Neil Vaidya, Town Accountant concerning potential borrowing terms for 15, 20 and 30-year terms. Committee acknowledged receipt of letter of support dated October 14, 2022 submitted on behalf of the Northbridge Conservation Commission. Committee acknowledged receipt of email communication (10/09/2022) sent to Barbara McNamee from Mary Sughrue-Yacino regarding Article #3, 2022 FATM, specifically intended purchase price and if approved would taxes be increased; Committee members noted the purchase of Castle Hill Farm would be funded entirely from Community Preservation Act funds, not requiring or resulting in any tax increase to Town residents.

2022 Fall Annual Town Meeting (October 25, 2022)

Point of information; G King noted that he would present the motion at Town Meeting and would offer the Committee's report and recommendation for Article #3, 2022 FATM.

Project Application(s) for 2023 Spring Annual Town Meeting

No applications received at this time.

Vacancy -Local Housing Authority & Member at-Large

Point of information; no discussion.

Scheduling of Next Meeting(s)

Next regularly scheduled meeting of the Committee shall be Monday, November 07, 2022 (6:30PM -via ZOOM).

Tuesday, October 25, 2022 (2022 FATM)

G King, Chair reminded members that a meeting of this Committee has been posted for the night of the 2022 Fall Annual Town Meeting, in the event the Community Preservation Committee needs to (re)consider its vote/recommendation for Article #3.

Future Agenda Items

G King noted future agenda items to include an update to Northbridge's Community Preservation Plan.

V. ADJOURN MEETING

Meeting adjourned at or about 6:55 PM.

Respectfully submitted by,

R. Gary Bechtholdt II, Town Planner/CPC Admin

Date approved: _____

Cc: Town Clerk