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COMMUNITY PRESERVATION COMMITTEE

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## MEETING MINUTES

TUESDAY, November 07, 2022

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**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, Jill Leonard, and Harry Berkowitz were in attendance. R. Gary Bechtholdt II, Town Planner/CPC Admin was also present; with Rainer Forst and Lenny Smith absent.

**II. APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES**

October 25, 2022

*Upon motion duly made (H Berkowitz) and seconded (B McNamee) the Committee approved the minutes of October 25, 2022.*

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

Review &amp; Next Steps

G King, Chair congratulated fellow Committee members for accomplishment of permanently preserving almost 100-acres in Town; a job well done. G King noted the next immediate steps, in addition to formalizing documents for sale/purchase of the property, is for the Town's financial team (Town Manager, Town Accountant & Town Treasurer) will need to review and ultimately enter into on behalf of the Town borrowing terms with a lender. G King explained that he would like to see the Town secure financing as quickly as possible due to rising interest rates. G. King has reached out to the Adam Gaudette, Town Manager; who is to schedule a time in the coming days to meet with him; G Bechtholdt, Town Planner/CPC Admin; Neil Vaidya, Town Accountant; and Julie Harris, Town Treasurer.

G Bechtholdt advised the Committee that he provided the Conservation Commission with a communication (dated October 31, 2022) detailing the approval of Article #3, 2022 FATM and next steps for the Conservation Commission, whereas the Commission will be the municipal entity to manage the Castle Hill Farm property. The Conservation Commission will formalize the Conservation Restriction (CR) to be placed on the property (as required for CPA fund land acquisitions) and the Conservation Commission shall also look to identify a holder for the Conservation Restriction, where the Town, as owner cannot hold the Restriction. G Bechtholdt noted as mentioned before, Metacomet Land Trust has expressed an interest in holding the CR for the Town; the Conservation Commission will need to review and finalize agreements.

G King explained as part of the drafting of the Conservation Restriction (CR) a baseline study needs to be prepared, this is something our Conservation Agent has experience in and will prepare for the Town. G King advised Committee members that the CR can be finalized after the Town acquires the property. G Bechtholdt offered as part of the baseline study, if the Conservation Commission determines a need to undertake additional study, the warrant article/motion provides for CPA Funds for this purpose.

G Bechtholdt suggested the Community Preservation Committee's role, as it relates to the Castle Hill Farm land acquisition was to recommend support and authorize the use of the Northbridge CPA funds; the Committee's role moving forward will be to oversee and continue to administer the Town's CPA funds; to make sure borrowing for the of Castle Hill Farm purchase and other identified expenses are consistent with the Committee's vote/recommendation on Article #3, 2022 Fall Annual Town Meeting. To do so, G King,

Chair will be included in discussions with the Town's financial team; to offer consent of borrowing terms, based upon anticipated yearly revenues of the CPA budget reserves and funds appropriated for Article #3.

G King will be following up with the Town Manager and others and will look to update the Committee at its next scheduled meeting.

#### IV. OLD/NEW BUSINESS

##### Correspondence & Communications

Copy of Community Planning & Development memorandum dated October 31, 2022 to the Conservation Commission. Committee acknowledged receipt of the following communication(s) from Barry Gallant, resident (1) email communication received 10/26/2022 concerning request to perform additional environmental review of the Castle Hill Farm property; (2) letter dated 10/26/2022 requesting the Town have a State and a Federal Authoritative Agency comprehensively review the Phase 1 Environmental Review done by the Owner (Castle Hill Farm property): Commonwealth of Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection/Central MA Region and United States Environmental Protection Agency/Region 1 New England and (3) email communication(s) received 11/02/2022 concerning Castle Hill Farm and the Conservation Commission's role, long-term maintenance, insurance costs to the Town. G. Bechtholdt offered to review with G King and provide a response to questions within the purview of the Community Preservation Committee. Committee noted the question regarding long-term maintenance was included in the handout for Article #3 provided at Town Meeting, where it suggests future funding sources may include the Town's Conservation Fund, supplemental CPA funding requests and State/Federal grants.

##### Project Application(s) for 2023 Spring Annual Town Meeting

No applications received at this time. G Bechtholdt recalled some discussion about possible funding request to preserve historical town documents, however application has not been received. G King indicated the Town Clerk was researching this further.

##### Vacancy -Local Housing Authority & Member at-Large

G King, Chair informed the Committee that Lenny Smith (Historic Commission representative) will be stepping down from the Commission and as such the Historic Commission will need to appoint a new representative. With already two (2) vacancies (Housing Authority & Board of Selectmen), G King expressed concerns with the Committee having a quorum for meetings, where 5 is required for a committee consisting of nine (9) members; G King may look to confirm with Town Counsel (and or the Town Clerk) to confirm what constitutes a quorum for this committee, where there are three (3) vacancies.

##### Scheduling of Next Meeting(s)

Next meeting of the Committee is scheduled for Monday, December 05, 2022 (6:30PM -via ZOOM).

##### Future Agenda Items

G King noted the Committee will review and look to update Northbridge's Community Preservation Plan, adopted April 2020.

G Bechtholdt advised the Committee that he has not heard from the Town Accountant on the status of the annual reporting to the State; suggested the Community Preservation Committee should get a copy of the report submitted as well as detailed bank statements from the Treasurer/Accountant, so the Committee can better track its budget. G King indicated that he would follow-up with the Coalition about getting a copy of

the annual report and will talk with the Town Accountant about getting more detailed information on CPA account balances moving forward.

M Proto offered an update on the Linwood Basketball Courts noting the project is set to go out to bid soon, with construction scheduled to commence in the spring (or earlier). G Bechtholdt reminded M Proto the process of invoicing and reimbursement to pay for scope of work specific to basketball court improvements will be eligible in accordance with Article #12, 2022 Spring Annual Town Meeting; where the Committee will review invoicing before authorizing CPA fund payments/reimbursement.

#### V. ADJOURN MEETING

Meeting adjourned at or about 7:05 PM.

Respectfully submitted by,

R. Gary Bechtholdt II, Town Planner/CPC Admin

Date approved: \_\_\_\_\_

Cc: Town Clerk