
COMMUNITY PRESERVATION COMMITTEE

**MEETING MINUTES
TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 11, 2023**

I. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Recognizing the presence of quorum Glenn King (Chair) called meeting to order at 6:30 PM, with Harry Berkowitz (Vice Chair), Michael Wilkes (Clerk), Barbara McNamee, Jill Leonard, Christine Johnson, and Karen Rogers in attendance; with Rainer Forst absent. R. Gary Bechtholdt II, Town Planner/CPC Admin was also present.

II. APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

August 07, 2023

Upon a motion made by and seconded by the Community Preservation Committee voted to approve the meeting minutes of August 07, 2023 (voting 7-0-0)

III. UNITED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Project Pre-Application (Historic Resources) /Bell Tower Restoration Project

The committee engaged in a thoughtful discussion regarding whether the proposed project met the established criteria and whether the applicant should be encouraged to proceed with their application. It was also duly noted that allocating public funds to a religious institution could raise legitimate concerns. Drawing insights from the situation in the town of Acton, the committee weighed the matter judiciously. Subsequently, after deliberation and a motion presented by G. King, seconded by M. Wilkes, the committee unanimously resolved to decline the applicant's pre-application for funds (voting 7-0-0). G Bechtholdt, CPC Admin shall prepare letter notifying the United Presbyterian Church of the Committee's decision.

IV. FLETCHER HOMESTEAD

Project Pre-Application (Historic Resources) /Architectural & Structural Assessment Project

The first proposal relating to the Fletcher Homestead the committee reviewed was a request for \$50,000.00 to conduct a comprehensive architectural assessment of the property. Following an in-depth conversation and a motion put forth by G. King and seconded by B. McNamee, the committee, in unison, extended an invitation to The Historic Society to commence the application process (voting 7-0-0). G Bechtholdt, CPC Admin shall prepare letter notifying the Northbridge Historical Society of the Committee's decision.

V. FLETCHER HOMESTEAD

Project Pre-Application (Historic Resources) /Boiler & Tank Replacement Project

In regard to the second Fletcher Homestead proposal, the committee evaluated a \$19,000.00 proposal aimed at replacing the property's furnace. After a brief discussion, the committee unanimously agreed that this was a necessity and should be resolved as soon as possible. Upon a motion made by G King and seconded by H Berkowitz, the committee unanimously voted in favor to proceed with the second proposal (voting 7-0-0). G Bechtholdt, CPC Admin shall prepare letter notifying the Northbridge Historical Society of the Committee's decision.

VI. OLD/NEW BUSINESS

Correspondence & Communications

G Bechtholdt informed the committee that it is time to pay our yearly dues to The Community Preservation Coalition (\$875.00). Both G. Bechtholdt and G. King emphasized the invaluable consulting services rendered by the coalition, noting that the expense was indeed justifiable. In light of this, a motion, initiated by H. Berkowitz and seconded by B. McNamee, was unanimously passed, signaling the committee's unanimous support for the payment of our annual dues to The Coalition (voting 7-0-0). G Bechtholdt mentioned that G King asked for an update on the overall status of the borrowing for the Castle Hill Farm acquisition and CPA Fund balances; this information will be provided from the Town Treasurer for the Committee's next meeting.

Vacancy (1) -Housing Authority

Committee members welcomed Karen Rogers, newly appointed member representing Playground & Recreation Committee and acknowledged that Rainer Forst has been appointed Member at-Large by the Board of Selectmen. Existing vacancy on the committee remains specifically the representative from the Housing Authority.

CP-3 Report (due September 15, 2023)

G King noted that he has prepared the required reporting of CPA funded projects for Northbridge.

CPA Funded Projects -Linwood Basketball Courts & Castle Hill Farm Conservation Land

The committee received a comprehensive update on The Linwood Basketball Courts project. With the project nearing its completion, the grand opening was tentatively scheduled for the end of October. The committee also received an update in regard to the Castle Hill Farm Conservation Land. A ribbon cutting ceremony is tentatively scheduled for Friday, September 22, 2023.

Project Pre-Application Solicitation -Open through September 2023

As it stands, there are no new applications, and the committee does not foresee any additional applications before the project application due date (October 01, 2023)

Scheduling of Next Meeting(s)

The committee noted that the next meeting will take place Monday, October 02, 2023 (6:30 PM) -via ZOOM.

Future Agenda Item(s) -CPC Public Outreach & Community Preservation Plan Update

Acknowledged with no further discussion at this time.

VII. ADJOURN MEETING

Having no additional business, the Community Preservation Committee adjourned its meeting of Monday, September 11, 2023 at or about 7:30PM.

Prepared by: Micheal Wilkes, Clerk

Submitted by:

R. Gary Bechtholdt II, Town Planner/CPC Admin

Date Approved: _____

Cc: Town Clerk