

**Northampton Community Preservation Committee Minutes
March 6 2019**

Time: 7:00 pm
Place: City Council Chambers, 212 Main Street (BEHIND City Hall)

Brian Adams	✓
Linda Morley	✓
Julia Chevan	✓
Chris Hellman	✓
Jeff Jones	✓
Martha Lyon	✓
David Whitehill	✓
Jack Finn	✓
George Kohout	✓
Sarah LaValley - staff	✓

Brian called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM

General Public Comment

None

Approval of Minutes

December 5, 2018. Linda moved to approve the minutes as presented. Seconded by Julia, the motion carried unanimously.

Chair's Report

Brian noted that the Community Preservation Coalition dues have been paid.

Meetings with Applicants for CPA Funds

Fitzgerald Lake Invasives Control – Broad Brook Coalition (BBC)

Bob Zimmermann, BBC President provided an overview of BBC's efforts to remove invasive species at Fitzgerald Lake to-date. There are several different species of concern in the area, some have extensive rhizomes and persistent seeds and require years of follow-up. Professionals have been hired using past CPA funds, and extensive volunteerwork is also utilized. Water chestnut, for example, is controlled with 8-10 canoes and kayaks with volunteers pulling the plant, and has been successful so far. Glossy buckthorn, swallowwort and knapweed are especially persistent, and treatment of those plants is primarily done by Land Stewardship Inc, a professional firm with licenses, training and insurance.

Linda asked if CPA funding is anticipated beyond the three-year CPA grant funded work. Bob replied that it is difficult to know how much follow-up will be necessary, but BBC is hopeful that reoccurrence can be reduced so that follow-up could be done by volunteers. Knapweed has been increasing, due to seed bank and possibly weather, so it's hard to predict.

David asked if native species are planted to help reduce invasives. Bob replied that planting in some locations is done as-needed, but many areas already have a native plant understory.

Brian asked if there is any opposition to herbicide use among BBC. Bob replied that there was a debate in 2007 when the program was begun, but members generally agree that it is safe and necessary.

Brian asked about occurrence of phragmites. Bob replied that these have nearly all been replaced by native cattails, and only limited annual followup is necessary at this point.

Florence Abolition National Register District – Committee for Northampton

Steve Strimer provided an overview of work to date and work proposed on the National Register District. It will highlight people and places in Northampton who were part of abolitionist and African American history, with a focus on historical context. It will be an ongoing benefit to have property owners aware of the historic significance of their properties, and the narrative can also

be published separately. The preferred vendor worked on a related National Register application, and has completed a great deal of research that would be costly to duplicate. Underground Railroad tours are already being done in conjunction with Forbes Library that generate a lot of interest, and those include some of the same sites.

George asked if a future CPA application to create a district that includes downtown abolitionist sites is being contemplated. Steve replied that many of these sites may not retain enough historic integrity to be able to be listed.

Martha noted that the district is very large, and asked if any pushback is anticipated. Steve replied that there isn't, many property owners have already been contacted, and the applicant will work with the Historical Commission to notify additional owners. Additional meetings and events will be held during the application process.

Chris noted that the scope of work and price estimate seems commensurate with the work proposed.

David noted that the study of history of what happened during the abolitionist movement and tying those places together as proposed is more important than linking architecture as in a typical National Register District, and noted that additional awareness and involvement once the listing is complete is important.

Brian asked if there is any chance the nomination might not be successful. Steve replied that MassHistoric has been encouraging of work so far and has also selected other sites in Florence for Register listing.

Priority Acquisitions – Northampton Conservation Commission

Wayne Feiden, Director of Planning and Sustainability provided an overview of proposed acquisitions. The application requests a higher percentage of the costs than is typical, but other purchases are being completely funded without CPA funding. The application highlights four of these purchases, and four projects for which CPA is requested.

Wayne noted that the Northampton ONE trail, a 25+/- mile trail loop around the City, is currently in planning stages and is helping to identify gaps, and all also have ecological importance.

Acquisitions include the rear of St. Mary's Cemetery in the Beaver Brook Greenway, and the rear portion of the Omasta parcel in the Mineral Hills that is not eligible for Agricultural Preservation Restriction funding. The special permit for the Waggin' Trails private dog park required that a portion of the site be permanently protected. Rather than accepting only a Conservation Restriction (CR), which would limit management opportunities and prohibit public access, the application seeks funding for the difference between the CR and fee ownership. A parcel in the Rocky Hill Greenway on Easthampton Road is also proposed to be protected, with an opportunity for a small parking lot for trail access. MassAudubon will hold the CR at no cost to the City.

Additional parcels for which CPA funds are not being requested include several parcels in the Saw Mill Hills that were discovered through a comprehensive survey that had previously been unknown.

George asked about response to complaints about land being removed from tax rolls. Wayne replied that limited development to provide building lots where appropriate is included in planning for large acquisitions, and this also helps to encourage development along existing roads, and often results in new affordable lots.

Review City Council Orders for Approved Small Grants

Chris moved to approve the Orders as presented by staff. Seconded by Linda, the motion carried unanimously

Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 8:50 PM.