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**COMMUNITY PRESERVATION
COMMITTEE**

Meeting Minutes

March 30, 2016

A meeting of the Community Preservation Committee was held on Thursday, March 30, 2016 in Conference Room F of the Grafton Memorial Municipal Center.

Present: Chairman John Stephens, Jennifer Thomas, Peter Finn, Sargon Hanna, Jim Gallagher and Ann Morgan.

Absent: Clerk Paul Scarlett, Treasurer Ken Holberger, and Gina Dalan.

- I. Chairman Stephens called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.
- II. **Clerk's Report** – The draft meeting minutes of March 24, 2016 were review. Mr. Finn recommended some changes to the language pertaining to the Conservation Commission review of the Stone Arch Bridge project review on page 3. Motion to approve the meeting minutes as drafted and revised made by Mr. Gallagher, seconded by Ms. Thomas. Motion passed unanimously.
- III. **Treasurer's Report** – Mr. Holberger was not in attendance but had submitted a Treasurer's Report. It was noted that the Town had hired a new Town Accountant and that Mr. Holberger was working with her to finalize the CPA numbers in advance of the upcoming Town Meeting. Motion to accept the Treasurer's Report made by Mr. Gallagher, seconded by Ms. Thomas. Motion passed unanimously.

IV. Project Updates

- A. Silver Lake Project – Mr. Stephens noted that he had received a memorandum from the Conservation Agent regarding this project. The Conservation Commission held a meeting on March 15th to review the proposed work. The memo notes that permitting will be required but they didn't anticipate any extenuating circumstances that would stop the project from proceeding. The memo further states that the Commission indicated its support for the project and advised the Applicant (Jennifer Anderson, Recreation Director) to consult with the Conservation Agent for permitting guidance.

Mr. Stephens noted that this memo was submitted as part of the CPC recommendation that the Applicant to review the project with the Conservation Commission.

- B. Stone Arch Bridge Project – Mr. Gallagher reviewed the status of the project since the March 24th meeting. A more detailed cost estimate which now includes in kind donations has been submitted by the Applicant as recommended by the CPC at the last meeting. Mr. Gallagher noted that the estimate shows approximate fees for local permits. He noted that he would like to see those fees waived by the Town through the Board of Selectmen and recommended that the Applicant take that step once the project begins.

Ms. Morgan noted that the outgoing Chairwoman of the Historical Commission, Ruth Anderson, had submitted a letter of support for the project to the Applicant. She also noted that the Applicant should take the time to meet with Town Staff at one of the regularly scheduled Development Team meetings where they can receive comments to guide the project. This will make the permitting process move more efficiently if the project has been vetted by staff well in advance.

Mr. Finn expressed concerns about the projected cost estimates compared to the proposed work and the need based on location and congestion of the area. Would the money be worth the end result in terms of public benefit? Mr. Gallagher reviewed the history of the planning efforts over the years for New England Village which included improvements to Whitney Park as well as the Stone Arch Bridge. It was noted that the Historical Commission had advanced the project in the past resulting in cost estimates and a work program that included more advanced repairs of the bridge. The new proposal before the CPC would only include the landscaping improvements to provide a pedestrian bridge connecting Bridge Street on the south over the river and north to the Whiney Park area.

Mr. Stephens noted the proposed work would result in an asset to the residents and workers in that area. Ms. Morgan reviewed the history of the area noting that the Stone Arch Bridge is the oldest bridge in Town authorized to be built by Town Meeting.

Mr. Skip Currier, part of the Applicant Team for the project, joined the meeting.

Ms. Thomas asked Mr. Currier to review the impacts to / improvements to the pedestrian network if the project were to advance. Mr. Currier noted that there were sidewalks in the project area which they plan to improve but that no new sidewalks were proposed as part of this project. The project team plans to clean up / repair the various elements in the project area only.

Mr. Finn expressed concerns that about the lack of detail / scope of project considering the amount of money being requested. Mr. Currier review the past history of the project noting that they do not have the resources to complete the original plan prepared on behalf of the Historical Commission. Mr. Finn noted that he would feel more comfortable if the Applicant could put together a clear scope of work outlining each element and not ask the CPC to accept a cost estimate as the only scope of project. Mr. Currier stated that the cost of a fully engineered plan was cost prohibitive but that the work they are proposing must pass the local permitting processes.

Mr. Stephens asked what would be the course of action if the approved CPA funds and donations were not enough to complete the project. Mr. Currier noted that they would continue to fundraise and seek donations in kind and that they were committed to seeing the project completed. Mr. Gallagher noted that he was the project liaison to the CPC and that we would provide regular updates to the Committee about work progress in light of the budgeted amount.

The Committee raised additional concerns about the structural integrity of the Stone Arch Bridge and the safety of the general public who will use it. Mr. Currier noted that the previous structural engineering work indicated that the Bridge was safe but that they would working with a new engineer in the future to ensure structural safety for the proposed pedestrian use.

When asked about the next steps, Mr. Stephens noted that if the CPC voted to recommend the project, the submission would first be reviewed by the Finance Committee in advance of Town Meeting.

Ms. Thomas and Mr. Finn expressed concerns and reservations about the project as submitted noting that the documentation was a little rough and vague. It was recommended that someone from the project team be prepared to meet with the Finance Committee to answer any questions they may have. Ms. Thomas recommended that it should be someone other than Mr. Mead since he is the appointing authority for the Finance Committee.

Mr. Currier stated that the revised cost estimate and the in kind donations list should be sufficient for substantiating the project to the Finance Committee. Mr. Gallagher noted that he has spoken to Mr. Mead who prepared the revised budget at the request of the CPC. He added that Mr. Mead does have additional back up information to support the detailed budget.

Mr. Stephens noted that the CPC was being asked to accept the revised budget information as acceptable and to take a new vote to rescind its denial made on March 24, 2016. No additional comments or discussion from the Committee was offered.

Motion to recommend approval of the project at the cost of \$221,700 of CPA funds to Town Meeting for the for the Stone Arch Bridge project made by Mr. Gallagher, seconded by Mr. Finn. Motion passed 4-1 with Mr. Finn voting NAY.

V. Public Comment – None.

VI. Executive Session – None.

VII. Adjournment – Motion to adjourn the meeting made by Ms. Morgan, seconded by Mr. Finn. Motion passed unanimously 5-0. The meeting was adjourned at 7:52 p.m.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Paul A. Scarlett, Clerk



EXHIBITS:

- Bridge Street Work Estimate and In Kind Donations, received at the March 30, 2016 meeting; submitted by Ray Mead; no date; 1 page.
- Memorandum from the Conservation Agent, Recreation Department's Application to CPC for Silver Lake Beach Improvements; dated March 22, 2016; 1 page.
- FY 2016 CPA Funds Summary, dated March 24, 2016; 1 page.

