



# TOWN OF GRAFTON

GRAFTON MEMORIAL MUNICIPAL CENTER  
30 PROVIDENCE ROAD  
GRAFTON, MA 01519

## Community Preservation Committee

2023 APR -4 1 AM 9:48

RECEIVED TOWN CLERK  
GRAFTON, MA

### Meeting Minutes March 2, 2023

The meeting was called to order at 7:01pm by Chairman, John Stephens. He asked for a moment of silence in memory of long time CPC member Jim Gallagher.

#### Welcome New At Large Member

John welcomed Ken Holberger back to the committee who stated he was happy to be back.

#### Treasurer's Report

Paul reviewed the Treasurer's Report with the committee. The document was screen shared for those participating remotely. A motion was made by Brook and seconded by Ken to accept the Treasurer's Report as presented.

At this point, the committee realized they had not taken attendance by roll call given the meeting was hybrid with committee members attending remotely. Attendance was taken by roll call: Ken Holberger, aye; Paul Scarlett, aye; Kristen Belanger, aye; Eric Swenson, aye; Justin Wood, aye; Brook Padgett, aye; John Stephens, aye. Absent: Sandy Brock. Staff in attendance: Joann Duncan

Justin asked about the impact on the CPA Funds if the state match were to be zero this year. Ken stated it would never be zero, but it will be lower than previously expected due to the reduction in recorded deeds at the state level.

The motion passed 8-0 by roll call: Ken Holberger, aye; Paul Scarlett, aye; Kristen Belanger, aye; Eric Swenson, aye; Justin Wood, aye; Brook Padgett, aye; John Stephens, aye.

#### Clerk's Report

Joann screenshared the February minutes indicating the February 23<sup>rd</sup> meeting was not held due to lack of quorum. A motion was made by Justin and seconded by Brook to accept the February minutes. Motion passed 8-0 by roll call: Ken Holberger, aye; Paul Scarlett, aye; Kristen Belanger, aye; Eric Swenson, aye; Justin Wood, aye; Brook Padgett, aye; John Stephens, aye.

A motion was made by Justin and seconded by Brook to accept the meeting minutes of January 26<sup>th</sup>. The motion passed 7-0-1 by roll call: Ken Holberger, abstained; Paul Scarlett, aye; Kristen Belanger, aye; Eric Swenson, aye; Justin Wood, aye; Brook Padgett, aye; John Stephens, aye.

### **Annual Spring Town Meeting Grant Proposals**

Norcross Park Inclusive Playground – Jen Andersen reviewed the grant proposal for the inclusive playground at Norcross Park. The Recreation Department is seeking funding for an inclusive play space. Age 2-5 structure needs to be replaced due to damage sustained in a storm. The other structure needs replacement due to age. Doing all the updates at one time saves time and money.

Jen stated this project meets the CPA priorities as well as the Town and State open space goals and the towns ADA goals.

She reviewed the planned amenities at the park. The request is for approximately \$228,000 which is a portion of the total cost. The entire project is over \$300 with other funds coming from the insurance monies due to the storm, capital money, and in-kind.

Joann screen-shared the plans. At this point in the meeting, Brook recused himself as he lives across the street from Norcross Park.

Justin asked about the cost of the park and expressed concerns about it passing at Town Meeting. He asked what the plan would be if this did not pass at Town Meeting. He stated he is in favor of the project.

Paul asked if there are other playgrounds that need to be updated. She stated everything is starting to age out in general. She emphasized that most of Norcross has been out of commission for a year now and it is the most popular playground in town. She reviewed the playgrounds that could be poured in place. Norcross is the best one for this. Jen reviewed the status of the other parks and stated the other playgrounds may not be appropriate for a poured in place playground.

A renovation is planned for the Ferry Street Park which will be paid for with ARPA Funding.

Kristen emphasized the goal of the Recreation Commission is to get an accessible park in town. Norcross Park is a very good spot for an accessible park.

Justin asked about the plans for Whitney Park. Jen stated that park is not under the jurisdiction of the Recreation Commission.

Rental Assistance for Housing Authority Residents and Applicants – Eric Swenson reviewed his grant application seeking \$10,000 for a rental assistance program for Housing Authority Residents and Applicants. He stated he had been working with Jim Gallagher on this project.

Eric stated the Housing Authority provides housing but there are still rent payments that must be made. There are two problems that people can face and that is in making these rental payments as well as alleviating rental debt of some applicants. This program would allow people in the Housing Authority to retain their housing in times of hardship.

The Housing Trust would establish a fund that could be used for this. He stated more information is needed concerning the payment of back rent for applicants. Jim and the Executive Director of the Housing Authority felt \$10,000 was a good amount to establish the fund and Eric sees the need for a request annually to replenish any funds used. This grant request is from the Affordable Housing Trust to establish a rental assistance program for Grafton Housing Authority renters and possibly for potential renters.

Ken feels this is a great idea. Justin asked if the funds would ever sunset. Ken suggested a lengthy sunset. John asked who would be the final say on if this money could be used to benefit non-Grafton residents. Eric stated he would reach out to the Housing Authority Executive Director to clarify some of these situations around non-payment of rent and potential residents.

John asked if Eric could determine the average monthly rent payment. That should be used in determining how much money is needed in this program.

Brook asked who would be administering the program.

Justin stated overall he is in favor of this proposal but did state there are some details that need to be cleared up. He asked if the Executive Director of the Housing Authority could attend a meeting to answer questions. Eric stated the AHT would be the account holder and the jurisdiction of releasing these funds would be at the discretion of the Executive Director of the housing Authority.

Eric stated he will be following up with the Executive Director regarding these matters and it was his understanding she was meeting with the Housing Authority Attorney regarding it and potential warrant article wording.

Joann offered to call the Community Preservation Coalition to see if there were any other towns that have done something similar.

Brook asked if it might be a conflict to have the Housing Authority administer this program.

Institute Woods Recreation Path Design and Engineering – Ken presented the grant proposal for the Grafton Town Planner who was unable to attend. He provided background on the original project. There was a discussion on who originally advocated for this design project. It is believed it was for public safety. It is believed the schools expressed an interest in having this path as a safety measure. Justin believed the concern came from the development of the Grafton Upton Railroad Propane facility.

Ken stated a report was provided in January 2023, but it is based on a study done in the 2019 timeframe. The report has three concepts and the original designs are from November 2019.

The concepts presented are both over \$1 million and the reasoning for choices made were not explained. There are also conflicts within the report.

The initial proposal sent in by the Town Planner was for \$75,000 for detailed plans on the construction of a million-dollar path. In the report there was no clear indication why the path had to have certain characteristics as laid out in the report. Ken questioned if the public safety and school departments even knew about this report.

Ken stated he and the Town Planner are recommending a recommissioning of this study and to have minimum requirements identified by the stakeholders.

Brook asked if this path would be a walking path or an emergency path.

Kristen asked if Pulte was asked for any funding of this path when the subdivision was approved. Justin believes Pulte bought the subdivision already approved. He does not think there were any conditions in the sale regarding the trail. Justin stated the Planning Board could not add anything unless the developer came back to the Planning Board for a plan modification.

Ken screen-shared the subdivision plan. He reviewed the proposed concepts in the report, showing the proposed trail on the subdivision map. He explained the difficulties with the concepts and offered another option (concept #4). Ken believes the trail can be created without the switch backs and believes it will reduce the cost.

The new proposal is requesting funding for a new study.

Brook asked if there was still interest in having this trail and stated it needs to be determined if this is a walking path or an emergency management path. Ken stated this study will resolve that conflict. Paul questioned if CPA Funds could be used for a public safety trail.

Colleen Roy asked who would be advocating for the project. Ken stated the Town Planner would be the project manager. Justin stated he would investigate the details of the plan and the conditions of the subdivision. He added nothing is preventing anyone from going to Pulte to see if they would be willing to pay for part of the trail. He reviewed the other development plans for that area. Kristen asked about other connectivity of this path to those areas.

Joann confirmed that the original grant proposal submitted by the Town Planner was to complete design work, however, the proposal is not changed to one seeking funds to update the study. The Town Planner is seeking \$18,500 to have this study updated. There is a schedule of what will be completed for the money.

John stated he questions if this is ready to be done now. Justin stated he will investigate the details on the conditions and the plan proposals. John stated he wants to hear what the schools and public safety departments feel about this project. Ken suggested the Planning

Department could ask them all if the study should be updated. John feels the critical players have not been asked if this is still a priority project.

Justin stated prior to the next meeting, the Town Planner can ask Pulte if they would contribute to the study. He added she could check with the TA, Fire, Police, and Schools to see if this were a project they would like to see continue.

#### **Warrant Articles for Spring Town Meeting**

Joann reviewed with the committee the known articles for Spring Town Meeting: FY24 budget articles for reserves and admin expenses, as well as the Pell Farm and Town House bond payment. This is the Town Meeting where the AHT reserves are typically transferred to the AHT. A member of the Trust should attend and provide a report of any CPA Funds in the Affordable Housing Trust that have been expended. She suggested John reach out to the Chairman of the AHT.

#### **Project Signage**

John stated he wanted Joann to check into having signs created for CPA funded projects that are currently in progress (during construction). Joann screen shared a document she created from the zoning bylaws. She reviewed her conversation with Bob Berger. The initial conversation was that a by law amendment would be needed, but then felt the exemption would be under number 2. Justin initially felt this exemption would only hold for town property. He felt if Bob said this exemption was ok, then it is.

The committee discussed the number and design of the sign they are looking for. Joann will follow up with Sunshine Signs on this issue and get a new quote.

#### **CPC Administrative Assistant Job Description**

There are no new developments on the posting of the CPC Administrative Assistant job. Justin stated if the Select Board is doing the hiring for this position, they should be drawing up the job description and posting the job. John stated he needs to find out the process for posting this job.

#### **CPC By Law Change Recommendation from the By Law Study Committee**

John stated there is a very minor by law change being proposed by the by Law Review Committee. It is housekeeping in nature. A motion was made by Justin and seconded by Brook that Joann sends a memo to the By Law Review Committee stating the CPC has reviewed the proposed change and the committee is in agreement. The motion passed 6-0 by roll call: Ken Holberger, aye; Paul Scarlett, aye; Kristen Belanger, aye; Justin Wood, aye; Brook Padgett, aye; John Stephens, aye.

#### **Project Updates**

Affordable Housing Trust Update – Eric left the meeting earlier; there was no update.

Town Records Archival Project – Paul stated he has not heard anything new on this project. He said he would have an update for the next meeting.

Historic Gravestones – John has not had an opportunity to speak with Richard Whitney yet. Justin stated Richard told him he had purged all the information he had. The committee is back to square one.

Grafton Common Restoration – Paul provided an update on the items being finished up including the irrigation system, an archway lantern, and a sign for the back side of the new electrical panel. He also explained the need for a railing on the main entrance to the bandstand. This railing would need to be on both sides, in the middle, and extended about a foot into the bandstand. A variance request is being sought to not put a railing in the middle and not extend a foot into the bandstand. Historic District Commission had been approached by the Chairman of the Grafton Accessibility Commission about the benches on the Common. The AAB stated because there are four accessible benches, that is fine. Other than that, there are a few small items the contractor needs to complete. A ribbon cutting is planned. Seeking the variances will not keep the Common from being used. Brook asked about the “Old Fountain” which is stored with DPW right now. He asked if that could be included somewhere on the Common.

Weights and Measures – The cabinet will be remaining where it is in the Municipal Center. The project is not yet closed out as they are waiting on reimbursement from the library for the cost of the electrical plug that was installed.

Lions Club Property Recreational Improvements (Phase II and III) – John stated work on the bathrooms has started.

Cisco Homestead – Justin asked Joann if Rae confirmed the last bill sent by Rae was the final. He stated that Rae would not have a project proposal for this funding round. Joann stated she would coordinate with Rae and Paul on the closing out of this project.

Recreation ADA Projects – Kristen stated no new updates on the ADA projects at the parks.

UUSGU Universal Accessibility Project – Paul has not received an update.

SGES Playground Accessibility Project – Justin will follow up for the April meeting.

95 North Street Accessible Passive Recreation Park – Surveying has started, and the town work will take place from June to September and the contractor work will follow after that.

Robinson Property Purchase – Joann read the update from the Town Administrator on this project. The town has been able to move forward from the Title issues. Currently they are awaiting documentation from the seller. Colleen Roy provided more details on the title issue.

Baseline Reports – No update on this item.

A motion was made by Justin and seconded by Ken to adjourn at 8:54pm. The motion passed 6-0 by roll call: Ken Holberger, aye; Paul Scarlett, aye; Kristen Belanger, aye; Justin Wood, aye; Brook Padgett, aye; John Stephens, aye.

Respectfully submitted by,  
Joann Duncan

The meeting can be viewed at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rvLLELSaNCg&list=PL1QHaxGDk2RXD9JZxPXyqO71gkWF TL8hG&index=1>