



TOWN OF WHATELY
Whately, Massachusetts 01093

Community Preservation Committee
Alan Sanderson Jr., Chair

MINUTES

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 13, 2019

TOWN HALL

Present: Alan Sanderson, Doug Coldwell, Judy Markland, Andrew Ostrowski, Donna Wiley, Catherine Wolkowicz

Absent: Jonathan Edwards

Also present: Montserrat Archbald, Margaret Christie, Rebecca Jones, Scott Jackson, Tom Litwin, Bob Sobola, Mary Stuart; Mark Wamsley, Kestrel Land Trust (KLT)

Alan Sanderson called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m. He welcomed new At-Large Member Doug Coldwell, who has replaced John Devine as liaison to the Agricultural Commission.

The minutes of the CPC meeting of October 9, 2019 were approved unanimously.

Judy Markland and Catherine Wolkowicz reported that they have reviewed the new town accountant's CPA financial reports. It appears that certain expenses have been mis-recorded (some in the wrong fiscal year and some attributed to the wrong project). Judy and Catherine believe that the balance in the unallocated reserve should be approximately \$140,000, and that the open space "bucket" held approximately \$73,200 as of July 1, 2019. The status of future Town Hall debt financing is also unclear, but they have not yet met with the Town Clerk to resolve that question. They hope to secure reliable financial reports before the CPC's December meeting so that proposal review can proceed with a clear understanding of the funds available to be awarded. (The level of matching support to be provided by the State, however, will not be clear for some months.)

Alan invited Mark Walmsley to speak about the plan for KLT to acquire the Dauchy property in Town Center to serve the public for hiking, cross-country skiing, snowmobiling, and other low-impact recreational activities. A Conservation Restriction would be held by the Whately Conservation Commission. Mark reported that the ideal parking area, for four to six cars, will be located to the immediate left of the entrance to the logging road off Chestnut Plain Road. KLT has begun to investigate alternate points of entry to the property, but restrictions on the Casey property, whose Conservation Restriction does not allow parking, and the absence of conversations thus far with adjacent private property holders other than Tom Litwin make it unlikely that an alternate entrance will be identified this year. Mark believes that purchase of permanent trail access to multiple properties may be possible over time. He also noted that re-routing of trails to avoid the Litwin property may involve building boardwalks over semi-wetland property, which will add to the project cost.

Mark reported that the value of the Conservation Restriction is \$105,000. The Conservation Restriction would be held by the Conservation Commission, which would share responsibility with KLT for an annual property review and report to the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation.

Bob Sobola of the Whately Snowmobile Club noted that the WSC maintains snowmobile trails throughout the Dauchy property, as part of a network of trails connecting to Conway, Goshen and Williamsburg. The WSC is eager to continue that work. Mark noted that KLT would be responsible for marking and maintaining hiking trails on the property, as well as building an entry kiosk and stocking it with trail maps. (Year One of these expenses are included in the project budget.)

Scott Jackson recommended a visit to the Greenberg property in Westhampton as an example of KLT maintenance of a plot similar to the Dauchy property. He noted that the Conservation Commission has not previously presented a request for CPA funding, and that the request to the CPA is consistent with other Conservation Restriction projects managed by KLT, proportionate to total project budget. Several of those present asked the total value of Agricultural Protection Restrictions funded with Whately CPA funds thus far; they total just under \$150,000. Alan noted possible concern among Town residents about taking a large plot off the tax rolls. CPC members reiterated their surprise about the modest goal for private support (c. \$20,000), and encouraged KLT to begin individual fundraising among Whately residents promptly. Judy noted that the number and volume of CPA requests this year may be high. CPC members encouraged the Conservation Commission to secure an endorsement for the proposal from the Recreation Committee.

Following discussion of the Dauchy property, Alan asked CPA members to summarize possible requests they know of for this year. They include two possible APRs; the veterans memorial park; and additional work on the cemeteries, as well as the standing commitments for Town Hall debt service and the track at Frontier Regional High School. Catherine reported that the Housing Trust/Committee is unlikely to submit a request until an appropriate site for multiple rental units has been identified. Judy noted that an award for the Dauchy project could be funded partially from the Open Space bucket and partially from unallocated reserves, as it fits under both open space and recreation objectives of the CPA. Proposals will be due on Tuesday, December 10.

Alan initiated discussion of the Community Preservation Plan. CPC members endorsed the revised goals submitted by the Historical Commission. They include:

- Rehabilitate historically significant buildings and structures in Whately.
- Conserve and document gravestones and landscapes in the town cemeteries.
- Conserve the town's historic records and artifacts and provide storage to ensure their preservation.
- Conserve the Historical Society's collection of Whately artifacts, photographs, and documents.
- Provide signage and educational material for town historic resources.
- Update the existing inventory of historic houses, tobacco barns, mill sites, and stone walls.

The Agricultural and Conservation Commissions are reviewing data in the Plan about protected land. Donna Wiley read a new goal for Recreation that was approved by the Open Space Committee this week:

- Develop a multi-purpose trail network that provides hiking and other outdoor recreational possibilities such as snowmobiling, cross-country skiing, mountain biking, horseback-riding, and the like, and provides links to trails of adjacent towns.

The Recreation Committee will review this goal at its November meeting and report to the CPC.

The Housing Committee has no changes to the plan at this time.

The next meeting was set for Wednesday, December 11, 5:00 p.m. in the Town Hall Meeting Room.

The meeting adjourned at 6:40 p.m.