

**CPC MEETING MINUTES
MONDAY, JANUARY 12, 2015
7 p.m.**

In Attendance: Karen Connolly, Stephen Coulter, Adam Conrad, Harvey Gates, William Limbacher, Joshua McKain, Marla Minier, Frank Snow

Also in Attendance: Kevin Cafferty-DPW Director, Jen Geoghegan, Val Baker, Richard Bochenek, Richard Dennis, Theresa Nielson, Patrice Maye, Jay FitzGibbons

Walk-ins: Interested parties and abutters also attended the hearing

The meeting was called to order at 7 pm.

Acceptance of Agenda – The Board voted unanimously (8-0) to accept the agenda as presented

Approval of September 8, 2015 Minutes: The Board voted unanimously (8-0) to accept the minutes as written.

SCHEDULED HEARINGS FOR THIS MEETING:

North Scituate Beach Nourishment Project: Mr. Kevin Cafferty, DPW Director – The DPW Engineering Department's application to restore 2,800 feet of public land along Glades and Surfside Roads in No. Scituate.

Mr. Cafferty explained that the last time the town added sand to this beach area was 1975 or 1976, but before the Blizzard of 1978. In the past, the Army Corps of Engineers would replenish the beach with sand every 5 to 10 years. Due to the Blizzard of 1978 and many subsequent years of erosion the beach is so depleted of sand that, during high tide, it is not a useable beach anymore.

Mr. Cafferty said that an application to the State's grant program for 'soft structural repairs' that provides money to prevent additional erosion by replenishing the sand, resulted in two grants:

- \$118,000 for engineering
- \$241,163 for permitting (Mr. Cafferty explained that permitting in a project like this has to go through several departments, including Coastal Zone Management, Game Department of Fisheries, EPA, etc.)

Mr. Cafferty said that the State was going to give the Town \$750,000 and, if the town matched that, they would be set up for future funds. But the Department of Game and Fisheries said the project needed to be permitted, and the scope of permitting will delay the work for about a year. The DPW's 2015 application had asked for \$900,000 in matching CPC funds, but is lowering their request to \$200,000 for the permitting and any additional costs or issues that come up during this phase.

It was discussed that, once approved, the town has a 10 year permit to complete the work. He added they are working with the state and once all the permits are done, if the funding source stays even, the Town will have access to additional funding from the State. He added that it was his expectation that it would be 2 years before the sand is put down and 10 years to build it up to the level that is needed.

The CPC asked if the total estimate was still projected at \$6.2 million. Mr. Cafferty said it could be but he doesn't see the state coming up with that much money. He added that we don't need to do \$6 million and that any amount we can get, even \$1 million worth of sand, would be a significant improvement to the beach area.

There was additional discussion related to the projected timeline and future funding needs to complete the project; dredging issues; Foreshore Protection; and parking issues at Minot Beach.

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Vinal Avenue Pathway Connector – Val Baker, Jen Geoghegan, Jenkins School Council – The Jenkins School Committee’s application for \$450,000 to install a 6’ pathway (4/10 mile) on Vinal Avenue creating a safe walking path between Stockbridge Road and Kent Street.

Ms. Baker and Ms. Geoghegan explained that both Vinal Ave and First Parish Road face traffic challenges during arrival and dismissal of school. Jenkins School Council believes improving access to and from school is pertinent and a benefit to the Scituate community. Some benefits include new walking path connections to the town center, Driftway Path, Peggotty Beach and the Lighthouse, and safe access to Jenkins playground, fields, and basketball court for recreation. Although Scituate Public Schools and public safety adapted a new arrival and dismissal structure in October 2014, these initiatives do not meet all of the safety needs for the approximately 60 school walkers.

Ms. Geoghegan discussed the actions they have taken so far to inform area residents and abutters via door to door discussions and/or leaving a letter outlining the proposal, and to enlist the support of various town departments. Supporters include the DPW, Planning Board, School Committee, Traffic Rules and Regulations, Recreation Commission, and Senior Center.

She pointed out that the Scituate Sidewalk Study listed Vinal Ave as one of the top 10 streets designated as a priority for sidewalks. This was seven years ago and the Safe Routes to School funding has been exhausted. The presenters cited several reasons why this proposal meets the criteria of the Community Preservation Act.

Mr. Cafferty joined the discussion to highlight the DPW’s current assessment of the project and the challenges, which include existing telephone poles along the proposed route. Further study needs to be done.

Jeffrey Kalla, a resident of the neighborhood, voiced the concerns of some of the abutters about the project, the timeline and a perceived lack of communication between the School Council and the area residents. He also noted that he thinks this is more of a school safety issue and not for recreation and therefore doesn’t meet the CPC requirements.

The CPC pointed out that this meeting was a hearing only and that the CPC vote would not be taken until February. After that, all CPC approved projects needed to be approved by the Advisory Committee, the Selectman, and ultimately approved by town voters at the Annual Town Meeting in April. It was stated for clarification that approving funds for a project was only the first step in a long process. It was also pointed out that all of the 2015 applications and meeting agendas can be viewed on the CPC Website.

Additional discussion included other school crossing areas that are used at St. Mary’s and Carrie Litchfield Road; whether or not the current changes have alleviated the issues; confusing signage on Vinal Ave; the need to prioritize all of the pathways and trails that have been approved by the town and still need to be done.

Driftway Property – Cedar Hollow Proposal – Richard Bochenek, Richard Dennis – Application requesting \$450,000 to preserve a seven acre parcel of land located in the triangle bounded by Old Driftway, Old Kent Street and New Kent Street.

Mr. Bochenek explained that this parcel of land, owned by the Scituate Housing Authority, is currently 100% undeveloped and includes an actively worked farm and a diversity of wildlife. They propose preserving the farm, constructing walking paths through the property, and developing a historical and environmentally oriented “rest area”.

The objectives of the proposal include protecting environmentally sensitive property, improving access and trail linkages to public recreation and land use areas, balancing open space with development demands to reduce service demands and tax burden, protecting rare and endangered wildlife habitat, preserving the Town’s rural character, and enhancing educational opportunities in the area. A key benefit is to provide an attractive entrance to the Harbor district.

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Mr. Bochenek pointed out that the Scituate Housing Authority has considered developing 20 units of housing on the property. While not a large development, it will still be costly due to the extensive site work that would be required. A new development in this area would add to the congestion in a section of the town that already has a lot of traffic with the Greenbush Train and parking lot, condos, a landscape company, Widow's Walk, the boat launch, to name a few. The proceeds of the sale would go to the Scituate Housing Authority to construct additional affordable housing in a more appropriate area of the town, or use the funds to maintain existing housing. It was mentioned that the SHA has had this land for 20 years.

- Scituate Housing Authority Liaison Stephen Coulter said that the SHA has had open forum discussions on options for the property and the best use of the land. The SHA has also walked the property. He did not rule out their willingness to sell the land. Mr. Coulter added that he would recuse himself from the CPC's future vote on the project.
- Conservation Liaison Frank Snow said that they only buy private land for conservation and consider watershed areas a priority for land purchase. He is not sure if this property fits that profile. He added that Conservation typically buys land for less than \$20,000 an acre. At that rate, this property would be worth \$140,000 which would be too low for affordable housing. Although he agreed that Driftway is busy, there is a need for affordable housing and thinks that the field could be preserved and trails included in the overall design.

There was additional discussion about whether or not the CPC could buy this land from the SHA because it is not currently for sale. It was also noted that the CPC purchases private property not Town property.

It was generally agreed that there was a need for further discussion about what the land is worth to the SHA (as it was also generally agreed that \$450,000 would not be enough for them to build in another part of town) before the CPC could determine whether or not it could be purchased under the rules of the CPA.

Mr. Bochenek and Mr. Dennis said this is their first discussion with any town board and think that they have created a new and unique way to manage land in the town. They are looking forward to more discussions with SHA and CPC.

Stockbridge Road Land – Theresa Nielsen – Application requesting \$950,000 to purchase her property at 108 Stockbridge Road to build a new Senior Center.

Ms. Nielsen has had the land for 29 years and is ready to retire. She has 9 ½ acres that is landscaped, and has a community garden, town water, sewer, sidewalks, etc. The location is good and everything is in place for a new Senior Center. The land is valued at \$1.7 million but she is willing to sell for less if it can be used and enjoyed by the seniors.

Five acres can be built on and 4four acres are wetlands with a brook.

CPC can only buy land that is for conservation purposes and, due to CPA rules, could not purchase for this proposed use. Under the guidelines, she could offer it to the CPC for affordable housing.

Tilden Trail & Harbor Walk Connector – Patrice Maye & Jay FitzGibbons – Application for \$168,934 for the development of a 6'-8' wide ¼ mile multi-purpose trail from the Beaver Dam/Tilden Road intersection to a downtown pathway that begins at 26 Brooks Street.

Ms. Maye explained that Tilden Road was designated as a Scenic Road in 1974 and provides a main point of access to the Harbor area. Although it is used extensively by pedestrians, joggers, cyclists, families and children, it is a very narrow and highly trafficked road and a main route for emergency vehicles. There is no safe passage to the Harbor or the Jenkins Elementary School. The many benefits to developing this pathway include completing the large "loops" connecting many neighborhoods, recreational areas and historic landmarks and connecting neighborhoods along Tilden Road, Sand Hills, the Lighthouse and Harbor Walk.

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Ms. Maye added that, in 2007, the Sidewalk Study cited Tilden Road as a concern but was considered a lower priority due to the number of homes. She pointed out that, due to the new developments being built in that section of Tilden Road, it is expected that the use of the road and safety concerns will increase.

Mr. Cafferty said that they could take a closer look but, before they take up another trail, the DPW needs to catch up on CPC projects that have been approved, including the Humarock basketball courts, softball fields, Country Way Trails, the Skate Park, and Tilden Trail Part I. He added that engineering could take a look and that there are plans to do some traffic studies in the area, it just isn't considered a high priority now.

There was additional discussion regarding the status, challenges and obstacles the DPW has encountered with some of the current projects, and the suggestion that perhaps the engineering phase should be completed to determine a project's feasibility before the Town votes on it.

A final comment was made by Joshua McKain about the DPW possibly using outside contractors to move projects along.

The CPC and Mr. Cafferty agreed that \$168,000 to complete this project was not realistic.

Old Business

- The WiFi password for the GAR Hall is **"PERRYPOST31"**
- CPC passed on both the Crosby and Damon property's before the end of the year. The CPC thanked Frank Snow for his hard work on these purchases. We have 6 months to get the access road done.

New Business

- Website – CPC discussed the importance of keeping the website up to date; Board members appreciated that it was easy to access the applications.
- An additional meeting needs to be scheduled in February for the vote. It was decided that CPC would meet on February 11th if a location could be found.

Meeting was adjourned 9:43 p.m.

Mary Sprague
Administrative Assistant