Town of SHELBURNE

Community Preservation Committee

MINUTES

Regular Meeting ~ February 25, 2025

A duly posted meeting of the Shelburne Community Preservation Committee was held at the Fire Station meeting room, Little Mohawk Rd, on Tuesday, February 25, 2025.

Present: Carolyn Wheeler

Will Flanders

Joan LaPierre

Susie Berger

Mary Lou Gallup

John MacGibbon

Jennifer Hale

Absent: Edith Bingham

Administrative Assistant: none

Guests: Kate Conlin, Flannery Geier, representing the project to build and expand playground at BSE

The meeting was called to order at 4:11 p.m. by Chair Will Flanders. The meeting was recorded.

**Questions for visitors regarding the playground project**

Katelin Conlin and Flannery Geier attended the meeting to provide answers to questions the CPC members had posed at a previous meeting. Flannery sent a written update to CPC members.

* **Has the group asked for a specific amount from Buckland?** No. The town asked for a Capital Budget Request form, with a deadline of November. Money toward this project will likely be included in next year’s budget. The town is supportive of the project and included it on its priority list for FRCOG. The town did not ask BSE to submit the capital Budget Request; the request is coming from the group spear-heading the effort. Because the project is not on Buckland property, the budget request is possibly more complicated but the town recognizes its obligation to help maintain the school/school grounds. As district reorganization of schools plays out, BSE very likely to remain as it is, but if it were to close, the repurposing use of that space will still allow of community access to the playgrounds.
* **What is the current vision of how the project will unfold?** Two phases: phase one in this coming year, phase two next year. Phase one uses 100k in funding from Shelburne; they are also meeting with Rep. Paul Mark in March or April to tour the site and will meet with him again, seining an additional 100-200k from the state and they have also reached out to the Mary Lyon Foundation (MLF) for more funds. Kristin Baker from MLF has a list of other grant opportunities and MLF will be a reference for the group in any grant applications they make, with a goal of 300k or more. They have begun to collect bids from manufacturers and once they have preliminary numbers will be able to decide how much they can accomplish in phase one. After securing the major part of their funding they plan to approach local businesses that might want to contribute and are seeking either donations of money or in-kind donations from business.
* **Has the group considered how they will recognize and honor donors and businesses that contribute?** They have thought about this but have no specific plans. They spoke with a rep from the PTO in Hadley who suggested that donors are typically fine if plans for recognition are to be determined.
* **If CPC approves $100,000 in funding, what specifically would those funds be used for?** To build one playground, starting with the preschool and possibly do much-needed repairs and some new equipment, including adaptable equipment could also be added to existing playground. Completing this work will create momentum and demonstrate to state funders that the project is viable. There are grants from T-Mobile and Eversource that require projects to be shovel-ready and funds from CPC would get the project to the point where they could apply for those grants. They’ve consulted Massachusetts Office of Disabilities and the Massachusetts Architectural Access Board for advice, but not for funding. Also have contacted Cynthia Schwartz from the Buckland Recreation Dept. Money from the state for use in phase one may be secured as of July 1, but accessed later.
* If CPC funds this project, it will present the project at Town Meeting. **Does the group have information/PR materials the CPC can use in presenting to the town?** Yes. They have a survey open to solicit ideas from the community and once they have a sense of how much they have to spend will also meet with teachers and staff at BSE to get their ideas on what is most needed. They will get a 3-D rendering of the plan and a parent has built a website for the PTO that includes information about the playground.

**Minutes**

Discussion of last meeting minutes: should scoring of project applications be included or not in the minutes. Earlier in the process of reviewing applications there was some hesitation to include scores in meeting minutes while CPC was tweaking/fine tuning the scoring rubric but in the interest of transparency, important to do so now. Emphasis on the fact that these are scores that rate the hard copy applications – not the value of individual projects to the community – and are preliminary in that there will be further steps in funding of projects.

Motion made to approve minutes as amended; seconded. Roll call vote: Will – aye; John – aye; Joan – aye; Carolyn – aye; Mary Lou – aye; Susie – aye; Jennifer – aye. Motion passed 7-0-0

**Hiring a CPC Clerk**

Will introduces Susan Durkee, who has applied for the position of CPC clerk.

Motion made to hire Susan; seconded. Roll call vote: Will – aye; Joan – aye; John – aye; Carolyn – aye; Mary Lou – aye; Susie – aye; Jennifer – aye. Motion passed 7-0-0

**CPC applications on Town website**

Jen has not been able to do it yet. Susan could do that kind of work if/when hired as clerk. Terry has the name of someone who helps support the town site who could teach Susan what she needs to know.

**CPC Board Representation Policy**

In response to need for clarification about appointed committee members vs. members of CPC, Will shares a policy to make this clear. A suggestion was made to add a statement that members of CPC recuse themselves from any issue that involves family members. Susie pointed out that the last line of the proposed policy sates that all state and federal laws and town guidelines apply, which covers conflict of interest, as does mandatory ethics training of all people serving on boards and committees. Mary Lou shared, as an example, the involvement of her and her husband in the proposal for CPC funding for the upgrading of the pickle ball facilities. She contacted the State Ethics Board for clarification about whether or not her membership on the CPC represented a conflict of interest and was told no, it doesn’t. This would only be the case where there is a financial interest at stake.

Motion made to adopt the policy; seconded. Roll call vote: Will – aye; John – aye; Joan – aye; Carolyn – aye; Mary Lou – aye; Susie – aye; Jennifer – aye. Motion passed 7-0-0

**Recommendations for CPC Funding**

The committee considers six project proposals. In addition to funding general projects, it has designated three categories – housing, historic preservation and recreation – each of which is allocated 10% of available funds.

1. Request for a sidewalk next to Trinity Church/Baptist lot

Motion made to fund this project; seconded.

Discussion: This project has some complexity and has not been well thought out. It is on private, not public land and the applicant is not a recognized group. If there were a public benefit, the issue of public vs private land should not be an obstacle and the CPC might approve this if there were an easement; there are other ways to get it done.

Vote to fund: Yes – 0 No – 7 Motion not passed.

1. Hill Cemetery project $8000

Motion made to fund this project; seconded

Discussion: This has been an ongoing project that needs money to continue. It is the only town-owned cemetery. If approved, does the CPC need to indicate if the funds come from the 14k ear-marked for historic preservation projects?

Vote to fund: Yes – 7 No – 0 Motion passed.

1. Housing projects Motion made to fund the project on Mechanic St.; seconded.

Discussion: there is money available from other sources to fund this work and there are lots of issues with the site. The site work needed can be paid for by the town with other funds.

Vote to fund: Yes – 0 No – 7

Motion to fund the project on Main St; seconded

Discussion: this project also has site issues and can also be paid for from other sources.

Vote to fund: Yes – 0 No – 7 Motion not passed.

1. Arms Library elevator project $45,000

Motion made to fund this project; seconded

Discussion: Question about whether this project falls under historic preservation, because it isn’t specifically preserving an historic building for public use. Accessibility is one upgrade allowed for using historic preservation funds. The CPC members as a whole commended the Arms staff for working to have other funds in place, making the project viable.

Vote to fund: Yes – 7 No – 0 Motion passed.

1. Pickle Ball facilities project

Motion made to consider each part of the project - courts, shade structure, bulletin board - separately when considering funding; seconded.

Motion made to fund the pickle ball court upgrade; seconded

Discussion: What complicates this project is that there are funds available to the Recreation Committee that are untapped and that could be used to fund this project. Is money available to the recreation committee needed for work on the gym? Work on the gym be done using money from the Town for capital expenses. There is a lot of support for pickle ball and for upgrading the facilities but this leads to a broader question of whether it is appropriate to use CPC funds for projects that have other sources of funding. The Community Preservation Act stipulates that CPC money is not intended to cover Town obligations. The CPC needs to justify a taxing 3% for money to fund projects and thus should not spend it on projects that can be funded without CPC support. It is the recreation committee’s responsibility to use the money it has available to do these types of projects, and existing funds can cover the pickle ball court upgrades.

Vote to fund: Yes – 0 No – 7 Motion not passed.

Shade structure at the pickleball courts $8500

Motion made to fund this; seconded

Discussion: A shade structure is needed because it is very hot out on the courts and many older people use them; likewise, sometimes children are there and have no shelter from the sun. Pickle ball players have rigged up temporary shade cloths that are ineffective and labor-intensive to set up and take down each time they come to play. Pop-up tents proved to be problematic (wind carried them over the fence, breaking the tents and damaging cars). This leads back to the issue of the responsibility of the recreation committee to fund proposals like this.

Vote to fund: John – aye; Mary Lou – aye; Will – nay; Joan – nay; Carolyn – nay; Susie -nay; Jennifer – nay. Motion not passed.

Bulletin Board at Conwell Gym $1000

Motion made to fund this; seconded

Discussion: Lots of value in that it shows residents the use of the whole property, covering all things that happen at the gym, not just recreation activities, can be used by multiple programs and is informative. Also, it’s a low-cost way to show support. Question: who is responsible for installation? The recreation committee in partnership with the town/DPW manages the property; the town maintains the building and grounds and would have a say in where the bulletin board is located. In order to feel confident the project will be completed, Will proposed to amend the motion to approve funding contingent on the Recreation Committee accepting the money and

agreeing to spend it on the bulletin board.

Vote on amended motion to fund: Yes – 7 No – 0 Motion passed.

1. Playgrounds at Buckland-Shelburne Elementary $100,000

Motion to fund this; seconded

Discussion: It’s a worthy project and the CPC has the funds. That area is well-used by the community as whole, not just by families of elementary school students. There was some concern about whether the group has the experience to manage a project of this scope. They are lacking experience but are showing tenacity and commitment. The money will be held by the town and disbursed once the group has gotten three bids, selected one and the Selectboard has approved it.

Some concern about BSE not being asked to contribute, given that they have had money for discretionary spending and they haven’t been maintaining the playground.

Mary Lou proposed an amendment is to grant them 80k instead of the amount; no one seconded it. Members noted that this project will likely cost more than the 300k the group is planning to spend in building three play grounds, but if the upper grades are moved to the high school, there will be less need for the more expensive higher-cost equipment for the older kids.

It may be premature to go too far in this project given the uncertainty about how the district schools might shift. Phase one, with its focus on the preschool playground seems the most broadly useful for families. Given that this project will take multiple years to complete and the group might ask for more funding in the future, helpful to see more decisions made about how the building will be used, and whether there is the kind of use that would support three playgrounds there. Still, the current condition of the playgrounds makes this a more urgent need.

Vote to fully fund: Yes – 7 No – 0 Motion passed

Will expressed appreciation to the committee as a whole for the work the committee has put into the establishment of the CPC and to “have everyone’s brilliant minds engaged in this process.”

**Schedule**

Next meeting will be held on March 11, 4pm at the Shelburne Fire Station on Little Mohawk Rd.

Motion to adjourn at 5:56pm; Motion seconded. Roll call vote: Will – aye; John – aye; Joan – aye; Carolyn – aye; Mary Lou – aye; Susie – aye; Jennifer – aye.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan Durkee