

**Community Preservation Committee
February 9, 2022
Hybrid Meeting Minutes**

PRESENT:

Chair Patricia Griffin Starr, Housing Authority representative (In-person)
Vice Chair Joseph Sheehan, Planning Board representative (In-person)
Julie Barbour-Issa, Selectmen-appointed representative (Remote)
Cheryl Doyle, Historical Commission representative (In-person)
Joseph Greeley, Selectmen-appointed representative (In-person)
John Hall, Selectmen-appointed representative (Remote)
Matt Lane, Selectmen/Parks Commission representative (In-person; left the meeting at 7:00pm)
Catherine Walsh, Conservation Commission representative (In-person)

Kristen Phelps, Community Preservation Coordinator (In-person)

ABSENT:

Maria Gallesyan, Selectmen-appointed representative

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 5:32pm by Chair Patricia Griffin Starr at the Norwood Senior Center.

Approval of Minutes

Cheryl Doyle requested a revision to the minutes, reflecting the fact that she made the motion to approve, not Catherine Walsh.

MOTION made by Cheryl Doyle to approve the meeting minutes of January 26, 2022, as revised.
Motion seconded by Matt Lane.

Roll-call vote:

Patricia Griffin Starr: **Aye**
Joseph Sheehan: **Aye**
Julia Barbour-Issa: **Aye**
Cheryl Doyle: **Aye**
Joseph Greeley: **Aye**
John Hall: **Aye**
Matt Lane: **Aye**
Catherine Walsh: **Aye**

Result: 8-0-0 (Approved)

Presentations by Community Preservation Act Applicants

Shattuck Park Improvement Study

Applicants Gordon Smith and Tom Cummings presented. The applicants reported that Shattuck Park is now overgrown. While the Department of Public Works has cut back some overgrown bushes, there have been no new plantings for many years.

In consult with Public Works Director/Town Engineer Mark Ryan, the applicants were advised that a professional landscape study be conducted to determine how to proceed and preserve the area, enhancing the use and beauty of the park. The Board of Selectmen voted in favor of the project and it is now being brought forward to the Community Preservation Committee for consideration.

There have been some concerns related to deed restrictions for the Park. Town Counsel has reviewed and reported that the only restriction is that the land must remain a park.

A study will provide information needed to improve the park, along with cost estimates. A subsequent review with officials and neighbors would then take place before any work commences. Funds for the work could be solicited through donations.

The applicants proposed some ideas to improve the Park, including a fieldstone wall along the perimeter, formal entrance openings, stonedust walking trails, plaques identifying the history of Shattuck Park, benches, and, potentially, low-level lighting.

Judith Howard, a resident of District 3, is a neighbor of Shattuck Park. She does not believe that it is a place for people to congregate at night and is concerned about litter. She would like the park to retain its natural state, with Public Works personnel continuing to clear brush when needed. She further reported that the Board of Selectmen has already stated that there should not be any lights installed.

John Hall stated that he appreciates the long-term view for a master plan. However, he noted that, unlike every other park in Norwood, there is no formal vote on record from Town Meeting to accept the property as a park, creating a series of questions on managing a project. Until and unless it is officially recognized, someone with the legal stature, responsibility, and authority, will need to be the lead for the project.

Resident Carly Rocklen stated that she would like for there to be an opportunity for the public to provide input on park planning.

Ann Haley, a resident of District 4, stated that the park should be left in a natural state and that lighting would disturb the natural habitat for animals. She also does not want fences or walls installed, as they would impede the ability for animals to enter and exit the area. She does agree that the property needs sprucing.

Affordable Housing Deed Restriction

Assistant Town Planner Sarah Bouchard presented.

Massachusetts has a state law known as Chapter 40B which requires communities to retain an inventory of affordable housing. A subsidized housing inventory is maintained by the Town with many units added over the years. Most of them have a deed restriction that extends in perpetuity. This is an instrument that is used to ensure affordability.

The Town currently has a diverse portfolio of properties that all came online at varying times. A number of units' affordability restrictions in the inventory expire in the next few years. One tool that other municipalities have utilized is to issue grants as incentives to property owners. This is important for two reasons: the Town does not want the inventory to drop below the required threshold; and to retain existing residents in their affordable homes.

The project request is to negotiate deed restriction extensions with owners of units that are soon set to expire. This is an eligible use of Community Preservation Act funds as it is to preserve affordable housing. If the restriction expires, there is no recourse if the property then goes to market-rate.

Regional Housing Services Organization (One-year Contract)

Paul Halkiotis, Director of Community Planning and Economic Development, presented.

As a member of the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC), Norwood took the lead in exploring the idea of creating a regional entity to provide assistance to communities related to housing and affordable housing. Two grants were received, totaling \$40k, to provide technical assistance in analyzing how a regional housing services organization (RHSO) would operate and whether or not it would be a good fit. In addition, work was done with the Chief Housing Planner at MAPC to help research how other RHSOs operate and what they do for member communities.

In general, a group of four to five communities is advantageous in forming the organization. Some existing ones have seven to eight communities. The Town's department does not have the resources to dig into each type of program. By partnering with other communities, the cost impact is lessened and the services are broadened.

In conducting research dating back to 2011, it was determined that no RHSO has collapsed and member communities seem satisfied.

\$10k for the first year of membership is being requested.

The Board of Selectmen and the Planning Board have voted to support entering into a municipal agreement to create the RHSO. If enough communities vote to join and enter into agreement, there will be a move to fully establish. This year's funds will be used to complete an inventory of housing and a database for communities. In subsequent years, the Department may come back before the Community Preservation Committee for a core membership fee of \$8-10k; and potentially additional funds for other housing programs for Norwood.

John Hall recommended that a case be built for the broadest group of potential supporters, dictating why working with other communities is advantageous and the need for affordable housing options in Norwood.

1927 Town Hall Rendering — Restoration and Preservation

Town Management Analyst Joe Collins presented.

The Town is in the possession of an architectural rendering of a proposed town hall building for what was ultimately chosen as the design for the Town. It is the only architectural rendering known to be in existence. The artwork is currently hanging in the hallway between Room 24 (the Finance Commission room) and the General Manager's office. If restored, there would continue to be public access to the artwork. The General Manager's office is requesting \$10,000 to fund the restoration and preservation.

Historic Annual Town Reports — Restoration and Preservation

Town Management Analyst Joe Collins presented.

The Town is in possession of numerous old annual town reports from 1873 (Norwood's first Annual Town Report) to today. Most of the reports, 48 in total running from 1873 to 1921, are over 100 years old and in horrible condition. If nothing is done, the reports will continue to disintegrate and be lost to time.

The General Manager's office is requesting funding to restore thirteen books. They anticipate seeking additional funding over the next few years to restore the remainder of the books and to purchase a display case. Over the course of the next six to seven years, it is hoped that 90 reports (1873-1963) can be restored.

While the library is in possession of all Town reports in digital form, the only known hardcopies of the old reports are in the General Manager's office. A request for \$14,500 to restore and preserve 13 of the reports is being requested.

The Town will work to have the reports housed and displayed somewhere for the public.

Playground at Norwood Memorial Airport

Recreation Superintendent Travis Farley provided an overview of the proposed project:

- Site preparation work to be completed by the Department of Public Works
- Installation of three playground elements
- Installation of a poured-in-place rubber safety surface along with flexible edge curbing
- Area would total 2,320 square feet

The project goals and objectives were reviewed:

1. Belief that the project falls in line with the Open Space and Recreation Plan by providing another playground with a more accessible surface along with elements for users.
2. Provides residents with another playground for play, providing neighborhoods that surround the airport a play space within walking distance.
3. Airport has recently seen a substantial increase in family spectators to see planes land and take-off. The playground would provide a play option while they visit, making the area more appealing for visitors. A similar project completed in 2018 at the New Bedford Regional Airport saw an increase in visitation.
4. Hope that an increase in visitation would also mark an increase for local businesses surrounding the airport.
5. Recreation Department plans to incorporate the airport more moving forward.
6. The Department has not asked to replace/add a whole playground since 2010.

CPA Relevance:

- Serves a significant number of residents
- Expands the range of recreational opportunities available to Norwood residents of all ages
- Maximizes the utility of land already owned by Norwood; maximizing the potential of a town resource
- Provides recreational opportunities for people with various types of disabilities

Mr. Farley stated that he will work with the Community Planning and Economic Development department to seek grant opportunities, as well as the private sector, to supplement funding.

He also reported that the New Bedford Airport has not seen any issues related to contamination from aircraft at the playground.

John Hall requested data on current visitors to the Airport and the potential users of the playground. Information on current users is based on observation. The playground will be geared to the neighborhood, but open to all. Playground elements will be inclusive for all children.

Julie Barbour-Issa asked if the project could be phased or split if the Committee is unable to fully fund the request. Mr. Farley responded that he would ask if it could be done that way, and will also attempt to seek other funding options.

Next Meeting

The next meetings will be held on February 16, 2022 and on March 2, 2022.

Other Business

Joseph Greeley informed the Committee that work is being done to prepare funding estimate options for the Cooper Park project.

John Hall requested that an updated list of projects, including the various scenarios for funding, and their impact on the budget, be shared for the next meeting.

Adjournment

MOTION made by Cheryl Doyle to adjourn the meeting. Motion seconded by Joseph Greeley.

Roll-call vote:

Patricia Griffin Starr: **Aye**

Joseph Sheehan: **Aye**

Julia Barbour-Issa: **Aye**

Cheryl Doyle: **Aye**

Maria Gallesyan: Absent

Joseph Greeley: **Aye**

John Hall: **Aye**

Matt Lane: Absent

Catherine Walsh: **Aye**

Result: 7-0-0 (Approved)

The meeting adjourned at 7:16pm.

Articles/Exhibits Used at Meeting

- Airport Playground Project slideshow presentation by Norwood Recreation Department
- Annual Town Report Project slideshow presentation by the General Manager's office
- Draft meeting minutes of January 26, 2022 for the Committee's review and approval
- Town Hall Rendering Project slideshow presentation by the General Manager's office

Minutes respectfully submitted to the Committee by John Cianciarulo.