Minutes of the Ashland Community Preservation Committee

Tuesday January 5, 2021
Zoom Online Meeting

In Attendance: Aaron Ladd, Gretchen Bravacos, Cathy Van Lancker, Joe Rubertone, Devin Cashman, Donna Saul, Amy Sayed

Mr. Ladd called the meeting to order at 7:45 pm.

The Committee discussed its current membership while recognizing that two seats remained open. The Committee agreed that it was not ready to alter the Committee’s membership to accommodate the request that it consider having a member from the Housing Trust be given a seat on the CPC. This change would require a change in the charter at Town Meeting. Instead, the Town needs to work with the Housing Authority to appoint a member as soon as possible. The committee also asked that the Select Board work to help fill the Historical Preservation seat currently open as well.

The committee updated a few members on the status of the Valentine project. A December Town Meeting was planned to discuss articles related to zoning changes at the site, but those articles were pulled before the meeting. The Committee reiterated the need for a conservation restriction to be in place to help protect the property long term. Ms. Van Lancker indicated that she would work with the Conservation Restriction Working Group to help get this paperwork going forward.

Under new business, Mr. Ladd presented a Grant Agreement submitted by the Town Forest Committee based on their recent approved project at the December Town Meeting. The Committee wanted one small change to section #8 about making sure that any unused funds at the end of the project would return to CPC. They agreed to vote on the final grant agreement at their next meeting in March. The Committee then discussed the fact that a grant agreement for the Trolley Brook Trail project was not needed because it would in essence be between the Select Board and itself as the Town would be the one managing the project and the money.

Mr. Ladd forwarded a request from Ms. Jenn Ball, Assistant Town Manager, asking for an extension of the current funding sunset date of June 30, 2021 for the Mill Pond Park Project. The committee voted 7-0-0 to extend the funding to December 31, 2021.

Mr. Ladd brought up one possible project to consider in the future related to the Mindess School Building project. Land owned behind the school, currently woods, would be a great site for a nature walk trail and environmental classroom. He referenced to a similar project in Needham behind an Elementary School. Given the January Town Meeting discussion of the Mindess school, he suggested that the CPC advocate for this type of project in the future. Ms. Sayed did some quick research and shared that the town does in fact own the land and that it was given to the Town in the late 1990s. The Committee will discuss this in greater detail in the future.

Ms. Bravacos moved to approve the December 1st minutes. Ms. Saul seconded the motion. The motion passed by a vote of 6-0-1 (Ms Sayed abstained)
The next meeting is scheduled for March 2nd @ 7:30pm

Ms. Van Lancker moved to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Bravacos seconded the motion. The motion passed by a vote of 7-0-0. The meeting was adjourned at 8:40.