

Community Preservation Committee

Meeting of April 15, 2020

Members Present: Cyndi Andrade, Paul Terrio, Gary Searle, Peter Diamond, Will Rigdon, Dave Turi, Bob Paschke, Betsey Whitney, Betty Lehan (at 8:00).

Guests: Susan Jacobson, Tom Cleverdon (Affordable Housing Trust); Lisa Audette (Managing Agent, Norfolk Housing Authority); Donna Jones, Joe Gately (Friends of Mirror Lake).

This meeting was held via Zoom and convened at 7:13 p.m. It was recorded via Zoom.

The primary agenda item was to consider a warrant article to utilize \$50,000 in CPA funds to provide short-term rental and mortgage assistance under the administration of the Norfolk Municipal Affordable Housing Trust, to Norfolk residents whose incomes are negatively impacted by the spread of the Covid-19 pandemic. If approved, Town Administrator Blythe Robinson has indicated that the Select Board could vote to reopen the Annual Town Meeting Warrant at its 4/21 meeting to consider adding this article to the TM warrant.

Cyndi Andrade opened the meeting with an explanation of how we got here – she had forwarded Community Preservation Coalition information on the use of CPA funds for rental assistance to Susan Jacobson in late March, while Susan had received similar guidance from the Mass Housing Partnership at about the same time.

Susan Jacobson then explained how rental assistance could be structured and accessed by local residents in Norfolk units. A number of parameters would have to be met – including income guidelines, proof of need, etc. Susan stated that she would work with applicants to fill out the paperwork if needed. This would be a temporary program only, and monthly assistance would be capped at \$500, and at three months. If demand for assistance exceeded the amount allocated under this warrant article, a lottery would be held to allocate assistance.

Lisa Audette explained that she has already identified a number of residents/families who will be in significant need in both the town's family rental housing and in senior/disabled housing.

Tom Cleverdon, Lisa, and Susan stated that approximately 57 households could be applicable. That does not include families living in 40B units in various developments (Town Hill, Boyd's Crossing, etc.).

It was noted that the Norfolk Town Meeting is scheduled for June 9, and if the warrant article is approved, funds would not be available until July 1. Susan and Tom stated that they are looking into using MHT funds in the interim, by moving funds into a separate account dedicated to this purpose. Question of if any spending could be "reimbursed" if the warrant article is approved. CPC members also emphasized that they wanted any funds to be used just for Norfolk residents. Cyndi will amend the warrant article to state so. It will go to Town Counsel to review. If that is not allowed, CPC may opt to reconsider the warrant. Cyndi noted that between now and town meeting (6/9), there is time to work out details, and pull the article if so voted.

There was discussion of the amount of money in the warrant article (\$50,000) which was based on the amount of money in the Affordable Housing "bucket," specifically if it would be enough. Lisa noted that the average rent for affordable units is currently \$450 (some more, some less). Peter Diamond questioned whether rent was recalculated based on changing income streams, answer is yes. Ultimately, the CPC consensus was to leave the amount at \$50,000 and possibly consider additional funding for the fall town meeting.

There was additional discussion detailing how any program has to be short-term. Susan indicated that a 90-day program would be most likely, with parameters and requirements reassessed at the end of that time.

Also, the warrant article is written to include mortgage assistance for deeded affordable homes. It was noted that there are/will be methods of assistance for mortgages. Members stated that if someone applied for mortgage assistance, it should be well documented that they exhausted every avenue for assistance before applying through the Town.

Gary inquired how the program would be advertised. Would it be a public advertisement or could Housing simply reach out to people directly. Susan indicated the funding availability would be posted on the Norfolk website, and that AHT would look to guidance from Lisa as to people in need.

Peter indicated his reservations on the warrant article, in that there will likely be many other people in Norfolk impacted by job loss from the pandemic who might need housing assistance.

Cyndi read the warrant article:

To see if the Town will vote to allocate from the Community Preservation Fund, Affordable Housing Reserve, \$50,000 to be transferred to the Norfolk Affordable Housing Trust Fund, to be used for a short-term rental assistance program developed in accordance with state and local agency standards and mortgage payment assistance for deed-restricted units, as allowed by Mass. General Laws Chapter 44B, for Norfolk residents; subject to a grant agreement between the Norfolk Select Board and the Norfolk Affordable Housing Trust and approved by the Community Preservation Committee, specifying how the funds will be used, time frame, and reporting and accountability of the funds. The grant agreement may be revised after one year of its enactment to allow any monies remaining to be used to create affordable housing in the Town of Norfolk, or take any other action relative thereto.

She asked for further discussion. Dave Turi made the motion to vote, Paul Terrio seconded the motion, there was no further discussion and a roll call vote was taken: Voting in favor: Cyndi Andrade, Paul Terrio, Dave Turi, Betsey Whitney, Will Rigdon, Gary Searle, Bob Paschke. Voting against: Peter Diamond. Abstaining: Betty Lehan.

The meeting moved on to “unanticipated business.”

Barbara Bartholomew had sent an email to Cyndi updating several projects. The display case on the ground floor of Town Hall is near completion and should be installed soon. The Highland Lake herbicide treatment is scheduled for early June

on areas in coves and edges, with retreatment again in August as needed. City Mills Pond is being evaluated for treatment next year. Finally, the gravestone repair at Pondville and Norfolk cemeteries is still in the works – date TBD. She noted that none of these will be interrupted by the Coronavirus.

Peter Diamond gave an update on the Warelands property on Boardman St. Construction has been ongoing; the small house is under restoration. The Committee also briefly discussed the status of 75 Cleveland St. The new property owners applied to demolish the existing antique structure and build two homes on the parcel.

Will updated the Committee on the status of the three field restorations funded with CPA funds. All have been completed. Additionally, Recreation bought new bleachers, bases, other equipment for the fields.

A motion was made to adjourn the meeting by Paul Terrio and seconded by Dave Turi. After no further discussion, the Committee voted unanimously to adjourn at 8:13.

Signed: _____

Betsey Whitney, clerk