

**MINUTES OF MEETING
COMMUNITY PRESERVATION COMMITTEE
February 1, 2021
Location: Online Meeting**

The Community Preservation Committee (the “CPC” or the “Committee”) convened a regular meeting, duly noticed, on Monday, February 1, 2021 at 7 p.m. via the videoconferencing platform Zoom. CPC members present were Stephen Ober, Chair; Barry Tubman; Ken Newberg; Nathalie Thompson; Marcy Dorna; Sue Zacharias; and Steve Wagner. CPC member Nina Danforth was absent. Recreation Master Plan Steering Committee Chair Trevor MacDonald and member Charlie Hipwood were present. Traffic and Sidewalk Committee (“TSC”) Chair Jay Doyle, Town Engineer Steve Fogg, Project/Civil Engineer Erika Bahrevar, and Recreation Director Chris Fitzgerald were present. Weston Media Center Videographer Jim Tremble and CPC Administrator Tracey Lembo were also present.

Steve Ober read a statement explaining the need for a meeting conducted by remote participation in light of the emergency orders issued by Governor Baker in response to the COVID-19 global pandemic and noted that the meeting was being recorded. Mr. Ober reminded the Committee that the CPC had received 5 applications for funding for 2021 Annual Town Meeting (“ATM”), 2 of which would be discussed at the current meeting.

Public Comment

None

Applications for 2021 Annual Town Meeting:

- **Burchard Park Rehabilitation**

Charlie Hipwood identified himself as the Weston Little League (“WLL”) representative to the Recreation Master Plan Steering Committee (“RMPSC”) and stated that RMPSC Chair Trevor MacDonald and Town of Weston Recreation Director Chris Fitzgerald, both of whom had been working on the 10-year Recreation Master Plan (“RMP”) with Mr. Hipwood for several years, were also on the call. Mr. Hipwood reported that the RMP identified the rehabilitation of the playing fields at Burchard Park as a high priority.

Mr. Hipwood referred to an aerial photo of Burchard Park, which is located at 369 Concord Rd. in the northwest part of Weston near Campion Center. Mr. Hipwood reported that residents frequented the park to walk, run, and exercise dogs as well as to use the tennis courts, basketball courts, and 5 baseball/softball fields. Mr. Hipwood recalled that when Burchard Park was constructed in 2007/2008 with private donations totaling \$2.5 million, 2 existing fields were completely renovated and 3 new fields were added. Mr. Hipwood explained that Burchard Park was largely maintained by WLL which contracted with a third party to mow, irrigate, and aerate the fields. Mr. Hipwood also noted that coaches, players, and parents donated hundreds of hours annually raking, weeding, and picking up trash. Mr. Hipwood reported that 12-13 years of heavy use had resulted in the need for the rehabilitation/restoration of the fields for which the RMPSC was requesting CPA funding. Mr. Hipwood noted that WLL was working with the Town’s Fields & Grounds Coordinator Ben Polimer to develop a plan for better field maintenance.

Mr. Hipwood next referred to a photo of Field 1 to illustrate flooding, erosion, and dangerous grade changes and suggested that renovation was needed to extend the useful life of the fields.

Mr. Hipwood referred to a detailed estimate for work proposed at Field 1, noted that 2 estimates had been obtained for each field, and reported that total cost estimates ranged from \$48,000 to \$65,000. Mr. Hipwood reported that should funding be approved, the RMPSC would work with the Town to run a competitive bidding process and that the work could be completed in a few weeks.

Mr. Hipwood then presented a photo of 2 softball fields in Wellesley undergoing an extensive \$1.1 million renovation for which \$600,000 in Wellesley's CPA funds had been approved. Noting the lower cost estimates he had referenced earlier, Mr. Hipwood explained that the request was for up to \$75,000 to rehabilitate all 5 fields. Mr. Hipwood maintained that these extraordinary repairs and improvements would make the fields functional for their intended use and extend their lives.

Responding to Mr. MacDonald, Mr. Hipwood noted that the Challenger Group, a baseball league for children with disabilities headed by Matt Shulman, played many of its games at Burchard Park because the facilities were handicap accessible. Mr. Fitzgerald emphasized the park's poor drainage and hazardous grade changes and reported that fields were not playable for several days after a typical rainstorm. Responding to Mr. Ober, Mr. Hipwood suggested that regular maintenance under Mr. Polimer's guidance would extend field life to beyond an additional 12 years.

Marcy Dorna asked if WLL would continue to advertise at Burchard Park to raise funds for field maintenance. Mr. Hipwood explained that WLL tried to keep its registration fees in line with other athletic programs in Town (e.g., soccer and lacrosse) but noted that its maintenance costs (i.e., \$35,000 annually currently) were substantially higher than soccer's and somewhat higher than lacrosse's. Acknowledging that coordination with Mr. Polimer's group might result in maintenance cost savings, Mr. Hipwood indicated that sponsorship banners/dollars could still be needed. Mr. Hipwood noted that despite refunding program fees because a spring season was not possible in 2020, WLL had paid for mowing and irrigation at Burchard Park so that townspeople could use it.

After expressing support for Town involvement in maintaining Burchard Park and for the RMPSC's request, Steve Wagner asked about the condition of the new softball field between the high school and middle schools. Mr. Hipwood reported that the field, used by middle and high school teams along with a 6th – 8th grade softball league, was well maintained by Mr. Polimer's crew. Referring to a Facebook post showing field damage caused by vehicles, Sue Zacharias asked if vehicle access could be restricted. Mr. Hipwood and Mr. Fitzgerald reported that the RMPSC was trying to address vehicle damage at multiple Town fields. Mr. Fitzgerald noted that this type of damage typically occurred at a single field or at a couple of fields approximately once per year and that solutions would be different based on each field's characteristics. Ms. Zacharias suggested video surveillance, which Mr. Fitzgerald stated was being considered. Indicating that field vandalism was disheartening, Mr. Hipwood expressed the belief that most people in Town did not realize that WLL volunteers maintained its fields.

The Committee discussed the likely date of 2021 ATM. Mr. Fitzgerald recalled that at the most recent Select Board ("SB") meeting, Chris Houston had suggested holding ATM on the football field on Saturday, May 15th with rain dates including May 16th and the following weekend. Responding to Ken Newberg's question about the time sensitivity of the project, Mr. Hipwood suggested that it would be best to complete the project as soon as possible but that WLL's

spring season could be held prior to rehabilitation. Mr. Newberg suggested using CPC administrative funds for the project; Tracey Lembo did not think that the proposal was a permissible use of administrative funds. Mr. Ober asked Mr. Hipwood to return to the CPC for its Public Hearing on March 22nd, which he explained is considered a dry run for Town Meeting.

Mr. Hipwood asked if he should be working with the Town to bid the project prior to the CPC's Public Hearing. Mr. Ober expressed uncertainty around bidding rules (e.g., would a bid obtained in February be valid at a May Town Meeting) but thought bidding the project soon was prudent if permissible. After noting that the RMPSC's request exceeded current estimates, Mr. Wagner suggested obtaining bids now to ensure that the funding request was adequate. Ms. Lembo asked Town Engineer Steve Fogg if he knew how long bids could be held for the project. Mr. Fogg recalled holding bids for up to 60 days but was unsure of the governing statute and suggested that the Town's Purchasing Agent could answer the question. Ms. Lembo agreed to consult him.

- **Ash St. Walkway Construction**

Jay Doyle suggested that Mr. Fogg could fill in some of the details on the design of the proposed Ash St. project. Mr. Doyle reported that when he had last appeared before the CPC, he was requesting funding for the Ash St., Case Estates, and Legacy Trail walkway projects, the latter 2 of which had recently been completed, and that he was now requesting funding solely for the Ash St. construction phase.

Mr. Doyle reminded the Committee that the Town's Sidewalk Master Plan had been completed in 2009 and adopted in 2010 and indicated that he was requesting funding at May 2021 ATM to construct the Ash St. walkway. Mr. Doyle reviewed the rationale for investing CPA funding in walkways including creating recreational walking opportunities and strategically completing links in the existing walkway networks, particularly between major recreational activity centers. Mr. Doyle noted that the proposed walkway would extend the existing walkway linking Route 30 to the Ash St. Reservoir further north to connect to Case Estates and the Legacy Trail. Mr. Doyle reminded the Committee of the following benefits of walkways: 1) support at home exercise, 2) provide walkers and joggers with an alternative to busy streets, and 3) link community activity centers.

Mr. Doyle reviewed the status of priorities in the Town's Sidewalk Master Plan as follows: 1) Brown/Winter St. (4,450 ft. completed in 2016), 2) Merriam St. (2,800 ft. completed in 2020), and 3) Ash St. (approximately 2,000 ft. in final design). Mr. Doyle noted that conditions and/or neighborhood support had changed for other priority projects identified in the Master Plan and that the TSC, working with DPW, had placed them on hold pending an update to the Master Plan which is expected to commence in 2021. Mr. Doyle presented a map indicating that the 3 current and completed TSC projects are geographically disbursed throughout Weston.

Mr. Doyle presented an aerial photograph with a more detailed view of the proposed project, again noting that it would connect an existing sidewalk, which currently terminates at the Ash St. Reservoir, to Case Estates. Mr. Doyle referred to a photograph showing the existing Ash St. walkway on the east side of the street and the proposed Ash St. walkway crossing over to the west side of the street. Mr. Doyle noted that the walkway would continue north along the west side of Ash St. for the remainder of the alignment.

Mr. Doyle next presented a more detailed plan of the project's alignment which had been developed by the Town's Engineering Department. Mr. Doyle noted that the proposed walkway would cross MWRA land in one section, that 1-2 trees would have to be removed, and that a couple of utility poles would have to be moved. At Mr. Doyle's request, Mr. Fogg highlighted wetlands constraints, a possible easement at 180 Ash St., and the desire to create separation between the walkway and the fairly high-speed road (i.e., 40 mph speed limit). Mr. Fogg also noted that the Ash St. roadway was scheduled for reconstruction this summer. Responding to Mr. Doyle, Mr. Fogg described the proposed location of the walkway on MWRA land on the east and west sides of Ash St. at the southern end of the project, a crosswalk from the east to west sides of Ash St. just north of an existing gravel parking lot, and a yet to be made request to the owner of 180 Ash St. for a sidewalk easement which would enable the walkway to be moved away from the road in front of this property. Mr. Doyle explained that at the northern end of the project, wetlands, a drop off, and a stone wall would force the walkway to be located close to the road.

Mr. Doyle displayed a slide enumerating project steps and milestones and noted that final design was expected to be completed by mid-March. Mr. Doyle asked Mr. Fogg if bidding could occur before Town Meeting. Acknowledging the difficulty of requesting funding at Town Meeting based on a cost estimate, Mr. Fogg suggested that obtaining bids before Town Meeting would be difficult and highlighted the last project milestone which indicated a more relaxed timeline (i.e., bidding anticipated in July-August 2021).

Mr. Doyle presented the Town Engineer's estimate of construction costs which is based on actual costs at Brown/Winter St. and Merriam St. In response to Mr. Doyle, Mr. Fogg reiterated that the Ash St. roadway was slated for reconstruction in 2021. Mr. Doyle noted that the Merriam St. walkway project had been timed to coincide with the Merriam St. reconstruction project and had given DPW flexibility (e.g., in cost allocation of curbing).

After expressing support for the project, Ms. Dorna asked how the project would connect to Newton St. Mr. Doyle explained that because of resistance from an abutter on the west side of Ash St., the walkway would not extend north to Newton St. along Ash St. Mr. Doyle further explained that walkers and joggers heading north to the Land's Sake area would do so via the Case Estates trail network. Responding to Nathalie Thompson, Mr. Doyle and Mr. Fogg reported that a path between Ash St. and Wellesley St. at the north side of the proposed project was complete.

Barry Tubman asked for a comparison of estimated costs for this project to costs for completed projects. Mr. Fogg could not remember the Merriam St. pricing but recalled that the Brown/Winter St. project had been completed 5-6 years ago at approximately \$115/linear foot. Mr. Doyle suggested that unit pricing should fall between the relatively straightforward Brown/Winter St. project and the more complex Merriam St. project. Mr. Fogg explained that Project Engineer Eli Bahrevar had calculated prices based on average bids for various quantities but cautioned that the estimate was preliminary because the exact alignment had not been completed. Ms. Bahrevar explained that the construction cost estimate for the proposed project was based on average unit prices for Merriam St. applied to estimated quantities for Ash St. and had been compared to escalated costs at Brown/Winter St. Ms. Bahrevar expressed confidence in the \$300,000 estimated construction cost (without contingency) based on current estimated quantities but cautioned that costs could increase for guardrail replacement, an

easement at 180 Ash St., and/or pole relocation.

Responding to Mr. Ober's question about previous cost estimates, Mr. Doyle recalled that prior discussions had aggregated Ash St. costs with those for Case Estates and the Legacy Trail. Mr. Doyle recalled that Howard Stein Hudson ("HSH") had provided an estimate approximately 2 years ago which he believed to be in the same range. Mr. Doyle asked Mr. Fogg to locate the HSH estimate but thought that there had been no significant cost increases.

Mr. Wagner asked if the walkway would be straightforward and adjacent to the street or if it would meander through the woods. Mr. Doyle indicated that the goal was to locate the walkway away from the street on the east side of Ash St., to cross the road at a crosswalk just north of the existing gravel parking lot, to enter the woods on the west side of Ash St., to approach the road near the driveway entrance [to 180 Ash. St.], and then to hug the road as it continued north to the connection with the Case Estates stone dust walkway. Mr. Doyle and Mr. Fogg reported that current plans called for the southern 1/3 of the walkway to meander and the northern 2/3's of the walkway to hug the road.

Ms. Zacharias asked about the guardrail that might have to be replaced. Mr. Fogg stated that he hoped it could be left as is because it could be expensive to replace. Ms. Bahrevar noted that the existing guardrail was constructed of galvanized metal with a wood veneer and that an in-kind replacement would be less expensive than a replacement using the materials employed on the Merriam St. guardrail.

The Committee discussed whether the TSC should return to the CPC prior to its Public Hearing but determined that it was not necessary. Mr. Doyle committed to adding additional details to his presentation including: 1) showing the alignment more clearly and 2) showing tree and stone wall impacts. Ms. Dorna recommended including mitigation measures for any impacts. Mr. Fogg promised much more specificity in the alignment by the time of the CPC's Public Hearing. In response to Mr. Ober's question, Mr. Doyle stated that it was the TSC's goal to have appeared before the Planning Board and the Conservation Commission before returning to the CPC.

Approve Minutes of the CPC Meeting on January 25, 2021

VOTE: Mr. Ober entertained a motion to approve the minutes of the CPC meeting on January 25, 2021 as amended. Ms. Zacharias made the motion, which was seconded by Ms. Dorna. The motion passed unanimously by roll call vote.

Other

Mr. Ober reminded the CPC that its next meeting was on March 8th and indicated that the Birch Lane Project and a discussion of CPA Fund financials were on the agenda. Ms. Lembo reported that she had confirmed with the Community Preservation Coalition that educational signs were not eligible for CPA funding because they did not acquire, create, preserve, or rehabilitate/restore an asset. Responding to Ms. Dorna, the Committee discussed whether the Town would have a Town Caucus but came to no definitive conclusions.

The meeting adjourned at 8:28 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Tracey Lembo
CPC Administrator

Appendix A

**CPC Meeting
February 1, 2021
Document List**

- 1) CPA Applications for 2021 Annual Town Meeting:
 - a. Burchard Park Rehabilitation:
 - i. Application
 - ii. Cost Estimates for Fields 1-5
 - iii. Facebook Screen Shot with Photos of Damage to Fields 4 and 5
 - iv. PowerPoint
 - b. Ash St. Construction:
 - i. Application
 - ii. PowerPoint
- 2) Draft Minutes of the January 25, 2021 CPC Meeting