

Minutes
Thursday, January 17, 2008
Community Preservation Act Study Committee

Conference Room 2 – Town Hall – 7:30 P.M.

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:32 p.m. by Chairman Adam Dash. Members present were John Dieckmann, Caroline Huang, Delores Keefe, Ann Verrilli, and Mark Paolillo, constituting a quorum.

Assistant Town Administrator Jeff Conti was also present; Members absent were Joe Scali and Peter Gunness.

Guests present were Selectman Paul Solomon; Katherine Roth, Associate Director of the Community Preservation Coalition; Susan Stott from Andover; Jody Kablack, Planning Director of Sudbury; Lisa Harrington, Historic District Commission; Anne Covino Goldenberg, Belmont League of Women Voters.

II. Approval of Minutes

The Committee moved: To approve the minutes of the Committee's January 2, 2008 meeting.

Motion carried unanimously (5-0).

III. Schedule of Upcoming Meetings

Selectman Angelo R. Firenze will attend the Monday, February 11th meeting. The next meeting will be on Tuesday, March 4th.

IV. Reports

A) Rappaport Institute Report. Ann Verilli reported that she contacted David Luberoff, one of the co-authors of the report, to clarify the basis for the finding that towns and cities that adopted the CPA had lower property values by several percent than they would have had if they had not adopted the CPA. Luberoff acknowledged that there was a "lot of noise" in their model, and that they didn't really establish a link between CPA and home prices.

B) Possible CPA Projects in Belmont

- 1) Conservation Commission – Adam spoke at a recent ConCom meeting, explained the CPA, the ConCom will consider possible projects and get back to us with their ideas.
- 2) Belmont Land Trust – Adam spoke to Dix Campbell, who said the BLT is interested in preserving the McLean barn, also interested in buying conservation restrictions, suggested using CPA funds for this purpose. Katherine Roth, Community Preservation Coalition, commented that CPA funds can be used to buy conservation restrictions.
- 3) Ann reported that the Belmont Housing Trust will work on a list of potential projects.
- 4) Lisa Harrington from the Historic District Commission reported that they discussed potential projects extensively the week before this meeting – she handed out a list of 6 potential projects, without estimated costs. They felt that it was premature to try to estimate the costs

C) Administrative Needs of Town – Mark spoke with Town Treasurer Floyd Carman, who stated that the cost to implement the CPA surcharge in the town tax bills would be minimal.

D) Financial Impact on Town – Figures to be developed by Mark.

E) Other Towns' Experiences

- 1) Andover (upcoming referendum vote on March 25th). Susan Stott of Andover accepted our invitation and related their experience to date. Initially, attempted in 2002, town meeting vote failed, opposition from the finance committee. In 2007, successful town meeting vote. Support was built from interested groups, open space bond articles had been passing anyway. Finance committee was split this time. One thing that really helped is that CPA money can be used to build playing fields, large constituency for this. At town meeting 2 spoke against, 15 spoke in favor, passed with a healthy majority. There is no organized opposition to the upcoming referendum vote.
- 2) Sudbury (adopted CPA in 2002, at 3% surcharge) Jody Kablack, Town Planning Director, accepted our invitation and related their experience to date. An early attempt to pass after a citizen's petition with 500 signatures failed, with little lead time to educate voters. CPA has been in effect for 5 years, has been "incredible" for Sudbury. Started with a study process, all parties impacted included. Town financial staff had some initial "trepidation" about administrative burden. Sudbury had been supporting "landbank" for open space acquisition. So far cumulative CPA funds have been \$11 million, about half has been committed to projects, half has been "banked". CPA funds

committed so far: 40% for open space acquisition, bonded for 20 years; 27% for affordable housing; 10% for historic preservation, 20% for recreation. Average impact on Sudbury tax bill is \$150/year. Commercial and industrial, low income, 1st \$100,000 of valuation are exempt from the surcharge. Does not seem to be a heavy administrative burden. The exemptions have been claimed by a relatively small number of people, who already use other exemptions and deferrals that are available. Sudbury reserves 5% of funds for administration – funds a housing planner to get affordable housing projects moving. 99% of funds used for town projects, 1% for a Wayside Inn historic preservation project. Dieckmann asked if CPA funds were being used for the Sudbury segment of the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail – so far \$175,000 has been spent on design work, these funds count toward required local matching funds – “couldn’t have happened without CPA funds”. Walkway construction (for recreation) has been funded

- 3) Lexington – there was no representative from Lexington, who has recently passed CPA. Their first set of proposed projects is listed on the Lexington town website and there was brief discussion of these proposed projects.
- 4) Bourne – Joe Scali will contact Bourne to see what kind of projects have been funded there with CPA funds.

F) Inviting Speaker/Outreach

- 1) As decided in previous meeting, we are trying to find opposition viewpoints. Jeff Conti reported that he had spoken with the chief legal counsel of the Mass Association of realtors, who we had thought to have been opposed to passage of the state CPA legislation. Currently, the Mass Association of Realtors has no position on the CPA, doesn’t see a statewide impact. Local realtor groups are free to take a position relative CPA as they see fit. He wasn’t familiar with the Rappaport report.
- 2) Katherine Roth, Associate Director of the Community Preservation Coalition attended and offered insight into the operation of the CPA
- 3) Mark had a brief discussion of CPA with the Warrant Committee – they are completely absorbed in completing the budget for town meeting, we can get on their agenda after town meeting.
- 4) Anne Covino Goldenberg from the League of Women Voters attended the meeting and took notes, intends to get up to speed and work with LWV to decide whether or not to endorse the CPA
- 5) Public meeting to present our findings is still well into the future, after our information gathering/synthesis has been completed

G) CPA Options – we still need to consider the range of surcharge and which exemptions should be included. Per previous discussions, the approach will be to consider two levels of surcharge and the funding that would be raised and the projects that could be supported at each level

H) Future of CPA – Katherine Roth stated that CPCs estimate is that in October, 2008, statewide matching funds for FY 2008 will be 60 to 70% of the amount raised by the property tax CPA surcharge. This is the first time it has been less than 100%. In the future it may drop to 30 to 40%. CPC sponsored legislation has been filed which would set the minimum state match to 75%. The prospects for passage are unknown at this time. The Department of Revenue issues a projection of the matching percent in February for the current fiscal year.

I) Drafting Final report – brief discussion of the timing

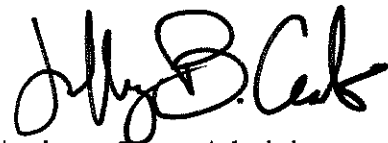
J) Final Presentation of Results – brief discussion of the timing

V. Other Business

The meeting was adjourned at 9:33 PM.

(Minutes approved by unanimous vote of the Committee, February 11, 2008.)

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jeff B. Conti". The signature is stylized and cursive.

Jeff Conti, Assistant Town Administrator