MILLIS COMMUNITY PRESERVATION COMMITTEE
MINUTES
MARCH 24, 2022
Room 229 Veterans Memorial Building, 900 Main St., Millis, MA

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Mr. Nathan Maltinsky, Chair.

Members present: Nathan Maltinsky, Chair
Wendy Barry, Treasurer
David Baker
Mary-Ellen D'Espinosa
Alan Handel
James Lederer
James McKay
Erin Underhill
Catherine MacInnes, Finance Committee Liaison

Members absent: Pamela Rheaume-Mustard

Also present: John Steadman, Conservation Commission Member
Kris Fogarty, Recreation Director
Lisa Hardin, 56 Walnut St.
Stephen Smith, 28 McCabe Ave.
Candace Loewen, Millis Housing Authority
David Werner, Oak Grove Farm Commission

Creation of Management Plan for Town-Owned Properties, Continued
Conservation Commission - (File #2022-002)
Mr. Steadman, representing the Conservation Commission, provided an update on the status of the Request for Proposal ("RFP") for the project and responded to issues raised at the meeting on February 24, 2022 (see attached). He stated that the Commission is not looking for a decision at this meeting. Mr. Steadman reiterated that the Conservation Commission had initially filed another funding proposal but "was sent back to the drawing board" as the CPC wanted to include all town-owned property.

Mr. Baker stated that he still wants to hear what the Select Board has to say regarding how funding will be provided to implement the recommendations made in the Master Plan…maintenance, improvements, etc.? Will they provide an operating budget? Mr. Baker stated that he "would rather give funds to implement the plan rather than create the plan." Ms. Barry stated that, in her opinion, this plan could be very valuable to use going forward in determining worthwhile projects.

There was discussion regarding the information gathering for the project. Ms. Hardin asked if the Black Swamp and Millis Heights were included in the town property study. Ms. Steadman stated that the Black Swamp is included, but not Millis Heights.

Discussion will continue at a future meeting when proposals are received by the Town Administrator.

Candace Loewen – Millis Housing Authority
Informal Discussion
Ms. Loewen requested a discussion to see what the CPC could do for additional affordable housing for Millis residents in town. She stated that the Housing Authority would be interested in any properties in town that would work for affordable housing construction. If they were to partner with the State/DHCD, any CPC funds may be matched, she said. Ms. Loewen stated that there is a need for family and elderly housing.

Mr. Maltinsky advised Ms. Loewen to approach the Select Board and Assessor's office on possible properties, and then prepare a funding request for the CPC.

Pickleball Sound Mitigation Proposal, Continued
Recreation Commission – (File #2022-003)
Ms. Fogarty presented the updated/revised application. The proposal request is for $21,035.16 from the Community Preservation Open Space/Recreation fund for "Acoustiblok" to be purchased for sound mitigation at the pickleball courts. Ms. Fogarty presented the estimate from Acoustiblok. She stated that this is "designed to diminish the pickleball sound by 50%." According to Ms. Fogarty, she was told by the Town Administrator that the Town will install the soundproofing and provide landscaping using the Town's Tree Fund. The amount of funds requested is for materials only, she said.

Mr. Smith, an abutter to the pickleball courts, stated that the neighbors have been dealing with the noise for a couple of years and spoke in favor of the proposal.

There were questions raised as to the flammability of the product; ease of graffiti removal if needed; and warranty if the Town is to install it. Ms. Fogarty will provide this information to the Community Preservation Commission. Mr. Handel stated that he was "not confident" this would solve the problem.

On a motion made by Mr. McKay, seconded by Ms. Barry, it was voted 7-1, with Mr. Handel opposed, in favor of appropriating **$21,035.16** for the Millis Recreation Pickleball Sound Mitigation Project from the **Community Preservation Open Space/Recreation Resources Reserve account,** pending information to be provided by Ms. Fogarty. The motion passed. (Note: information was emailed by Ms. Fogarty on March 25, 2022).

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Oak Grove Farm Trail Improvement Proposal
Oak Grove Farm Commission – (File #2022-004)
(Note: Ms. MacInnes was recused from this discussion)
Mr. Werner of the Oak Grove Farm Commission presented the application. The proposal request is for $16,900.00 from the Community Preservation Open Space/Recreation fund for materials for improvements to Oak Grove Farm trails. Mr. Werner stated that there are three areas in particular: (1) trails bordering Island Road and Ridge Street (2) causeways connecting the parking lot with the middle of Ridge Street fields and (3) area bordering Exchange and the rear of Orchard Street properties. Each have sections that are impassable after rainfall and when conditions are damp. They are seeking funding to improve, link, and make available existing trails through the use of permeable gravel and landscaping fabric that allows for drainage and groundwater flow while providing a secure walking surface throughout the calendar year, Mr. Werner said. DPW's labor has been offered, he stated.

On a motion made by Mr. Baker, seconded by Ms. D'Espinosa, it was unanimously voted (8-0) in favor of appropriating **$16,900.00** for the **Oak Grove Farm Trail Improvement Proposal** from the **Community Preservation Open Space/Recreation Resources Reserve account.**

Other Business:

Minutes
On a motion made by Mr. Baker, seconded by Ms. D'Espinosa, it was voted unanimously to approve the minutes of February 24, 2022 as written.

Adjourn
There being no further discussion and on a motion made by Mr. Baker, seconded by Mr. McKay, and voted unanimously, the meeting was adjourned at 9:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

_____
Camille Standley
Administrative Assistant

Comments to the CPC

March 24, 2022

We are not asking for any action tonight. We appreciate the opportunity to respond to some of the issues raised at your last meeting and update you on the status of the RFP. The $200,000 that Carol mentioned at your last meeting, was a ballpark number provided by Robert Weiss and was partially based on a similar undertaking by Framingham. We know that the CPC requires three bids for consideration and hope the bids come in well below that number.

First let me give you a timeline on what has happened related to this RPF since your last meeting on February 25 and the schedule for deliverables.

- 2/28 – The Select Board unanimously approved the RFP pending approval of town council.
- 3/16 – The final version was published by the Town Administrator's Office
- 3/17 & 18 – The RFP was provided to 9 consulting firms plus the Conway School of Landscape Design.
- 3/23 – The RPF was publicly advertised.
- 4/20 – Proposals are due to the Town Administrator
- 4/22 – Target date to select the preferred vendor
- 5/2 – Spring Town Meeting.
- 6/15 – Kick off Meeting
- 12/15 – Final Draft is due

This timeline is very tight. The current draft warrant for the Spring Meeting contains the following item: "***To see if the Town will vote to appropriate a sum of money from the Community Preservation Open Space/Recreation Reserve Fund for the Millis Town Owned Properties Inventory and Management Plan, or take any other action in relation***

thereto." This requires a simple majority. The warrant is not finalized, but this item has been inserted as a placeholder.

After your last meeting on this subject, the CPC asked for clarification on three items, I am paraphrasing:

1. Incorporating the Fields Study?
    a. This was read and integrated into the language of the RFP including input from citizens for additional resources. It is listed as an available document although we do not have a digital copy. It is my understanding that building the Clyde Brown School rendered some of the recommendations of that study obsolete.
2. Other funding sources?
    a. We are striving to get solid quotes for this study which will permit informed decisions of funding.
    b. The town will pursue the possibility of grants, but in most cases the town has to be prepared to fund the project in order to be considered for a grant.
3. How will funding be provided to implement the recommendation? Maintenance? Operating Budget?
    a. I am distributing a list of 9 properties that might have potential and the dates that they were acquired. With very few exceptions, little has been done with these properties as there is not a master plan.
    b. The RFP asks to categorize each of the 35 properties into one of 4 groups:
        i. Those with recreational potential.
        ii. Those associated with water quality or wild life habitat.
        iii. Those being used by or for municipal use including the DPW.

iv. Those that can be sold or developed perhaps for low or moderate income housing.

c. The RFP should then identify and prioritize the 3 or 4 properties with the greatest potential for recreation. With suggestions on the best use, capital costs, and ongoing maintenance cost.

d. There is a bit of a chicken and egg dilemma here. Without a plan which identifies and focuses on a few properties, budgets and funding cannot be established. When and if improvements are implemented is dependent on the priorities of the town. Having 40,000 foot vision is a first step and as is obvious from the list that we circulated, without a vision, nothing will ever happen.

e. There might be opportunities to partner with the Trustees as they own some lands contiguous to Town owned properties.

f. The RFP will also point out that the state lists some areas for hunting that are near homes including Pleasant Meadows and Village Street walking paths.

g. This plan will also provide a context within which to evaluate potential future acquisition of properties.

This study also addresses some of the actions that were enumerated in the 2019 Open Space Recreational Plan, (OSRP).

Questions?

Thank you