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**BELMONT WARRANT COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
FINAL**

**FEBRUARY 15, 2017, 7:30 P.M.
CHENERY COMMUNITY ROOM**

Present: Chair Epstein; Members Alcock, Dash, Crowley, Fallon, Gammill, Helgen, Lisanke, McLaughlin, Schreiber, Slap

Members Absent: Libenson, Lubien, Mennis, BOS Chair Paolillo, School Committee Chair Fiore (Town Administrator Kale)

The meeting was called to order at 7:32 pm by Chair Epstein.

Chair Epstein began by reviewing the agenda and then turning to the first item.

Approval of Minutes

The minutes of 2/8/17 were unanimously approved.

CPA Projects: Initial Review

Chair Epstein began by noting that the WC would discuss the proposed CPA projects in more detail with the proponents in a meeting on March 29. He then offered a short recap of how the CPA works in Belmont. He noted that there is a 1.5% surcharge on property tax (and there are exemptions). There is a state contribution to this source of money; the state match rate is currently about 20%. Each participating CPA town appoints a Community Preservation Committee (CPC).

CPA projects fall in one of four categories: historical preservation, acquisition of open space, support for subsidized housing, and certain types of recreation. (This was later adjusted to three fields with open space and recreation amounting to one bucket/field). Each of those fields has CPA representation. Proponents for projects submit proposals to the CPC. The committee's principal function is not to evaluate the application (proposal) on its merits, but rather to evaluate the proposal to see if it meets the requirements.

Member Fallon stated that she agrees that the CPC does vet the proposal to see if it meets the requirements, but she believes they also vet the proposal on the substance of the project. Member Dash added that, ultimately, the proposals are voted up or down at Town Meeting; the CPC makes recommendations to Town Meeting.

The WC then discussed the details of the CPA and the CPC's role in evaluating the proposals. Member Helgen then raised the issue of the WC's role in reviewing the CPA projects. Several questions arose: Is the WC making a *judgment* on the cost of a project? Or is that role left to TM? Should the CPC be diving in to the merits of a proposal? The WC discussed these questions.

CPA Project Proposals

1. Grove Street Tennis Courts – \$336,000

Chair Epstein noted that a temporary repair was made several years ago to these courts; those repairs have now failed. This request is for four new courts. The line item for the engineering design seems high but could be a contingency that is not entirely spent. Member Schreiber pointed out that four courts are necessary for school tournaments (the CMS and BHS courts are off line and will be going off line, respectively).

2. Redevelopment of Sherman Gardens – \$173,200

This falls under the affordable housing field and is for a feasibility study.

3. Sons of Italy Historical Artifacts Preservation – \$24,125

This project falls under historic preservation and this proposal is to preserve records and artifacts. Chair Epstein asked if others (Sons of Italy, etc.) are contributing to this project. Member Helgen noted that this is tantamount to taxpayer money going toward a private organization.

4. Grove Street Park/Intergenerational Walking Path – \$35,000

This is for a site plan and will likely be followed (in a year or so) by a sizable request to construct the walking path. Chair Epstein observed that Belmont is spending a lot of money on walking paths – as there will be one at PQ and at Clay Pit Pond.

5. PQ Playground Revitalization Project – \$615,000

This proposal is to upgrade the playground, improve the drainage system (as there is considerable flooding), and it does include a small walking path.

Total: \$1,183,325

The WC broadly discussed the CPA projects, the costs associated with the projects, the amount of staff time spent executing the projects, long range planning for the projects, and some of the ripple effects of the projects.

FY18 Budget: Updates

Chair Epstein noted that there was a Joint meeting on Monday concerning the FY18 budget. Member Gammill discussed the note he sent to the WC members (“gammill-CB-memo.pdf”) that is based upon work the WC Education Subcommittee has done this year. His discussion focused on funding strategies, not spending strategies, for the FY18

budget and, in particular, the option of reducing the general fund allocation to the schools and having the schools draw more upon the available state grant circuit breaker funds. This option would also allow the town to take a lower draw from the general stabilization fund.

The WC discussed this proposal. Member Slap noted that SPED (i.e., special education) funding can be very unpredictable. She said some type of reserve is needed as the SPED amount is so variable from year-to-year. She suggested consulting with the School Department to hear their insights on this proposal.

Chair Epstein suggested that Member Gammill write a letter to the key town and school officials addressing the question of the amount of the drawdown of the circuit breaker account for FY18.

Adjournment

Member McLaughlin moved to end the meeting at 9:15 p.m.

Submitted by Lisa Gibalerio
WC Recording Secretary