

COMMUNITY PRESERVATION COMMITTEE MEETING

August 24, 2023 - 6 PM Plymouth Town Hall Shallop Room In-person and Zoom

(Severe technical difficulties for the entire meeting)

Members Present: Bill Keohan, Chair; Allen Hemberger, Clerk; Karen Buechs; Bill Fornaciari, Historic Commission; Birgitta Kuehn, Planning Board; Randy Parker, Conservation Commission; Russell Shirley, Plymouth Redevelopment Authority. Zoom: Betty Cavacco. Absent: John Mahoney, Select Board.

Guests: Pat McCarthy, Pct 18 TMM (Town Meeting Member); Connie Melahoures, Pct. 3 TMM; Peter Neville, Pct. 10 TMM; Richard Serkey, Pct. 2 TMM; David Berman, citizen; Ed Russell Pct. 16 TMM (Zoom).

The agenda was accepted and minutes July 18, 2023 approved.

Keohan stepped down as chair for Allen Hemberger to conduct the election of the chair. Keohan was nominated as chair by Shirley and seconded by Buechs. There were no other nominations. The roll call vote was unanimous.

Keohan took over the remaining election process.

Vice Chair: Hemberger was nominated by Buechs and seconded by Cavacco. There were no other nominations. The roll call vote was unanimous.

Clerk: There were no nominations. Hemberger agreed to continue to be the clerk until someone else was nominated.

Keohan informed the committee he had sent the CPC approved warrant articles packet to the Select Board and Advisory and Finance Committee. All members have this material in their handouts:

Fall Town Meeting Warrant Article from CPC

Article 9(A) Voted to recommend: (Affordable Housing) Habitat for Humanity

Article 9(B) Reserved: (Affordable Housing) Plymouth Housing Authority

Article 9(C) Voted to recommend: (Historical) Center for the Arts

Article 9(D) Reserved: (Historical) (short term borrowing) Pilgrim Hall

Article 9(E) Voted to recommend: (Open Space) Grassy Pond off Rocky Pond Road

Article 9(F) Voted to recommend: (Open Space) off Rocky Hill Road

Article 9(G) Hedges Pond Demolition

Article 9(H) (Recreation) (Reduced Borrowing) Stephens Field. Cavacco mentioned that the bid came in at \$250,000 over budget and the Select Board voted to fund the difference with ARPA money.

Article 9 (I) CPA Estimated Revenue 2024: Account set-up

Note: Details of CPC Articles can be found on the Town of Plymouth Website under Government, Town Meeting, Draft of Warrant for Fall 2023 Town Meeting.

Update of Articles passed at Fall Town Meeting 2022

9A Darby Pond (Open Space): Still working on conservation restrictions. Kuehn, West Plymouth Steering Committee, asked whether there are any trails marked at this site. Keohan said there is a kiosk, and some trails are marked. Work needs to be done to create a parking area and better marked trails. A site walk would be helpful for the committee.

9B Spire Theater (Historic) Grant Agreement Signed: Scaffolding up and work on schedule.

9C Stephens Field Estuary Land Protection: Pending P & S

9D 1857 Foundry Marine: Still no word from Safe Harbor, who did not receive Special Permits.

CPC Administrative Activites

The committee discussed the pros and cons of having an administrative assistant for the CPC. Shirley and Hemberger both felt it was not necessary. For over 20 years the CPC has gotten the job done. Shirley said a 20 hour a week assistant would be inefficient, and he wants the CPC to maintain its independence. Keohan said he could use help with procurement and invoices. Other boards use town employees that might want some extra hours. Cavacco insisted the committee had previously voted to have administrative help. Keohan explained that the committee can have a discussion and reconsider that vote. Cavacco insisted it would have to be taken up by the winning side of the question. Keohan said that only is a rule for Town Meeting and not for regular committees. The committee also discussed having their own counsel and not using the town's. Keohan said having their own counsel is more efficient and saves money. Again, Cavacco insisted they could not do this if the Select Board did not approve of their decision.

Public Comment

Serkey, a retired attorney, explained that the Charter and By-Laws just say the Select Board may recommend counsel. Serkey also felt the Select Board has been trying to get more control over the CPC because of the CPC not approving the amount of funds for 46 Sandwich Road that the Select Board had requested for an article at Spring Town Meeting 2022.

Ed Russell, retired attorney, echoed Serkey's remarks. He too feels it is a power grab by the Select Board and Town Manager and he does not want town personnel involved with the CPC.

Cavacco again accused the CPC of violating the procurement law. Keohan explained that no violation had occurred. Three bids had gone out. Only two responded.

(Notes: 1. Cavacco had accused the CPC of a procurement violation when she was interviewed by the Select Board on June 20, 2023 for a position on the CPC. 2. I called the Finance Department the day after this meeting and asked what the violation was. The department explained there was no violation giving the same explanation that Keohan gave.)

The Gurnet Light

Keohan felt the Town should own these 7 acres of land. The lighthouse is the oldest wooden structured remaining on the East Coast. It helped protect Plymouth Harbor during the War of 1812. Kuehn suggested we reach out to the Non-profit that takes care of the Bug Light.

The committee then voted on paying invoices.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:39 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Ginny Davis, LWV Observer Corps

For your information: When the minutes of this meeting have been approved, they will be available at plymouth-ma.gov website. Go to Agendas and Minutes, scroll down to and click Community Preservation Committee, look right and click the minutes icon.