



TOWN OF NORWELL
Norwell Town Offices, Room 112
345 Main Street
Norwell, Massachusetts 02061
(781) 659-8000

**Norwell Advisory Board Meeting Minutes
March 30, 2021**

The Advisory Board was called to order by Chair Peter Smellie at 7:00 P.M. Also present were Town Administrator Peter Morin, Town Accountant Donna Mangan, and Board Members Mark Cleveland, Bob Perniola, Susan Darnell, Rick Goulding, Jesse McSweeney, Andrew Reardon, Julie Sim, and Kate Steele.

ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

Minutes – The minutes of the March 23 meeting were distributed and reviewed.

Motion made to accept the Minutes of the March 23, 2021 meeting as written. Seconded and passed 8-0-1 by roll call, Member Darnell having abstained.

Bills – None

Reserve Fund Transfer Requests – None

Correspondence/Notices – None

Action Items / Discussions – None

FY 2022 BUDGET OVERVIEW

Draft FY 22 Budget

The Board voted on the following FY 22 budget totals:

Town Budget	\$57,889,000
Community Preservation Fund	\$75,000
Water Fund	<u>\$1,489,812</u>
Total Budget	\$59,453,812

Motion made to recommend the FY 22 budget in the amount of \$57,889,000 for the Town, \$75,000 for the Community Preservation Fund, and \$1,489,812 for the Water Fund, for a total budget of \$59,453,812. Seconded and passed 9-0-0 by roll call.

MAY 2021 TOWN MEETING ARTICLES

Carleton Property Transfer

The subject article proposes the transfer of an 8.3 acre section of the southwestern corner of the Carleton Property to the Community Housing Trust for possible development. A similar article last year received the support of the Advisory Board as well as a majority of those present at the 2020 Town Meeting, but not the two-thirds majority required for passage.

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Mr. Reardon noted that residents at the time expressed concern about approving the article without a possible concept for development. CHT Vice-Chair Liz Hibbard added they had considered three designs, settling on one to present and gauge public support. The proposed concept involves the construction of five buildings with four rental apartments in each. Two of the five buildings would front Lincoln Street, all buildings would be surrounded by buffer trees, and a stone wall in front would be preserved. The buildings would be located away from existing houses on Lincoln Street, as the section of the lot closest to these houses is wetland. The plans include a small parking area for the adjoining conservation property off the proposed entrance road.

Ms. Hibbard noted that all 20 units would count towards the Town's Subsidized Housing Inventory (SHI). The Town could implement a "local preference" mandate making the units available to town employees and young families. The proposal is in keeping with CHT's strategy to maintain a 40B safe harbor through smaller-scale developments around town, designed with community input. If the proposal is approved at Town meeting, they will issue a request for proposals to select a developer; further design would proceed with input from multiple Town entities as done with 40 River Street.

Mr. Smellie noted that he had been contacted by numerous abutters, and had asked that they designate one speaker. Nick Warendorf, 49 Lincoln Street, read a statement objecting to the process by which CHT settled on its proposal, as it was developed without input from abutters. The initial concept discussed last year suggested 4-5 cottage-style units similar to those at Donovan Farms, and the switch to 20 rental units had been made with no public dialogue. The proposed 60 car lot raised traffic concerns and was inconsistent with the character of the area.

Mr. Smellie asked how several pending 40B developments would impact the Town's SHI. Ms. Hibbard indicated that all 126 rental units at Simon Hill Village would be added to the SHI. An additional project off High Street could potentially add another 56 units. It is unclear whether a third project off Stetson Road will be primarily apartments or condominiums, which will impact how many units count towards the SHI, but Ms. Hibbard believes the town's SHI would still be under the 10% threshold based on the 2020 Census data for the town.

Ms. Darnell asked when the units in these developments would be incorporated into the SHI; Ms. Hibbard noted that according to Town Planner Ken Kirkland, these units would not be counted in the SHI until they had received building permits and certificates of occupancy. Ms. Darnell also asked if any environmental assessments had been made of the CHT section of the Carleton Property. Mr. McBride indicated that the entire property had been delineated and surveyed; perc tests had also been done in the CHT area to see what kind of development it could support. Ms. Hibbard noted that the Trust had to balance the need to sufficiently flesh out concepts with the need to avoid spending significant fees on consultants for concepts that may never get built.

All parties discussed whether the strategy of pursuing small developments would get the town to a 10% SHI. Mr. McBride pointed out that the strategy was incorporated into the 2005 Master Plan based on charettes with residents in which this was felt to be the fairest approach to such development. Ms. Hibbard added that the Town receives a "safe harbor" from 40B development when it proceeds with its own projects and staggers them properly.

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Mr. Cleveland inquired about what entity handles rent collection and maintenance. As with 40 River, the Town would contract out to a management company at the appropriate time. Ms. Hibbard added that the CHT is seeking to build rentals because all rentals count towards the SHI, and they have heard it is easier to address issues with renters than with individual unit owners.

Mr. Perniola commented that CHT development proposals would likely run into less opposition if it tried to build 55+ units in old commercial properties along Washington Street. Ms. Hibbard noted that the Trust had tried to identify locations in the area of Queen Anne's corner, but these had septic and other issues that precluded residential development. They had also reached out regarding the future of Saint Helen's Church, but that property remains in use and is surrounded by existing neighborhoods.

Mr. McSweeney asked if the units would have a preference for current residents. Ms. Hibbard noted that housing for residents/town employees was a goal of the CHT, but a preference would have to be approved by the state. He also asked whether the mobile home units in town counted towards the SHI; they did not under the current regulations. Mr. McBride added that the predecessor to the CHT had pushed to have these units counted, but the state does not do so because in privately held parks, the mobile home owners do not own the land beneath their units. It is possible to convert such parks to owner-controlled co-ops but this requires time and a park owner willing to sell.

Mr. Cleveland noted he was sympathetic to the concerns of the abutters but also noted the Town was in a difficult spot where it was currently vulnerable to "unfriendly" 40B developments that can be built with very limited Town input. He would prefer the Town to take greater control of its future by proactively seeking safe harbor rather than relying on 40B developments continuing to get built over Town objections. Ms. Darnell agreed in general but questioned the cost of seeking such safe harbor; Mr. Perniola also appreciated the sentiment but wanted to be sure abutter concerns were taken into consideration.

Katelyn White, 59 Lincoln, asked if the plan would have to go back to Town Meeting for approval if additional funds were needed; Ms. Hibbard indicated it would not, but would still be subject to public hearings by various town agencies during the permitting process. Ms. White also commented that she and her neighbors wanted input into the design process and number of units, and wanted to be pulled into the conversation before the public hearing process. Mr. Warendorf agreed, stating they wanted to be included at the concept development stage.

Motion made to recommend the Carleton Property Transfer article. Seconded but not passed, 4-5-0, by roll call: Reardon aye; Perniola no; McSweeney no; Sim aye; Steele no; Cleveland aye; Smellie no; Goulding aye; Darnell no.

After the vote, Mr. Smellie indicated he would arrange for both sides of the vote to speak to the issue at Town meeting.

Community Housing Trust Funds Transfer

As per its previous vote, the Board reconsidered the CPC-sponsored article transferring funds to the Community Housing Trust originally discussed at the March 4 meeting. The article has since been amended to lower the amount transferred from \$400,000 to \$100,000. CHT Chair Gregg McBride noted that CHT's original request was for \$100,000, but CPC members increased it to \$400,000 when it voted the proposal.

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Mr. McSweeney asked whether any of these funds would be used for the CHT development proposal off Wildcat Lane. CHT Vice Chair Liz Hibbard indicated that some funds are used to develop the preliminary designs for past and future projects, but the bulk of the funds are used to acquire deed-restricted units to keep them affordable. In response to a query from Mr. Perniola, Ms. Hibbard indicated these funds were recouped as much as possible when the unit(s) was resold. The Trust needs funds on hand in order to acquire such units and maintain the Town's subsidized housing inventory.

Motion made to recommend the article titled CHT Transfer in the amount of \$100,000. Seconded and passed 6-3-0 by roll call: Reardon aye; Perniola no; McSweeney no; Sim aye; Steele aye; Cleveland aye; Smellie no; Goulding aye; Darnell aye.

MISCELLANEOUS

All parties further discussed a citizens petition to transfer a parcel of town-owned land off Wildcat Lane under consideration for development by the Community Housing Trust to the Conservation Commission. Mr. Smellie checked with Conservation Commission Chair Marynel Wahl. The Commission is meeting with members of the Wildcat HOA on April 6 and would be available to meet with the Board the week of April 12.

Select Board Chair Ellen Allen pointed out that CHT doesn't meet with the Commission until early May, so a discussion on April 12 would take place with the Board having only heard one side of the issue. Later in the meeting, Ms. Steele suggested that the Board wait to hear from both sides before voting on the petition. Ms. Sim agreed, noting that the Board could make a recommendation on the floor if necessary, as has been done in the past.

Motion made to reschedule the Wildcat Citizen Petition reconsideration to May 6. Seconded and passed 9-0-0.

Mr. Morin is waiting on new language on the South Shore Votech Bond Issue article with respect to allowing unused funds to revert to communities or be used to spend down principal and interest.

FUTURE MEETINGS

May 6, 2021

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, a motion was made to adjourn at 8:40 P.M. Seconded and passed 9-0-0.

Peter Smellie, Chair

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