

# Community Preservation Committee

Monday, August 30, 2021

5:00 PM

Remote Virtual Meeting via Zoom

Approved 9.20.2021

**Present:** Dr. Peter Kurzberg, Chair      Ron Frazier  
              Maria Bonfiglioli                Darryl Mikami  
              Diane Francis                    Marta Googins (joins the meeting after attendance was taken)

**Also Present:** Melissa SantucciRozzi, Director  
                    Kelly Phelan, Conservation Planner

Dr. Peter Kurzberg calls the meeting to order at **5:00 PM** via Zoom and requests that **Director SantucciRozzi** proceeds to take attendance for the **August 30, 2021** meeting via roll call: Dr. Kurzberg – present; Maria Bonfiglioli – here, Diane Francis - here, Ron Frazier – here, Darryl Mikami – here. Five Members are in attendance; Members Marta Googins and Mark Preziosi are absent.

## NEW BUSINESS – Two new applications:

### Town of Braintree – Watson Park: Shoreline Stabilization and Flood Control Project

Director SantucciRozzi advises that she has is going to turn the presentation over to Kelly Phelan, the Town's Conservation Planner who did a very nice job on the Application, providing a lot of materials. Ken Kirkland, Assistant Director, provided a lovely Staff Report. Also noted, Marta Googins is joining the Meeting.

Kelly Phelan begins the presentation by sharing her screen. She explains that this project started because of coastal erosion. The bank of the Fore River is eroding pretty severely at the seawall and threatens to undermine the walking path and eventually the baseball fields. The Conservation Commission started looking for a solution to this, and got a Coastal Zone Management Grant to work on a solution. There was a working group with members of the Public Works Department, including the Recreation Division and Stormwater Division. They came up with this plan, which is fully permitted, and they are basically ready to get construction bids provided they secure the funding for the project. The project consists of restoring two lobes of eroded salt marsh and stabilizing the eroding coastal bank. That would be cut back to a less steep grade. The third component of the project is to construct a flood protection berm through the park that is two-feet tall. It would protect the park from flooding in the near term. The park was underwater twice in 2018 due to two different storms—coastal storm surge type of storms. With sea-level rise and climate change, we expect this to happen more frequently. The berm is intended to protect the project for the next few decades while the Town figures out a long-term plan. The design also includes rain gardens at the base of the berm, and the berm would wrap from near the splash pad, through the project area and tie into the existing seawall and pick up again at the other end of the seawall where there is a flood path area that could flood the path. This is a temporary measure with an anticipated lifespan of 50 years. The project is fully permitted, and we just got news last week that we have received a \$772,000 grant for construction. We are ready to go to bid if we have the full amount. The Application tonight is for a \$300,000 Match to that grant to get us to the project total that we need. We won't go out to bid until March 2022 because the project will be started from the river working inward. So, the salt marsh would be constructed first – the salt marsh restoration would be done first. We cannot plant those salt marsh buds until early spring. We are looking at bidding this in December, getting a construction contract finalized and beginning the project in March. Ms. Phelan will take questions.

Dr. Kurzberg thanks Ms. Phelan and asks if there are any questions or comments from the Committee.

Member Bonfiglioli confirms that Ms. Phelan worked on the grant from Mass. Coastal Management and she secured significant funding. Member Bonfiglioli wants to express congratulations and thanks Ms. Phelan for doing that.

Dr. Kurzberg would echo what Member Bonfiglioli said, and also refers to the previous that CPC received last year. As with all the other projects done by the Conservation Planner, they are very thorough and detailed and yet easy to understand. While 50 years seems pretty permanent to Dr. Kurzberg, he asks about how we are given the salt marsh material. Ms. Phelan explains that we purchase the salt marsh buds and the soil medium that would be used to grow it. It will be constructed and hopefully stabilize and start growing in the first year. The fifty-year timeline is really about the berm and how long the berm will function. Dr. Kurzberg asks, when the berm comes down, is the idea that the salt marsh will take care of the flooding? Ms. Phelan explains that the idea is that, at that point, we will not be able to keep up with sea level rise, the way it is projected right now. At that point, a lot of the park will become salt marsh, as it will migrate inland, which is an issue for the Recreation Division, but at least the salt marsh would protect the houses on Gordon Road that have the buffer between the river and the neighborhood.

There are no further questions or comments, and Dr. Kurzberg asks Director SantucciRozzi if she has any comments, and she states she has a few things. The Director wants to point out Kelly's efforts, as the under-cover grant getter for the Town of Braintree. Frankly, these projects would not be possible without securing these grant funds. Director SantucciRozzi wants to draw attention to the Staff Report prepared by Ken Kirkland, who we will introduce. Ken has gone through some of the basics and identified some of the property, some interesting characteristics of the property, as well as the funding sources and highlighting some various planning principles and the Master Plan and how this project meets and satisfies the criteria of the Community Preservation Act. The last thing the Director wanted to add is that staff is recommending this project be funded out of the Unreserved Account. We have about \$330,000 in the Open Space and about \$4Million in the Unreserved. Staff is recommending we used the Unreserved for this particular project. The Director doesn't have updated financials, as this was a special meeting at the request of Mayor Kokoros related to these very important Town of Braintree projects. The Director will provide updated numbers for the regular September Committee Meeting.

Dr. Kurzberg knows there is a format to follow for the motion, and Member Preziosi is not here. The Director advises that she thinks, if the Committee votes to support a favorable recommendation for this project in the amount that Kelly Phelan has requested out of the Unreserved Fund, that would be more than appropriate.

Member Bonfiglioli asks, when we talk about taking the money from the Unreserved Fund, is it really moved from the Unreserved to the Open Space or does it go directly from the Unreserved Fund. The Director advises that it comes directly from the Unreserved Fund.

Dr. Kurzberg asks for a MOTION to allocate \$300,000 for the Watson Park: Shoreline Stabilization and Flood Control Project.

Member Mikami **MOTIONS** to move \$300,000 from the Unreserved CPA Funds for the Watson Park: Shoreline Stabilization and Flood Control Project; seconded by Diane Francis; voted by roll call (6:0:0 votes: Dr. Kurzberg: AYE; Member Frazier: YES; Member Mikami: YES; Member Bonfiglioli: YES; Member Francis: YES; Member Googins: YES).

### **Administrative Business:**

#### **Introduction of New Assistant Director of Planning and Community Development**

Director SantucciRozzi provides a quick introduction to Ken Kirkland, our new Assistant Director of Planning and Community Development. We have been anxiously awaiting his arrival. He comes to us from Norwell, Massachusetts, where he worked for Peter Morin. He comes to us with previous experience from Cranston, Rhode Island, with a Bachelor's Degree, as well as two Masters Degrees.

We are excited to have Ken here. He will be assisting the Director in these meetings and preparing materials for the Community Preservation Committee. You will see emails from him, and he will also be attending the meetings. Welcome, Ken!

Dr. Kurzberg welcomes Ken Kirkland and thanks him for the Staff Report; Dr. Kurzberg acknowledges that it looks very comprehensive.

### **Town of Braintree – Hollis Field/Watson Park: Improvement Design Services**

Director SantucciRozzi opens the presentation for our next proposed project at Watson and Hollis. Steve Leary and Chris Griffin are here to make that presentation.

Steve Leary, Assistant to Mayor Kokoros, along with Chris Griffin, Assistant Recreation Director, are here tonight on behalf of the Applicant, Mayor Kokoros. Mr. Leary explains that the Committee has a funding request in the amount of \$90,000 for the Hollis Field and Watson Park Improvement Design Services. By way of background, in the fall of 2020, East Braintree Little League put in a CPC Application for funds to make improvements and replacement of selective infrastructure at East Braintree Little League at Watson Park. The Mayor, while he was in full support of this application, wanted to take a more comprehensive approach to that project, meaning we wanted to look at the Town as a whole (i.e. our field usage, where we need more fields, what other improvements can we do in Town). That is how we got to this point. The Mayor then put a baseball steering committee together, which was made up of high school coaches, league presidents, youth league coaches. Mr. Leary advises that they had one introductory meeting where he shared this same field design at Hollis, which Mr. Leary will share with the Committee Members now. Hollis is an underutilized field. It is currently used for baseball and some Pop Warner football. There are other practices that go on there, but overall it is under-utilized. There is no irrigation to keep the field in working condition throughout the spring, summer and into the fall season. What they are proposing is a design for a multi-use synthetic field. This is just for the design. We understand that Community Preservation Funds cannot be used for the actual building of the turf; this would just be for the design. What Mr. Leary means by a “multi-use” synthetic field is that the primary use would be a 60X90 Babe Ruth baseball field. In the outfield, the turf would be able to be used for multiple sports, which would include field hockey, soccer, football. Pretty much everything that you can do on turf, you can do on this field. Why is that important? When Thayer built its rink, they eliminated three turf fields which were used by the Town for Braintree soccer and other youth sports. Right now, we are limited with field spaces, and the time that we do get to use Thayer’s fields is limited. With the addition of this design on this field, it would give us an opportunity to have more space for our youth leagues and other sports leagues in Town to use this field.

Mr. Leary continues, back to the Watson Park design, what they are looking to do is remove the existing Babe Ruth 60X90 field that is currently there. By doing that, they would be able to expand the parking lot from where it currently is into the existing Babe Ruth outfield. If you have ever been to Watson Park during baseball season, parking is a major issue with people parking on the side streets and up into the neighborhood, which affects the quality of life for residents. Currently, there is only 40 spaces for the whole park. They would be looking to double what the current parking lot offers. Also included with this design, they would coordinate the best field positions for the Little League fields that are currently there. Right now, East Braintree Little League is not able to host official tournaments because of the size of their fields. One field is only 180 feet in dimension, and that does not fit with the current guidelines for a Little League to host an official tournament. With that, they would put a new Little League field where the current big 60X90 Babe Ruth field is and they would update the existing fields, including fencing, bleachers and the improvements that East Braintree Little League was looking for in their initial application. What East Braintree Little League was looking for when they first came to the Committee would still be included as part of this Design Service. Mr. Leary explains that they are working with Weston and Sampson, who provided the quote for this project. Lastly, Mr. Leary wants to highlight Letters of Support received from DPW Director, Jim Arsenault, from Assistant Director Recreation, Chris Griffin, from the President of East Braintree Little League, Andrew Berman, and from Joe Cunningham, the President of Braintree Babe Ruth, who are all fully in support of this application for design services.

With that, Mr. Leary opens discussion up to any questions from Committee Members.

Member Mikami, as someone who played on these fields a few years ago, this is an idea that he wishes had been done many years ago. Member Mikami asks if we came up with this design concept or is this something that Weston and Sampson is proposing to us in terms of the parking and reconfiguring the size of the fields. Mr. Leary explains that it was the Town's idea that they proposed to Weston and Sampson to see if this was in their realm of work. Weston and Sampson are just helping facilitate the design. Mr. Griffin, Assistant Director Recreation, adds that the concept design they are working off of is one that was developed after consultation with the Town's Engineering Department as well as consultation with East Braintree Little League because, as Steve Leary mentioned, not only is this an addition of parking and some very serious well-needed work on the infrastructure, such as fencing, dugouts, scoreboards, bleachers, it also includes extensions of the outfield and repositioning the angling of some existing fields to fit better and provide a more conducive environment to the facility. So, in the sort answer, "yes", the Town did come up with the concept of what they want to do. Weston and Sampson won't be operating off of a completely blank slate. Member Mikami confirms that Weston and Sampson feel that what the Town came up with is a good plan. Mr. Griffin confirms that from all they have gathered from Weston and Sampson, "yes". Member Mikami asks if all the items from the original Watson Park application are part of this project, as well. Mr. Griffin explains that, while what was proposed last year was very needed, it didn't address all the issues there. Items that may have not been included last year were the fencing, bringing the fields up to complete Little League standards. Member Mikami refers to the Hollis field and asks how many different events could you have at once there. Mr. Leary explains it would depend on what they come up with in the final design. It depends on how big you make the outfield. In terms of the safety if there is a baseball game going on and you have soccer, that wouldn't be feasible. However, you could have a field hockey and a soccer game going on side-by-side depending on the design for the actual outfield. Mr. Griffin adds that, depending on the age level and what league is using the field, if you had younger age level, you may be able to fit as much as four soccer games. Member Mikami thinks both of these are terrific and much needed. His opinion is to try and make Hollis as big as they possibly can to accommodate as many players and games. This is a terrific start.

Member Bonfiglioli was wondering if the Hollis School will be able to utilize the location where the synthetic field is going. Mr. Leary responds and explains that a few months ago he went out and met with Mr. McDonald onsite and explained to him what they were proposing to do. Mr. Leary got a feel for how much the Hollis School uses that space. They do use a portion of that space for day-to-day recess. They also use the entire field for two different types of Field Days during the school year. They would be able to use the field for those events.

Member Googins confirms that \$90,000 is for design study. She asks if the Applicant has come up with an approximate figure for the infrastructure upgrade. It seems like there is a lot there that you want to do. Mr. Leary responds and states that they met with one contractor who provided a basic estimate of similar projects he had done elsewhere. The approximate figure was in the area of \$750,000 to \$1Million for Hollis Field and for Watson Park improvement we don't have a definitive figure from a contractor. Dr. Kurzberg states that estimate seems a little low. Mr. Leary explains that cost was for a synthetic baseball field and didn't include the entire area. They are looking to design a much larger area. Member Googins explains that she was just talking about Watson Park, as she has been involved there over the years with Little League. She expressed that there was is a lot of area, and wondered if there was any approximate. Dr. Kurzberg asks about the proposal from East Braintree Little League. Director SantucciRozzi refers to the previous proposal was an excellent application; it was a "clean-up" application addressing a little of a number of items. It was in the amount of around \$300,000, but her understanding is that Weston and Sampson will provide all of that cost estimating. As they worked through the design, what she liked about the scope is that there is a lot of opportunity to speak to stakeholders. As they start to work through layouts and preliminary designs, there were two or three community meetings with stakeholders to talk about these.

One of the Director's recommendations was going to be that they not only provide design for the turf but also design for non-turf. In the event it becomes cost prohibitive, this Committee who seems to be very supportive of these concepts could assist with funding if it wasn't turf. The Director is not sure if that changes the price or if the Committee is willing to include this in their motion, if they vote this evening. The other thing the Director wanted to point out was the CPC did actually vote, and the Council voted as well, on an Application that was submitted from the Recreation Department in the amount of \$21,500 for the Winfield-Adams Playground Baseball Field Renovation. Her understanding is that was voted back in November 2019, and none of that work has been done. The Director can discuss this further off-line with Chris Griffin. The Director is providing just a suggestion, and she asks if Mr. Leary had a chance to speak with anyone at Weston and Sampson to see if both styles were included in the estimate or whether there will be added costs in analyzing this.

Dr. Kurzberg thanks Mr. Leary and Mr. Griffin for the presentation and the application. He also thanks the individuals that provided Letters of Support for the project. Dr. Kurzberg mentions that in the proposal for \$21,500 for Adams Field, it was for a youth field – a 50X70 field. Mr. Griffin explains that it is an option. There are other areas around town that we can look at. We are not currently in a position to make a commitment to a 50X70. Dr. Kurzberg states that this proposal would result in a terrific complex at Hollis. Certainly, the upgrades over at Watson would be wonderful, as well. Dr. Kurzberg discusses the fact that currently turf fields are not approved as a CPC expenditure. He is not sure why. The Director explains that the design is an approved expenditure, but she doesn't know if the reason for not including the actual construction is due to the fact that, although it is open space and recreational, perhaps because it is synthetic turf this may not be considered open space. Dr. Kurzberg asks if we can pursue that with the state; maybe that is something they would change their minds on, as turf fields are going in everywhere. It is certainly a recreational project. The Director will check in with Stuart at the Coalition. The Director is not sure why turf fields are not an approved CPC expenditure; she notes there are some that have environmental concerns with turf fields. That is why she suggested getting a broader scope of design. Dr. Kurzberg states hopefully the design will lead to some improvements rather than being a design that gets shelved because there isn't adequate funding. Dr. Kurzberg was wondering what the Mayor was thinking for funding the project. Mr. Leary advises that this could be done perhaps through supplemental appropriations or capital funding.

Kelly Phelan, Conservation Planner, added that, while Weston and Sampson is looking at Watson Park and doing analysis of the fields at the park, they take in account the analysis that Woods Hole Group has done. Some of it is just basic topography that certain areas are higher in elevation and those probably have a longer expected life span. The middle of the field may be lower and more likely to flood sooner. She hopes they take that into account, as it would be ashamed to invest a lot of money in something that is in a low-lying part of the park.

Dr. Kurzberg asks if there is a motion to approve \$90,000 for CPA funding Open Space Recreation.

Director SantucciRozzi advises that there are ten individuals in attendance tonight, and she wanted to give them an opportunity to speak if they are interested before the Committee moves to a MOTION. The Director advises that Mr. Tom Martin is interested. Chris Griffin assists Mr. Martin with audio.

Mr. Martin advises that he was part of the Steering Committee to help make some recommendations. They have a wonderful collaborative relationship between all the different organizations, with baseball and a lot of the other sports. Mr. Martin advises that, even though this was driven by baseball, the Committee is all in favor of encompassing a project that would permit many parties to utilize the open space. Mr. Martin is asking, in the event turf is not approved by the Preservation Committee, for this not to be tabled back to drawing board because there are a lot of people that will do something to make sure this works out. Mr. Martin notes that with all the rain we had this summer, and the fields being unplayable, we need other options sooner than later. Mr. Martin appreciates being able to listen in to tonight's meeting. He notes there are a lot of people that are really behind this project.

Director SantucciRozzi notes there are no further speakers.

Dr. Kurzberg asks for a Motion.

Member Mikami **MOTIONS** to move \$90,000 from the CPA Open Space Funds for the Hollis Field/Watson Park: Improvement Design Services; seconded by Diane Francis; voted by roll call (6:0:0 votes: Dr. Kurzberg: AYE; Member Frazier: YES; Member Mikami: YES; Member Bonfiglioli: YES; Member Francis: YES; Member Googins: YES).

Director SantucciRozzi notes that both she and Kelly Phelan, Conservation Planner, will be available to assist Weston and Sampson, Steve Leary and Chris Griffin, as they move through this, to make sure that there is proper coordination with the restoration project that Kelly is doing to ensure that these things are designed collaboratively.

**Administrative Business:**  
**CPC Manager Job**

Director SantucciRozzi advises that we have gotten some applications and interviewed one individual. We have decided, at this time, to not offer that person the position. The posting has now been put back out, and the Director did receive a phone call last week from a very experienced, seasoned Professional Planner. They are currently working in a community. They are interested in working part-time. The Director is excited about this individual, and she will keep Dr. Kurzberg posted if there are going to be any additional interviews. We are looking for somebody that will be a good fit and help the Town grow the program and really make the program as great as it can be. We do have an Assistant Director, which is helping Director SantucciRozzi a lot.

**Administrative Business:**  
**Approval of Meeting Minutes: June 14, 2021**

The minutes for the June 14, 2021 Community Preservation Committee Meeting are presented for approval.

Member Diane Francis **MOTION** to approve the minutes of June 14, 2021; seconded by Member Ron Frazier; voted by roll call (6:0:0 votes: Dr. Kurzberg: AYE; Member Frazier: YES; Member Mikami: YES; Member Bonfiglioli: YES; Member Francis: YES; Member Googins: YES).

Member Frazier had noted in the minutes that there was one item holding up the Elm Street Cemetery Project that we hadn't got any figures in yet. Member Frazier asks if those had come in yet. Director SantucciRozzi advises that we got the numbers for the tombs and the stones, but not the topper fence. The Director will make a note to follow-up on the topper fence.

Member Ron Frazier **MOTION** to adjourn the meeting; seconded by Member Diane Francis; voted by roll call (6:0:0 votes: Dr. Kurzberg: AYE; Member Frazier: YES; Member Mikami: YES; Member Bonfiglioli: YES; Member Francis: YES; Member Googins: YES).

Director SantucciRozzi informs the Committee about a site visit to the Outdoor Classroom at Morrison School.

Meeting adjourned at 5:53 PM.

Respectfully submitted,  
Louise Quinlan, Planning and Community Development