**March 19, 2015 Community Preservation Meeting and Annual Public Hearing Minutes**

At the Shutesbury Elementary School Library. 6 to 8 PM.

Members present: Chairman Donald Fletcher and members James Aaron, Linda Avis Scott, Allen Hanson and Leslie Bracebridge, recording. Members absent: Rita Farrell and Susan Essig.

Chairman Fletcher opened the meeting at 6:00 PM.

Minutes of January 15, 2015 and February 19, 2015 were reviewed and approved as written.

Chairman Fletcher summarized the course of the meeting to be to listen to presentations of the three 2015 applications to be followed by questions and answers. The final part of the evening will include a discussion of Shutesbury’s Community Preservation needs, possibilities and resources.

1. In the presence of Cemetery Commission Chairman Marilyn Tibbetts, Commission member Walter Tibbetts presented the Commission’s proposal to continue their work of “sprucing-up” the West Cemetery:
   1. The history of restoration of stones at the West Cemetery has been met with 2 challenges:
      1. Finding a qualified entity to follow through with the gravestone restoration work, and
      2. Continuing damage of falling limbs from the aging unhealthy pine trees still standing.
   2. The Commission has been in contact with a certified gravestone conservator from New Salem who has proposed a combination of gravestone restoration with a volunteer training program.
   3. The Commission has contacted a tree removal company that can bring in a crane to remove the remaining trees not previously removed partly due to the challenge of how to get them down without damage to all of the standing gravestones around the trees.
   4. Additional benefits:
      1. Gravestone restoration will continue into the future with volunteer services.
      2. Cemetery grounds keeping will be much easier without the trees and falling tree debris.
   5. Costs:
      1. Gravestone repair of up to 30 stones and training of up to 20 volunteers ~ $10,000.
      2. Tree removal and stump grinding ~ $17,000.
   6. Additional work, not part of the proposal, to be pursued with the Tree Warden after the project is completed: Ornamental tree plantings compatible with the location.
   7. Summary: Remove the hazard, train volunteers to repair the stones in keeping with approved gravestone repair historic preservation standards, with more advanced repairs to be done by the certified conservator.
   8. Answers to questions:
      1. It is not known if the trees were purposefully planted originally. They provided character at one time, but are now a menace to the gravestones.
      2. Tree work should be done in the dry fall once the ground is frozen, or in winter, not when the ground is soft.
      3. Discussion on necessity of stump grinding: Stumps will be ground to below ground level without damage to surrounding stones, loamed to ground level and grass seed planted, both for appearance and to make grounds keeping efficient and keep brush from growing.
      4. Have not yet advertised for volunteers. Previous cemetery projects have netted as many volunteers as has been needed.
2. In the presence of Old Town Beach Improvement Committee member Gail Fleischaker, other members: Mary Anne Antonellis and Catherine Hilton presented their 3-member Committee’s proposal to create a waterfront park at the former town beach:
   1. The goal is to reclaim use of an under-used town property.
      1. Raised gardens designed by Gail Fleischaker, and
      2. A Kloter Farms knotty cedar 10-foot gazebo with bench seating will complement the:
      3. 2014 initiated Library sponsored kayak loan program also at that site.
      4. The old bath house will be converted to kayak, lawn furniture, and tool storage.
      5. Parking and toilet facilities are already in place at the boat launch.
      6. A kayak rack and lawn furniture are already in place.
   2. Anything done in wetlands area will be pre-approved by the Conservation Commission.
      1. Removal of brush that has grown up since the beach closed and future plantings will be negotiated with the Conservation Commission.
      2. The garden budget is therefore zero, until a plan is approved by the Conservation Comm.
   3. Much in-kind volunteer work does not show up in budget.
      1. The Old Town Beach Improvement Committee will be responsible for daily maintenance.
      2. Members of the Old Town Beach Improvement Committee hope that eventually there will be a town recreation committee that might assume oversight of the area.
      3. Police will be asked to include the site in their patrols.
   4. The Old Town Beach Improvement Committee will ask town meeting to name the area the “William G. Elliott Waterfront Park” in honor of the late town volunteer who served on many boards and committees and worked tirelessly to keep Lake Wyola’s water clean.
   5. Summary of the question and answer discussion:
      1. Fire Chief Tibbetts was asked to define allowable fires:
         1. It must be a cooking fire.
         2. It must be contained.
         3. It needs permission of the property owner.
         4. Fires of any kind are illegal on public property unless:
            1. They are contained either in a standing hibachi as seen at other parks, or in a pit with cement bottom and sides, and
            2. They must be extinguished after use.
      2. The gazebo foundation will be a base of crushed stone.
      3. The gazebo will be cedar, not pressure treated wood.
      4. Some neighbors say that the area currently attracts young people and parties.
         1. There is no way to know if the improvements will attract or discourage nuisance behavior.
         2. Police could be asked to enforce a rule to close the park at dusk.
         3. Police could enforce the fire rules.
         4. Norene Pease, who lives across the Lake from the area, stated that she has not heard loud noises from the area at her home.
      5. There are no plans for an accessible path to the area in the proposal, but a future accessible path would be welcomed.
      6. Nothing will change regarding swimming in the area: Swimming is not prohibited, but it is not encouraged.
3. Member Gail Fleischaker presented the Conservation Commission’s Merrill Drive “Top-of-the-Lake” 40 by 90 foot kayak and canoe launch and picnic area:
   1. In addition, the area will include:
      1. A lakefront stewardship demonstration of 3 season plantings to hold the soil in place:
         1. Red twig dogwood, azalea, and blueberries,
         2. A “low-mow” grass requiring mowing only once or twice a season,
         3. A tree near the picnic table to provide shade.
         4. The plants and landscaping will be donated.
      2. 3 established parking spaces,
      3. A hard stone path to the Lake edge,
      4. A post and timber fence/vegetation on the left border , and
      5. Educational signage.
   2. All work will be done under the direction of the Department of Environmental Protection’s circuit rider to be consistent with the Massachusetts Wetlands Act.
   3. The project would convert an un-used piece of town property into a destination for people who don’t otherwise have access to the waterfront.
      1. The property was fully treed at one point.
      2. Signage would include:
         1. Dawn to dusk and other park use rules,
         2. Instructions for proper cleaning and care of boats entering the Lake,
         3. History of Lake Wyola.
         4. Location of bathrooms – at State Park.
   4. Summary of the question and answer session:
      1. Norene Pease welcomes more paddlers on the Lake.
      2. A discussion of “residents only” was dismissed as not in compliance with former use of state public funds for the original purchase of the dam area and unenforceable anyway.
      3. The shore bank for launching will be modified according to the Wetlands Protection Act.
      4. Specialist Janice Stone will write the Notice of Intent.
      5. Concern of alcohol brought onto property was countered with the formalized the property becomes, the more that sort of thing will be noticed.
      6. Concern of the town-owned island being incorporated into the project: There is no plan to include the island in the project; the bridge was removed previously to limit access to the island. The island is fully treed and not easily accessed.
      7. Plans for both the “Top-of-the-Lake and the William G. Elliott Park would be not to have trash cans, but rather to expect that people will take their trash out when they leave.
      8. Mary Anne Antonellis stated that given the opportunity, most people will do the right thing.
4. Chairman Fletcher introduced the final portion of the public hearing: Inviting those present to brain-storm about the **needs possibilities and resources in Shutesbury**, that might be incorporated into future Community Preservation funded projects:
   1. Possibly enhancing the town-owned Cove Road property for public use.
   2. Recognizing the potential of the Bennett house at the Lake Wyola State Park.
   3. Access to the Hidden Meadow Conservation Area.
   4. Designation of times for quiet paddling and noisier motor boating on Lake Wyola.
   5. Possibilities for the 711 Wendell Road Ames/Janowitz property.
5. Chairman Fletcher recognized:
   1. Ideas require groups of people to get the ideas off the ground,
   2. These projects enrich our community.
6. Chairman Fletcher reviewed the remainder of the process:
   1. Only town meeting can approve the recommendations that the Community Preservation Committee makes.
   2. Donald will make the presentations at town meeting. He would like proponents for each project available, in case there are technical questions.
7. The next Community Preservation Committee meeting is scheduled for April 2 at 6 PM at the Shutesbury Town Hall.

Minutes respectfully submitted by,

Leslie Bracebridge