

**COTUIT FIRE DISTRICT
PRUDENTIAL COMMITTEE MEETING
FREEDOM HALL
COTUIT, MA 02635
June 24, 2024**

Present: Mark Lynch, Fran Parks, Ray Pirrone, Seth Burdick, Lisa Haven and Charlie Eager

The meeting was called to order at 6pm by Fran Parks on June 24, 2024

Fran did a roll call of the members present and the Pledge of Allegiance

Fran stated that the Civic Association has been working on the Cotuit Memorial Park and she gave history about the park.

- 1946, CFD started discussing putting a Memorial in the park
- 1948 & 1949, they put a warrant on the Article for a Motion for the Town to purchase property in Cotuit for a park
- Passed in 1949 and they purchased, for \$1,500.00 the park that was owned by Sally Sawyer, Roger Scutter, Mr. Gibbs and Ms. Hamlin
- After CFD acquired it, they set up a committee to propose how they wanted to set up the park
- First memorial is for WWI. It was carried to the town by three trucks and went to Cptn. Chatfields yard. It went to the library along with the flag post.
- A ceremony was held and the Gov of MA came for the WWI Memorial
- A wooden memorial was put up at the library with the names of the men and women in WWII
- 1949, State Legislature accepted the change of legislation so that new memorials could be purchased
- Memorial District set aside \$1,000.00 for the Memorial Park to set up in 1951, when another ceremony took place
- 1958, the school where the PO is now, was torn down
- A committee wanted to purchase the property on the corner of School St. and Main St.
- A swap was arranged. Both buildings (old school and A&P) were torn down.
- District Committee designed the park and the placement of the memorials and monuments.
- The monuments and the flag and how they are displayed was designed by and paid for by the Cotuit Fire District.

Fran stated that she thought there was no reason to change the layout of the park as it was designed specifically for the honor of WWI and WWII men and women and should stay there.

Public Comment related to park:

- Richard Ventrone – senior architect for the Town and handed out photographs
 - Library property showcasing the two monuments from 2001
 - 2009 image shows the driveway to the parking lot
 - 2014 image is a drastic change. Driveway has doubled in width. Stairs have been added.
 - Axial relationship created with library and stairway

- Bronze needs to be cleaned up on the monuments
- The original relationship of the monuments to the flagpole has been superseded by the new dynamic that has been introduced.
- He would like to realign the walkway to meet handicap accessible requirements
- Relocate the three (3) memorials so they are in line and facing the flag pole and centralize them
- Chris Robello
 - Asked Richard Ventrone to explain the placement of the monuments
 - Richard explained that right now, they face the road. They would be moved so they are directly in front of the stairs but in the same relationship with the road and flagpole.
 - Vietnam Memorial, WWI and WWII would be more prominently located and face the flag
 - Chris Robello strongly stated her opinion in opposition to have the Memorials face the flag and thinks that memorials should face School Street as she has ancestors on the memorials. She feels they are already in a prominent position. She is all in favor of widening the walkway. She does not understand why the flag needs to be moved to be central to the library stairs.
- Kathi Campbell
 - Concerned that the part that narrows that goes back to where the library steps go down, now the flag will be there? Understands handicap accessibility. It appears that everything will be pushed back, further back into the park and will be less visible.
 - Richard implored Kathi to look at the plan so she could understand the logic behind the idea.
 - Kathi responded that she does not understand the logic. She has family members on the memorial. Any pushing back, takes away the focal point of the memorials. She does understand improving and upgrading the walkways.
 - Fran responded that she would get Kathi a copy of the plans.
- Carol Zais
 - President of the Cotuit Civic Association – has been working with Town of Barnstable for over a year, engaging their services from the program for Memorial Park plans that were put in place before COVID and on schedule to get money from the town on the capital improvement.
 - Cotuit Civic Association has held off on doing any public announcements because the Town has asked to wait until they were further long in the understanding of the easements that needed to be adjusted.
 - Civic Association will be having a meeting on it.
 - Thanked the architects for taking the time to draw up the plans on a non-funded project and taking time away from their funded projects
 - Fran responded that the District does have an interest since it paid for the Memorials and Flag
- Steve O'Connor
 - Asked Richard about cul-de-sac circles
 - Richard replied (minutes taker cannot hear/understand)
 - Responded that the axial relationship to stairs is the right one.

- Stated it is a much better experience to be able to read the names on the Memorials on foot rather than driving by and seeing the Memorials.
- Patty Daley
 - Expressed that she liked the serpentine path suggestion and supports moving the Monuments as it would be more accessible to people in the park
- Carol Zais
 - Stated that this is all preliminary and at the beginning stages. It is a slow moving project.
- Richard Ventrone
 - Stated that the drawings look finished but they are only sketches.
- Mark Lynch
 - Commented that the Prudential Committee is discussing the preliminary plans and happy that it appears that the project is moving forward
- Fran Parks
 - Let Mr. Ventrone know that at one time there were benches to the side of the memorials and questioned changing the position of the monument and flags in order for the library stairs to be accessible
- Richard Ventrone
 - Stated that he did not see that moving monuments to increase their importance is at all disrespectful to the people who erected it and those whose names are on it. The desire is to increase the importance of the memorials within a park that has changed over the last 70-80 years to reflect a different landscape
- Chris Robello
 - She was not implying that she thought it was disrespectful. She thinks that it is respectful to have a sign that says Memorial Park and you see two (2) memorials when you enter the park.

Accepting past minutes

Fran put forth a motion to accept the February minutes. All in favor.

Public Comment:

- Patty Daley – stated that she is not familiar with a format where public comment is the form for speaking to an agenda item
 - Regarding Cotuit Elementary School
 - Lawn needs to be mowed
 - Outside graffiti needs to be taken care of
 - Fran commented that they do not own the land
 - Patty commented that it is right in front of the school and would be happy to go out there and mow the grass
 - Regarding Ad Hoc Committee on the school
 - Sent an email regarding how Ad Hoc Committee meeting gets formed
 - Asked the committee to honor their duty to expend funds to do the study in the way that is true to the Article and honors the wishes of the voters.
 - Mark Lynch asked if, besides herself, if she knew of any other people to be possible members of the Ad Hoc Committee

- She answered Pat Lentell, John Havel, Jamie Jackson and Carol Zais are the folks that she had personal conversations with to be on the Ad Hoc Committee.
- Carol Zais
 - Regarding mowing of the field and asked if when the Cotuit field is mowed, could they mow the Cotuit Fire District sections around the school
 - Seth answered that the DPW has been working on the field and the DeMello Brothers have a contract to mow and Prudential can contact Demello to have them mow
 - Regarding parking at the field – do not want to do enhancements at the school that will be used for parking
- Pat Lentell
 - Stated that something needs to be done with the property asap as it is a blight to the community.

Treasurer's Report

FY24

- 11 months into the fiscal year
 - Revenue greatly exceeds the budget
 - Expenditures are below the budget
 - Substantial amount of free cash for next year
 - Fire Department has been operating one-person short all year so there is substantial overtime
 - Suggested moving some of the reserve funds into the Fire Department to cover the potential overage
 - Estimating \$25,000.00
- Articles
 - \$15,000.00 left in the maintenance for the school building so there are available to address some of the needs
 - CC5 purchased some equipment
- Ray put forth a motion that the Treasurer be directed to transfer from the Reserve Fund \$4,000.00 for finance salaries and \$25,000.00 for Fire Department salaries. Seconded by Seth. All in favor.

Miscellaneous

- Fran stated that the Freedom Hall announcement sign is seriously deteriorating and the middle part needs to be replaced.
- Mark stated that the Fire District website needs to be updated
 - Mark asked Carol Zais about the Civic Association website and asked her to send him their contact information
- Paychecks issue
 - Ray has engaged a tax attorney to investigate and give them an opinion re what the proper reporting for taxable income on the W2.
 - Tax attorney quoted around \$2,500.00 to investigate.

ANNUAL REPORT

- Corrections / proposed changes
 - Lisa Haven stated that in Word, the “track changes” will be helpful.
 - Mark asked Charlie to identify necessary changes to By-Law - Section 11 Advisory Committee

Ad Hoc Advisory Committee

- Discussion regarding what the Prudential Committee is responsible for regarding commitment
 - Patty Daley commented regarding she emailed about Ad Hoc Committee and suggestions for timelines, which is up to Prudential Committee.
- Seth stated that he does not have the bandwidth and cannot chair the committee
- Mark stated to Patty Daley that there is no reason why the group of people that Patty Daley identified would not be able to get together and have meetings and, at the end of the timeline, go to the Prudential Committee and voice their opinion regarding what kind of study on the school needs to be done.
 - Patty answered that was fine and asked Mark if he was referring to outside of the committee process?
 - Mark stated that it need not be a formal committee. If there is a group that wants to suggest what the study should look like, then let’s hear what they have to say.
 - Patty answered that she would be happy to head that.
 - Fran stated that the Prudential Committee already had their marching orders.
 - RFP on the building to either demolish it, demolish part of it or find out purposes that it would be useful.
 - Fran stated that she felt no other information would be needed.
 - Patty responded about what the contents of her email was regarding RFPs and offered to work on the committee.
 - Seth stated his reason for the idea of an Ad Hoc Committee.
 - Mark proposed a timeline for an Ad Hoc Committee
 - Mark, Seth and Fran weighed in on the idea of an Ad Hoc Committee.
 - Carol Zais weighed in as well (minutes taker could not understand)
 - Mark stated that he is in favor of an Ad Hoc Committee
 - Fran disagreed with the Ad Hoc Committee
 - Charlie Eagan weighed in (minutes taker could not understand)
 - Mark moved that the Prudential Committee create an Ad Hoc sub committee relating to the elementary school property with a sunset of August 15, 2024 consisting of Patty Daley, John Havel, Pat Lentell, Jamie Jackson and Carol Zais; Fran seconded the motion; all in favor; Fran was not in favor; Mark and Seth were in favor
- Steve O’Connor spoke about the hostility around the issue. He stated that it was palpable. What is the highest and best use of this building? He stated that there should be money allocated to do an RFP to figure out the highest and best use of this building.
 - Mark interrupted and let Mr. O’Connor know that there was a report done, Habib Report and encouraged him to review it on the website.

- Pat Lentell spoke about community involvement because the Prudential Committee was taking control of the building to demolish it and the Prudential was not putting it out to the community to determine best use.
- Fran weighed in regarding Community Center proponents
- Seth weighed in and stated that the Prudential Committee is primarily responsible as financial overseers. It wasn't prudent for the Prudential Committee to add another capital cost.
- Citizens and Prudential Committee had a lot of conversation back and forth.
- Patty Daly spoke about Ad Hoc Committee deadline of August 15, 2024 is not enough time.
- Mark spoke about the end result of the studies.
- Patty Daly spoke about what the study would be about.
- Laura (?) regarding a statement made to demolish the building and waiting for Fire Department using the building and deciding they were going to do something else.

Election of Officers

- Fran asked Charlie if he would like to remain Clerk
 - Charlie answered yes
- Fran asked Ray if he would like to remain Treasurer
 - Ray answered yes
- Fran nominated Mark to remain Chairman of the Prudential Committee and nominated herself for Vice-Chair
 - Seth seconded Mark's nomination and Fran's nomination
 - All in favor

Seith made Motion to Adjourn – all in favor