

**Town of Hamilton
Community Preservation Committee
April 12, 2012 Minutes**

Attendees

The meeting was held in the Memorial Room of Town Hall with the following Committee members in attendance: Tom Catalano, Keith Glidden, Ed Howard, Jeff Hubbard, Jay Butler, Ray Whipple, and Nepo Trepanier. Christine Berry as CPC Coordinator was also present. With a quorum of CPC members present the meeting was called to order at 7:35pm

Acceptance of Meeting Minutes from March 8th CPC Meeting

The minutes from the March 8th meeting were accepted by the CPC.

Update on the Essex Street Citizen's Petition

Christine provided an update on the Essex Street Citizen's petition. Rudi Pizzano was able to secure enough signatures to support the inclusion of a warrant article requesting funding from the Town's free cash and CPA funding. The petition was deemed illegal by Town Counsel because CPA funds cannot be appropriated without the recommendation of the CPC. The Board of Selectmen decided to keep the engineering request on the warrant for \$15,000 using free cash. Mr. Pizzano had previously withdrawn the application from the CPC. Tom noted that the CPC can entertain a resubmission if the applicant decided to do so.

Approve CPA FY13 Budget

Christine prepared a draft FY13 budget for the CPC. The entire budget is not ready to be approved at this time, particularly the Patton gift appropriation. Tom reported that he spoke with Stuart Saginor, Executive Director of the Community Preservation Coalition, about the CPC covering the carrying costs of the Patton property, and Stuart advised that we could not. The CPC can only fund capital expenses associated with the project. Tom asked the CPC whether they would consider using the remaining, unspent FY12 CPA administrative funds for septic and home inspection expenses. Christine reported that we probably still have close to \$9,000.00 available within this fiscal year.

Tom made a motion that the CPC allocate the potential spending of any excess FY12 administrative funds remaining for various due diligence costs associated with the acceptance of the Patton gift. The motion was seconded. Ed noted that this was appropriate because the Town needs to understand the condition of the house. The motion was approved.

Patton Estate Land Donation CPA Request

Marc Johnson, Selectmen, provided an update on where things stand with the Patton Estate donation to the Town. Marc reported that the Patton Estate Committee has been spending a lot of time with the Recreation Master Plan consultant figuring out what type of fields the Town needs and what can be developed on the property. Marc noted that we wouldn't have a final answer from the consultants until later in April. Ray added that most people feel the fields will have a positive effect, but there are concerns about the house. Marc said that Mrs. Patton wants to keep the house with the fields.

Marc reported that there is a rich collection of artifacts in the house. He noted the property would provide the Town's only public access to the Ipswich River. He said Essex County Greenbelt Association is very excited because they currently have easements over abutting land but can't access the property. He said they are envisioning using the existing well access

road to access the river and fields. He added that the Town is considering capping the abutting Idlewood well if they get DEP's approval to do so. Tom added that the Patton property could provide a link to the Discover Hamilton Trail as well.

Tom asked whether the CPC would entertain holding an extra meeting before our next regularly scheduled meeting so we'll have more information in preparation for a vote. Marc added that the Patton Estate Committee is planning to have a report completed before Town Meeting summarizing their findings and recommendations for the use of the land and building.

Marc noted that Gordon Conwell said they would be willing to use the building as long as they could to continue their archiving. There is still substantial archiving to be completed. Ed inquired whether the concept was for the Town to be in the bed and breakfast business. Marc said no, that the Town would be owner, and would lease the building for to a bed and breakfast operator.

Marc said the intention is for the leaseholder to cover the majority of the improvements needed for the house. Ed said that as a business holder he is concerned about the Town getting involved in the bed and breakfast business. Ed has heard that the hotel business is not doing well right now.

Keith asked if was a minimum amount of lease income that the Town wants to realize. He said that would be an important component to understand so we know what our bottom line is, and how a business owner can be profitable without having a burden. Marc said they don't know that number yet. Marc said that they will have it at the end of April. Marc said they will also know what the lease agreement will be with Gordon for their archiving program at the house.

Ed heard that the Town is going to go into negotiation regarding the lawsuit with DEP. Marc thought that the lawsuit may be over, but there is still the concern over the Town's permits. The dispute with DEP is that the Ipswich River basin runs dry a great deal. The DEP is concerned about withdrawing water from this sub-basin, which is where the well is located. DEP says believes the high water withdrawal comes from human activity, but it could also be evaporation. The area is very grassy. DEP does not want this sub-basin affecting the river.

Ray asked if any of the Patton Committee members seemed willing to invest in this property, hypothetically. Marc responded by saying that they are looking at it more as a what if we can't get a leaseholder. The Town could give it back to the Patton family by using their right of first refusal; or sell it, with the proceeds going half to the Town and half to the Patton's charity of their choice.

It was suggested that the CPC meet on May 2nd at 7:30pm so that the Patton Committee will have their report in place. The CPC will vote at that time on this project. Ray asked who will oversee this whole project. Marc and Tom suggested it would be a combination of the Town Manager and some form of the existing committee. They added that Danvers has a similar set-up. Their Historical Society manages the land and allows various uses. We have to look at all the most viable uses. Tom added that Mrs. Patton may leave some of the items in the house or take it away. He said the house is full of exhibits, photographs, furniture, and memorabilia. Tom said they'd need to get a caretaker in there soon in the interim, particularly in the wintertime.

Tom moved to accept items #2, #3 and #4 for the Community Preservation budget for FY13 as presented in Appendix X. The motion was seconded. The CPC will return to the Patton Estate budget item at their May 2nd meeting.

Meeting Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 9:00pm.