

**Town of Hamilton
Community Preservation Committee
September 9, 2010 Minutes**

Attendees

The meeting was held in the Memorial Room of Town Hall with the following Committee members in attendance: Tom Catalano, Jeff Stinson, Ray Whipple, Leigh Keyser, Jay Butler, Ben Ricker and Peter Dana. Christine Berry as CPC Coordinator was also present. With a quorum present the meeting was called to order.

Welcome Ben Ricker to CPC

Ben Ricker was recently appointed to the CPC as one of the at-large Board of Selectmen appointments. The CPC welcomed Ben to the Committee.

Donovan Update and Review

Christine Berry reported that there are some updates to the Donovan acquisition project cost since Melissa presented the project to the CPC last month. There is a possibility that the closing costs are going up, but for now remain estimated at \$30,000. The Board of Selectmen voted on Monday, September 6th for the Hamilton-Wenham Open Land Trust to hold the conservation restriction so there will be no \$15,000 conservation restriction endowment fee. The \$28,000 cost to issue the bond and bond counsel is a new, added cost. Hamilton will be securing a \$3 million bond, a portion of which will be the Donovan acquisition. The total cost to issue the bond is \$100,000. The CPC's portion will be pro-rated and is estimated to be a maximum of \$28,000. Deborah Mena recommended that the CPC assume a worst case scenario with a total project cost, including closing fees and bond counsel to be \$733,000; which assumes no grants or fundraising. Adjustments can be made on Town Meeting floor, but Deborah recommended that any adjustments be made to lower the cost, not increase it.

Deborah won't request the bond until December 2010 so that the amount to be bonded can be determined at that time. Peter Dana recommended the Town issue a Bond Anticipation Note (BAN). Most cities or towns sell a BAN for short-term funding which can go as long as two years. The option for Donovan runs out in March 2011, and we may be able close even sooner. The CPC discussed how much they might be willing to bond and for how long. Tom Catalano thought that 30 years was too long. Peter Dana suggested that our financial consultant review what the impact would be on the Town's bond ratings.

Christine reported that both Greenbelt and Essex County Trails Associations (ECTA) have each committed \$10,000. The Hamilton-Wenham Open Land Trust will probably be committing \$5,000. Jay Butler reported that the Sports Leagues would likely be contributing about \$60,000 through a \$10 per child per sport for three years. This formula will be confirmed at a future Recreation Board meeting. Concern was expressed about Wenham's lack of contribution for the project. Christine reported that Michael Lombardo is continuing to press Jeff Chelgren to see if Wenham can contribute funds through their General Fund since they cannot use CPA funds for an acquisition.

The CPC agreed to split the project cost to half paid in cash and half paid through a bond. To date, there has been no further information on the status of the Town's two grants. Jeff Stinson reported that Brad Hill's office did call to express support and sent a letter of support as well. The representative from the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA) was very positive on the site visit. Town representatives pitched the project as mix of

preserving recreation space while simultaneously preserving open space. The final decision on the grants us up to EEA. Jeff Stinson offered to place a call to EEA for an update.

Tom Catalano suggested that the CPC vote to split the \$733,000 as bond/cash and as a back-up to vote the entire purchase in cash if Town Meeting does not have the appetite for a bond. Bond rates are so cheap and leave more flexibility with reserves in case other projects come up. For a 15 year bond, Peter Dana thought it would be 3 -3¼ % interest rate.

Ray Whipple inquired as to whether Hamilton pays anything to use the Iron Rail fields. Jay Butler reported that it is the Sports Leagues that pay for the use of the fields. All of the maintenance is covered by soccer. Ray expressed concern that the regional center safety plan has left Hamilton in a very difficult position and that could impact this project. Jeff Stinson hoped that we could separate the two issues.

There is authorization within the CPA statute to bond and the warrant article gives Board of Selectmen the authorization to bond.

Tom made a motion to authorize the CPC to spend \$733,000 for the acquisition and closing/bond costs of the Donovan parcel subject to bonding 50% of the cost and paying cash from CPA open space and undedicated reserves from the remaining half as well as the alternative of making a floor motion to pay the entire project in cash from CPA reserves. The motion was seconded. The vote was unanimous

Christine will finish warrant language and re-circulate to the CPC.

Christine inquired as to whether the CPC had any ideas for the Town Meeting presentation. Tom will present the warrant. The CPC suggested a slide showing every sport that supports the project, and the numbers in each league, pictures of the site being used, summarize the discussions we had with Gordon Conwell, Wilcox, and all the other sites that have been examined for potential recreation fields. The presentation should highlight the general lack of fields, and that this is the least expensive option for field acquisition. We should include a slide of the trails, highlight the reduced rate of sale because of market conditions. The asking price was originally \$1.2 million, and the land is already improved for recreation use. The CPC asked Christine to inquire with Dave Santomena whether there was anything in writing for the trail easement to be held by ECTA all the way out to the road in Ipswich. Christine will confirm what type of access will be permitted – foot traffic, equestrian, etc. The presentation should highlight that no future capital improvements will be necessary, existing port-a-potty, etc. Blueberry Lane residents may be concerned about expanding fields, but expansion is unlikely due to wetlands. The fields are already being used at maximum capacity; any additional use will be marginal.

Christine will prepare a draft presentation and circulate for the CPC's review.

Review Proposed FY12 CPA Application Schedule

Christine presented the FY12 schedule for Annual Town Meeting. Christine explained the application schedule to the new CPC members. The first application round will determine eligibility under CPA. If a proposal for eligibility is accepted, then an application for funding is requested. The schedule presented uses the same general schedule we've used before. Christine will send an email out to all Town Hall staff, the Hamilton-Wenham Chronicle, a notice on the Town website, and ask that an announcement be made at a Board of Selectmen meeting.

Tom Catalano made a motion to approve the schedule. The motion was seconded. The vote was unanimous.

Update on Accord Affordable Housing Project

Christine updated the CPC on the status of the Acord project; work should begin within the coming months. This is a project which passed Town Meeting in May of 2009. Acord has all the funding in place. Through the use of CPA funds, Hamilton was to be granted a 30-year Affordable Housing Restriction (AHR) but there was never a Town Meeting vote to authorize the Board of Selectmen to accept the AHR. Christine inquired as to whether the Housing Partnership Committee might want to present that item at Town Meeting. The Board of Selectmen included a placeholder to create a Municipal Affordable Housing Trust and this project may be a good lead-in for that warrant article presentation.

Meeting Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:30 pm.