

**Town of Hamilton
Community Preservation Committee
November 18, 2010 Minutes**

Attendees

The meeting was held in the Memorial Room of Town Hall with the following Committee members in attendance: Ray Whipple, Ed Howard, Leigh Keyser, Jay Butler, Peter Dana, and Ben Ricker. Christine Berry as CPC Coordinator was also present. With a quorum present the meeting was called to order at 7:32pm

Acceptance of minutes from October 14th CPC meeting

The minutes from the October 14th CPC meeting were accepted.

Review of FY12 CPA Applications for Eligibility

Hamilton Cemetery Database

Allison Jenkins and Joe Shea from Hamilton DPW were present to discuss their proposal which requests \$10,000 in CPA funds for a database to store the records electronically for the Hamilton cemetery. Allison described the fact that all the Town's cemetery records are hard copy only and was hoping that this project could qualify for CPA funds. The database information would also be made available to the public for anyone wanting to search the information. Christine inquired with the Community Preservation Coalition about the eligibility of this proposal. The Coalition provided a letter from the Department of Revenue stating that a very similar project does not qualify for CPA funds. The letter stated "We do not believe that services such as archiving or scanning, to the extent that they involve preserving the information content of documents, rather than preservation or restoration of the physical documents themselves, qualify for community preservation expenditures. The Community Preservation Act contemplates efforts to preserve or restore the actual documents themselves, where they have been damaged or impaired in some way. Historic documents, not the information they contain, are the "historic resources" eligible for Community Preservation Fund expenditures. "

Peter Dana asked whether the Town could hire someone to set up the database and how much it would cost. Allison said yes, and that the cost would depend on how much they time they put it into it. Peter thought that a student from the High School or someone from the Historical Society might be interested in this project.

The CPC unanimously agreed that this was a worthy project and important to do, but agreed that the project did not qualify for CPA funds. Ray Whipple inquired whether Allison or Joe had a copy of the cemetery survey that was done a number of years ago. They did not, or thought that it might be with the Historical Society. Joe said that the older records were not kept very well. Allison stated that the records prior to 1993 are hopefully in the basement and are not kept in a secure environment protected from humidity, etc.

If the digitization of the records is an incidental as part of a much larger project to preserve the actual records then it could qualify. Allison said that she may come back next year with a larger project to preserve the records and will reach out to the schools. The management of the cemetery falls to the DPW. There is no cemetery commission in Hamilton.

The CPC agreed and voted that the project did not qualify for CPA funds. But did want to put into the record that they are interested in preserving the actual records if a proposal was to come forward.

Restoration of Patton Park Cannons

Paul Rigol of the DPW Park staff was not able to be present for tonight’s meeting. Christine described Civil War and WWI cannons at the entrance to Patton Park on Bay Road and described Paul’s application requesting \$500-\$5000 in CPA funds to replace/restore the cannon wheels. Some members of the CPC thought the wheels were replaced 7-8 years ago and wondered why they needed to be restored again. The CPC thought that the wheels may just be sitting in the ground and not on cement slabs. Without Paul presence at the meeting, the Committee was unable to determine the cause of the rapid deterioration.

The CPC voted to determine the project as eligible for CPA funds. The CPC would like Paul to be at the next meeting to better describe the issues and reasons for the restoration. The CPC also asked for clarification as to whether this was restoration versus replacement. The application was unclear on this point. There were originally three cannons at the Veteran’s Green in front of the Congregational Church; one for each war. The third cannon may have been removed before being transferred to the Park. Its location is unknown.

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Update on Additional Potential Applications

Christine reported on some additional projects that may come forward requesting CPA funds. The American Legion may request funds for their building on School Street which was Hamilton’s first school building. American Legion members on the CPC may have to refrain from voting on that project to avoid a conflict of interest. The second application that may come in would be from the Municipal Affordable Housing Trust (MAHT) that was just approved at Town Meeting. No CPA funding will be placed in the MAHT without the CPC’s recommendation and approval by Town Meeting. Once dedicated to the MAHT, the Trust will not have to come back to the CPC or Town Meeting for project specific approval as the purpose of the MAHT is consistent with the Community Housing purposes of CPA.

The deadline, if the CPC is willing to accept late proposals, should be January to give the CPC enough time for careful review. Ray advised that a project to improve water access to Chebacco Lake may come before the CPC. He had spoken to the Scout Master and he said that he had a scout who was very interested in doing the project for his Eagle Project. Years ago, the beach area was a popular and active spot. For a Town that has so many ponds, there is little opportunity for swimming.

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CPA Project Status Updates

Christine circulated a spreadsheet showing the status of all the CPA projects that have been funded over the years. The School Street wellhead, under John Tomasz, has made no progress over the years due to unwilling landowners wanting more compensation. John inherited a lot of old DPW-sponsored CPA projects and has been doing a good job of making progress on them most of them.

The CPC is considering withdrawing funding to long-time CPA projects that aren’t being completed in a timely fashion. They CPC would like an update of all projects not making progress. Christine needs to look into the permanent easement for access from the Pleasant Pond for that CPA project. The lighting at Patton Park project is moving forward in coordination with HW Little League. Jay reported that the HW Little League is also putting in significant funding to install new and improved lighting.

The second floor ceiling of Town Hall is on hold until the space needs study is completed. The consultant has submitted plans, and those plans need to be reviewed by staff. According to Phil Stevens, Tom Catalano has the plans for the Model T building. Ed Howard's son was in charge of the project, but his son has since left the Fire Department. The deputy Fire Chief should be coordinating with Tom Catalano. The CPC agreed that they need to find a way to move projects forward if they've been languishing for 3 plus years.

The CPC should consider not accepting additional applications from proponents who still have outstanding projects. Christine will contact Chief Stevens and will ask what the plan is for completing the building. Christine described that historically it has been the town-sponsored projects that go on indefinitely and languish and that the non-profit, private sponsored projects are completed much more quickly. The CPC expressed concern that there was not enough staff to complete the projects. The CPC would like to create a policy that applicants need to come back and discuss their projects with the CPC if they languish too long. Peter Dana suggested that the CPC could work with the applicant to see how they can help. The applicant needs to understand this is a contract and there are time constraints. Project applicants could send a report via email to Christine if they are unable to attend a CPC meeting. Christine also suggested that Michael Lombardo could help as well.

Ed Howard reported that the new Historic District signs were discussed at an HDC meeting. Christine provided a booklet created by the Massachusetts Historical Commission showing examples of historic district signs. Ed thought that either John Tomasz or Tom Catalano was following up. The scale and type of the signs of discussed.

Leigh provided an update on the kitchenettes. He stated that the project is moving, but very slowly. Ed reported that the HDC voted on the Town Hall fronts steps and that that project should be moving forward soon.

CPA Signage

The CPC had expressed interest in the past in installing temporary signs at the site of CPA projects that are underway. CPA administration funds could be used for the signs. Christine circulated a photo of a sign that was used in Manchester for CPA projects. The CPC agreed we should have different size signs for different size projects. Ed didn't think we should be advocating for CPA. He stated that he felt the intent of the board is to review projects and ensure the Town's CPA funds are used well. He was supportive of signs but without the language "CPA Funds Work." Other members expressed agreement with Ed. Ray reminded us that residents don't know how funds are being used. Christine said she could wordsmith the sign language so that it doesn't advocate for CPA, such as "Your CPA funds make this project possible". Christine will come up with a draft of words, and prices for different size signs.

Town Meeting Recap and Donovan Next Steps

Everyone agreed that Town Meeting went very well. Christine is working with Town Counsel on assignment of the option to the Town and the conservation restriction language. The option goes to March 2011 so the Town will close before then.

The CPC also discussed Donovan as a potential site for a community garden. Peter Dana said he would plan to meet with the Planning Board to discuss further. There was a lot of support for community gardens and there is already a dug well at the site of the Donovan property.

Meeting Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 9:00 pm.