

**Town of Hamilton  
Community Preservation Committee  
February 10, 2011 Minutes**

**Attendees**

The meeting was held in the Memorial Room of Town Hall with the following Committee members in attendance: Tom Catalano, Ray Whipple, Ed Howard, Leigh Keyser, Jay Butler, Peter Britton, Peter Dana, and Ben Ricker. Christine Berry as CPC Coordinator was also present. With a quorum present the meeting was called to order at 7:30pm

**Acceptance of minutes from January 13<sup>th</sup> CPC meeting**

The minutes from the January 13<sup>th</sup> CPC meeting were accepted.

**Review of FY12 CPA Applications**

**Post 194 American Legion Building** - Tony Heath was present to discuss this proposal, which includes restoration of portions of the American Legion building on School Street in Hamilton. Tony reported that they have started to get proposals for the restoration work. Joe Hanson, who is acting as General Contractor for the project was also present. Tom Catalano asked whether they have looked into any of the programs available for rebates energy efficiency work such as MassSave, NStar, and National Grid. Tom stated that they are going to want to make sure they install efficient windows and boiler. CPA funds shouldn't be used if they can get free money elsewhere from these programs. Tom suggested they look at the Database for State Renewable and Efficiency website which lists the incentives available. Christine will email Tony the appropriate links. MassSave will do a free energy audit as well. Christine reported that the CPC would have to vote at their March 10<sup>th</sup> meeting if this is going to make it on the warrant for ATM.

Ray Whipple asked whether we have established that it would qualify for CPA funds. Christine researched this and found that no American Legion had received funds to date. Christine said that the Historic District Commission (HDC) would need a vote saying that the building was significant to the history and culture of the Town and then it could qualify under the CPA requirements. Tom reported that the HDC is trying to schedule a meeting to vote on this project and the cannons. Tom said that we need a detailed application with a scope of work, detailed list of improvements, estimates on savings from improvements, and knowledge about what other funding is available. Peter Britton expressed concern about meeting the March 10<sup>th</sup> deadline. Jay Butler stated that the windows on the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor were original to the school. Joe said they would repoint, and reinforce those windows.

Jay reported that he likes the project, but he is not comfortable with the refurbishment of the boiler room for a smoking room and he would like to see work done for the windows on the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor. He also stated that he would really like there to be outside funding. Joe stated that the entire cost of the project is \$150,000, and they are asking for only \$100,000 in CPA funds. Jay also inquired about how accessible the building was to the public. Tony reviewed some of the memberships available, some of which are available to the general public. The Town already holds a right of first refusal on the building. Peter Britton stated that it is important to get publicity about the building and understand the function that the American Legion provides. He stated that the Hamilton-Wenham Chronicle, Hamilton-Wenham Patch, or the Salem Evening News would be willing to publicize their efforts and would be a good way to get the word out. Peter Dana stated that he felt the American Legion was vibrant organization with a diverse age group and was supportive of the project.

Ed Howard suggested that Tony provide a one-page write-up on the services and activities the Legion provides to the Town, including the construction and maintenance of the pool at Patton Park.

**Discover Hamilton Trail** – Alex Van Alan, Executive Director of the Essex County Trails Association (ECTA) was present to discuss this proposal. As a follow-up to a Board of Selectmen meeting last fall, Christine and Jeff Stinson met with Alex last month on how they can best protect the trails in Hamilton. ECTA has been very interested in promoting and working on the Discover Hamilton Trail (DHT). The DHT map is still available online. ECTA has been working with landowners to try to re-route the trail so it is off-road at all times. They've also been talking to the Myopia Schooling Field Trust about starting the trail on their property rather than having the trail begin at Town Hall. Alex reported that there are portions of the trail that are muddy and need work including boardwalks.

Christine noted that the recreation criteria is currently very limiting under CPA. Kathy Roth felt we would be limited in assisting with this project unless a trail was acquired with CPA funds. She said we could do preservation of the trails such as we did at Chebacco Woods, but we can't do maintenance. We funded the rebuilding of some Chebacco Trails because the flooding was causing the destruction of the trail. Peter Britton reported that the ECTA provides very valuable services. He said that when he was on the Planning Board they were always encountering trail issues. The CPC asked whether CPA can fund negotiating trail easements and the associated costs that lead up to trail easements such as title, deed research, etc. ECTA would like to make the DHT a focus for the next 5 years.

Christine stated that under CPA trails fall under recreation, not open space. Tom asked how we can fund research. He stated that there are so many trails in addition to DHT, and how do we figure out which of the trails are multi-use, single use, etc. ECTA holds a number of trail easements. How many formal trail easements actually exist? Peter noted that the last thing that Town wants to do is hold easements, we'd rather pay for the mechanics, and ECTA can hold the easements. Ed stated that the trail system plays into the branding of the Town and that it's trails that are one of the Town's best assets. We need an inventory and to know where the trails are. ECTA has a map that shows the private trails, but they do not publicize that map. Christine stated that we could pay for some of the research out of the CPA's administration account. Peter Britton thought we should keep the focus on the DHT for the time being. Peter Dana stated that the Conservation Commission has been maintaining the DHT signs. He also noted that properties have transferred ownership and it is important to know where easements are located.

Alex will redraft the application and have it ready for the next CPC meeting. Christine will call Kathy Roth and find out what they can do. Tom said he would rather have it go through Town Meeting so people know how CPA funds are being spent. He noted that it is a three part proposal, (1) research of trail easements, (2) creation of trail easements, and (3) identifying existing trails that need preservation/repair.

**Municipal Affordable Housing Trust (MAHT)** – There is no application yet for this project. Fred Mills, a member of the Hamilton MAHT reminded the CPC that last year, Town Meeting voted to create a MAHT to allow creative ways to develop affordable housing. Members of the MAHT have come up with a new concept and would like to receive CPA funds to get the program started. Rather than create new housing, they want to create a fund which is accessible to residents whose homes qualify for affordable housing. The MAHT would give roughly \$20,000 to the homeowner to be used for very specific purposes – new roof, electric, septic, etc. and require them to bring the home up to its highest and best use. In

return, a deed restriction would be placed on the house keeping it affordable for 30 years. This type of program would allow residents to stay in their homes. It would allow the town to maintain the houses that help Hamilton have a balanced community – a complete demographic. What incentive does a new buyer have to keep up the home? Fred reported that it's only a 30 year restriction, when you sell you could make a lot of money, and an owner could get out of the agreement if MAHT finds another affordable buyer.

Peter Britton noted that they have been looking for a vehicle, outside of Town Meeting, to make progress on affordable housing and now we finally have it. As both a member of the MAHT and the CPC, Peter asked to transfer monies that we have that have not been utilized so they can be put to use for affordable housing. The MAHT is asking for \$500,000. There is only approximately \$80,000 in the community housing reserve, but in the undedicated reserve there is well in excess of \$500,000.

Fred reported that building new housing is very difficult. This program uses existing housing and identifies it as affordable. Peter Britton said there would have to be an important education component. Tom asked the Committee how much of the pie are we willing to give up for community housing. Affordable housing doesn't rate as high as open space in the master plan. Peter Britton suggested maybe they lower their ask to only \$200,000. If people like it and it works, they could come back with another request.

Fred will provide a formal application in time for the next meeting. Fred will also look into whether they will fall into the procurement trap. Fred reported that they can make it more likely for Hamilton residents to get in though the lottery. Jay noted they won't have a complete legal review by the March 10<sup>th</sup> meeting. If this particular proposal approach is derailed due to legal issues or other issues, the MAHT could still use the funds for an approach that was not reviewed by the CPC. CPA was passed in Town, in part, because every proposal would go before Town Meeting. The MAHT should be prepared to discuss/review alternative approaches.

### **Other Pending CPA Applications**

Christine circulated a list of all the applications that they've received to date. Paul Rigol will have an estimate for the cannon wheel restoration before the March 10<sup>th</sup> meeting. Christine is skeptical the map proposal will be ready in time for March 10<sup>th</sup> vote.

### **CPA Signage Sample**

At the last CPC meeting, one of the CPC members asked to see a sample of the signage material. Christine borrowed some samples from DPW to show the CPC. The signs would be temporary signs that would go up during construction of CPA projects. John Tomasz would use the steel pickets to put up the signs. Tom suggested we develop a prototype with Town of Hamilton logo. Ed suggested we review the Town's sign bylaw. Christine will check on that and report back at the next CPC meeting.

### **Request for CPA Administrative Funds**

Christine reported that our annual dues of \$1,500 are due to the Community Preservation Coalition. Tom moved that the CPC pay the \$1,500 dues out of the CPA's administrative account. Ed Howard seconded. The motion was unanimous.

**Community Preservation Plan and Bylaw** – Ed noted in our bylaw that the CPC is required to study the needs of the Town. Ed noted that the bylaw was not specific as to how often it must be completed. He asked whether the CPC should host an open house on an annual basis. Christine noted that this part of our bylaw comes straight from the CPA

legislation. Kathy Roth at the Coalition recommended CPC's update their plan every 5 years. Peter Britton said the CPC should have a meeting sometime during the year to say what we do. The CPC discussed having a time slot available at a Board of Selectmen meeting since it is televised. Peter thought a 15-minute slot could go a long way for people to understand what the CPC is working on and has accomplished. Christine will talk to Chris Lindberg or Michael Lombardo about doing this maybe sometime in April.

**Model T Building Update** – Tom thought this project was on hold. Tom said he would be glad to talk to Phil Stevens to move the project forward. Phil was supposed to look at the site plan and see if they could move it off to the south side of the property and not have it right in the middle so that it would not have any impact on the potential redevelopment of the old library. Christine reported that Phil said they are willing and ready to start this spring.

**Meeting Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 9:45 pm.