

**Town of Hamilton  
Community Preservation Committee  
June 10, 2010 Minutes**

**Attendees**

The meeting was held in the Memorial Room of Town Hall with the following Committee members in attendance: Tom Catalano, Ray Whipple, Leigh Keyser, Jay Butler, Chris Davis, and Dave Carey. Christine Berry as CPC Coordinator was also present. With a quorum present the meeting was called to order. Also present were Michael Lombardo, Town Manager, Deborah Mena, Finance Director, and Select Board members Jennifer Scuteri, Bill Bowler, Marc Johnson, and Jeff Stinson.

**Acceptance of Minutes from May 13<sup>th</sup> CPC Meeting**

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

**Donovan Property Discussion and Update**

Melissa Roy, Recreation Director was present to discuss this proposal. Melissa reviewed the proposal before the Town which is the acquisition of the 51 acre Donovan property on Sagamore Street for \$682,500. Melissa reviewed the map, highlighting the open space component and recreation field component. She explained the lease agreement that the Town holds with the Donovan family. The Donovans have the right to terminate the lease at any time.

The Donovan family constructed the existing playing fields in 2003. There are existing trails on the hillside, and the family has agreed to donate a permanent trail easement on their abutting property as part of this acquisition. Melissa reported that the negotiated sale price is \$682,500 which was negotiated by Essex County Greenbelt Association (Greenbelt) and is based on an appraisal. Youth Soccer, Little League, and boys and girls lacrosse all use the field. The fields are maintained by Hamilton DPW.

Melissa explained that Hamilton is in dire need of fields and that this acquisition is simply to keep the status quo. Greenbelt has secured a private donation to hire a consultant to prepare two state grants, which if awarded, will reimburse Hamilton for a portion of its costs. We are requesting from \$250,000 from the PARC grant and \$106,000 from the LAND grant. The Recreation Department is estimating a contribution of \$60,000 and private fundraising at \$20,000. Melissa reported that Wenham is not slated to commit at this time. It appears that Wenham cannot contribute because the CPA statute appears to require municipal ownership if funds are contributed for an acquisition. Christine reported that separate legislation does not permit a community to own land in another community unless it is for watershed and/or water supply purposes. The Community Preservation Coalition also advised that it would be difficult for Wenham to contribute. Dave Carey inquired as to whether a special act of the legislature could grant a waiver. Attendees agreed that would be difficult and time consuming.

Michael Lombardo reiterated that this is an important project for Hamilton and that we cannot afford to lose this field. He stated that we need to make sure funding is in place given the timing leading up to Fall Town Meeting and that this is a pressing need for the Recreation Department.

Deborah Mena reported that CPC could choose to bond the cost of the acquisition. She stated that at a conservative 5%, the principle would be \$34,000 per year, and that the interest would be the same at year one, and then decrease over time. Tom Catalano stated that if S.B. 90 doesn't pass, that \$68,000 could be a large portion of CPA annual revenues. Chris Davis stated that he felt the match has bottomed out, and that the match should be going up. He said it is our first open space and recreation project, and that it's a good one. Tom agreed and noted that this would meet and slightly exceed our 10% minimum for open space set aside.

Chris Davis reported that Hamilton Wenham Open Land Trust hasn't been approached for funding, but likely could contribute some small amount. Melissa reported that Greenbelt is not able to contribute to the purchase price, but has and will provide in-kind services, and they did help pay for the first appraisal. Greenbelt also put down the \$5,000 to hold the option.

Several of the youth sports leagues were present to lend their support to the project. Phil Tocci, the president of Little League stated that the Donovan field is critical. They are prepared to do whatever they can to preserve the fields. He stated that it will impact every sport.

Chris Davis inquired as to how much they think can raise. Melissa reported that user groups now pay \$10 per sport per person. The Recreation Board discussed raising that fee \$10-\$25 to help defray CPA costs. Tom Catalano asked how many users there are. Melissa reported that there are 1347 slots. Marc Johnson stated that this is way to bring Wenham in to contributing to this project.

Steve Ozahowski, the representative from Youth Soccer stated that traditionally users should not have to pay for municipal assets. Chris Davis responded by stating that the more funding sources and support, the better story to tell at Town Meeting. Doug Smith, representing Youth Football, stated that High School football is 100% funded by users. They are seeing an increase in scholarship need and reduction in sponsorships. He stated that sports are struggling, but that they would support a minimal user fee increase.

Michael Lombardo stated that there are \$1.5 million in CPA balances and that this seems to be a project that fits the criteria well. Tom Catalano stated that we don't want to expend all of our resources when other high priority properties might become available. Chris Davis stated that some of the known high priority parcels in town would cost in the seven figures. Leigh Keyser asked whether the entire Donovan family supports this. Melissa reported that they are.

Dave Carey asked the CPC to take a straw poll to show their support. The vote was unanimous in support of the acquisition. Christine stated the CPC would need to take a vote on this project no later than their August meeting to allow for Town Meeting preparations. Melissa stated that we won't know until mid-October whether we will be receiving the grants. Chris Davis stated the he would recommend financing at least a portion of the purchase; that it was too big a hit not to. Tom Catalano suggested they at least use all of the open space reserves, estimated at \$180,000. Jennifer Scuteri stated that our tax rate just went up 2% and that we'd be borrowing at 4%. Marc Johnson stated that the CPC funds will cover the debt financing. Michael Lombardo stated that it would be up to the discretion of the CPC to decide on financing. Ray Whipple expressed concern over the political aspect of Wenham not contributing. Michael stated he and Melissa would continue to discuss options with Wenham.

For next steps, Dave Carey stated the CPC needed to see everything on one final application for a vote. This will be presented at the CPC's July meeting.

### **Senate Bill 90 Discussion**

S.B. 90, An Act to Sustain Community Preservation, is a bill pending in House Ways and Means. If passed, the bill would bring the state match closer to 75% and expand the CPA recreation criteria to include restoration and renovation of recreation properties not acquired with CPA funds. Jennifer Scuteri spoke to Representative Hill who said that both he and Senator Tarr are supportive of the bill. They are concerned however, that the bill doesn't stipulate that the increased revenue is coming only from housing sales; that they may have to tap general funding. Jennifer reported that that language is being worked on and that they felt it would go through by end of July. Jennifer suggested they sell it as something they can give communities when local aide is being cut. Christine Berry reported that the Coalition believes the bill has momentum and that they are optimistic.

### **Woodbury Street Path Event Reschedule**

A previous attempt to schedule a walk to celebrate the completion of the Woodbury Street path on National Trails Day did not come together. Christine inquired whether the Committee would like to try to reschedule the walk. The Committee agreed and suggested the last Saturday in June. Christine will send around an email confirming and will coordinate with Essex County Trails Association.

### **Request for Admin Funds for CPA Workshop**

Christine Berry requested \$190.00 in CPA administration funds for her and Dyan Katz, Assistant Account to attend a half-day financial CPA workshop in Buzzards Bay. Dave Carey moved to approve the motion and Leigh Keyser seconded. The vote approving the funds was unanimous.

### **Meeting Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:40 pm.