

**Town of Hamilton
Community Preservation Committee
November 8, 2007**

Attendees

The meeting was held in the Memorial Room of Town Hall with the following Committee members in attendance: Tom Catalano, Dave Carey, Peter Clark, Leigh Keyser, Ray Whipple, Chris Davis, Peter Britton, and Peter Dana. A quorum was present. Christine Berry as CPC Coordinator was also present.

Approval of Meeting Minutes

The minutes from the October 11th meeting was approved.

FY09 CPA Application Review

The primary purpose of tonight's meeting was to begin review of the preliminary applications to determine eligibility under CPA requirements prior to public hearings.

Renovation of First Congregational Church of Hamilton

Reverend Dorington Little and Eldon Goodhue were in attendance to discuss this proposal. Constructed in 1843, the First Congregational Church of Hamilton also served as Hamilton's Town Hall. The Church is undergoing a \$2 million renovation project and has just completed the first phase. Part of the renovation includes installation of historically appropriate windows, removal of the stained glass windows and reinstallation of the windows elsewhere in the interior of the building, and additional repair to the steeple, including the clock, which is owned by the Town of Hamilton. The Church is requesting \$200,000 in CPA funding for this project. This estimate was secured from a private contractor.

It was suggested that the Church explore using energy efficient windows. The Historic District Commission may be able to provide additional information on the history of the Town's past use of this building.

Given the Church's history and its location in Hamilton's Historic District, the Committee voted that the project is eligible under the Historic Preservation CPA criteria and asked that Church specifically address the following in their final application to the Committee: clearly describe and strengthen the public benefit of the project, detail the costs and sharpen the estimates of the three components of the proposed project, provide information on how the Town came to own the steeple clock, and provide visual aids for the final application.

Housing Rehab/Accessory Apartment Loan Program

Jean Nelson, Hamilton's Planning Board Coordinator, was present to discuss this proposal on behalf of the Planning Board. The purpose of this program is to provide low interest loans to income eligible homeowners to create an accessory apartment within their home. Accessory apartments provide benefits to the homeowner and provide a more affordable rental housing option in Town. Loans would be available only to those residents which are income eligible, and the homeowners could rent to anyone. This is considered a smart

growth tool and would not count towards the Town's 40B units. The intent of the Planning Board in submitting this proposal was to help seniors stay in their homes; accessory apartment tenants could provide the income to enable them to do so.

There are several issues regarding the administration of this type of loan program. What would be the term of the loan? Or would money be paid back at the time the house is sold? Would funds be dispersed through invoicing, or paid out in installments? Could a local bank be used to help administer this program?

The Committee voted to approve this proposal as eligible under the Community Housing CPA criteria. Dave Carey will coordinate with Dorothy Stookey and Jean to firm up the project details before bringing it back to the CPC.

Acquisition and Development of Willcox Property for Recreation Fields

Bill Bowler, Selectman, and Marinel McGrath, School Superintendent, were present to discuss this proposal. The total cost for the acquisition and development of this property is \$1,075,000. The proposal requests a maximum of \$739,385 for Hamilton's share of the cost of this project. The remaining funds, \$335,615, will be requested from the Wenham CPC. It is estimated that one-third of the project costs could be raised through private donations.

The price of the Willcox property has recently been lowered to \$810,000. Bill has secured letters of support from various Town boards and committees, but not the joint Recreation Board, which has concerns regarding usage and control of the property. The School Committee has expressed willingness to enter into a short-term use agreement for the fields. There is not much overlap between when the schools and recreation groups use the fields. Such an agreement would be drafted prior to the Town Meeting vote.

There still seem to be some issues regarding any rights that Kurt Miller, an abutter, has on the Willcox property. Miller has an easement that includes the right to pass and re-pass on the property, and the right to keep horses on the property. The Town may need to undertake a friendly eminent domain taking to extinguish these rights. Town Counsel has the title on this property. There was also discussion around the future of the house and whether it could be moved and used for affordable housing. This would allow this project to qualify under both the Recreation and Community Housing criteria.

The initial take of Town Counsel is that the school should hold title to the property as the abutter. Language in the CPA statute may require that the Town hold title to the property. A request for an override for the schools is coming in the spring. There are various financing vehicles available for this purchase. Willcox is willing to take back a mortgage and the Town can bond the purchase and finance it over a number of years.

The Committee voted that this project is eligible under the Recreation criteria of CPA. Christine will draft a memo from the Committee asking Bill to address several questions/issues including, but not limited to, the cost to fund the purchase over a number of years and how the house can be reused. Dave, Tom, and Peter Clark will review the memo before Christine sends it to Bill.

CPA Project Status Update

Dave Carey provided an update on the Woodbury Street Path. The Road Safety Committee is struggling with getting this project completed. Approximately 1/3 of the project is constructed. Christine will contact Brad Kimball to figure out what the obstacles are today so that we can work on completing this project. Chris Davis offered to assist Christine with this.

Next Meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, November 29th at 7:30pm in the Memorial Room at Town Hall.

Meeting Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 9:00pm.