

HAMILTON COMMUNITY PRESERVATION COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF MEETING

February 16, 2017

Members Present: Tom Catalano, Jay Butler, Peter Britton, Shawn Farrell, Ed Howard and Robert Preston.

Coordinator: Dorr Fox

This meeting was called to order by Tom Catalano at 8:00 pm with a quorum established.

Minutes

Motion to approve the January 15, 2017 minutes made by Ed Howard.

Seconded by Shawn Farrell.

Vote: Unanimous to approve.

Committee Member Reports

Ed Howard described Planning Board activity to include the public hearing at 227 Willow St. resulting in the Board sending a request that the Building Inspector issue a Cease and Desist order. The Planning Board also addressed various types of housing development, including Planned Unit Development and Cottage Zoning.

Peter Britton spoke about the Affordable Housing Trust (AHT) with activity on 7 Kinsman Lane. The developer thought access was not appropriate, so the revised plan was to come through Town Hall land, extending the DPW area, adding 1/3 acre more of cemetery property, and affordable housing. A joint meeting between the AHT, BOS and Harborlight would happen later in the week. The AHT would request funding from the CPC to allow for local preference on two potential affordable developments.

Tom Catalano said the Historic District Commission was looking at the cell tower behind Town Hall which was not in the district but being reviewed as a formality. Mr. Catalano recalled that he and Dorr Fox went over the potential Warrant with the FinCom. The also talked about an adjustment to the surcharge level to which the FinCom was not in favor of or opposed to. The FinCom offered their concern regarding Boston entering the trust fund allocation and wondered what Hamilton's share would be. There was an average of 20.07% this year. If an increase of CPA funding was able to keep the tax rate down, the FinCom might be in favor of a higher assessment.

Shawn Farrell highlighted the last Selectmen meeting as one that went over the audit, tax recap, outstanding water bills, and Town Hall building committee, which had change having a membership comprised of members of specific committees to anyone who was interested. The Board of Selectmen also discussed and later (the following Friday) signed the Sagamore Hill Conservation Restriction. The base line report would be forthcoming. The closing would be in

March. Essex County Greenbelt would be returning to the Conscom to ask for a parking lot with signage and a kiosk. The on-site compost business existed but would be restricted to its existing size and out of the public eye. Mr. Farrell also described the ConsCom meeting with Alan Berry when they discussed the encroachment of the Patton Ridge drainage system and lawns onto Town land.

Pingree Park Playground

Dorr Fox noted that the Wenham CPC was meeting the same evening. Tom Catalano said the FinCom made it clear that they wanted Hamilton CPC approval of joint (Hamilton Wenham) projects to always be contingent upon funding from Wenham. The Committee agreed they were comfortable funding a project in the Town of Wenham.

Buker School Playground

It was discussed that the grant for the playground would increase from \$20,000 to \$25,000 to match the funding level of other playground projects that were previously approved.

Motion made by Jay Butler to increase the grant from \$20,000 to \$25,000 for the Buker playground.

Seconded by Ed Howard.

Shawn Farrell had spoken with two Wenham CPC members and they had indicated that Buker would get a reduced amount of \$20,000 from the Wenham CPC. Jay Butler said he recalled that at the last meeting, he thought they had given the Winthrop School playground \$20,000 when it was \$25,000. HWRSD would give \$10,000. Peter Britton asked about performance as the one year delay at Winthrop School was totally unnecessary. Tom Catalano suggested putting a sunset clause on the application, but in this case, it would handicap the applicant.

Shawn Farrell asked the applicant what her timeline was for the project, to which she responded it was the next academic year. Tom Catalano suggested giving the money to the Friends' group with the cooperation of the School District, but not giving it to the school department. If the project were not to move forward, it would remain in the CPC fund. It was recalled that Wenham was quoted as saying that they were not working with any Friends' groups. The applicant responded that the application was actually made by the School Committee, who also voted \$20,000 to the cause. The School Committee would also encumber \$10,000. Other fund raising totaled \$80,000. Money for the delayed Winthrop School project had been encumbered but not issued yet. Tom Catalano suggested giving the same amount of \$25,000 to Buker that had been given to Winthrop. Shawn Farrell agreed.

Vote: Unanimous to approve the increase to \$25,000.

Horseshoe Courts at Patton Park

The applicant was not present. The Horseshoe Club reportedly had \$4,000 to \$5,000 that they could be put toward the project. Shawn Farrell talked to Sean Timmons (Recreation Department) about programming to which Mr. Timmons responded positively. The Club had

never made a formal request to the Rec Department. Tom Catalano wanted to see a youth component. The project would be tabled.

Munis Report.

The Munis Report indicated that there was still \$1,055,326 in the account. The estimated surcharge funds totaled \$400,000 for the coming year. The estimated state match would be \$80,000, but Marissa Batista suggested lowering the estimated state match due to Boston being a part of the program. After Jay Butler noted the grant for Lamson Crossing was \$89,050 rather than the \$42,402 as listed, the remaining funds after Town Meeting approval for all the proposals would be \$670,000.

Affordable Housing Trust Request.

Unlike the usual two step process, there would be one step for the \$400,000 request.

Peter Britton discussed the AHT powers under State law regarding property for affordable housing. The AHT currently had \$230,000. If the AHT made a contribution of \$200,000 for a project, the State would look favorably on that contribution for eligibility of local preference. Given the statistics of town residents that were qualified, 70% people in the lottery would be able to take advantage of affordable housing as it became available.

The second item discussed by Peter Britton, was if a property such as the Dodge Tree property, which sold for \$800,000 for a one acre parcel, were to be for sale again, it would have great potential, but the economics didn't work for Harborlight. Mr. Britton said he would entertain the notion to subsidize the purchase of a 40B project, allowing for significant rental units to be constructed depending on septic and drainage. Mr. Britton said the AHT had heard clamor for the AHT to look downtown as an area of interest.

According to Peter Britton, the AHT was eligible to receive money for affordable housing. The trust would try to locate properties of a smaller nature in as many places in town as possible, including the Patton Homestead, a Town owned property. Other sources of funding were the General Fund and donations. Mr. Britton addressed the need to have the funds in advance of isolating a specific project to have the ability to make a statement to the State. Mr. Britton believed the request clearly fell under the auspices of housing under the CPA act.

A member of the audience suggested the CPC should review individual projects rather than give the AHT the funds. The CPC should recommend the reuse of existing buildings, according to the resident, but Peter Britton responded that some other authority would determine if a project was appropriate or not. A resident thought it would be counter-productive to allow money that would destroy a historic register home and open space for affordable housing. Tom Catalano explained that it would be a small component of a larger project. One resident said he was nervous that the AHT would be asking for \$600,000 every couple of years. The resident was a proponent of CPA, but hated to see it used to destroy historical buildings and open space.

It was noted that last year, a resident put conditions on the grant to the AHT, which set precedent, but Jay Butler responded that the Town Meeting motion was determined not to be a legal motion by Town Counsel.

Tom Catalano said the AHT track record illustrated that they were sensitive to infill development that was low impact such as the Habitat for Humanity project. The track record had not come up with projects that had lots of opposition. Peter Britton added that the \$400,000 would be used to obtain local preference for two projects of 30 units with two sites being proposed under one project. The State law that allowed for the Trust was created to allow nimble and quick action rather than Town Meeting approval. In response to a resident wondering if the grant could be for less money, Mr. Catalano responded that it was the last meeting before Town Meeting so the application could not be amended.

Motion made by Jay Butler to deem the project as eligible.

Shawn Farrell seconded.

Vote: Unanimous to approve.

The Committee moved forward with discussion regarding funding the application. Ian Cookson wanted the CPC to review each project. Tom Catalano assured Mr. Cookson that the AHT would discuss potential projects with them as they would want to apply for more grants in the future. The Selectmen would have the ability to get feedback from the citizens after the AHT decided if a project might be suitable. Mr. Catalano stated he had faith in the AHT. Jay Butler reminded the residents that potential projects would be listed on the website and assured them that the CPC did not have enough money to give the AHT \$600,000 per year.

Shawn Farrell agreed that the \$400,000 would be used to accomplish local preference and or move quickly on a smaller property, but didn't see it destroying open space with a 200 unit development.

Motion made by Robert Present to appropriate \$400,000 from the CPC fund balance to the AHT.

Seconded by Jay Butler.

Vote: Unanimous to approve.

Discussion for Bond for Sagamore Hill

Tom Catalano recalled the bond term was 15 years. Marissa Batista reportedly suggested looking at alternate terms of the bond, showing a 4% interest rate for a 20 year, 4.5% for a 29 year, and 3.5% for a 10 year bond. Ms. Batista reportedly noted that these were sample rates and real rates would be more competitive. Shawn Farrell said he hoped for an interest rate of 3 or less. If the warrant said specific terms, the Committee wondered if they could change it, but Dorr Fox remembered the principal was spelled out and would look at Town Meeting minutes. It may not be in the Warrant or the Committee could go with a 15 year bond term.

Shawn Farrell moved to remain with a 15 year term.

Seconded by Robert Preston.

Vote: Unanimous to approve.

District Commission Sign

The Committee discussed the location of the existing sign, which was installed outside the Historic District, but facing oncoming traffic. As it was a State highway, it would be difficult to move. Donna Brewer opined that paying for a new sign was not eligible and noted the statute. A sign needed to go with the restoration of a building. Language had recently been clarified. As the Historic District had no funding, the Committee suggested submitting a petition for funding from the General Fund. Shawn Farrell suggested petitioning the Board of Selectmen.

Motion to withdraw the Historic District sign proposal was made by Robert Preston.

Shawn Farrell seconded.

Vote: Unanimous to approve the withdrawal.

Review of Article Wording.

The FinCom wanted clear language regarding unanimous votes by noting how many positive and opposing votes were experienced.

Motion to amend the Warrant article to reflect the FinCom comments and change the grant amount for Buker School was made by Jay Butler.

Seconded by Robert Preston.

Vote: Unanimous to approve.

Jay Butler suggested recording the number of votes in favor of each proposal. Instead of recording unanimous, the record should reflect how many votes in favor and how many negative votes.

Marissa Batista reportedly requested that \$43,600 go toward the Donovan acquisition from the revenues and \$3,373 of the revenues go into the reserves for accounting purposes. The difference between reserves balances and revenues was explained. Balance meant it came out of the reserves, revenues meant it came out of money collected. The \$3,373.00 corresponded to the 10% from the Donovan parcel, which would come out of revenues.

Motion to appropriate funds from the open space revenues made by Shawn Farrell.

Robert Preston seconded.

Vote: Unanimous in favor.

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Postcards to Advertise Surcharge Exemptions

They would be sent out with the real estate tax bills.

Review of Open Grants

Dorr Fox said he talked to the DPW about Senior Center bids, which were being put out in April. Ray Whipple had photographs to see what it looked like. Patton Park cannon wagon wheels were discussed with four different people having been contacted to repair them. While some members were not happy with a replication, some spokes had to be replaced. Robert Preston and Shawn Farrell thought replication was acceptable if necessary. The calvary cannon stopped being made in 1916.

Jay Butler discussed the American Legion where the emergency generator needed to be fixed before the wiring project began. The Legion had informed Mr. Butler that several other things needed to be completed before the wiring project. Mr. Butler explained to Joe Hanson that he had a chance to lose the funding and might need to come to the Committee to explain why it had taken so long. The Sunset clause was for two years and was initiated last year.

Evaluation Tool

Jay Butler went through the documents. Mr. Butler set up weighted questions in the General and Specific Criteria Sections. The General Points would total 100, while Specific Points totaled 50. All projects needed to be evaluated in the General Criteria Section. The Specific Criteria Section would feature responses for each of the three divisions, Affordable Housing, Open Space and Recreation, and Historic, so there were four sets of questions. Applicants would only respond to the specific section they were interested in as well as the general section.

Jay Butler created an Excel workbook with the first half featuring questions and the second half including a summary. The bottom included the name of the project. The workbook calculated the average score for all projects under consideration as well as a percentage score for General Criteria as well as each Specific Criteria for each member's scoring. The workbook would show discrepancies when big swings were noted. Even though the workbook might seem convoluted, it would provide a quantitative assessment and transparency. Tom Catalano thought using the workbook between the eligibility and funding meetings would be helpful. Peter Britton suggested using it live to take notes. Mr. Butler said the two pages of questions could be scored during the meeting and he would enter the data into the program. There were seven questions under the General Criteria with four or five in the Specific Criteria section. Edits would be done during a future meeting.

Motion to adjourn made by Ed Howard

Seconded by Robert Preston.

Vote Unanimous to adjourn at 9:52 pm

Marcie Ricker

Attest

Date