

HAMILTON COMMUNITY PRESERVATION COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE PUBLIC HEARING

June 8, 2017

Members Present: Jay Butler, Tom Catalano, Robert Preston, Ed Howard, Peter Britton,
Mimi Fanning

Coordinator: Dorr Fox

The public hearing was called to order by Tom Catalano at 7:08 with a quorum present. Mr. Catalano noted the poor turn-out. At the start of the meeting only Michelle Horgan, a Housing Authority member; Neil Duggan, the candidate for the CPC at-large seat; and Tim McCarthy from *The Chronicle* were in attendance, aside from the minutes taker. Jeff Hubbard, a Selectman and member of the Town Hall Renovation Committee, came later in the meeting to address the board.

CPC Public Hearing Presentation

Mr. Catalano and the other members reviewed the CPC PowerPoint slides. Mr. Catalano mentioned the Town's surcharge on property taxes is 2%. Jay Butler noted Wenham has a 3% surcharge.

Slides of projects done with CPA funds were shown. The biggest were open space projects, such as Patton Park and Sagamore Hill.

Dorr Fox mentioned the CPA surcharge exemptions are up on the website. Many people were unaware of the surcharge exemptions and that is why they have sent out the flyer.

Mr. Catalano noted that the projected State match is down to a small percentage. There has been talk of increasing registry fees to give a bump up to the State but it still has a ways to go through the legislature, he said.

One slide covered the reserve for housing, which is currently only \$10 because all of the money was sent to the Affordable Housing Trust. There are general reserves and reserves for Historic Preservation, but no other reserves. The fund balance and reserves have gone down significantly

A few slides covered results of a Spring 2016 CPC Survey. Only 91 people responded out of 8,313 residents. Most people agreed that money should be spent on open space. When asked what was most important, the respondents said: open space (38.5%), recreation (25.3%) and affordable housing (22%).

The next slides showed some anticipated projects and their costs, with a list of proposed grants going back a few years. Mr. Butler explained that projects in Category A are those that were likely to be approved and were Town-supported. Mr. Fox noted one of the slides was new and

was based on recent conversations with Kate McGuire and was not included in the slides emailed to the board.

Category B projects aren't that clearly flushed out, according to Mr. Butler, and there is question on their eligibility. Category C projects have no project definition and their costs were unclear.

Mr. Britton asked for clarification about what was decided about sunset clauses. He was told that the board had agreed that sunset clauses should be added in to future grant approvals.

Mr. Fox said Hamilton Council On Aging Director Mary Beth Lawton will no longer be applying for a grant for the COA parking lot. Per Michael Lombardo, that project has been put on a back burner. The COA project currently being done is mostly for improvements to the second floor of the existing building.

Mr. Howard said the *Northshore Magazine* included water sports and a town beach as Hamilton highlights in its feature, obviously not knowing the Town very well, he said. He noted that in Essex they had to restrict beach access to residents and their guests. He said that police were called regarding parking problems on Chebacco Road and that sooner or later the Town is going to have to take responsibility for that beach – for example, to do water testing and inspect the porta toilet to find out if it's being used or if folks are urinating in the lake.

Other highlighted slides showed a request for invasive species removal and a request to replace a sign at the Patton Homestead Riverwalk.

Mimi Fanning reported on porch renovations discussed at the previous CPC meeting. Mr. Catalano asked her to go back to the Housing Authority and ask about using synthetic material instead of pressure-treated wood, which splinters and doesn't look as nice or hold up as well.

Mr. Catalano said the Patton Group wants to absorb the 45K grant given to them into a larger project. They are going to send out an RFP for an architect and hire an architect to do the roof, dormers, electrical panel, put in handicapped bathrooms and widen one of the doors to make it handicapped accessible. Mr. Fox noted they have not yet submitted the building permit that they need to do within the next 10 days.

Mr. Butler said they were carrying a grant for painting the exterior on two buildings and he wanted to know if they were still moving ahead on those. Currently, in Category A, are two projects: to paint the exterior of 121 Railroad Ave. and do the Railroad Ave. Apartments' windows. These are new projects, but there were some other painting projects on the original list that nobody seemed to know about and which have since been removed. When Mr. Britton questioned that, Mr. Butler said none of these projects have been voted on and are just place holders.

Mr. Howard questioned a previous approval of horseshoe pits for 50K. That has been tabled, the other members told him.

The slides were reviewed in more depth, to see what projects are active. The Community House (in category B) probably does not need to have its heating and cooling systems replaced, according to Mr. Preston. He doesn't think they would ever come forward with that. Ms. Fanning said they can't ask for that because it pertains to the interior not exterior. Mr. Fox said he would contact them. They do want help with brick work repointing and slate roof work, he said.

Mr. Fox passed out copies and Mr. Catalano referred to a printed meeting schedule and timeline for projects.

Mr. Duggan, who is Mr. Butler's neighbor and a candidate for the CPC's at-large position, asked why the matching funds were so small. Mr. Catalano explained that the kitty includes Boston and all the communities. The pool has dwindled so the match has gone way down. The State might add another \$25 to the fee at the registry which would bump the Town up by 2 or 3%. Cambridge spends 80% of its funds for housing, not for open space or historic preservation. He said that at one point the Town considered adjusting the surcharge to 3%. Wenham has a bigger match because they're at the 3%. Mr. Preston noted there is only one kitty for the State match.

CPC Vacancy Status

Mr. Duggan has submitted his resume for consideration as an at-large CPC member. He has an impressive resume, according to Mr. Catalano.

Mr. Catalano made a motion to pass along Mr. Duggan's candidacy to the Selectmen for consideration. Mr. Preston seconded the motion. It passed unanimously.

Catalano said to Mr. Duggan that if appointed, it would be a three-year term. Mr. Butler explained the schedule and how there is one meeting to look at eligibility and another to review the funding.

Discussion on Grants and the Process

Ms. Horgan, who is on the Housing Authority with Ms. Fanning, said she was curious about the next step when Ms. McGuire submits a grant. She is told there are two steps: to determine eligibility and to discuss the merits of the proposal. Once the CPC votes to approve a project, they move it on to Town Meeting for a vote. That happens whether or not the Town Manager or others like the idea.

Mr. Britton says historically they've been pleased with how careful the applications have been. The costs have been much more modest.

Mr. Butler said that they have turned to some of the applicants (such as the Community House and the playgrounds) and asked them to come up with matching funds from other sources instead of writing the whole check. He said they were trying to get the schools to take more ownership

of projects like playing fields instead of the Recreation Department leading the charge. Regarding Patton Ridge housing, part of the agreement with the developers is that they were given X amount of money but some of the money is in limbo and nobody knows what to do with it. The agreement with Wenham is that if Hamilton puts in an amount, Wenham has to put in 40%. Mr. Preston said hopefully the money earning interest.

Mr. Preston said that many of the applications do come in with an amount in mind and they need to develop a more circumspect view. Most of these projects are falling into the historic preservation category, Catalano said.

Review of Project Evaluation Tool

Mr. Fox said he went through Mr. Butler's grant evaluation scoring system plan and made the requested changes. He noted that applicants were being asked to submit 10 copies but that isn't necessary when they could just send an email. The major substantive change is what Mr. Butler is doing with the evaluation criteria. Mr. Butler is making his own changes, as well, which he will send to Mr. Fox.

Chair and Vice-Chair

Mr. Howard made a motion to reappoint Mr. Catalano as chair. Mr. Butler seconded the motion. The board voted in favor (5-1) with Mr. Catalano abstaining.

Mr. Preston made a motion to reappoint Mr. Butler as vice chair. All voted in favor (5-1) with Mr. Butler abstaining.

Mr. Britton asked if it mattered that he is no longer involved with the Affordable Housing Trust. Mr. Fox said no, they don't need to have a representative from Affordable Housing.

New Business

Mr. Butler said he noticed that the new website had added clicks, which he did not think was good. Mr. Fox said he also noticed that.

Committee member reports and a review of open grants will resume at the next meeting, which the members decided will be July 13. There was no July meeting on the schedule, although many members already had this date on their calendars. Mr. Fox said he would add it to the schedule.

Ms. Fanning invited CPC members to a walk-through at the Housing Authority and asked when they could schedule that. They chose June 20 at 8 a.m., with June 21 at 8 a.m. as an alternate date.

Town Hall Renovation Committee

Selectman Jeff Hubbard, who is a member of the Town Hall Renovation Committee, reported that the Renovation Committee had been established. Its goal is to hire, by State regulations, an

owner's project manager (OPM). The next step is to hire a structural engineer and do a needs assessment. The OPM is the eyes and ears on their behalf, Mr. Hubbard said. The Board of Selectmen wanted to have this happen earlier than at Town Meeting to get ahead of the game by six months. He said his purpose was to get this on the radar screen of the CPC. While the Finance Committee has a 100K fund that they are able to access when something is anticipated, the Selectmen thought it was important to look at the "parallel tracks" of the CPC.

Mr. Britton said that while Town Hall is a historic building, the function of the renovation of this is largely to meet the governmental charge of how this building is used. He personally feels that the money for the OPM should come from the Town and not the CPC. The CPC deals more with things like structure and maintenance to the building, not its functionality.

Mr. Hubbard countered that the OPM would be responsible for all the project, including the historic component. OPMs, he said, have to be architects and engineers with seven years of experience. Mr. Preston echoed that CPC funds would go to the structural needs as the plans are developed, but not to staffing.

Mr. Hubbard said it wouldn't be staffing, it would be a consulting company.

Mr. Catalano said they would have to formulate the request and have a specific purpose instead of the all-purpose OPM.

Adjournment

Mr. Catalano adjourned the meeting at approximately 8:08 p.m.

Mary Alice Cookson

Attest

Date