

HAMILTON COMMUNITY PRESERVATION COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF MEETING

November 9, 2017

Members Present: Robert Preston, Ed Howard, Jay Butler, Katherine Mittelbusher, Shawn Farrell, Mimi Fanning, Neil Duggan

Members Absent: Chris Currier, Chair Tom Catalano

Coordinator: Dorr Fox

Jay Butler called the Hamilton Community Preservation Committee (CPC) meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. with a quorum present.

Minutes

Robert Preston made a motion to approve the minutes of the October 12, 2017 meeting. Shawn Farrell seconded the motion. The Committee voted unanimously to approve the minutes (7-0).

Committee Member Reports

Ed Howard reported that at the last Planning Board meeting they discussed the warrant articles in preparation for Town Meeting, primarily the Cottage Housing Bylaw. One thing he had requested that was brought up and recognized at Town Meeting is that when a Planning Board vote is taken, the count should be recorded so the public knows whether a decision is unanimous or split, and if split, who the dissenting votes were. Regarding the Cottage Housing, he and Claudia Woods voted no, Peter Clark abstained, and the other members voted for it. Mr. Howard reported that the Historic District Commission, who met last night, are bringing forward a Demolition Delay Bylaw. Two points of discussion are that the demolition delay would run for a year (Mr. Howard had originally supported 6 months) and the date for something to be considered “antique” is 1940.

Mr. Butler commented that while the Great Estate (revision to the overlay district) and the Cottage Housing bylaw didn't pass, the people who spoke about them didn't have specific changes to propose. They were either for or against. This doesn't give the Planning Board much to work with. Mr. Howard admitted that is true. He said the vote was 90% opposed to Cottage Housing, which was confusing because the survey taken earlier had indicated respondents were in favor of it.

Mr. Farrell reported that at their last meeting, the Board of Selectmen was given a public safety update by Fire Chief Phil Stevens and Police Chief Russell Stevens. The Fire Department has been having a hard time getting call firefighters to respond to fires. It used to be that tradesman

working in Hamilton would leave their jobs and respond, but because their pay at their regular job is generally much higher than the firefighter pay, they are reluctant to do so now. Also, many of them work in Boston, not locally. The Fire Department has been talking about some form of regionalization, perhaps with Wenham, but it's a tough path to take. [The CPC later had further discussion about combining fire departments. One drawback is that a merged department would be considered a new department and would therefore lose some of what the existing department currently has (funding, for example).]

Mr. Farrell said the BOS discussed Special Town Meeting and what could be done better for next time. A primary comment was that it wasn't good to hold the meeting at Winthrop School. Many thought Town Moderator Jeffrey Melick did a good job. He was criticized at the meeting for allowing more people to speak who were pro cottage housing than con, but CPC members said the criticism was unfounded. He didn't know people's views before they took the podium.

Mr. Farrell talked about Town Meeting scheduling—that this year many parents of young kids had the tough choice of whether to attend their kids' sporting events (last games of the season) or go to Town Meeting. The seniors had petitioned that meetings be held Saturdays during the day because they don't like to stay out late or have to drive in the evenings, but he said the Town needs to think of a better system so as not to exclude the younger adults from participating. Some citizens have suggested the use of absentee ballots. Mr. Preston thought it would be nice if the appendices were sent out ahead of the meeting. He noticed people trying to read and interpret them at the meeting.

Mr. Farrell said because Town Meeting isn't a set date, it has to be scheduled around school functions, such as the school musical. It might be good to have a set date for Town Meeting that sports teams and the schools need to schedule around.

Mr. Farrell said the BOS also looked at the Town's three-year financial forecast, and specifically at free cash, which has in the past been used to lower the tax rate. The problem is that the Town doesn't want to keep doing that. With a tighter budget in the future, there won't be that much free cash available. The Town received a grant to help the Finance Committee look at writing financial policies for the Town.

Neil Duggan asked if the Town is noting what is happening in Washington regarding tax reform. Mr. Farrell replied yes somewhat. He commented that nobody in Hamilton is on top of OPEB (Other Post-Employment Benefits), which hasn't really been funded. Also the Town ended up renegotiating health insurance and a 12% increase has been projected, although they only budgeted for a 7% increase.

Mr. Farrell continued that the BOS had a discussion regarding the solar project at the landfill. It will only generate approximately \$20K-\$40K annually vs. the \$60K that was originally expected. They are moving ahead anyway.

Mimi Fanning said she was glad to see the BOS looking into why the COA was not open during the storm to provide shelter for those without power. The CPC members talked about generators owned by the Town and which ones are available.

Ms. Fanning updated the CPC on the Housing Authority. She's pleased with the progress. They were asked to attend Town Meeting regarding the money they had asked for and were pleased to receive. During the storm, a big tree split in half and part of it fell behind Lamson Hall that cost \$900 to remove. The director will attend a conference Nov. 13-14—for an update about violence against women. A community fair will be held at the school to recruit volunteers from the school to help with tasks like gardening, raking leaves, and entering data. Work on the Brooks House will be starting. The audit went through fine. Mailboxes are now located in Lamson Hall so tenants can socialize, have coffee, etc. The Department of Housing and Community Development increased its budget for the renovation of the apartments on Union Street. They signed a notice to proceed on installing intercom systems at the doors.

Review of Town Meeting

Ms. Fanning said she worked at the door and heard many complaints from people being put in the overflow room, who couldn't see the slides. Some came back into the main hall and the Fire Chief made them move and there was some grumbling.

Mr. Farrell commented that 389 people attended the meeting; Winthrop only seats 250. The high school seats 600 and would have been a much better venue, but it wasn't available.

Some people had criticized the quality of the slides. Mr. Preston pointed out that it wasn't the slides but the projection that was the problem. The high school is a better location for tech reasons, as well.

Designation of Member & Alternate to Sign Warrant for Invoices

Dorr Fox explained that a statute, which is already adhered to by other Town boards, requires that there be a member from the CPC signing the warrants, as well as an alternate to sign if that person is not available.

Mr. Howard made a motion that Tom Catalano be designated as the signer with Mr. Butler as the alternate. Mr. Farrell asked if he could reform the motion. He advocated saying "chair" and "vice chair" so the motion will carry from year to year.

Mr. Farrell made a motion that the chair be deemed the signing authority for the CPC and if the chair is not present, the vice chair will sign. Ms. Fanning seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously (7-0).

Publicizing CPC Successes

Mr. Fox had brought a sign of corrugated plastic to the meeting as an example of a temporary sign that could be used to publicize CPC projects during construction. The sign costs \$40 at Staples. Mr. Farrell said he had good luck with inexpensive signs at *politicalawnsigns.com*. Members gave ideas about signs and were asked to find vendors, both the temporary ones and permanent, good-quality plaques for completed larger projects. Those cost approximately \$500-\$600 each. Mr. Howard recommended cast aluminum because brass ones may be stolen. Katherine Mittelbusher said the Boston Landmarks Commission has brass ones that aren't that expensive.

Mr. Preston asked if there was a sign at the Town pool. The members did not think so. In the future, grant recipients will be asked to build the cost for a sign into their budget. Mr. Farrell asked Mr. Fox if he could talk with Recreation Director Sean Timmons about a sign for the pool.

Mr. Fox is going to research what other town CPCs are doing regarding the language for the signs. He will gather examples for the next meeting.

Mr. Howard noted that temporary signage is the purview of the BOS; permanent signage is the purview of the Zoning Board of Appeals. Therefore, the signs ought to be cleared through them.

Review of Open Grants

Mr. Fox gave the following updates:

- **Senior Center Balustrade:** No progress. Mr. Fox will speak with Mary Beth Lawton, Council on Aging director. The work will require getting three quotes.
- **Patton Park Cannon/Wagon Wheels:** Photos of the wagon wheels were passed out to the members. The wheels are complete, boxed up and will be shipped back to Town after Thanksgiving. Mr. Farrell asked who will install them. Mr. Fox wasn't sure. The CPC members also inquired about the painting of the cannons. Mr. Fox will look into that.
- **American Legion Electrical Work:** The electrician, who is also the Town electrical inspector, is doing the work and will be requesting the final grant money. They have pulled out all the old wiring.
- **Historical Society Pictorial Collection:** No change in status.
- **Patton Estate Roof Replacement:** According to Department of Public Works Director Tim Olson, he and Town Manager Michael Lombardo are selecting an architect for the project.
- **Pingree Park Playground:** There was a delay in the shipment of equipment and the project will happen in the spring.
- **Buker School Playground:** No change in status.
- **Habitat for Humanity House Construction:** Mr. Fox distributed photos of what the houses look like as of today. The houses are closed and secure so workers can work indoors.

Other Business

Last meeting, the CPC had decided to consult with Town Legal Counsel Donna Brewer about mechanic’s liens. They want to be able to put conditions on grants so that projects are built as specified in their grant application so that situations like what happened with the Winthrop School playground do not happen again. (*Wood chips were substituted for a surface that would have made the playground fully ADA-compliant.) Mr. Farrell asked Mr. Fox to send him a reminder and he will call Ms. Brewer.

Mr. Howard asked if they could put moving the start time of CPC meetings from 7:30 p.m. to 7 p.m. on the agenda for the next meeting.

Mr. Butler asked what grant applications will be coming before the CPC before the next Town Meeting. Mr. Fox replied that the Hamilton Affordable Housing Trust (HAHT) would be asking for \$100K because the money given to them previously would run out after the 20-unit project at Willow Street and potential 40-unit Longmeadow Way project are developed.

Mr. Howard mentioned he found out this morning that the roadway into Longmeadow is privately owned, which will complicate matters.

Mr. Butler asked what the HAHT request would be for. Mr. Fox replied that the Trust is looking at a 10% Down Program to give down-payment assistance to new homeowners. Mr. Butler noted that if CPC issues a grant to the Trust, the Trust would be bound by the same rules as the CPC and cannot spent money on any kind of initiative that doesn’t involve the building of community housing. He noted that it took the Trust five years to spend the first amount of money given to them and said they cannot sit on \$600K and ask for more money. They may need to wait until the \$600K has actually been spent.

Mr. Butler added to the previous signage discussion that he will be sending a list of all the projects he believes deserve a sign to the CPC members for their input. Mr. Howard commented that the public ought to know where their money is being spent. Mr. Farrell concurred and said the people who responded to the survey did not seem to know. For example, a lot of grant money has gone to the Housing Authority.

Adjournment

Mr. Howard made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Preston seconded the motion. The Committee voted unanimously (7-0) to adjourn the meeting at 8:33 p.m.

Mary Alice Cookson

Attest

Date