

HAMILTON COMMUNITY PRESERVATION COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF MEETING

January 11, 2018

Members Present: Jay Butler, Robert Preston, Ed Howard, Mimi Fanning, Katherine Mittelbush, Shawn Farrell, Chris Currier and Neil Duggan

Members Absent: Chair Tom Catalano

Coordinator: Dorr Fox

Jay Butler called the Community Preservation Committee (CPC) meeting to order at 7:03 p.m. with a quorum present. He announced that Richard Boroff, a Planning Board member, was taping the meeting for his own use.

Minutes

Ed Howard made a motion to approve the minutes of the Dec. 14, 2017 meeting. Robert Preston seconded the motion. The Committee voted unanimously to approve the minutes (6-0). Chris Currier had not yet arrived and Mr. Butler did not vote because he was absent from the Dec. 14 meeting.

Committee Member Reports

Mimi Fanning said she had nothing new to report.

Shawn Farrell said the Board of Selectmen (BOS) renewed a license for a jukebox at the American Legion. They approved a Curbside Textile Recycling Program, which will take away about 6% of the Town's trash tonnage. The program shouldn't affect charitable donations. The Chair of the Board of Health presented a draft of a dilapidated/vacant/unsafe building bylaw and received BOS input. The public hearing will be Jan. 25. The BOS discussed the Conservancy District Zoning bylaw that's been on the books since probably the mid-50s. It was deemed by an attorney hired a couple of years ago, as well as recently by Town Counsel, to be in need of either updating or discarding. The BOS discussed payment in lieu of taxes by the tax-exempt Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary. Hamilton taxpaying households are currently contributing approximately \$350/year to educate the children and pay for public services of those living on the campus. Three water abatements were approved. The BOS opened the warrant for Town Meeting to be held April 7 at 9 a.m. They discussed the process and timing of the Town Manager's evaluation, which should be completed by the BOS's second meeting in February.

Ed Howard said the Historic District Commission is meeting next Wed. for a presentation regarding a cell tower made to look like a tree. This is confusing, he said, because the cell tower

issue is still under litigation. The Planning Board tweaked the Demolition Delay bylaw; it wasn't as clear as it should be in some areas. Another discussion was about the Conservancy District bylaw, enacted pre-State conservation measures—Is it an essential part of Town regulations or is it outdated? Nothing was resolved, he said, but it was thoroughly discussed.

Review of Funding Applications

- **Affordable Housing Trust (HAHT)**

Russ Tanzer, Chair of the HAHT, said a \$100K grant would help the Trust provide affordable housing in the community. The HAHT is struggling and continues to struggle, he said. The Trust funded the Willow Street project for \$300K and earmarked another \$300K for a second project. After that, there will be no money left. They need money on hand to develop future projects, hire consultants to help them, and pay for Dorr Fox's time.

Discussion

Mr. Butler noted the HAHT is under the same constraints as the CPC in terms of what the money can be used for. Robert Preston said if the CPC approves the HAHT's request it may have to turn down other excellent projects. The CPC has about \$550K in general reserves and will receive another \$450K for Fiscal Year 19, but on the horizon will come funding requests for Town Hall, playing fields, and the Patton Homestead. The Trust doesn't have other funding sources. Neil Duggan asked for clarification about the Trust's assertion that its efforts are widely supported in the community. Mr. Tanzer replied the community does support affordable housing efforts, but the trick is finding the land and right location. Ms. Fanning supported the Trust's request. It benefits everybody, as opposed to something like the turf field, she said. Mr. Tanzer pointed out that Willow Street Project costs about the same as the two Habitat for Humanity single-family homes on Asbury Street. The Trust wants to do more projects like Willow Street, he said.

Decision

Mr. Preston made a motion to approve the HAHT's funding application. Mr. Farrell seconded the motion. The CPC voted unanimously (7-0) to approve the funding in the amount of \$100K.

- **Patton Homestead**

Mr. Butler announced that the Patton Homestead has asked to table its funding request until next month. President of the Patton Homestead Board of Directors Carin Kale explained the Town has hired an architect/preservationist for this project and, due to snow delays, they don't have all the figures yet.

Discussion

Because a couple of CPC members were absent, it was decided not to discuss the project so those absent wouldn't have to review the tape.

Review of Eligibility and Funding Applications for Housing Element Update of Hamilton Master Plan

Planning Board member Mr. Boroff, 40 Moynihan Rd., explained the point of the \$30K "ask" is to hire a planner/consultant to assist with the housing element of the Town's Master Plan. This consulting firm would help with the public outreach and data information collection on local incomes and demographics. The result would be proposed zoning articles and to provide for financially attainable and varied housing, including cluster housing, market-rate housing, traditional housing, affordable housing, etc. The \$30K would cover the expenses of the project, including the educational component, such as the presentation at Town Meeting. If this project isn't funded by the CPC, the Planning Board will do it anyway; however, Mr. Boroff said they don't have the skills a professional planner has.

Mr. Currier arrived to the meeting during this discussion.

Mr. Butler wondered why update the housing section and leave the rest. Mr. Boroff's response was that they were going to update the whole document. The current Master Plan cost \$80K in total and took about a year and a half and extensive public meetings to generate.

Planning Board member Rick Mitchell said the genesis of the idea is that over the last 6 to 12 months there's been a lot of discussion and conflict about affordable housing and cottage housing. The Town needs an objective look at where they are now—What are the current demographics? Who is being served? This is not about low-income housing, he said, but about providing housing for empty nesters who want to downsize or young professionals who want to stay in Town but can't afford a \$500K home. They want to get the public engaged concerning options for growth based on factual data rather than innuendos or fear.

Mr. Butler applauded using the term "accessible" rather than "affordable" housing because people tend to equate the word affordable with low-income. Mr. Howard asked about the woman who wrote the original master plan. She was a professional planner and isn't available now because she works for another town.

Mr. Farrell asked about the timeline and how many phases this project may have since oftentimes groups comes back to the CPC multiple times for funding. Mr. Boroff said at this point they are only talking about needing funds for this one section of the document. Mr. Farrell asked Patrick Reffett, Director of Planning & Inspections, if he had talked with Town Manager Michael Lombardo about capital funding for the process. Mr. Reffett said they hadn't spoken in detail about it, but this is the first step that needs to take place. Mr. Boroff said other topics that are part of the Master Plan—land use, open space and resource protection, community facilities and services, housing, transportation, and implementation—all hinge on the issue of housing.

Mr. Tanzer voiced support and called funding the project “the right thing to do.”

Decisions

Mr. Preston made a motion to approve eligibility for funding of the Housing Element Update of the Hamilton Master Plan. Ms. Fanning seconded the motion. The motion to approve the project’s eligibility was unanimously (8-0) approved.

Mr. Preston made a motion to approve funding the Housing Element Update of the Hamilton Master Plan. Ms. Fanning seconded the motion. The motion to approve funding the project was unanimously (8-0) approved.

Publicizing CPC Successes

Mr. Butler affirmed the CPC would be going back and putting signs on already completed projects. CPC members decided the Town seal should go on all signs. Mr. Farrell had explored wording options and read what’s being used in Gloucester: “This project received funding assistance from the citizens of Gloucester through the Community Preservation Act.” CPC members liked the wording. Mr. Fox discussed pricing he’d received from various sign companies. CPC members agreed all the signs should have the same color, same seal, and same wording. They decided bronze would be appropriate for the permanent plaques. Ms. Fanning asked what sign company was used for the plaque at the bandstand. Mr. Fox will find out.

The Community Center has agreed to a CPC sign placed inside the building due to its brick exterior. Mr. Preston suggested making a few inexpensive signs as prototypes. Mr. Fox said there is little money to fund this now; however, there may be funds left over from salaries that can be transferred over. Mr. Farrell will design the signs. Mr. Fox will place the orders.

Mr. Howard reminded the CPC that permanent signs are the jurisdiction of the Zoning Board of Appeals and temporary signs are the jurisdiction of the BOS. The CPC will make its recommendations and appear before the two boards for approval. Katherine Mittelbusher wondered if the Historic District Commission played a role if a building is within the historic district. Mr. Fox said they can bring that up at Wednesday’s Historic District meeting.

Ethics Training Reminder

Mr. Butler reminded members they must complete the ethics/conflict of interest online training and exam by the end of the month.

Project Evaluation Tool

Mr. Butler explained the tool isn't being used. He thought it might be best to use the tool between eligibility and funding hearings. The reason for the tool is to have some sort of guidance by which to evaluate projects.

Mr. Currier noted the tool is good to have in front of them as they're discussing eligibility and funding so they don't miss anything. Mr. Farrell suggested they give the form to the applicants to use as guidance for filling out CPC grant applications and making pitches. The CPC decided to implement both ideas.

The scoresheet may come into play when the CPC is looking at projects of equal weight and deciding which to send on to Town Meeting or if they are deciding to not grant the full amount requested, said Mr. Farrell. CPC members discussed that they can only approve things for which they actually have funds. If they don't approve the project, it doesn't go to Town Meeting.

Review of Open Grants

- **Senior Center Balustrade:** Mr. Fox said he spoke with Council on Aging Director Mary Beth Lawton who had said this project went out to bid and nobody responded. However, he has since found out from Department of Public Works (DPW) Director Tim Olson that this was incorrect. Mr. Olson had bid out the gazebo and nobody responded, so he didn't put the balustrade project out to bid because he thought the same thing might happen. There is no sunset clause on the project, which is seven years old. Mr. Fox is trying to find out the name of the contractor who did the previous work.
- **Patton Park Cannon/Wagon Wheels:** The boxes haven't been opened, but Mr. Fox expects they're OK.
- **American Legion Electrical Work:** Mr. Butler has signed off on the work. Mr. Fox thought there was more money left in the grant and will check that.
- **Historical Society Pictorial Collection:** Mr. Fox had sent a link to CPC members. Mr. Preston said the photos are filtered by date, but there is no search box to find them by topic. The Historical Society is open Thursday afternoons.
- **Patton Estate Roof Replacement:** This project will be part of the larger Patton Homestead renovation project.
- **Pingree Park Playground:** It is completed and an invoice was received. Ms. Mittelbusher suggested asking CPC grant recipients to send in a photo of their completed projects when they're done. Mr. Preston added that the photos could also be used for future presentations. Mr. Fox said they will write that into the grant agreements from now on.
- **Buker School Playground:** Construction should happen this spring.
- **Habitat for Humanity Houses:** Construction is a bit stalled due to weather.
- **Brooks House:** Not started yet.

- **Town Hall OPM:** Nothing has happened, as far as Mr. Fox knows. He only had the September minutes to go by. They haven't requested money and the OPM has not yet been hired.
- **Knotweed Removal Program:** The project won't start until weather-appropriate.

Mr. Butler inquired about money due back to the CPC from a Hamilton Housing Authority roofing project that came in under budget. Mr. Fox said they can vote it back into the fund in July.

Other Business

The School Department is going to be asking for several large bonds—one is \$2.7 million for a Turf Field at the high school. Mr. Farrell said the School Committee was quick to jump on bonding. Personally, he doesn't like that; he thinks it should have fundraising. The next meeting will be Feb. 8.

Ms. Fanning said she read in the papers about Beverly allowing large houses to be divided and turned into condos. She wondered if Hamilton had a similar program. Mr. Howard replied that it's a complex process to get collective housing in Town. Building single homes is what drives the market. He said the Planning Board is focused on it, but not sure how to make it "hatch." Mr. Preston said modern structures tend to have open floor plans so it costs a lot to separate them into condos; Beverly has older homes.

Adjournment

Mr. Howard made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Fanning seconded the motion. The Committee voted unanimously (8-0) to adjourn the meeting at 8:31 p.m.

Mary Alice Cookson

Attest

Date