

HAMILTON COMMUNITY PRESERVATION COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF MEETING

February 8, 2018

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

Members Absent: Chair Tom Catalano, Mimi Fanning, Chris Currier

Coordinator: Dorr Fox

Jay Butler called the Community Preservation Committee (CPC) meeting to order at 7:08 p.m. with a quorum present.

Minutes

Ed Howard made a motion to approve the minutes of the Jan. 11 meeting. Robert Preston seconded the motion. The Committee voted unanimously to approve the minutes (6-0).

Committee Member Reports

Mr. Howard reported the Planning Board, at its last meeting, approved a plan by Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary to separate a 19-acre lot at the corner of Miles River Road and Bridge St. Also discussed was a “nuisance building” bylaw brought forth by Board of Health Chair David Smith. A public hearing was held and there was a great deal of interest. Comments were made about softening the process regarding vacant houses (to not have 180 days as an absolute) so as not to unfairly target an elderly homeowner who might be in a nursing home and unable to care for his/her property. Another item discussed was the Demolition Delay bylaw with a few people speaking for and against.

Shawn Farrell reported on Monday’s Board of Selectmen (BOS) meeting. He said nomination papers are available at the Town Clerk’s office for the Planning Board, School Committee, and BOS. The Fire Department will hold its fourth Citizen’s Fire Academy. “Snow Day,” an outdoor event, will be held at the Patton Homestead Feb. 19. Council on Aging Director Mary Beth Lawton discussed what is happening and what the needs are at the Senior Center. Senator Bruce Tarr and Representative Brad Hill honored Army Nurse Corps veteran Mary Maione with a citation; she was also recognized by the BOS for her service. Ms. Maione and the State are working toward a bill to recognize women like her who served in the armed forces. Tom Catalano, who chairs the Historic District Commission, presented an overview of the proposed Demolition Delay bylaw. The Town’s budget was discussed. Last night a joint meeting was held with five boards: both towns’ BOS and Finance Committees (Fin Coms) and the School Committee. Wenham is facing an override and its tax rate could increase by about \$700. Mr.

Preston asked about apportionment, which is now at about 60/40 (Hamilton/Wenham). Mr. Farrell said they will be studying the issue in March. The BOS is talking with Town Counsel to see if it might push for a vote on a level service budget for the Schools with a separate warrant article to vote on the budget increase the School Committee wants to make (a 6% increase vs. the 2-3% increase the BOS recommends). The point, according to Mr. Farrell, is to have them justify their proposed increase so the citizens understand what the Schools are asking for in terms of programs. There are about 45 children living on the Gordon-Conwell campus who are educated by the Town. The BOS is trying to get Gordon-Conwell to honor its original P.I.L.O.T. (payment in lieu of taxes) agreement from 1974. Mr. Preston asked if Wenham had a similar problem regarding Gordon College; Mr. Farrell didn't know. He added that Gordon-Conwell has apartments on campus generating income and other commercial activities. The BOS, working with FinCom, want to open a dialogue with the college. The BOS also discussed the Recreation Fields Destabilization Fund of \$500K (designated for field development) and discussed potential uses for that money now that the turf field project was taken off the warrant by the School Committee, which wants a debt exclusion for it. A working group will meet Tuesday with the School Committee to talk about next steps. The BOS also discussed Town Manager Michael Lombardo's contract (which auto-renewed). They will be negotiating with Mr. Lombardo.

Review of Funding Application—Patton Homestead

President of the nonprofit Patton Homestead Inc. Board of Directors Carin Kale introduced members of her team who were present. She noted Marc Johnson was responsible for the charts and numbers being presented. The Homestead has requested a \$200K grant. The Patton property was a gift to the Town in 2012 and its annual tax revenue from the 12 units in back brings in about \$145K to the Town, she noted. She learned that in 1970, the house information was submitted into the inventory of historic assets of the Commonwealth, but it is not yet on the register. (Mr. Preston, who has had previous experience with this process volunteered his help.) As stated in the report, the Homestead renovation project touches on all the goals of the Community Preservation Act (CPA), she said. The Wenham Museum holds its annual Military History Day there. The Wenham museum now possesses the family archives and memorabilia and is a current tenant. The Homestead is working closely with Mr. Lombardo regarding staffing. This year the parking lot was approved and added. A "Snow Day" with outdoor events is set to happen soon. She praised Spencer & Vogt, the architects and preservationists hired for the project, and said they are lucky to have them. The Phase 1 priority is to renovate the core of the house so people can use it for events, which will generate income. The \$200K will cover that renovation. It will be combined with the \$45K in CPC funds previously received for repairing the roof and dormers. They are also looking at a capital campaign and working with Representative Hill and Senator Tarr to receive support at the State level.

Questions/Discussion:

Mr. Preston asked about plans for a property manager. That person will live off-site and occupy the Homestead's office during business hours. They'll need security for the off-hours.

Ms. Kale mentioned that other towns have had to raise money to buy a historic property. Concord's buying of the birthplace of Thoreau took 15 years. She noted the Patton Homestead was donated and they are on a fast track relatively speaking.

Mr. Johnson said to prepare the property they will have to address Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliance issues. Spencer & Vogt have this experience with older homes. The Homestead will offer flexibility for public meeting access, he added.

Mr. Howard said he was at a meeting and someone said the Town had shut off water to the house. He was concerned how that would affect the heating system. Mr. Johnson said the archives are there, bathrooms are there, and Department of Public Works (DPW) workers are often there; he and Ms. Kale doubted the water was turned off.

CPC members discussed that the roof and dormer repairs, which were approved and funded, were not done because they are being rolled into the larger project.

Ms. Kale noted Wenham Museum's enthusiasm over the archives. Gordon College was the former manager of the archives (per the gift agreement). Mr. Johnson explained that the Museum is stepping into those shoes and currently looking at the commitment they want to have.

Mr. Farrell mentioned there was talk of an equestrian theme at the Homestead.

Mr. Preston asked about the Mass Cultural Council (MCC) grant. It was just submitted per Ms. Kale. Regarding a Mass Preservation Projects Fund grant—they said this often comes with restrictions and they were hesitant to apply at this time.

Mr. Farrell asked a question—if the CPC approves specific things and something changes, does the Homestead need to go back to the CPC? Mr. Johnson said that in drawing up the grant, they had asked Spencer & Vogt to only include those things that qualified for CPC money. Dorr Fox said the grant money stays as two separate accounts and the Homestead will need to submit the invoices accordingly.

CPC members were interested in plans for the second and third floors and discussed some potential uses. An elevator is not part of the current plan. Ms. Kale mentioned that sometimes the upper floors in historic buildings are used for residences. Mr. Preston thought perhaps the Wenham Museum might use some of that space for storage. Mr. Johnson said they have had groups approach them, but right now they won't be doing anything that might interfere with the core. He noted about \$40K-\$50K is in the budget for shoring up the first floor so it can handle a public load since it was built as a house not a public place.

Decision:

Mr. Farrell made a motion to approve the Patton Homestead's \$200K funding application. Mr. Preston seconded the motion. The CPC voted 5-0 to approve the application (with one abstention: Mr. Butler).

Further Discussion:

CPC members discussed wording of the grant agreement. They agreed the project needed to happen within two years (by July 1, 2020) with architect stamped plans received and building permits issued by that date. Otherwise, the grant money will be returned to the CPC and the Homestead would have to reapply.

Katherine Mittelbusher suggested the building permit received should be a one-time permit, not one that can be renewed.

Mr. Fox will run the language by Legal Counsel Donna Brewer and email CPC members if there is any change. Ms. Mittelbusher suggested adding a provision for signage, as they'll want a bronze plaque there to publicize the CPC. The Town will agree, Ms. Kale said.

Review of Town Meeting Appendix and Presentation

Mr. Fox gave his PowerPoint presentation and gathered feedback. The first slide pertained to appropriating \$23.5K of FY19 revenues for administration costs. The second was fund balances and reserves. The third detailed CPA requirement that a minimum of 10% of CPA revenues go to three categories: Open Space & Recreation, Historic Preservation, and Community Housing. The rest was a summary of where the funds are going, how much in grant money has been approved for each project. Mr. Fox was asked to add in language on signage. He asked the Committee if they wanted to add sunset dates on the housing element of the master plan and on the \$100K affordable housing trust grant. He was advised not to add the sunset dates. He will send out a revised version of the presentation. Mr. Butler and Mr. Preston said they won't be attending April Town Meeting because of prior commitments.

Publicizing CPC Successes

Mr. Butler noted what the CPC has agreed to in terms of what the signs will say and look like. They had previously agreed to wait on making up the signs due to lack of funds. Mr. Farrell is drawing up the design and will circulate it. Mr. Fox said there is probably enough cash to do a minimum order. A motion will be needed. The CPC agreed to vote on it next month. Mr. Farrell will try to have a pdf for them to vote on by the next meeting.

Mr. Howard asked whether the CPC does an annual report. Mr. Fox said that is basically what he puts on the website, a list of all the projects approved for Town Meeting. Mr. Butler added that the CPC plan is updated every year in June or July with the latest list of grants.

The members discussed that the State match keeps going down because 10 more communities have joined the pool. They've been told to use 11% as the new norm, instead of 18%. They want to get Neil Duggan and Ms. Mittelbusher (who are relatively new CPC members) onto the CPA email list.

Review of Open Grants

- **Senior Center Balustrade:** Mr. Butler said Mr. Catalano knows someone who can get the balustrade made. Mr. Fox will check with him.
- **Patton Park Cannon/Wagon Wheels:** The project will be completed in the spring.
- **American Legion Electrical Work:** Mr. Butler said 99.5 percent of the work is done. They have some patching of the walls to do. They won't ask for more money. The remainder of the grant fund will be returned to the CPC.
- **Historical Society Pictorial Collection:** Nothing is new. Mr. Butler mentioned he received their newsletter.
- **Patton Estate Roof Replacement:** The project is being worked into the larger project and will happen eventually.
- **Pingree Park Playground:** They haven't asked for money yet.
- **Buker School Playground:** No update.
- **Habitat for Humanity Houses:** They are continuing to work on the interior.
- **Brooks House:** Not started yet. They are waiting until the spring.
- **Town Hall OPM:** A meeting was held this week to talk about the RFQ (Request for Qualifications) for the OPM (Owner's Project Manager). They will have another meeting in about two weeks and then send out the request.

Mr. Butler mentioned he met the project manager for Gordon College, who is a licensed engineer and who said he didn't think the college had a good relationship with the Town. Mr. Howard said he had heard that, as well. Mr. Butler mentioned this person might be a good source to consult for his expertise, and it could make for better relations between the college and the Town to involve him.

- **Knotweed Removal Program:** No update. The program will happen in the spring.

Other Business

CPC members discussed the need to identify who would be presenting at Town meeting and recommended Mr. Catalano (who was absent). They will discuss it at the next meeting.

Adjournment

Mr. Preston made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Mittelbush seconded the motion. The CPC voted unanimously (6-0) to adjourn the meeting at 8:31 p.m.

Mary Alice Cookson

Attest

Date