

HAMILTON COMMUNITY PRESERVATION COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF MEETING

April 18, 2018

Members Present: Chair Tom Catalano, Jay Butler, Ed Howard, Katherine Mittelbusher, Shawn Farrell

Members Absent: Neil Duggan, Mimi Fanning, Chris Currier, Robert Preston

Coordinator: Dorr Fox

Chair Tom Catalano called the Community Preservation Committee (CPC) meeting to order at 7: 02 p.m. with a quorum present.

Minutes

Shawn Farrell made a motion to approve the Feb. 8 meeting minutes. Jay Butler seconded the motion. The Committee voted unanimously among those present to approve the minutes (5-0).

Committee Member Reports

Mr. Farrell reported on Monday's Board of Selectmen (BOS) meeting. He first made a few announcements: There will be a lecture on coyotes at the Library on April 23. Textile recycling will start May 23. The pool is slated to open June 9 weather-permitting. The BOS appointed Chief Russell Stevens as Acting Town Manager. William Olson moved from the Planning Board to fill Bill Wilson's slot on the BOS. A total of 1,058 people voted. They had a turnout of about 400 citizens at Town Meeting, but only about 100 were left by the end due to the long length of the meeting. To remedy this, the BOS discussed ideas like using a clicker system to make counting votes quicker and perhaps pulling warrant items randomly out of a hat so people will be inclined to stay for the whole meeting. The Open Space Committee, Town Hall Building Committee, and Board of Health each have one open position. Ed Howard nominated Bob Curry to serve on the search committee for the Acting Town Manager. Mr. Farrell worked on the Rain Barrel program. Rain barrels can be purchased through the Town website. He was elected BOS chair. Scott Maddern was elected vice chair, and William Olson was elected BOS clerk. They discussed setting a hard and fast deadline for the warrant process leading up to Town Meeting so there won't be the usual last-minute scrambling. They discussed Warrant Article 5-4, the Kaminski-Clarke property at Bradley Palmer. There was an advisory vote to not tax the property; they are going to get a second opinion from an attorney other than Town Counsel. For the town manager search, they have put out an RFP and are hiring Community Paradigm Associates, run by Bernie Lynch, which came highly recommended. Mr. Butler asked if they would reconsider people who had applied in the last year for the Town Hall Building Committee opening. Mr. Farrell answered yes. Mr. Catalano said he was flabbergasted when he read about the Town

Manager's severance package in the newspaper. Mr. Farrell explained the severance was in the contract. Mr. Howard commented he heard Scott Maddern say at the BOS meeting he was in favor of citizen's petitions, yet they were moved to the back of the agenda. He noted a couple of the citizen's issues were resolved before the Town Meeting, such as the one before the Planning Board to reopen the density requirements of downtown Hamilton. He mentioned the five citizen's petitions in light of Mr. Maddern's comment that it showed participation in government. Mr. Farrell noted a need for differentiation between citizen's petitions that are legal and those that are not. Some things, such as cutting the pay for the Town Manager, can't be done. The vote then becomes advisory-only. The process can be improved by working with the citizens to make the language on the petitions correct. Mr. Catalano said he took umbrage with people who come out of the woodwork right before Town Meeting with petitions and amendments, but have chosen to forego opportunities all year to address the matters with the various boards. Mr. Catalano said he didn't think it fair to then use Town Counsel's time right before Town Meeting and there should be a cut-off for getting the petitions in. Mr. Farrell said they are working on having a hard stop well before Town Meeting. Another issue discussed is that there were so many appendices out in the lobby it was hard to tell who was putting out what literature. Mr. Catalano said he thought the Town would be within its right to have a table including only Town-generated documents and another table with everything else. Mr. Farrell said they were looking at making the materials into a packet for next meeting and also trying to figure out how to minimize the length of the warrant article presentations since some lasted 45 minutes to an hour. He suggested the meeting last no more than four hours total with a potential carry-over day, but that should be left to the discretion of the moderator. Mr. Butler noted the Town presentations didn't appear anywhere in print. He thought the public would be better served if they were mailed out or otherwise publicized. Mr. Farrell noted the cost of doing that. Mr. Howard said Ipswich does a beautiful job with their town meeting backup materials and encouraged them to look them over. Katherine Mittelbusher suggested the Town presentations be posted online with a robo-call pointing people to the site, as well as having hard copies available at the Library. Mr. Farrell agreed and said the BOS was looking at using Code Red alerts to get the information out. Mr. Catalano asked if he thought the election location (the Recreation Center) suppressed the vote. Mr. Farrell said the election would still be at Winthrop School if the school administration hadn't told them they didn't want it there due to safety issues. He has talked with Chief Russ Stevens about using one of the electronic billboards on wheels for publicizing Town election, Town Meeting, and other events. How to get the community engaged is a big concern since voter turnout was only about 17%. Ms. Mittelbusher asked about advanced voting. Mr. Farrell said there was some talk at the State level and there are camps for and against. The State initiated it in some Boston precincts and it was supposed to increase voting by 90 percent, but it only increased it by 1 percent. It's also expensive to implement. Mr. Howard said he noticed there were some who came to Town Meeting only for the articles they were interested in, calling friends on cellphones to find out when those conversations were happening.

Ed Howard did not have much to report for the Planning Board since Mr. Farrell covered everything. He thought it was a major step forward taking Article 5-6 off of the Town Meeting agenda and reopening the debate on the dense section of Hamilton's downtown and what the residents are expecting of the density.

Tom Catalano reported the Historic District Commission issued a certificate of appropriateness for an interior renovation at 604 Bay Road. The Demolition Delay Bylaw passed handily at Town Meeting. The *Salem News* article erroneously reported the bylaw only applied to the Historic District. He is resigning from the Historic District Commission and from the CPC in the next couple of months if anyone knows anyone interested in filling the slots.

Sherry Leonard, Housing Authority secretary, filled in for Mimi Fanning, who was absent. She reported they were pleased with everything moving along at the Brooks House. Mr. Fox clarified the work had gone out to bid, but the construction hadn't started. She said that was correct.

Handbook for New CPC Members

Mr. Butler said some boards in other towns require people to attend some of their meetings prior to joining their boards. Hamilton boards do not. He said he always wanted to assemble a handbook for people to look at in case they might be interested in joining the CPC. He threw down the basics to create a living document. Mr. Farrell thought the idea was great and said they should have it for other boards, as well, and that it should include zoning bylaws, code of conduct, etc. Mr. Howard noted, for example, some people on boards get up and go over and whisper to each other at a public hearing, which isn't allowed but apparently they aren't aware. His point is that the handbook would help educate people. Mr. Butler suggested the CPC handbook be published on the Town website with the idea that it may be edited and added to over time.

Decision:

Mr. Butler made a motion that the CPC adopt the CPC handbook for new and potential CPC members. Mr. Farrell seconded the motion. The CPC voted unanimously among members present (5-0) to adopt the handbook.

Mr. Fox asked what the document should be called. He had written it as "New Members' Guidebook." CPC members were fine with that.

Review of Town Meeting

This agenda item was already covered in Mr. Farrell's report and the subsequent discussion, so they moved on to the next item.

Publicizing CPC Successes

Mr. Fox said there would probably be about \$2,000 left in the CPC's administrative funds at the end of the fiscal year, according to Finance Director Marissa Batista, and they can use it on signage. The money is currently dedicated for Mr. Fox and Minutes Recorder Mary Alice Cookson's time and needs a vote if it's to be dedicated to signage.

Decision:

Mr. Farrell made a motion to spend up to \$2,000 of the administrative funds for promoting CPC successes. Mr. Howard seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously (5-0) by those present at the meeting.

Mr. Fox said the money needs to be dedicated to the actual projects before the end of the fiscal year, so the signs will have to be designed and ordered by June 30. Ms. Mittelbush asked for a list of projects where they wanted to place signs retroactively. Those included the Town pool, community house, and American Legion. Mr. Catalano suggested tying in the plaque to the Community House's 100th anniversary. The estimated cost is \$400 per plaque. Mr. Farrell will send names of some foundries to Mr. Fox. It was recommended that there be a plaque at the Winthrop playground, and the Buker playground group is currently looking at having one.

Upcoming CPC Public Hearing

Members discussed how they can get people to show up for the public hearing they are required by law to hold once a year. Last year they had 0 attendees. They invited past grantees, but nobody came, although they had about 40 attend the previous year. They expect it is because most people know what the CPC does and how to apply for a grant. Mr. Farrell said they should advertise it again in the newspaper. They decided not to do a flyer. Mr. Catalano suggested tacking on the hearing to a BOS meeting or perhaps holding a joint meeting with the BOS and Finance Advisory Committee (FinCom). They will talk with Chief Russ Stevens about using the illuminated sign to advertise the event.

Ms. Leonard said all the good things happening in Town now started 10 years ago. She said when her kids were little she wasn't that involved in the Town government. She said she thinks the answer lies in catching younger families. Also, she commented that Town Meeting was way too long. She works in senior health care and worried about the seniors who attended the more than six-hour meeting without food or drink.

Mr. Farrell said he talked with Jane Wetson, former Town Clerk, and she was disappointed they held the election at the Rec Center instead of Winthrop School. They used to build a civics lesson around the election and the kids would see their parents vote. You lose the chance to inspire the next generation by not having it at the school. Mr. Farrell also expressed that many parents are forced to have to make a decision whether to go to Town Meeting or attend their kids' sporting events. He would like to have the Rec Department close all the fields that day to eliminate the conflict. Mr. Catalano asked Mr. Farrell to talk with the BOS about how to foster more participation with the CPC and suggest the idea of a joint meeting with them. All of the boards are worried about the future funding for CPC due to the current State match, which is only at about 11%. There's been talk about increasing fees at the Registry to make up the extra funding. That's where the money comes from.

Ads for the CPC public hearing in the past were put in the Salem News. Mr. Fox said last year they put it just in The Chronicle and on Facebook and everywhere else. They need to figure out their plan.

Review of Open Grants

Mr. Fox gave the following updates:

- **Senior Center Balustrade:** Still on the back burner. Mr. Catalano told Mr. Fox to let him know if he can help Department of Public Works (DPW) Director Tim Olson move it forward. He may have a source to donate some of the material.
- **Patton Park Cannon/Wagon Wheels:** The wheels are out of the crates. There's been discussion about painting the cannons before putting the wheels on. They have an Eagle Scout interested in painting it. However, there's concern about lead paint and they thought it best to have a professional do the blasting (they discussed the best blasting methods). Mr. Catalano and Mr. Farrell both recommended Cassidy Brothers in Rowley for the job. They could have the Eagle Scout do the finish coat.
- **American Legion Electrical Work:** Hasn't heard from them and hasn't received any email on whether they're going to tap the last \$100 left on the grant.
- **Historical Society Pictorial Collection:** There is still \$5K-\$6K left on the grant. The scanning is done, but no search function yet. Mr. Catalano mentioned the Whaling Museum has a good searchable photo data base they should check out.
- **Patton Estate Roof Replacement:** Mr. Farrell and Mr. Catalano said they thought the roof would be included in Phase 1 of the project. Mr. Fox will check with Carin Kale, director of the Patton Board of Directors, on the timing. Mr. Farrell explained the goal for the Patton Homestead is to do the envelope first with the landscaping, so the venue looks nice on the outside and can be used for outdoor events. He thought the target for getting things done on the outside was September. He said EBSCO (information services co. in Ipswich), expressed interest in using the grounds for its company picnic this summer.
- **Pingree Park Playground:** They haven't asked for the money yet.
- **Habitat for Humanity Houses:** Still progressing.
- **Brooks House:** Ms. Leonard gave an update earlier in the meeting.
- **Town Hall OPM:** The request for the bids has been reviewed by Town Counsel and will be released next week.
- **Knotweed Removal Program:** The project is slated to begin in two to six weeks. This is the prime time for removal and they are identifying sites to remove it.
- **Buker School Playground:** He has not heard anything. Mr. Farrell said the Friends of Buker School group was at a School Committee meeting he attended and they were talking about doing it before September. There was a sunset of two years; it's been one year already.

CPC Members discussed projects that may be coming to them for grants. Mr. Catalano said he can't support projects solely for open space because they don't bring money to the Town and it

isn't fiscally responsible. He made a suggestion of using the landfill site for relocating the DPW and having some affordable housing there. They discussed that the cap isn't certified yet and that part of the scope of the cap depended on removal of an invasive species. The firm they're using said they couldn't do it. That is also slowing down the construction for the solar panels. Mr. Farrell said he thought the Gun Club had moved out, but they weren't sure on details.

Other Business

Mr. Howard noted a misconception he had heard while socializing was that the CPC vote to underwrite the first phase of renovating the Patton Homestead had been “unanimous.” He noted it was not unanimous. Not all nine members of the CPC were present and one person, Mr. Butler, had abstained. The vote was 4-1. He isn't questioning the legality, but said he felt they had some responsibility to communicate to the public when they have a slam dunk and when they have a majority vote. Also, he questioned the order in which people vote. For example, if he had known Mr. Butler was abstaining, he said he may have voted differently. He is feeling pressure from the Planning Board and how to vote his conscience when it goes against the majority. Mr. Butler brought up tongue-in-cheek that one who was uncomfortable with voting on a particular project could essentially just skip the meeting since there are 9 members on the board, 5 is a quorum and they only need 3 votes for something to pass.

In light of Mr. Howard's comments, CPC members discussed how votes should be reported. Ms. Cookson asked for clarification on whether individuals' names should be recorded in the minutes—for example, calling out Mr. Butler's abstention on the Patton vote. CPC members felt the decision should be left up to the individual about whether they wanted their individual name (in addition to the vote) recorded in the minutes. Mr. Farrell suggested using the language “passed unanimously among those present” in cases where members were absent.

Mr. Butler elaborated a bit on his abstention on the Patton vote. While he did not agree they should fund the project, he did not want to kill the issue from getting to the Town Meeting floor. Mr. Howard said he wondered if they owed it to the public to let it all hang out as far as communicating their thoughts on a given topic.

Adjournment

Mr. Howard made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Farrell seconded the motion. The CPC voted unanimously (5-0) to adjourn the meeting at 8:37 p.m.

Mary Alice Cookson

Attest Date