

HAMILTON COMMUNITY PRESERVATION COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF MEETING

July 12, 2018

Members Present: Vice Chair Jay Butler, Ed Howard, Robert Preston, Allison Jenkins, Mimi Fanning, and Neil Duggan

Members Absent: Katherine Mittelbusher, Chris Currier

Coordinator: Dorr Fox

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

Finance Advisory Committee (FinCom) member Nick Tensen attended the meeting.

Annual Election of Officers

Ed Howard nominated Mr. Butler as Chair. Mimi Fanning seconded the motion. Mr. Butler nominated Robert Preston as Vice Chair. Mimi Fanning seconded the motion. The CPC voted unanimously among those present (5-0) to approve Mr. Butler as Chair and Mr. Preston as Vice Chair.

Mr. Howard asked if a Secretary was needed, was told no.

Welcome to Selectmen Representative Allison Jenkins as New Member of the CPC

Mr. Butler welcomed Ms. Jenkins, who is taking over for Shawn Farrell as the Selectmen rep.

Neil Duggan arrived to the meeting at 7:05 p.m.

Minutes

Ms. Fanning had one correction: On page 3 her name was listed as “Mr.” instead of “Ms.” She made a motion to approve the June 14 meeting minutes as amended. Robert Preston seconded the motion. The Committee voted unanimously among those present (6-0) to approve the minutes.

Committee Member Reports

Mr. Howard explained CPC members who are representatives to a board give reports; at-large members don't.

Ms. Jenkins reported that Special Town Meeting (STM) is scheduled for Oct 13. This Monday the Board of Selectmen (BOS) will open the warrant. The cell tower is still under discussion. One major thing she sees coming to STM is that she is going to recommend the BOS consider keeping gas stations open 24 hours. It is going to cost \$250K minimum to repair the filling station behind Town Hall. If they don't repair it they'll need to spend money to remove it. If they had 24-hour access at the gas station, the police, fire and DPW can fill their tanks there. The Town currently has an antiquated system for reporting on fuel fill-up, while at the gas station the employees' cards would provide easy tracking. Not having the filling tank on Town property would also reduce insurance costs. Mr. Preston asked if there was a gas station willing to be open 24 hours. Ms. Jenkins said Cumberland Farms. They offer diesel. Also, they are set up for a generator in case of outages.

Ed Howard reported the Planning Board's last meeting was taken up with what they refer to as the "elevator building." The judge in the case is not going to insist that the fifth floor be torn down and wants them to arbitrate. The owner of the building Michael Pallazola did not show up to the meeting, but sent a couple of plans without measurements. There is supposed to be a hearing Aug. 8. The Board is going to ask Mr. Pallazola to represent what he is willing to do at the next meeting, July 24. Mr. Howard said it was discouraging they didn't get very far with it.

Mimi Fanning reported the Housing Authority met this morning and there isn't much going on. She said Executive Director Kate McGuire wanted to know why the date was changed to get grant requests in. Dorr Fox said it could be because Robin Crosbie was leaving and wanted to have things set for Town Meeting. Ms. Jenkins added the BOS is trying to set a calendar everyone adheres to and that residents have a more thorough package of information well in advance of Town Meeting. Mr. Fox said the CPC might want to push the eligibility applications up and review them two weeks from now. Ms. Fanning said the Housing Authority was having a hard time changing 31 Union St. to three-bedroom apartments. They didn't get any bids. So they are cutting back the scope of that project and will just upgrade the electrical and the flooring. From the DHC they received \$65K per unit as part of a vacant unit maintenance grant and a little over \$3K from FEMA due to storm damage.

Publicizing CPC Successes

Mr. Butler said the CPC had voted on 5 aluminum cast plaques and he has signed warrants to buy them. They will be placed at Donovan Field, Patton Homestead, Hamilton Wenham Community House, the Council on Aging, and the American Legion. Signs are also being made (by others) for the Patton Park pool, Sagamore Hill, and Pingree Park.

Mr. Fox said that the company he is using for the casting the plaques said they weren't sure the detail of the Town seal would show up and had asked if the CPC might want to use the other design. CPC members opted to stick with the design they had chosen. They were less concerned about the seal and more interested in the lettering being clear.

Mr. Preston asked if they were using aluminum and Mr. Fox said bronze. He said he would inquire about using coated aluminum in light of CPC members' expressions of concerns about theft.

Mr. Butler said once the plaques come in, he and Mr. Fox can contact the principals at each location about installing them. He said they might prevail upon the DPW. Mr. Jenkins said the Facilities Department has the skill set.

Mr. Butler said the CPC has 9 temporary-type signs that were found in the basement of Town Hall and Mr. Farrell will provide wire mounts for them. Mr. Butler suggested these signs be placed at the Brooks House, Habitat for Humanity houses, site of invasive species (knotweed) removal, the Winthrop School playground, River Walk at the Patton Homestead, the Tabernacle at Asbury Grove, the Woodbury Street trailhead, the Patton Park cannons, and the Chebacco Woods trail. Ms. Jenkins said the River Walk was so overgrown right now that they wouldn't be able to find the sign. She suggested they wait to place it until it is in better shape.

Mr. Butler said there is a third category of sign that hasn't been discussed—semi-permanent plastic signs made to withstand the outdoors that could be used for projects funded by the CPC, but not meeting the monetary criteria of \$150K and up. At this point, the CPC doesn't have the money to buy them, but will at the end of the fiscal year. He thought the CPC ought to generate a list of where they might place them. Ms. Jenkins suggested having a large banner they can move from site to site. Mr. Butler said that was the thought regarding the 9 temporary signs previously discussed.

Mr. Butler gave suggested sites for the semi-permanent signs. They would go to projects given grants totaling about \$25K-\$50K, such as the School Street well protection, Pleasant Pond landscape and parking lot, underground lights at Patton Park, the Chebacco Woods trail, Woodbuy Street repair, Discover Hamilton trail deed research, Pingree playground, and Buker playground. The latter two might already have signs in progress.

Discussion of June 18 Public Hearing

Mr. Butler said they heard from Chris Davis on the Rich property, 66 acres at the corner of Chebacco Road and Essex Street, that they won't be coming forward to ask for a CPC grant until next spring. No dollar amount has been mentioned yet, but he believes the property is valued at about 1.5 million. Another upcoming large project is the Town Hall renovation. Other projects discussed at the Public Hearing were Ms. McGuire's request for funds on behalf of the Housing Authority for painting and Recreation Director Sean Timmons' request for \$4K for two basketball hoop systems at Patton Park.

Mr. Butler noted Selectman Scott Maddern made a comment at the CPC hearing that they really need to think about capital reserves and become part of the capital planning process. Mr. Butler said FinCom has been supportive of CPC's efforts. He said there was some sentiment expressed at the meeting that they ought to allow the voters a say in which projects the CPC should fund.

Mr. Howard asked why they wouldn't take direction from Town Meeting. Mr. Butler noted they can't put forth two projects unless they have the ability to fund them both because both might get approved. They have to pick what gets sent on to Town Meeting. Opening up meetings to public comment, as they have been doing, is one solution to the need for public input, but very few turn out for the meetings.

Ms. Jenkins said in the case of two projects having prominence, the CPC could put forth one of the projects and make the public aware that another project is out there that is in competition to it. Therefore, Town Meeting's voting down of the project would show it was in favor of the other one.

Neil Duggan asked about the turf field and was told the School Committee had said this won't come before them for another 2.5 to 3 years.

Mr. Butler went over his public hearing notes. He said Interim Town Manager Robin Crosbie had indicated capital projects were anything over \$10K. He said he had gone on the Finance and Advisory Committee page of the Town website and saw a spreadsheet listing all the capital projects starting in 2015 and projecting out two to three years. On it were three CPC projects assigned to the CPC, but the CPC was never part of the construction of that list.

Revised State Funding Level and Future Planning

Mr. Butler said the joint Senate House Committee, a bipartisan committee, is still deciding whether to increase fees at the Registry of Deeds. If the fees increase Hamilton could be looking at a 30% match. On the flip side, if that doesn't happen, the match is only about 10%. Mr. Butler said if the CPC has to turn down a large project, it might move the Town get behind a change in the Town surcharge from 2% to 3%. To make that happen they would need a citizen's petition. A citizen's petition for Special Town Meeting requires 100 signatures and one for Annual Town Meeting in the spring requires only 10.

Mr. Preston noted the surcharge was the only tax that could be waived if a person had a hardship and can't pay it.

Review of Anticipated Future Projects List

Mr. Butler went over the Anticipated Future Projects in the A, B and C categories and their cost estimates. He said the list was a living document that sits on the website and at any given meeting, they can add to or subtract from it.

Mr. Fox mentioned the Boy Scouts are interested in working on a few of the projects, for example, painting the tank at Patton Park.

Mr. Tensen asked what amount the CPC collected from the Town surcharge. He was told Finance Director Marisa Batista estimated it to be \$400K in Town money and a match of about \$80K.

Mr. Butler explained that if a project is over \$500K, they need to talk about bonding. They can only bond from the money received by the Town, not on the state match.

Mr. Howard said he wanted to stress that if there are two major projects deserving of attention that should be the business of Town Meeting. The others said that the CPC needs to make the decision about which projects are put forward.

Ms. Jenkins said hypothetically if two projects are viable, the CPC can bring one or the other project forward and then on the Town Meeting floor, it could be amended to exchange one project for the other. Or, they could vote a certain amount of grant money to one project and a certain amount to the other by virtue of the citizens amending a warrant on Town floor. There should be a way legally to ensure the will of the citizens is heard. Mr. Fox will ask Town Counsel Donna Brewer about this.

CPC Plan Update 2018

Jay said the changes made were purely administrative, involving changes in the deadlines leading up to Town meeting.

- The first deadline is Thursday, July 19, for submitting eligibility applications.
- The CPC meeting to review the eligibility was moved up to Thursday, July 26 at 7 p.m.
- The deadline for funding applications is Aug. 2.
- The CPC meeting to review funding applications will be Aug. 9.

Decision:

Mr. Preston made a motion to accept the 2018 CPC Plan into the record as amended and corrected. Mr. Mimi seconded the motion. The CPC voted unanimously among those present (6-0) to accept the plan.

Mr. Fox will post the new plan to the website.

Need for New Planning Board Representative to CPC

Mr. Howard explained he needed to step down from being the Planning Board rep. to the CPC because he has taken over as Chair of the Historic District Commission/Historical Commission and will be the rep from that board. Therefore, they need a candidate to step in. Mr. Fox said he had been asking Director of Planning & Zoning Patrick Reffett to fill that role.

Review of Open Grants

Mr. Fox gave the following updates:

- **Senior Center Balustrade:** Nothing new is happening and there is no sunset on the grant. Ms. Jenkins asked if it was delayed because they couldn't find the design. Mr. Fox said they did have the pictures. He thought the delay was due more to the money not being enough. Ms. Jenkins said the project was bid once and they only received one bid. When they bid it out the second time, the three bids that came in were very high. Former CPC Chair Tom Catalano had some materials he thought could be used. Mr. Fox will contact him again.
- **Patton Park Cannon/Wagon Wheels:** The wagon wheels are complete, but they are in the barn at the Patton Homestead because the cannons themselves are in bad shape. Mr. Fox and Department of Public Works (DPW) Director Tim Olson were talking about applying for a grant. To do it as a professional project thru Cassidy Brothers, they received a quote of \$5,500. There isn't money in the DPW budget for this. Dorr suggested he would put together a grant application if the CPC supported it. Ms. Jenkins said she could write the bid specs to help facilitate the project. They discussed that the tanks would need to be sandblasted and painted. Mr. Howard said there was likely lead paint under the layers.
- **Historical Society Pictorial Collection:** The group is on vacation for the summer. There's still more work to be done.
- **Patton Estate Roof Replacement:** The \$250K grant was funded July 1. Mr. Howard said he was worried the two existing skylights might be covered over instead of doing the work right. Mr. Fox said he could ask the architects for a presentation. Ms. Jenkins said because of the dollar amounts involved, the work would be certified. Mr. Tensen said the firm being used, Spencer & Vogt were experts in historic renovations.
- **Buker School Playground:** They haven't asked for the grant money yet. His suspicion is they haven't started the work.
- **Habitat for Humanity Houses:** They used all the CPC money and received another \$26K for completing the project, which should be done by the end of the summer.
- **Brooks House:** Mr. Fox didn't have an update. Ms. Fanning said they were supposed to start the work.
- **Town Hall OPM:** They Town Hall Building Committee just paid for the ad for the OPM.
- **Knotweed Removal Program:** They have spent about \$1,500 of the \$5,000 awarded to them in the most recent grant, as well as what they received from the previous Town Meeting. They will most likely be coming back for more funding.
- **Master Plan Housing Element:** The RFP is almost complete and will go out soon.
- **Affordable Housing Trust Grants:** Mr. Fox gave an update. When the CPC took its straw poll it wasn't in favor of spending \$800K for 7 units at Willow Street, which would require the Hamilton Affordable Housing Trust (HAHT) to ask for approximately \$150K more in additional funds to the \$600K already approved. This was the feeling of the Trust, too—that they wanted to receive more for their money. The HAHT would like to do the original 20 units of senior housing at Willow Street, but that needs sistering with

another project. This could be 100 units at Longmeadow. However, because the Town doesn't want that large of a project, Marc Johnson of the HAHT and Andrew DeFranza of Harborlight devised a rather complicated plan to enable the Town to "buy down" the scope of the project as far as the number of units. For example, for \$200K they could decrease the number of units from 100 to 89. Mr. Fox is currently writing up a grant request for that. Mr. Preston was concerned the HAHT was tying up a large sum of money for a long time. He asked if Mr. Fox could revisit the idea of sunset clauses with Ms. Brewer. Ms. Jenkins said she had heard a certain percentage of people who would be living at the Longmeadow project had been homeless. Nobody was aware of that.

3% Surcharge Discussion

Mr. Butler said he wanted to raise awareness that the issue may come up about raising the Town surcharge from 2% to 3%. Mr. Howard said there is a measurable percentage of people in Town who would rather see the CPC disappear. Mr. Butler said the CPC has to stay until the Sagamore Hill is paid off. Mr. Preston says he has run across many people, primarily younger people, who are pleased with the CPC's efforts and thought it was easier living with a tax where they could see where their tax money was going.

Other Business

None.

Adjournment

Mr. Howard made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9 p.m. Mr. Preston seconded the motion. The CPC voted unanimously (6-0) to adjourn the meeting.

Mary Alice Cookson

Attest

Date