

HAMILTON COMMUNITY PRESERVATION COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF MEETING

TOWN HALL—MEMORIAL ROOM

577 BAY ROAD

August 19, 2019

Members Present: Chair Jay Butler, Ed Howard, Janel Curry, Neil Duggan, and Katherine Mittelbusher

Members Absent: Shawn Farrell, Chris Currier, Sherry Leonard, and Robert Preston

Coordinator: Dorr Fox

Chair Jay Butler opened the Community Preservation Committee (CPC) meeting shortly after 6 p.m.

**Approve Meeting Minutes—July 11**

Ed Howard made a motion to approve the July 11 meeting minutes. Katherine Mittelbusher seconded the motion. The CPC voted unanimously among those present (5-0) to approve the minutes.

**Brief Review of CPC Financial Status**

Mr. Butler said he sent an email attachment to all of the Committee showing what was in the CPC coffers. He said if anyone has any questions, he can refer back to his summary. Nobody did.

**Review of Funding Applications for Fall Town Meeting**

• **Town Hall Restoration**

Department of Public Works (DPW) Director Tim Olson appeared before the Committee requesting \$607,000 total for continuation of design services for the Town Hall restoration. He said a vote of approval from the CPC and from fall Town Meeting will enable the Building Committee to continue the design development through to the contract documents and allow them to have a bid-ready number for Annual Town Meeting in the spring of 2020. He said once again his ask was a two-part approach. He's

asking the CPC for a sum of money and then will ask the Town to support the remainder of the request.

**Discussion:**

Mr. Butler, who is also the secretary of the Town Hall Building Committee, said at the last CPC meeting they discussed eligibility and the fact that relocation expenses (for relocating the employees during the renovation) are not CPC-eligible. Deducting them leaves \$492,767. He said the CPC has a total of \$981K, but that amount has to cover grant requests for both fall and spring Town Meetings. Mr. Butler said he reviewed the conceptual estimate done by the architects in March and said his gut feeling is that about \$2.1M of the \$4.5M estimate for construction costs is eligible for CPC funding, according to what he believes the CPC learned from Executive Director of the Community Preservation Coalition Stuart Saginor. Mr. Butler said he doesn't think the five CPC members present should stop the largest expenditure in the Town's history and thinks the Committee should vote to allow it to go through to Town Meeting for a decision. He recommended funding the project at \$200K.

Janel Curry agreed, but she said if the CPC supports 50% of the \$492,767 figure (mentioned above), the sum would be closer to \$250K than \$200K. She recommended funding at \$250K instead.

Ed Howard said two nights ago the Historical Commission/ Historic District Commission (HDC) met and without any arm twisting decided it supported Option B, which preserves the historic staircase. Some members were present and Mr. Howard asked if anyone wanted to say comment on the letter [supporting Option B] that had been written and submitted by HDC member Scott Clements. (The CPC members all had a copy of the letter.)

Neil Duggan then referenced another letter, this one from Selectman and CPC member Shawn Farrell [supporting Option A]. Mr. Duggan said he wanted to better understand the difference of opinions on the matter.

Mr. Butler explained some of the history regarding the decision to choose Option A. He said the Town Hall Building Committee, the HDC, and Finance and Advisory Committee (FinCom) both preferred Option B, which supports keeping the grand staircase. However, he said the BOS had directed them to consider taking the staircase out. He said this wasn't a suggestion by the BOS; it was a direction. The reason for removing the staircase was that it was supposedly going to cost \$750K in additional funds to keep it because doing so would require making an addition to the back of the building.

Ms. Curry asked the question that if by voting yes this evening, the CPC would be supporting one option over the other. Mr. Butler said yes, essentially voting yes on the funding would mean they would be voting for the current option, which is Option A. But

Ms. Mittelbusher raised the point that they were still having a financial discussion about Option B. Mr. Butler said the vote this evening keeps the project alive at this point.

Mr. Olson said by Sept 1, they should have a more defined number for the cost difference between Options A and B. The \$750K figure had been offered as somewhat of a rough estimate. He also said switching gears at this stage would result in an increase of about \$150K in design work plus a delay of the project by about six months. He said he had a list of items the architects and Building Committee are planning to keep to preserve the building's historic character. He said the Building Committee had thought the HDC would have more of an issue with maintaining the envelope of the building as it is rather than with the staircase removal.

Mr. Clements, who has lived in Town for 20 years and is an architect, said what stood out to him is Town Hall's important part of the Town's heritage as "the" public building and the Town's most significant and expensive project to date. He thought the list Mr. Olson had was just a bare minimum for preservation and commented that they are preserving the wainscoting that is much newer than the stairway. He said he thought the CPC needed to pause and think if there are other ways to preserve features rather than demolishing them, making the point that the CPC discussion was about *preservation* funds.

The CPC members present discussed other elements of the building project, such as keeping the domed ceiling and lowering the upstairs stage. It was suggested that by not approving the funding request, the CPC would send a message pertaining to the direction of the project.

Mr. Olson discussed the impact to the site, for example, that putting on an addition to the back of the building would result in a loss of parking and the fact that fuel tanks are located there. He spoke in support of Option A, discussing the process they went through, the many meetings they had had, and he said many townspeople had asked them to find the cheapest option for getting the project done.

Ms. Mittelbusher asked if the treatment of the balcony and stage upstairs would be different between the two options. Mr. Butler said no.

Mr. Duggan commented they were talking about spending about \$8M for a building that houses only 28 employees. Mr. Olson said that plus another 11 or 12 DPW employees. However, it was also discussed that Town Hall is where Hamilton residents come to conduct business, attend meetings, etc.

**Decision:**

Mr. Howard made a motion that the funding request not take place at this time because more light needs to be shown on the project and it is economically and socially more acceptable than fighting about it on Town Meeting floor. He believes the CPC's job is to

create an atmosphere where things get thoroughly ironed out. His motion was not seconded.

Ms. Curry made a motion that the CPC approve funding the Town Hall building project at \$250K and allow it to go to Town Meeting. Mr. Duggan seconded the motion. The CPC voted (4-1) to approve the motion. Mr. Howard was the dissenting vote.

Mr. Butler and Mr. Olson encouraged people to attend future Town Hall Building Committee meetings. The next meeting is Wed. eve at 5 p.m.

**Decision (Continued):**

The CPC added July 1, 2021 as the date the project must be started by.

**Further Discussion:**

Mr. Duggan asked where the Town Hall Building Committee would go for funding if the Community Preservation Act hadn't passed. Mr. Olson said it would go straight to the Town.

Mr. Olson said they had some good leads on relocation potentials and said the grant just passed would reduce the \$8.5M total figure by \$250K. He detailed the various steps the Committee had taken to arrive at where they were, including two rounds of interviews with Town employees.

Mr. Olson and Director of Planning & Inspections Patrick Reffett left the meeting.

- **Affordable Housing Trust: 434/436 Asbury Street for Habitat for Humanity Housing**

Habit for Humanity Executive Director Don Preston addressed the Committee saying the funds requested were for the acquisition of 434 and 436 Asbury St. He said he was currently in negotiations to develop a Purchase & Sale (P&S) agreement. The funding request was actually generated by the Hamilton Affordable Housing Trust (HAHT) for the purpose of giving the money to Habitat for Humanity to develop affordable housing at 40%-60% AMI (area median income). The proposed project is for building seven units, three of which are duplexes and one is a single family home. The property was subdivided into three parcels. One would be retained by the owner. The owner also wants to retain ownership of the cell tower, which is on the second parcel. An appraisal was done on the property for a total of \$650K for lots 2 and 3. The grant request was \$200K.

Mr. Butler asked if the HAHT would need to go to Town Meeting to obtain approval to spend \$650K for the project. Dorr Fox said no. It would not even require a public hearing, just a vote at a regular HAHT meeting. Then, at the time of closing, the HAHT would provide the check.

Mr. Howard asked if the project involved age-restricted housing. Mr. Preston said no. He said Habitat for Humanity services families that can be made up of any combo, for example, people taking care of their parents. The CPC inquired if there had been any pushback from the abutters. Mr. Preston said they don't know yet since they don't yet have a P&S.

Mr. Butler recommended an initiation date of July 1, 2021 for the grant. He said the money would come back to the CPC if the project didn't go forward. It would be presented as a friendly 40B. Mr. Fox said because they would need Zoning Board of Appeals approval before they close on the property, they may want to extend the date to 2022.

**Decision:**

Ms. Curry made a motion to approve the \$200K funding request by the HAHT for the purpose of building the affordable units with the provision that property be purchased by January 1, 2022. Mr. Duggan seconded the motion. The CPC voted unanimously among those present (5-0) to accept the motion.

**Approval of Fall 2019 Town Meeting Warrant**

The Town Meeting warrant language was approved during the process of reviewing the grant applications above. (See above CPC decisions.)

**Approval of 2019 CPC Plan**

Mr. Butler said he hoped everyone had read the CPC Plan updated by himself and Mr. Fox.

Ms. Curry made a motion to approve the 2019 CPC Plan. Ms. Mittelbusher seconded the motion. The CPC voted unanimously among those present (5-0) to approve the plan.

**Close-Out of Brooks House Renovation Grant**

Mr. Butler said all the grant money had been spent for the Brooks House and the work was finished.

Mr. Howard made a motion to close out the Brooks House grant. Ms. Mittelbusher seconded the motion. The CPC voted unanimously among those present (5-0) to close out the grant.

**Review of Open Grants**

- **Brooks House Renovations.**
- **Town Hall OPM/Design Services:**
- **Affordable Housing Trust grants:**
- **Knotweed Removal Program:**

- **Master Plan Housing Element:**
- **Weaver Pond Restoration:**
- **The Community House**

Not discussed this evening due to time constraints.

**Other Business as Necessary**

None.

**Adjournment**

Mr. Duggan made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:22 p.m. Ms. Mittelbusher seconded the motion. The CPC voted unanimously among those present (5-0) to adjourn the meeting.



Mary Alice Cookson  
Minutes Secretary



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Attest

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Date