

HAMILTON COMMUNITY PRESERVATION COMMITTEE

TOWN HALL—MEMORIAL ROOM

577 BAY ROAD

September 12, 2019

(Meeting Notes)

Members Present: Chair Jay Butler, Ed Howard, Katherine Mittelbush, and Neil Duggan

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

Coordinator: Dorr Fox

Chair Jay Butler opened the Community Preservation Committee (CPC) meeting at approximately 7:10 p.m. There was no quorum. Neil Duggan arrived, but there was still no quorum. Because of this, Mr. Butler asked that notes be written up to share with the other members rather than official meeting minutes.

MEETING NOTES:

Aug. 19 Meeting Minutes

Dorr Fox will send them out for the next meeting.

*** CPC-Eligible Historic Preservation Costs for Town Hall Renovation**

*** CPC-Approved Grant for Town Hall Renovations Neutral as Regards Option A or B Building Layout Design**

*** Town Meeting Plans for Presentations to Support CPC Grant Requests**

Mr. Butler said he met with Town Manager Joe Domelowicz about the upcoming Town Meeting. He also met with the Finance and Advisory Committee (FinCom) and learned nobody had yet told the public about the Hamilton Affordable Housing Trust (HAHT) housing project proposed for Asbury Street, being funded by the CPC and developed by Habitat for Humanity. He said when he spoke at Town Meeting he was going to note that the CPC generally supports the HAHT and had voted to do that with the \$200K grant. Then he would introduce Don Preston, Habitat's Executive Director, to present and explain the plan.

Mr. Fox and Mary Alice Cookson discussed that the abutters attending the recent HAHT meeting (this past Tuesday evening) seemed to have no real strong opposition to the Asbury Street project. Some seemed pleased it was being done by Habitat.

Mr. Butler discussed that the Town Hall Building project would be the more controversial of the two projects being funded by the CPC. He talked about the debate between Options A and B for the Town Hall. Option B preserves the historic staircase and adds an addition to the back of the building while Option A gets rid of the staircase to use that space, retaining everything within the envelope of the building. The CPC remained option-neutral when it cast its vote to fund the project. An architect in town Scott Clements, who is on the Historic District Commission has been attending Town Hall Building Committee meetings and has proposed perhaps coming up with an Option C.

Last night was a meeting of the Town Hall Building Committee and the difference in cost between Options A and B had been said to be roughly \$750K, but now is thought to be closer to \$400K. Spread out over 30 years it isn't all that much money. It is possible that a motion can be made on the floor to restrict the CPC-approved funding (\$250K) to one of the two options.

Katherine Mittelbusher noted that if Option B were chosen, they had been told it would cause a significant six-month delay in the project and add another \$150K to the cost. Mr. Butler said that was true.

Mr. Butler said that concerning his presentation at Town Meeting, he will explain that the CPC had voted to fund the Town Hall Building project by \$250K and is option-neutral, and he will introduce Mike Twomey, Town Hall Building Committee chair, to give a presentation that would be followed by a presentation from the architects who would announce the dollar amount. Right now the architects are proceeding with Option A, but there are also two cost estimates being done (one from the architect and one from the OPM [Owner's Project Manager]). Those numbers are expected to be made available Sept. 25.

Word is that the \$8.5M price tag is expected to go up. If the numbers for Options A and B get to be close, the Town Hall Building Committee might go back to the BOS to show that the difference is small and see if they can re-vote to match Option B favored by the Town Hall Building Committee, the FinCom, and the Historic District Commission. (Both Ed Howard and Ms. Mittelbusher are HDC members; Mr. Howard is chair.). There are a lot of negotiations that will be going on over the next two months. Ms. Mittelbusher also pointed out that there is still an Option C being discussed.

Mr. Butler said the Town Hall Building Committee has also been talking with John Rodenhizer, 6 Pilgrim Road, of the Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) who has been working off a series of energy-management regulations that could change the design. The Committee has also hired another independent expert concerning Town Hall's basement, which is damp with a couple of sump pumps running. Plans might involve such things as ripping up the floor and fixing the French drains, adding a bigger generator, running pipes under the floor, etc.

Mr. Butler discussed what Stuart Saginor, Executive Director of the Community Preservation Coalition, had said, that using historic preservation funds to demolish historic features inside the

building wasn't in the spirit of community preservation, but Mr. Saginor had also said that ultimately the CPC could turn to Town Counsel for advice. Mr. Fox had received an opinion from Town Counsel, which the CPC just received this evening at about 6:20 p.m. that seems to support the idea that the CPC can do whatever it wants pertaining to this matter. He said in the history of the CPC, the CPC has always taken advice from Town Counsel.

Ms. Mittelbusher commented that the HDC had decided it was OK with the bump-out created in the back of the building for the elevator. Mr. Butler said even Mr. Saginor said that was OK to do, but it has to be done in such a way that they don't destroy the exterior of the building. Mr. Howard agreed. He said that if the addition is done to make the restoration of the rest of the building positive, then a free-standing elevator shaft is acceptable. Mr. Howard said on Sept. 24, the HDC will meet at Town Hall at 1 p.m. to go over the guidelines. It is an official meeting but the agenda hasn't been posted yet. The next meeting with the architects is on Sept. 25. FinCom will also be voting this evening to take a position. They will write up their recommendations and send them out ahead of Town Meeting with the warrant. Mr. Domelowicz has allowed the Town Hall Building Committee to write an overview/summary of what they've done and what the money is for. Mr. Butler is the author of that. It will be going out with the mailing of the Town Warrant and copies will be available on the tables at Town Meeting.

The next CPC meeting is Oct. 10. Town Meeting is Saturday, October 19.

Mr. Fox asked Mr. Butler about the Town Warrant language for the two CPC articles. Mr. Butler said he liked how they appeared as two separate warrant articles. Mr. Fox said the only thing they did differently from what he had done is that for the Town Hall Building project, they are going to use up the \$49K in historic preservation reserves first and then the rest of the money (\$201K) would come from the general reserves. He had originally written it as \$250K coming from the general reserves just because he thought that was easier (less confusing). Mr. Butler said he thought the way it appears now is fine.

Mr. Butler said after the CPC presents its grants, the DPW will have its capital ask. At that time, they will ask for the remainder of the \$607K (less the \$250K from the CPC). Some of those funds involve relocation costs for housing the Town employees while the renovations are being done. Mr. Butler mentioned that Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary might have an empty building to offer the Town for temporary housing. It could perhaps be a payment in lieu of taxes that they would turn over to the Task Force to work out. Therefore, it might be good to include something about the relocations costs in the article. Mr. Butler pointed out, though, that if the Town Hall Option B is chosen, that could involve a six-month delay and nobody knows if that building would be available.

Mr. Butler discussed that Town Meeting could vote down the \$250K grant for the Town Hall. If that happens, the project would end for a while until they decide what to do. Another thing discussed is that it would be cheaper to build a new building than to do the renovation. One of the people in Town who objects to the project is Doug Trees, 557 Bay Road, who wrote a memo and sent it to many at the Town Hall—with the exception of the Town Hall Building Committee

responsible for the project. Mr. Trees had based his numbers on the original cost estimates and hadn't read the meeting minutes that changed the cost estimates so his information in the memo was incorrect. He is going to be in France right up until Town Meeting but it is expected he may speak on the matter on that day.

Open Grants

Mr. Butler reported on the tour he and Mr. Fox had had at the Community House showing how their money was spent, and he felt it was spent wisely. He noted Wenham had given \$50K for the furnace; however there was a restriction the money has to be for something historic, so they are going to use some of Hamilton's money for the furnace and juggle that around.

Replacement Plans for Dorr Fox

Mr. Butler discussed that this evening is Mr. Fox's last meeting and the Town is deciding on what will happen with the coordinator position. Mary-Ellen Feener will be handling the CPC postings and Ms. Cookson can perform other CPC duties for them as needed until they find someone. The position could be combined with a grant writer position, and by November someone should be in place. Mr. Fox thinks The Community House's grant will be mostly spent before he leaves and there isn't currently a big backlog of open grants.

Other Business


Mr. Butler said he will be on vacation in Ireland from Sept. 26 to Oct. 6.

Mr. Fox will send out the agenda soon for the next meeting on Oct. 10 along with the Aug. 19 meeting minutes and notes from this meeting. He asked that he and Mr. Butler get together before his last day (Sept. 25) to sign the warrant.

Mr. Duggan brought up that he doesn't plan to extend his term beyond July and the CPC will be needing new members. Mr. Butler reviewed the process for that. Mr. Howard clarified that Mr. Duggan's finish date would be in July.

As suggested by Mr. Howard, the CPC gave Mr. Fox a big round of applause and wished him well in his retirement.

The meeting ended at 7:47 p.m.



Mary Alice Cookson
Minutes Secretary