

HAMILTON COMMUNITY PRESERVATION COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF MEETING

TOWN HALL—MEMORIAL ROOM, 577 BAY ROAD

February 13, 2020

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

Members Absent: Chris Currier

Chair Jay Butler opened the Community Preservation Committee (CPC) meeting at 7:06 p.m.

Approve Meeting Minutes (1/9/20 Meeting)

Robert Preston made a motion to approve the Jan. 9 meeting minutes. Shawn Farrell seconded the motion. The CPC voted unanimously among those present (7-0) to approve the minutes.

Committee Reports

Ed Howard reported the Hamilton Historic District Commission (HDDC) had set March 5 as its next meeting date.

Mr. Farrell reported on Board of Selectmen (BOS) activities. He listed board/committee openings, which include two for the Hamilton Development Corporation (HDC). The HDC selected two candidates but, per BOS policy, they are waiting to see if there are other interested candidates. The School Committee met last night on the budget and went from their original proposal of a 13% budget increase down to an 8.57% increase. The BOS closed the warrant to new articles. They propose having two articles for the budget again—one for up to a 5% increase and the other for anything over the 5%. The BOS voted to approve the Housing Production Plan (HPP) and set Town Manager goals. The warrant goes to print March 20 and will be mailed out on March 27.

Sherry Leonard said the Housing Authority's Maintenance Director Gary Dean is leaving for another opportunity. She thanked him for his service.

Dorr Fox Replacement Plan

The CPC discussed the Town's difficulty in filling the Project Coordinator position vacated by Mr. Fox. Director of Planning & Inspections Patrick Reffett elaborated, saying Town Manager Joe Domelowicz had wanted to integrate a financial element to the position. He speculated that perhaps "planner types" might not be great with math and said the job description may need rethinking. Mr. Howard inquired where the position had been posted. The response was the Town website, Massachusetts Chapter of the American Planning Association, *The Beacon*, and *Salem News*. Mr. Howard said his son sits in an elected position in Newbury and they are having similar trouble finding someone for a similar position.

Janel Curry Replacement Plan

The CPC is looking for a Planning Board member to join the CPC as an appointed member of the CPC and serve as a liaison. So far nobody has come forward.

Hamilton CPC Eligibility and Funding Requests from the Town Hall Building Committee for \$2M to Support the Town Hall Renovation Project

Mike Twomey held up large boards showing plans for Town Hall. The first was a rendering of Town Hall in its early years, which provided details like cornices, gutters, and downspouts. He discussed parking. Regarding the two-story addition, which will house the elevator and staircase, he said the Committee had two trains of thought: to duplicate the style of the rest of the building or do something completely different. They went with the first choice so the addition will blend in. Mr. Twomey reviewed how each floor would look, starting with the basement and ending with the stage area upstairs, which is where the Town Manager's office will be. The stage steps up from the ballroom, which will be the new meeting room. Mr. Preston asked how many seats it will have. Mr. Twomey thinks 60-70. That figure also pertains to the number of parking spaces. Mr. Reffett said code was 60 spaces; the Town has 67. Mr. Twomey said if they need more, they can use some in the Department of Public Works (DPW) yard.

Mr. Farrell asked if anything was happening with the existing balcony; he was told no. Mr. Preston noted board/committee meetings would happen upstairs. There will be a coffee station and space for HWCAM. Addressing acoustics will be a big issue. There will be two toilets on the first floor, two in the basement, and two upstairs. A paperless initiative is underway. They're working to eliminate mold in the basement. The total cost estimate for the project is \$9.7M. Mr. Twomey said they are trying hard to drive that number down. The project has been funded with \$1.1M to date. The Building Committee is still spending what was approved at the last Town Meeting. Mr. Butler said the grant before the CPC now is for \$2M with contingency upon voter approval and that the construction starts within two years. It would take \$2M off the top of the ask for construction costs at Special Town Meeting in the fall.

The CPC discussed that the \$2M would be bonded. Mr. Butler said a 30-year, 5% municipal bond would be about \$167K the first year. If you add that to the other bond the CPC is carrying (\$112K paid for last year), that equals \$280K. The CPC collects about \$454K each year before the State match (you can't use match money to bond). Therefore, the CPC would only have

about \$300K left in its regular pool. *Ms. Leonard corrected him later in the meeting, noting \$454K - \$280K = \$174, which means the CPC would have just enough left to fund one more \$2M project. Mr. Preston asked when the previous bond (for Sagamore field) will end and was told they are about 12 years out on a 15-year bond. Mr. Preston wanted to know what the Building Committee was going to do at the upcoming April Town Meeting. Mr. Twomey said they would lay out the project and what was spent to date. They won't have bid documents ready until Fall Town Meeting.

David Wanger, chair of the Finance and Advisory Committee (FinCom), presented that perhaps it might be prudent to wait on the \$2M grant request and not take it to April Town Meeting. His rationale was that although FinCom supports it and supports the work of Mr. Twomey's committee, the Town has significant fiscal issues (school budget, water rate increase, infrastructure issues) at present. The CPC discussed that Wenham is facing an override and Hamilton could come close. Mr. Butler noted a grant request requires a 2/3 majority vote. However, if it doesn't pass, they can bring it back again to the next Town Meeting. Mr. Farrell noted the \$2M comes from the CPC and doesn't impact the tax rate; however, he said people might not realize that when voting. The CPC discussed it might be better to present the \$2M grant request in the fall when the actual costs for construction are presented and people can see the total picture.

Mr. Butler noted that athletic fields at the high school might be coming up as a potential project. He also said Essex County Greenbelt had made an inquiry, and it looked like they were going to be getting an open space grant request. Mr. Farrell concurred. Mr. Wanger added the schools would be seeking to plan for a new school in the future and there is a \$40M OPEB liability that hasn't been funded.

Decision on Eligibility:

Mr. Preston made a motion that the CPC approve the Town Hall Building Committee's request for eligibility of the Town Hall project. Mr. Farrell seconded the motion. The CPC voted unanimously among those present (7-0) to approve the motion.

Mr. Preston said he wanted to put the funding off because he thinks it will go better if presented together with the construction costs. Mr. Butler asked Mr. Twomey if he had enough funds to get through the bidding stage. He said yes.

Mr. Duggan asked the question if the CPC was trying to steer the decision a certain way by not bringing it to April Town Meeting. Mr. Butler responded that the \$2M funding had been his idea, conceived long before the water rate and budget issues were raised. Mr. Preston said the CPC can indicate at Town Meeting that the project is eligible and mention that the CPC and FinCom are both behind it, but leave the number up in the air because they don't know yet what it will be.

Decision on Funding:

Mr. Preston made a motion that the CPC table the funding of the \$2M grant for the Town Hall project and discuss it in the future for consideration for Special Town Meeting in the fall. Mr.

Farrell seconded the motion. The CPC voted unanimously among those present (7-0) to accept the motion.

Mr. Farrell asked Mr. Twomey if he had looked at any green energy grants. He said yes, but to get the grants you need to invest money and it is still a little early for that.

Mr. Duggan left the meeting at 7:56 p.m.

CPA [Community Preservation Act] Training by Town Counsel, KP Law

Mr. Butler was in touch with Patrick Waddell, vice-chair of the Wenham CPC. KP Law is the Town Counsel for both towns. The two came up with the idea of holding a joint CPA Training session by KP Law on the third Thursday in March at Wenham Town Hall. The CPC agreed they should do it. Mr. Butler said an agenda would be developed and sent out.

Plan for Hamilton and Wenham CPC Joint Meeting

A joint meeting for the two CPCs was suggested for May or June. Wenham is also going to set up a meeting with the interim school superintendent like the one Hamilton had.

Review of Open Grants

- **Town Hall OPM/Design Services (\$250K grant):** This is the grant approved at the last Special Town Meeting in the fall. It is expected to be spent by July 1, but there is other money obtained through the DPW to work with.
- **Affordable Housing Trust (\$100K and \$200K grants):** The Trust expects to spend the grant money by the fall when it closes on the Asbury Street property to develop affordable housing units.
- **Master Plan Housing Element (\$30K grant):** The Planning Board is in the final stage of this project. All the money will be spent soon.
- **Weaver Pond (\$17K grant):** Mr. Butler received an update from Mr. Reffett yesterday. The project will be closed out and money returned to the Town. He will be receiving an email and then the CPC can formally vote on the closure of the grant. [The project couldn't be done because the DPW didn't have the means for hauling the wet material away.
- **Knotweed Removal Program (\$7.5K grant):** Same thing with this project. They can't find knotweed on Town property. When they find it, it is on private property. There is a new Conservation Commission agent just hired who might look at this issue and turn it around. Mr. Preston mentioned he has property with knotweed. Mr. Butler suggested he send an email about it to Mr. Reffett.
- **The Community House (\$100K grant):** Then grant money is expected to be all spent by June. The Community House is waiting for Wenham to change a bylaw so the boiler can be paid for.

Other Business as Necessary

The CPC discussed potential future projects. Athletic fields may be funded with CPC money, but not a stadium. Site work on the fields can be funded, but not the grass itself.

There was a discussion that Hamilton’s Capital Committee might support the idea of increasing the surcharge to 3%. However, this would need to come from a citizen’s petition/grass roots effort. There are different amounts of signatures needed depending on which Town Meeting it is brought to. One requires 40; the other is 350.

Katherine Mittelbusher asked the question if people can you solicit signatures outside Town Meeting on the day it is going on? The answer was yes. It was also suggested that someone could stand outside the Town Pool. The Town Clerk approves the wording of the petition and lets you know the amount of signatures needed.

They discussed that the surcharge increase would be nominal but would bring in a lot more money for projects for the Town:


Here are the CPC Surcharge Calculations for Fiscal Year 2020 as distributed later by Mr. Butler to the Committee:

Property Assessed Valuation	Annual Property Tax at \$16.98 per thousand	Annual 2% Surcharge	Proposed Annual 3% Surcharge	Annual Increase in Surcharge from 2% to 3%
\$300k	\$5094	\$69	\$104	\$35
\$400k	\$6792	\$102	\$153	\$51
\$500k	\$8490	\$136	\$204	\$68
\$600k	\$10,188	\$170	\$255	\$85
\$700k	\$11,886	\$204	\$306	\$102
\$800k	\$13,584	\$238	\$357	\$119
\$900k	\$15,282	\$272	\$408	\$146
\$1M	\$16,980	\$306	\$459	\$153
\$1.5M	\$25,470	\$475	\$713	\$238

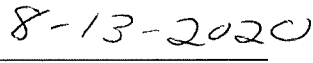
It was noted that if a resident is a senior on a fixed income or has a lower level of income, they can apply through the Assessors’ office for an abatement, which is a complete absolution. Many people are unaware this surcharge amount appears on their tax bills. Ms. Leonard noted that for a small amount of money, the Town would receive a lot. Mr. Preston noted that everything the CPC does are visible so residents clearly see what they are getting. Mr. Butler said Governor Baker has put in a provision for the CPC to receive the surplus again. Also, fees were upped at the Registry by \$30.

Adjournment

Mr. Preston made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:11 p.m. Mr. Farrell seconded the motion. The CPC voted unanimously among those present (6-0) to adjourn the meeting.



Mary Alice Cookson
Minutes Secretary



Date