

HAMILTON COMMUNITY PRESERVATION COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF MEETING

Teleconference

December 10, 2020

Members Present: Chair Jay Butler, Robert Preston, Shawn Farrell, Kim Dietel, Richard Boroff, and Katherine Mittelbusher

Members Absent: Chris Currier and Sherry Leonard

CPC Coordinator: Pat Shannon

Call to Order

Chair Jay Butler called the Community Preservation Committee (CPC) meeting to order at 7:01 p.m. A roll-call was taken. In addition to Mr. Butler, the following were present at the start of the meeting: Robert Preston, Shawn Farrell, Richard Boroff, and Kim Dietel. Ms. Mittelbusher joined the meeting shortly afterward.

Approval of Amended 10/8/20 Meeting Minutes

Mr. Butler called the CPC's attention to an edit discussed at the previous meeting. Minutes Secretary Mary Alice Cookson checked the CPC webpage and found the change had not been recorded. The edit involved a comment from Ms. Mittelbusher during the Committee Reports regarding the Town Hall renovation. Ms. Cookson will edit the Minutes to reflect that the existing ramp on side of Town Hall may wrap to the back of the building rather than may be located at the back of the building. Ms. Mittelbusher confirmed this edit was correct.

Decision:

Mr. Farrell made a motion to approve the amended Oct. 8, 2020 minutes. Ms. Mittelbusher seconded the motion. A roll-call vote was taken with "ayes" from Mr. Butler, Mr. Preston, Mr. Farrell, Mr. Boroff, Ms. Dietel, and Ms. Mittelbusher, (6-0) unanimous among those present.

Approval of 11/12/20 Meeting Minutes

Decision:

Mr. Farrell made a motion to accept the Nov. 12, 2020 minutes pending one amendment. Ms. Mittelbusher seconded the motion. A roll-call vote was taken with "ayes" from Mr. Preston Ms. Dietel, Mr. Farrell, Ms. Mittelbusher, Mr. Boroff, and Mr. Butler, (6-0) unanimous among those present.

*(*Note: It was discovered after the meeting that the amendment, which involved changing \$60-\$80 to \$60K-\$80K, was needed in the Oct. 8 minutes, not Nov. 12 minutes. Error was corrected.)*

Committee Reports

Mr. Farrell reported topics at the Board of Selectmen (BOS) meeting included: Town Manager review document, rethinking the Town Hall ballot question and next steps for the Town Hall renovation in light of the debt exclusion having been voted down, and the budget calendar.

Ms. Mittelbusher said the Hamilton Historic District Commission (HHDC) met on Dec. 1 before the debt exclusion vote and had since been in a holding pattern on the Town Hall renovation. The Historic Preservation agreement [restriction included in the CPC grant award to the First Congregational Church of Hamilton] was finalized by the HHDC but had not yet been signed. The cell tower agreement had been signed.

Ms. Dietel said the Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) discussed a few items regarding personal properties and was waiting on the Planning Board to bring some items before the ZBA.

Update on State Disbursement

Mr. Butler reviewed the numbers regarding State disbursement. The State match was 28.6%, a sizeable increase from previous years. Mr. Butler noted Hamilton's surcharge money raised had also gone up (from \$454K to \$480,851). He wasn't sure if that would be the new amount going forward or if it were a "blip." Mr. Preston said the jump makes sense if real estate transactions have gone up. Mr. Farrell said Town assessments have gone up and cited the new Canter Brook development.

State of CPC Reserves

Mr. Butler noted CPC Coordinator Pat Shannon and Finance Director Marisa Batista had forwarded some financials. Mr. Butler said he had wanted to know what would be the unreserved balance on June 30, 2021 so as to gauge how much money the CPC would have for awarding grants at the next Special Town Meeting (STM) in the fall. The answer was \$640K minus any grants approved at Annual Town Meeting (ATM) in May.

Near-Term Anticipated Grant Requests

- **Patton Park Tennis Court Repair Request**

Mr. Butler took this agenda item out of order to accommodate Recreation Director Sean Timmons who discussed his eligibility request concerning the three tennis courts. The amount requested is \$45K, but Mr. Timmons said he thought the bids would come in under that. He said the courts have about 400 to 500 feet of cracking. When there is substantial cracking, the procedure is to cut out the area around the crack, put it material, and resurface and repaint it

rather than just filling the cracks. The last time repairs were made was seven years ago. Two companies have looked at the job; the bids were between \$38K and \$44K. He noted it was significant work and felt it fell within the category of renovation rather than maintenance. He said he has photos to make available.

Mr. Preston asked if the Town had an operating budget for maintaining the courts. Mr. Timmons said maintenance is paid out of his revolving fund, but due to COVID the fund had lost about \$160K in revenue. Mr. Boroff asked where the revolving funds came from. Mr. Timmons said user fees, such as field rental and rec programs.

Mr. Farrell asked questions about warranties. Mr. Timmons responded it depended on which system was used. Work done in the past was out of warranty.

Mr. Butler inquired if the grant request was for the three tennis courts plus basketball court. Mr. Timmons said no, just tennis courts as the basketball court work is considered strictly maintenance. He said the bids he had obtained for the tennis courts weren't sealed bids. He expected to put out a scope of work. Mr. Preston asked what caused the cracks; Mr. Timmons replied moisture under the surface and being located in the Northeast.

Mr. Farrell noted the work would happen after ATM and asked if stop-gap measures could be used before the weather became cold and wet. Mr. Timmons said it was too late for that and didn't think if they had done stop-gap work in the fall that it would have made a difference.

There was a discussion that Hamilton's varsity team does not play or practice at the Patton courts, although the JV team does practice there. The Patton courts are open to the public until 10 p.m. There are lights. Pickleball has been a popular sport and Pickleball equipment is stored at the courts.

Mr. Butler said the CPC needed to determine whether the Finance and Advisory Committee and Finance Director would consider the item a capital expenditure. Mr. Timmons thought yes based on the current financial policy. The job is over the \$25K threshold for his department. Mr. Butler stressed the CPC can pay for capital expenses but cannot pay for anything that is strictly repair or maintenance. Mr. Farrell noted that in the financial policies, it was determined what was considered capital compared to operational. He asked Mr. Timmons what it would cost to replace the tennis courts. Mr. Timmons said the three courts, which have significantly less fencing than the Wenham courts, would amount to about \$75K to \$80K per court.

Ms. Dietel asked Mr. Timmons if he might request support from the community. Mr. Timmons said he could talk with tennis parents about getting a booster donation; however, it is tricky for him to seek donations as he is a Town employee.

Mr. Boroff inquired if there was a lifetime cap on capital expenses; Mr. Timmons said no.

The CPC decided to seek input from Ms. Batista about whether the project was a capital expense. They also encouraged Mr. Timmons to change the grant request wording.

Decision:

Mr. Farrell made a motion to approve the eligibility for the tennis court capital project pending a capital project designation from the Town Finance Director. Richard Boroff seconded the motion. A roll-call vote was taken with “ayes” from Mr. Preston, Mr. Farrell, Ms. Mittelbusher, Mr. Boroff, and Mr. Dietel, (6-0) unanimous among those present.

• **Habitat for Humanity 434-436 Asbury Street Project**

Mr. Butler said there was not a current grant request from the Affordable Housing Trust (AHT) nor did he anticipate one for ATM, but in the grant just approved at Special Town Meeting (STM), during that cycle there was a document from Habitat for Humanity about their LIP (Local Initiative Program) application. Mr. Shannon said in the LIP application it was written that Habitat was seeking funding of \$300K from the AHT and \$200K from the CPC. Mr. Shannon said he didn't know if Don Preston, the lead for the project, expected to actually receive that.

Mr. Shannon said the project at 434 Asbury St., would be completed in three phases, and, assuming the funding goes through, Habitat expected to close on the property at the end of April. When Habitat does come to the CPC, the plan is to apply for grants of \$20K per unit per each phase. The first year would be for a \$60K grant, ultimately adding up to \$200K. He noted that Habitat for Humanity of the North Shore and the Merrimack Valley Habitat for Humanity have merged; the new entity is called Essex County Habitat for Humanity.

Mr. Butler noted that the CPC had originally given the AHT funds for the Asbury Street project, but the AHT had pivoted and used the funds for the Willow Street project. He said a pivot could happen again. Also, he said he hoped Mr. Preston wasn't going to apply directly to the CPC for funds but would look to the AHT to sponsor the request from the CPC. Mr. Butler said the State's Affordable Housing Coalition had advised that whenever CPCs award money to their AHTs, the grant proposal should detail how the money will be used. Mr. Butler said he assumes Hamilton's CPC does not want to do that so as to allow the AHT to have flexibility on its use of the funds. The other CPC members agreed with this reasoning.

Review of 11/14/20 STM [Special Town Meeting] and 12/3/20 Special Election Votes

The AHT grant was approved. The Town Hall building project was approved but the funding was voted down by the ballot question/Dec. 3 Special Election. A story appeared today on the front page of *The Chronicle*; the project is in limbo. Mr. Farrell noted he had a meeting set up with Town Hall Building Committee Chair Mike Twomey and Town Manager Joe Domelowicz to discuss next steps. He said the Town needed a better marketing campaign to get the word out to the public that the Town Hall renovation is the best-case scenario. It was discussed that perhaps some voters saw the \$9M price tag and did not take into account the \$1M already spent

or fact that the CPC had awarded \$4M toward the project. Voters also seemed to be pitting money for consolidating the elementary schools and building a turf field against money for Town Hall; however, those projects are a long way off and the Town already has \$500K set aside that it can put toward the field. Some voters perhaps thought it might be easier and cheaper to build a new Town Hall, although that isn't the case since they would need to acquire the land. It was also discussed that the bulk of the cost of the renovation was making the building ADA-compliant and bringing it up to code.

Committee Member Vacancy—At-Large Member

Mr. Butler noted there is still a CPC vacancy and confirmed with Mr. Farrell that the BOS had posted and announced the opening.

Other Business as Necessary

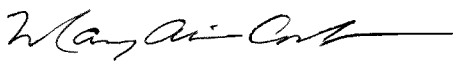
Mr. Butler asked Ms. Cookson and Mr. Farrell about a minutes discussion at a recent BOS meeting. Mr. Farrell said the BOS had talked about changing the way minutes are taken. He said the Town goes above and beyond what is required by the State and said they were trying to find a middle ground. He said the topic will come up in the future.

It was discussed that the CPC skip holding a January meeting since there is no pressing business and hold off on the tennis court funding request/hearing until the next meeting on Feb. 11.

Adjourn

Mr. Preston made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:02 p.m. Mr. Boroff seconded the motion. A roll-call vote was taken with “ayes” from Mr. Preston, Mr. Farrell, Ms. Mittelbusher, Mr. Boroff, and Ms. Dietel, (6-0) unanimous among those present.

Prepared By:



Mary Alice Cookson
Minutes Secretary

2/12/21

Date

Attest:



Pat Shannon
CPC Coordinator

2/12/21

Date