

**Town of Hamilton
Community Preservation Committee
February 11, 2016 Minutes**

Attendees

The meeting was held at Hamilton Town Hall with the following Committee members in attendance: Chair Tom Catalano, Vice Chair Jay Butler, Ray Whipple, Shawn Farrell, Ed Howard, Robert Preston and Peter Britton. Community Projects Coordinator Dorr Fox, Director of Planning and Inspections Patrick Reffett, Recreation Director Sean Timmons, Selectman Scott Maddern also present. Tom Catalano called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Acceptance of minutes from January 14, 2016 CPC meeting

Jay Butler moved to approve the January 14, 2016 minutes. Robert Preston seconded the motion. VOTE: Unanimous.

Committee Member Reports

Shawn Farrell summarized that BOS is working on Town Meeting warrant, and redoing the community-wide online survey. Tom Catalano mentioned that the Historic District Commission has not had any activity in the last month. Ed Howard described how the Planning Board is fine tuning and rewriting zoning by-law which will be addressed at spring Town Meeting and a second phase at fall Town Meeting.

H.2533: An Act Relative to the Curatorship Program – Kevin Kaminski

Discussion ensued with Kevin Kaminski about the property that he is managing on Highland Street that is in curatorship program. Specifically addressed was a House bill to be voted on by the Legislature that is intended to add a clause stating that properties in curatorship program are exempt from paying real estate taxes which allegedly could foster success of the program. Currently Topsfield, Ipswich and Hamilton collect taxes for such properties.

Peter Britton moved for the CPC to write a letter of support for the legislation. Howard seconded the motion. VOTE: 6-0-1 with Butler abstaining. Community Projects Coordinator Dorr Fox will draft the letter for the CPC.

Financial Update

The CPC has to vote to put the CPA funds into the CPA reserves at spring Town Meeting. This update did not include return of some money from COA sign project or \$108,000 received from the state. The CPC has \$91,000 for historic preservation, \$163,000 for housing, \$191,000 for open space which will be used for the Sagamore Hill project, and \$828,000 in undedicated reserves. Some of the CPC's approved projects have not tapped into the funds to date. Discussion addressed how \$13,000 has been slated for community housing, and \$50,000 out of historic preservation. The open space reserve will be used for the debt obligation and \$500,000 and (\$1.25 million bond) would go to the Sagamore Hill project. The CPC has \$800,000 in reserves. Funds will be replenished in the next fiscal year by \$380,000 in local taxes and

\$108,000 from the state. The CPC acknowledged how it has more project requests than the Town has CPA funds.

Grant to be considered for funding: Winthrop School Playground

Discussion ensued with Jen Daniels and Nancy Littlehale from the Friends of Winthrop organization that is working towards renovating the Winthrop School playground so it has the best play value for elementary school students. To date, \$7,500 has been contributed towards the project by the HW School Committee, \$20,000 by Wenham’s CPC and \$90,000 has been raised in private donations.

Discussion addressed concerns from the Committee such as:

- If the Winthrop School site could ultimately be used for another desirable Town project (i.e., senior housing),
- If there is general community will to support HWRSD projects with CPA funding relative to when the Act was adopted in Town,
- The limited public benefit of the project,
- Responsibility of HWRSD to provide adequate playground equipment at its schools and who would maintain the equipment,
- If a precedent would be set for other elementary schools in district to seek CPA funds for future projects, and
- If HWRSD projects should be funded in part by CPA funds since there are limited CPA resources.

Also mentioned was if the historical two-thirds Hamilton and one-third Wenham split of funding for school projects should be utilized for the playground project. It was noted that the Hamilton Wenham Education Fund only funds academically based projects so it would not provide money toward the playground rehabilitation project.

Britton moved to fund \$25,000 toward the playground project. Preston seconded the motion. VOTE: 5-2 with Catalano and Whipple opposed.

Grant to be considered for funding: Patton Homestead

Discussion ensued with Director of Planning and Inspections Patrick Reffett regarding a \$250,000 request for CPA funds to renovate the Patton Homestead to address maintenance issues (i.e., window replacement), and to make the facility ADA accessible in anticipation of potential future uses with more than 50 people at the site. The Patton Homestead Incorporators non-profit organization is working process toward appointing a director, and raising funds (\$500,000, \$250,000 from the sale of Patton property at the site was allocated for Homestead) to get an equal matching grant from the Mass. Cultural Council to use to refurbish and preserve the Homestead. A facilities study has been done of the site and draft report will be forwarded to the Committee. The consultant has identified \$1 million in elements that need immediate attention.

Concerns raised by Committee members regarding this CPA project request included:

- If the Homestead is a financial burden to the Town and hesitation to spend CPA funds to make improvements when a use for the Homestead has not been defined by the non-profit especially to make the Homestead self-sustainable independent from taxpayer dollars,
- That alternatives for the use such as having a curator do historic preservation should be explored.

It was noted that the facility is currently used by many veterans and the intent of the gift was for a public purpose. Also, that it is eligible for historic preservation funds.

Ray Whipple moved that the CPC supports the project in general terms but that the Committee needs more information to vote on funding the project and it would defer this to fall Town Meeting. Howard seconded the motion. VOTE: 6-0-1 with Farrell opposed.

Grant to be considered for eligibility and funding: Hamilton Affordable Housing Trust

Discussion was on \$100,000 in CPA funds that the CPC had given to the Hamilton Affordable Housing Trust since it the Trust has the ability to purchase a property without being required to get a Town Meeting vote. This year the Trust has had two projects and it received \$150,000 from the proceeds of the land sale at the Patton Ridge project.

The Trust authorized \$18,000 for handicapped ramps to the Hamilton Housing Authority project on Railroad Avenue. In addition, \$250,000 was committed to 270 Asbury Street that Habitat for Humanity is purchasing with the intent of building two affordable housing units. The Trust has expended all of its funds. In order to continue to do projects (i.e., two under consideration on Longmeadow Way and another on Asbury Street) the Trust needs additional funding. The CPC has \$210,000 in reserves for affordable housing.

Preston moved that the project is eligible for CPA funds. Farrell seconded the motion. VOTE: Unanimous.

Britton moved for the CPC to grant available affordable housing funds and remainder from undedicated reserves to make up the \$250,000 to the Hamilton Affordable Housing Trust for affordable housing. (The sunset clause is for two years and could be renewed due to extenuating circumstances). Preston seconded the motion. VOTE: Unanimous.

Grant go be considered for eligibility and funding: HW Regional High School Field Renovation Project

Phil Tocci from the turf field working group updated the Hamilton CPC on how the Wenham CPC had voted 5-4 to approve spending \$22,592 as one-third of the cost of \$67,240 for design and engineering of a turf field at the HWRHS campus. The HW School Committee had unanimously voted to support this phase of the project and for RFP for procurement as well as for engineering work to commence on school property. Hamilton's share for this phase of the project is \$44,647.

Discussion ensued about what aspect of the project could be paid for with CPA funds, and that this project requires a multi-year commitment which will include public hearings and private fundraising effort. The genesis of the project was in response to the Recreation Master Plan which identified the overuse of existing community playing fields and the deteriorating surfaces that need to be saved as well as to partially restore Patton Park back to a passive recreation area in Town.

Discussion addressed how the CPA project request will pay for design/engineering through site plan review and that Recreation Director Sean Timmons would go before Town boards including the Conservation Commission related to the proposed turf field's proximity to wetlands. Also mentioned was importance of lighting at the turf field to enable nighttime use and how historically abutters to the school campus had been opposed to lights being installed for this purpose. It was noted that state of the art technology in field lighting allows for minimal light spillage beyond a field and that neighborhoods would be polled about any proposals for field lighting. In addition, private donations will be set up for collection in a non-profit.

Farrell moved to approve the eligibility of the project. Whipple seconded the motion. VOTE: Unanimous.

Butler moved to approve the CPA funding of \$44,647 for the project. Britton seconded the motion. VOTE: Unanimous.

Future Anticipated Grant Applications

Discussion was on how Habitat for Humanity may ask for \$40,000 in the fall for the 270 Asbury Street project. In addition, Andrew DeFranza of Harborlight Community Partners may come before the CPC with a request for CPA funds related to a potential project on Longmeadow Way. The Committee recommended that an update on the progress being made on the Town's housing production plan should be provided to the CPC. It was noted that the application for the Town Hall renovation has been withdrawn for now.

CPA Surcharge Increase

Discussion ensued on consideration of changing the CPA surcharge from 2% to 3% and that it would be presented at fall Town Meeting. A public event will be hosted in Town either by the League of Women Voters or the Community House to gather resident input on the matter. This forum or a future CPC public meeting could address what CPA can and cannot fund. A ballot initiative would be required to change the surcharge. The CPC formed a subcommittee of Catalano, Butler and Preston to analyze details associated with a surcharge adjustment plan.

Sunset Clauses/Grants to be cancelled

Discussion was on how the Committee is on top of all grants to be cancelled and how all sunset clauses will be for two years.

Other business

Discussion reiterated how Carin Kale, Chairman of the Patton Homestead Incorporators, could come to the CPC's next meeting for project discussion although the Patton Homestead CPA funding request for \$250,000 has been put off until the fall Town Meeting. There was suggestion on how tours of the building could be helpful, similar to the site walks at Sagamore Hill, to increase understanding on actual amount of work required at the Homestead relative to possible future uses.

Adjournment

Preston moved to adjourn at 9:45 p.m. Farrell seconded the motion. VOTE: Unanimous.

Respectfully submitted by Jane Dooley, Minutes Secretary

ATTEST: _____
Thomas Catalano Chairman