

**Town of Hamilton  
Community Preservation Committee  
October 8, 2015 Minutes**

**Attendees**

The meeting was held at Hamilton Town Hall with the following Committee members in attendance: Chair Tom Catalano, Jay Butler, Ray Whipple, Shawn Farrell, Ed Howard, Keith Glidden, Bob Gray, Robert Preston and Peter Britton. Director of Planning and Inspections Patrick Reffett, Finance Director Brian Connolly, Community Projects Coordinator Dorr Fox, Chris LaPointe from ECGA also present. With a quorum of CPC members present, Tom Catalano called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.

**Acceptance of minutes from September 10, 2015 CPC meeting**

The Committee will vote on these at its next meeting.

**Vote Funding Applications**

Discussion ensued about Appendix B to fall Town Meeting warrant that will enumerate CPC projects/actions for Town Meeting to vote on, also that the Town manager has withdrawn applications for COA project and Town Hall renovation.

Ray Whipple moved that the CPC accept the withdrawal of the applications for the COA and Town Hall projects. Keith Glidden seconded the motion. VOTE: Unanimous.

- Sagamore Hill/Conservation Restriction project, ECGA open space land acquisition

Discussion ensued about the draft warrant article language for the CR for Sagamore Hill with the gist being the acquisition is going to be done in the form of a grant. Town manager is suggesting the Town make a grant to ECGA in exchange for the CR rather than the Town purchasing the CR outright. The language in the warrant will be changed to reflect the Town Meeting voting on a grant to ECGA for the acquisition of real interest for the CR on the land. The language in the CR will describe the actual interest relative to what the Town is receiving. The Town is going to be asked to approve the grant without the final wording on the CR.

LaPointe noted that if there will be a grant in exchange for a CR rather than a purchase and sale agreement there would be a grant agreement that outlines understanding between Town and ECGA (i.e., property, diligence, process for finalizing CR). The money is connected to the interest and Town manager would rather not have this be a purchase. The CPA coalition has stated that grant in exchange for CR model is acceptable under statute. It would be conditional in that Town can make grant to ECGA and if transaction does not occur with Trust for Public Land and Greenbelt the grant would not move forward. LaPointe said the end of December 2015 deadline is for funding commitment not closing. The only way ECGA has an interest to convey to the Town is if

Greenbelt has amassed all of the other funding and if that does not occur Greenbelt would not expect the grant to be paid out (if grant is approved by vote of Town Meeting).

Discussion was on how the Town would pay for the grant since there are not adequate reserves to pay for the grant in cash, financing will have to be used. Scenarios of 10 to 15 year terms and principal options of \$1.2 million, \$1.5 million and financing the entire purchase were presented to CPC for review. Also noted was if \$280,000 and \$203,000 related to withdrawn COA and Town Hall projects could help the CPC's cash situation relative to long term debt. The CPC has roughly \$1 million in reserves for the project. Also addressed was after this fall Town Meeting the CPC would review its surcharge level. It was noted that since bonding will be used for the grant a two-thirds vote is required for the Sagamore Hill project to be approved at Town Meeting. The interest rate for the bonding could be 4%. The CPC concurred that it did not want to bond the entire grant. The BOS has not yet reached consensus on the Sagamore Hill/ECGA grant.

Also addressed was how this was the CPC's first application for open space, and greater rate of return when CPA surcharge is 3% versus 2%. The lowest scenario for debt would encumber approximately 20% of current income stream on 15 year term to bond (i.e., \$1.25 million, 15 year term, payments would start out using 21% of current annual revenue stream and would drop over time). The remaining debt on Donovan field is for seven years although the Town would have used less than 40% of its bonding capacity at the 2% surcharge level.

Discussion was on bonding \$500,000 and paying for the rest of the grant. Ed Howard as CPC representative from the Planning Board said that board supports the concept of purchasing Sagamore Hill but does not have financial information to make a decision. Peter Clark expressed support speaking as a citizen and Planning Board member for the \$500,000 bonding suggestion and use of reserves for land conservation project. This scenario would allow for \$500,000 to remain in reserves to be used for other projects. CPC has more than \$1 million in reserves after the other CPA projects are brought forward at the fall Town Meeting.

Last year the Town collected with 2% surcharge \$374,525, state match of \$118,352 and aggregate was \$492,877. With 3% surcharge the state match of \$118,352 this year would go to state match of \$284,000. For a median household the CPA surcharge/tax increase would cost \$45 more annually. The BOS is not unanimously in support of increasing the CPA surcharge. There are avenues for residents to get relief from surcharge.

Glidden moved to approve the Sagamore Hill application, the acquisition to go on the warrant for allocation of \$190,000 from the Open Space and Recreation reserve and the balance of \$500,000 to come from unallocated reserve and that the Town/CPC bond the remaining amount \$1,258,000 on a 15 year bond debt service schedule. Howard seconded the motion. Glidden amended the motion stating that this is for the grant in exchange for the acquisition of Conservation Restriction. VOTE: Unanimous.

Catalano realized later in the meeting after this vote was taken that an email had been sent to CPC from Finance Director Brian Connelly stating that the Town manager had recommended the Town/CPC bond the entire funding amount for Sagamore Hill CR.

LaPointe spoke to issue to be resolved between BOS, Town manager and Town counsel where funding for all CPA articles is under one article and CR for Sagamore Hill is a separate standalone article from the funding. This is being done for housekeeping since the CR and debt vote requires a two thirds vote to pass. It was reiterated that ECGA will maintain the property. In addition, Howard mentioned that he expressed support for increasing CPA surcharge to 3% to Planning Board.

Discussion ensued on request from Friends of Winthrop School for \$100,000 in CPA funds toward \$285,000 playground and when CPA was adopted it was stated that it was not intended for use for school projects. The request was withdrawn but may be resubmitted in the spring. If the School was going to use the Patton Park playground across Route 1A from the school grounds, the playground would have to be shutdown to any other users during school hours this is why the Friends of Winthrop School believe the School needs its own playground. Private fundraising is occurring for the School playground, which is on Town owned property, and this could be a project for the HW Ed Fund.

#### **New Business – Project evaluation tool**

Discussion ensued on CPC members recusing themselves on CPC votes where they were involved in organizations (i.e., Hamilton Housing Authority) and if this was necessary because CPC members are in many cases the representatives on the CPC for organizations (i.e., advocate for open space for Conservation Commission).

In addition, when project applications come before the CPC the Committee votes on the parameters under which it is eligible for CPA funds (i.e., historic preservation, open space and recreation, community housing) and the CPC project evaluation tool should be used objectively at this point. For the next meeting the CPC will review revised evaluation tool to determine how it is being used by the Committee members to understand the disparity in CPC input on project applications.

#### **Town Meeting**

Community Projects Coordinator Dorr Fox will review last year's CPC presentation for Town Meeting and ensure that the presentation for fall Town Meeting follows policies and procedures from Town moderator. Discussion addressed how the CPC would likely not broach possibility of raising CPA surcharge from 2% to 3% at fall Town Meeting and if topic is presented at fall Town Meeting it would be after all votes are taken on CPC warrant articles.

Howard asked if CPC could get information sooner than just before the Committee's meetings (i.e., letter to CPC from Open Space subcommittee to Conservation Commission).

Discussion was on the Committee's timeline moving forward with November 7 fall Town Meeting, November 12 CPC meeting, November 30 deadline for spring Town Meeting, and regular CPC meeting schedule for December and January. A joint BOS and FinCom meeting is on October 14 and the CPC expressed interest in learning the opinion of these boards on the financial numbers for Sagamore Hill project. Also, that the CPC should have a slide at Town Meeting describing its new objective evaluation system for projects.

Discussion ensued on Sagamore Hill as the first open space request for CPC and it was restated that ECGA would be maintaining the property which will have public access. Also mentioned was the Assessors valuation of the property, the Land Vest appraisal of \$5.1 million, and property is being sold to the Town with CR that limits the property to the \$800,000 price so it will never be a \$5 million property with Town paying \$1.7 million for its share. ECGA and TPL have a video ready of the site to play at Town Meeting.

**Adjournment**

Robert Preston moved to adjourn at 8:30 p.m. Peter Britton seconded the motion. VOTE: Unanimous.

Respectfully submitted by Jane Dooley, Minutes Secretary

ATTEST: \_\_\_\_\_  
Thomas Catalano Chairman