

**Town of Hamilton
Community Preservation Committee
September 10, 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, Ed Howard, Keith Glidden, Bob Gray, Robert Preston and Peter Britton. Community Projects Coordinator Rachel Meketon, Director of Planning and Inspections Patrick Reffett, Finance Director Brian Connolly, COA Director Mary Beth Lawton also present. With a quorum of CPC members present, Tom Catalano called the meeting to order at 7:30pm.

Approve August 13th Meeting Minutes

Robert Preston moved to accept the August 13, 2015 meeting minutes. Jay Butler seconded the motion. VOTE: Unanimous.

Project Evaluation Scoring System

Rachel Meketon provided an overview of project evaluation scoring system to objectively assess each application. The projects were scored on percentage of CPA criteria (i.e., historic preservation, recreation, and affordable housing). Project forms show how each application is evaluated. Discussion ensued about how this system allows CPC members to objectively evaluate projects and projects that fall under the Town's Master Plan and more than one CPA category score higher.

VOTE – Eligibility Applications

The CPC voted on the eligibility of the following CPA project applications:

- *Council on Aging – Second floor of the Senior Center*

COA Director Marybeth Lawton is requesting CPA funds for an elevator and fire escape for the second floor at the Senior Center (\$203,000 to make second floor comply with fire and building code regulations, and update space to relocate outreach coordinator's office, hold classes, entertainment, instruction and recreation as well as install an ADA compliant elevator and second form of egress out the back side of building). She mentioned that projection is the senior population in Town will grow by 22% in five years (35% of Hamilton's population).

The COA has been granted CPA funds that were used for kitchen renovation, were slated for bathroom renovation that has not occurred and effort is underway to get that work done in six weeks, and letters for exterior of building which will be installed by the end of next month. Discussion addressed how multiple Town departments including public works are involved in trying to move this project forward.

Discussion ensued about CPA funding eligibility relative to adding infrastructure outside of the Senior Center building and applicability of historic preservation although fire/building code and ADA regulations come into play with such a project. Also addressed was how capital expenditure by the Town would have to pay for any renovation of the second floor since this is expansion versus historic preservation. In addition, that no programs were historically held in the second floor space when the building was the former Hamilton Library.

Butler moved that the CPC vote on the eligibility of the project but delay voting on the funding until the Committee gets more information. Bob Gray seconded the motion. VOTE: 7-0-1 with Keith Glidden opposed.

Funding Applications

Council on Aging – Second Floor of the Senior Center – waiting for more information and postponed until the CPC's October 8th meeting

Hamilton Historical Society – Phase 3 of Preserve Our Pictures

Annette Janes noted that this request (3 of 3) completes the project, and state grant funds for the project besides CPA funds have been more than \$50,000. She spoke to the success of the first and second phase of project.

Glidden moved to approve the (\$9,980) funding for the Preserve Our Pictures project. Gray seconded the motion. VOTE: 7-0-1 with Ray Whipple recusing.

Discussion was about how a weighted average could be used for scoring CPA projects.

American Legion Post 194 – Basement Windows & Electrical Upgrade

Greg McKenna described how the Legion hall is open for public use for rental (reduced rate for members), and how hall is used for veteran events, Little League, COA, HW Rod & Gun Club, etc. Also mentioned was how the Legion had installed an elevator, and generator at its own expense. This is a third CPA request from the Legion for basement window replacement to provide security and upgrade to electrical system for safety. Discussion ensued about possibility of phasing project and intent to have the facility be an emergency center and importance of preserving historic Town building.

Butler moved to approve the funding (\$65,000) for the American Legion project. Gray seconded the motion. VOTE: Unanimous.

Town of Hamilton – Town Hall Rehabilitation

Director of Planning and Inspections Patrick Reffett spoke to Town Hall rehabilitation project. The historic preservation of Town Hall is estimated to cost \$430,000 with two phases: 1) full evaluation of the building: historic, structural, all systems; 2) design based on this information and condition of the building. The total request is for \$430,000 with Phase 1 - \$280,000 in one year process, Phase 2 - \$150,000.

Discussion ensued about how the CPA funding request for fall Town Meeting could be just for Phase 1 at \$280,000. Intention is to use bonding for proposed addition to the Town Hall. Also mentioned was if consideration has been given to rehabilitating Town Hall and constructing a new building for administrative offices. The rehabilitation is being proposed to address lack of code compliance and ADA accessibility as well as structure being incapable of handling paper file storage load on the second floor which is unsafe. Also mentioned was \$15,000 for hazardous material evaluation. In addition, \$30,000 for drainage system (basement does not drain and is unusable).

Discussion was on need to address public works yard as part of Town Hall rehabilitation since addition is proposed to be located in the rear of the building and expected need for additional parking. Building a new structure is not financially possible in Hamilton, it would be much less expensive to expand Town Hall and add an elevator.

Butler moved to approve funding for Phase 1: \$280,000 of the project. Whipple seconded the motion. VOTE: Unanimous.

Hamilton Housing Authority – Roof, Gutter, Downspout at 31 Union Street

Discussion ensued with maintenance representative from Housing Authority for roof at 31 Union Street property for \$13,000. Butler moved to approve funding for \$13,000 for Hamilton Housing Authority. Ed Howard seconded the motion. VOTE: 7-0-1 with Gray recusing.

Essex County Greenbelt Association – Open Space Acquisition

Discussion ensued with ECGA's Chris LaPointe about request for \$1.7 million for Hamilton's share of the open space acquisition. The CPC addressed how Essex's share is the smallest financial contribution (up to \$300,000) and its Town Meeting decision may not be until May so Hamilton's commitment of \$1.7 million by contract deadline date of December 31, 2015 is more important to acquisition. Application deadline for Landscape Partnership Grant is September 30, 2015. At Hamilton's fall Town Meeting Greenbelt will report progress on private fundraising goal for project. Ultimately if Town Meeting votes to support the project and another funding mechanism fails, the Town will not have spent its money.

He opined that Hamilton's Town Meeting positive vote, ECGA's progress on private fundraising goal, and awards of state grant and funding will make it known how Trust for Public Land will move forward with the project. It was noted that conversations have occurred with Town boards and committees and LaPointe will seek endorsement from the Selectmen after the CPC endorses the project prior to Town Meeting. The Town Meeting will be voting on a specific number rather than a not to exceed amount.

Discussion was on benefits of project including responsibility to preserve property not falling on Town, ability for public to access the land after it is acquired, and Town will

have no maintenance responsibility when it owns conservation restriction rather than the land to be owned by Greenbelt.

Also mentioned was the CPC's interest in understanding the funding mechanism that the Town would use for the project before the Committee would vote its support. Meketon reported on research she had done with CPA coalition about how the project does not fall under all three CPA categories and related funding. If the project is bonded, the CPC can review annually to decide which CPA reserve could be applied toward the funding payment. When the CPC approved the eligibility of the project it was not based on one or more CPA funding categories.

The CPC has \$1.2 million in its reserves and some bonding (possibly \$ 1 million) would have to occur for the project. Finance Director Brian Connelly spoke to borrowing options and noted that spending entire reserve would impact future projects. Discussion addressed requisite independent appraisal being done, whether this project should have a separate Town Meeting warrant article or be part of overall approved CPA project vote.

Information the Committee will need to know before Town Meeting is the current bonding costs for projects for 20 and 30 years as well as percentage of bonding capacity that will be consumed with 2% and 3% surcharge between existing and proposed debt obligations related to CPA bonding. The Donovan field bonding debt expense will be taken out of analysis for future bonding capacity.

In response to Carin Kale who questioned if the project would move forward only if Essex moves forward with its funding, Catalano noted that the cost of the project had been brought down from \$2 million to \$1.7 million. Discussion was on the Town's interest in lowering the tax rate and that the Sagamore Hill property owner is currently paying \$428 a year in real estate tax due to Chapter 61A status compared to potential tax revenue if the property were developed. It was acknowledged that the conservation restriction acquisition is a luxury expenditure that would bring a benefit to the Town.

Discussion addressed how with a 2% CPA surcharge, the Town could bond the Sagamore Hill and Town Hall projects but very little else with CPA funds. Meketon recommended the Committee look at how much money it would expect to have in CPA funds in a given year (\$350,000 without state match) that could be applied toward debt and this two category CPA project would have a maximum of \$300,000 that could be applied annually toward the project. For a 10 year debt table, the first payment is expected to be \$160,000 annually going down to \$90,000 a year with a 4% interest rate. The Committee discussed researching this further and deciding on funding scenario at its next meeting.

Discussion ensued on if CPA surcharge was increased to 3% the bonding capacity would increase dramatically and concern about not communicating to Town Meeting voters that the only way Hamilton can afford Sagamore Hill is to raise the surcharge from 2% to

3%. An initiative to increase the surcharge could start after fall Town Meeting beginning in a joint meeting with CPC, Selectmen and Finance & Advisory Committee.

Also noted was the appraisal of Sagamore Hill commissioned by Trust for Public Land that was provided to the Town. As part of the Landscape Partnership Grant process a review appraisal will be done on September 28 prior to grant application going in on September 30.

Discussion was on need for two thirds Town Meeting vote on Sagamore Hill project and if this does not occur it is unlikely TPL would buy the entire property or try again in the spring to get outside funding. Ultimately what the landowner wants drives the process and deadlines.

Preston moved to defer the funding decision on the ECGA – Open Space Acquisition until the CPC’s October 8 meeting when funding options can be reviewed for the project. Glidden seconded the motion. VOTE: Unanimous. These numbers will come from Connelly and be circulated to CPC prior to the meeting.

Town Meeting

Preston moved to put CPA projects 1, 2, 3, 5 together in one article with 4 and 6 as separate CPC articles on the fall Town Meeting warrant. Gray seconded the motion. VOTE: Unanimous.

CPA Surcharge

The Committee had discussed the possibility of changing CPA surcharge from 2% to 3% earlier in the meeting. Discussion ensued about how this idea needs to be publicized and League of Women Voters could possibly help with that effort.

Adjournment

Howard moved to adjourn at 9:57 p.m. Whipple seconded the motion. VOTE: Unanimous.

Respectfully submitted by Jane Dooley, Minutes Secretary

ATTEST: _____
Thomas Catalano Chairman