

HAMILTON COMMUNITY PRESERVATION COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF MEETING

TOWN HALL—MEMORIAL ROOM

577 BAY ROAD

June 13, 2019

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

Members Absent: Janel Curry, Shawn Farrell, Katherine Mittelbusher, and Chris Currier

Coordinator: Dorr Fox

Chair Jay Butler called the Community Preservation Committee (CPC) meeting to order at 7:15 p.m. There was no quorum. It was decided the meeting would be for informational purposes only. However, shortly afterward Neil Duggan arrived and the CPC did have a quorum, but that was only until Robert Preston needed to leave following the third agenda item.

Meeting Minutes—May 9

The CPC postponed the vote to the next meeting.

Committee Member Reports

Welcome New Member

New member Sherry Leonard gave her report on the Housing Authority. She said the Brooks House now looks like a restored historic house. It was repainted a sage color and they have been working on the exterior, including the bell tower. The inside was gutted and cleaned.

Stuart Saginor, Executive Director of the Community Preservation Coalition—Meet and Greet / Presentation on Town Hall Project

Mr. Saginor gave a PowerPoint overview of the Community Preservation Coalition and what's happening with Community Preservation Act (CPA) projects across the State. He said he had been asked to give insight into the historic category of CPA funding and how decisions are made regarding historic projects. He passed out handouts entitled "The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation"; "Qualifying Historic Projects for CPA Funding; and "Chart 1,

Community Preservation Fund Allowable Spending Purposes.” He discussed the Coalition’s makeup, the facts that some seats on the steering committee would be opening up, and explained the Coalition provides assistance in the form of a website, email newsletter and bulletins, CPA advocacy and legislation, ballot measure adoptions and changes, training conferences, webinars, presentations, and workshops, all supported by CPA communities’ membership dues.

Jack Lawrence, 105 Rock Maple, asked: Of the 351 cities and towns in the State, how many have adopted CPA? The answer was exactly half.

Mr. Saginor said the website (*communitypreservation.org*) contains the entire history of the law and changes to it. The CPA has been amended nine times. One measure of success, he said, might be that no community that’s adopted CPA has ever revoked it. He went through some stats: 5,100 appropriations made to Historic Preservation, 29,289 acres preserved, 2,200 outdoor recreation projects funded, 15,500 affordable housing units created or supported, more than 10,000 projects approved, and \$2.1 billion raised. He noted the fastest growing category is outdoor recreation. He said in the past, one couldn’t rehabilitate existing athletic facilities with CPA funds, but they lobbied to change that.

The CPA Trust Fund is administered by the Department of Revenue (DOR). Funds come from the fees charged at the Registries of Deeds. That was enough for a 13.8% base match last year. Hamilton’s 2% surcharge results in \$400K in local revenue per year and about \$80K in State match. The match has fallen dramatically. DOR had estimated an 11.5% match for this Nov. 2019. The Coalition was successful in obtaining an extra \$10M this year, bringing the base match to 19%. They advocated for the State to take money from the surplus and put it into the CPA Trust Fund. One reason the match is so low is that a lot less transactions are happening at the registries of deeds.

In response to a question from Mr. Lawrence, Mr. Saginor said cities and towns with less than a 3% surcharge are handled differently from those with 3%. He explained everyone gets the same percentage on Round One. In Round Two, funds are awarded based on needs for the funding, (therefore more affluent towns get less money than those with more financial need.) Also, you can never get more than what you have raised locally. If a town chooses and gets a successful ballot on the 3%, it can access a third round. Mr. Saginor reviewed the Fiscal Year 2020 budget. The House voted to raise the \$20 fee at the registry to \$50.

Owners Project Manager (OPM) for Hamilton’s Town Hall renovation project, Lee Sollenberger of Design Technique, Inc., and Mallory Demty, architect/project manager with LLB Architects, were present at the meeting. Also present was Mike Twomey, chair of the Town Hall Building Committee, and Elizabeth Wheaton of the Historic District Commission/Historical Commission.

Mr. Saginor discussed what qualifies a project for CPA funding and went over examples. They discussed there are some gray areas, and typically they need to be interpreted by Town Counsel. They also discussed that people need to understand that the CPC is a modest funding source and will need to prioritize the “asks.”

Mr. Saginor said sometimes Community Preservation Committees (CPCs) add a condition that a historic preservation consultant be added to the team to ensure the project meets the Secretary of the Interior's Standards. He talked about the 10 standards. In other cases, he said, people who sit on the Building Committee have experience with historic preservation work. Ms. Demty said she thought Hamilton was on the national historic register, but not the state historic register. Mr. Saginor said he was pretty sure if you are on the national one, you are also on the state one. Hamilton's Town Hall is eligible for CPA funds.

Some specifics of the Needham Town Hall project were discussed as a case study. When that town added an addition to their building to house an elevator, they used a glass atrium to separate the two buildings so they didn't have to tear off the back of the historic building. Needham's CPC said that if CPA funds were used, the entire project must be constructed to the standards. What happens sometimes is that if CPA funds cover only certain features of the project, only those features are done to the standards while others are not. This is where problems can arise, he said, adding that sometimes the cheapest way isn't always the best way and a purpose of CPA is to allow extra funding to do things "properly." From his talk, it was clear that he advocates for restoring historic buildings to their original design.

Mr. Butler noted the CPC is the only board in town that has to make a positive recommendation before something can get to Town Meeting. If the CPC turns down a request, that's the end of the line, whereas other boards can make an unfavorable recommendation but it still goes to Town Meeting. He also noted the CPC doesn't have the authority to spend a penny without Town Meeting vote.

Mr. Twomey discussed two options being looked at by the Building Committee: Option A, which is to take out the grand stairway and put in an elevator, or Option B, which would leave the stairway where it is and construct an addition to the building for the purpose of housing the elevator.

Dorr Fox noted that if the Town wanted to maintain its grand staircase and put the addition on, then that project would appear to meet the standards and be eligible for CPA funding. But if it removed the staircase and put an elevator in its place, they would have to differentiate between what was eligible for CPC funds and what was not.

The CPC discussed the idea of adding a historic preservation consultant into the budget, taking that out of the CPC funding being offered. Ms. Leonard asked who determines if the alteration is changing the spatial relationship and whether that's OK. It was discussed that the CPC requires the standards be met, but it doesn't say who interprets that.

Mr. Butler and the others discussed that the construction would result in carving up the building for office space and they were concerned whether that was OK to do with CPC funding. Mr. Saginor said yes, as long as they aren't destroying any historic features. They mentioned the wainscoting might be a historic feature. The CPC discussed that the cost estimate for the project is about \$8.5M and they might potentially contribute about \$2M.

Ed Howard said it was his understanding that an ADA-compliant entrance can't be a secondary entrance. Whatever is the public entrance, the wheelchair has to be able to come through. A discussion followed that in cases of historic buildings, waivers are often granted. Ms. Demty said they were not looking to add a ramp to the front of the building and would have to go for a waiver. Mr. Twomey commented there is no part of the current stairway inside that meets current code.

Mr. Butler acknowledged Mr. Sollenberger for his work on the Topsfield Town Hall, restoring the building to its original grandeur.

The CPC discussed that spending begins July 1 for the \$150K grant already approved for the project. Mr. Saginor confirmed that initial costs of the project in its early stages (before specific plans are drawn up) can be covered by CPA funds [such as the grant for the OPM and design services]. Requests will be coming to the CPC this summer in advance of Fall Town Meeting. Mr. Fox posed whether this might be a good time to hire a historic preservation consultant. Mr. Butler said they might not need to go much further than just involving the Historic District Commission more. Also, Mr. Saginor noted Mr. Fox has a background in historic preservation. The CPC thanked Mr. Saginor for his time and information.

Mr. Preston left the meeting.

Discussion on Annual Public Hearing
Review of 2019 Annual CPC Meeting Presentation
Update of 2019 CPC Plan

Mr. Butler gave a history of the how the CPC Public Hearing had been handled in years past and said they were holding it as a joint meeting with the BOS on July 1, as they had done last year due to low attendance at past hearings. [The joint meeting enables the CPC to receive a wider audience because the meeting is televised.]

He discussed that Wenham has a 3% surcharge and said he calculated how much Hamilton would receive from the State if it went from its current 2% to a 3%. Then he calculated the tax hit that would place on the average Hamilton homeowner. Also he divided up all the grant-receiving organizations to see which ones had received the most money. As the reserves dwindle, he said the CPC needs to be observant of that. The CPC reserves at the end of this fiscal year are going to be about \$300K total. He calculated what would happen if they gave \$2M to the Town Hall Building Committee. He said in the past they've always been able to fund grants that came before them, but this year they may have to choose. He said in his presentation, which should be about a half hour, they are putting out a plea that if anyone has information about any large grants applications that might be coming forward to let the CPC know.

Mr. Duggan asked if the Capital Committee (CapCom) had started yet. Mr. Butler said not yet, but he was going to approach the CapCom first with the idea of exploring a potential increase to

a 3% surcharge. Mr. Howard said about two years ago they had batted it around. At first he was against it but has changed his position. One of the big problems is how are they going to get more people involved in town government, he said.

Ms. Leonard noted even small grants do make an impact. Mr. Butler agreed. He noted the CPC has given many small grants over the years and said most organizations in Town are aware of the CPC as a source of grants.

Mr. Butler asked them to look over his presentation for the public hearing and give him their suggestions. Mr. Howard noted the CPC would not be meeting before the hearing, which is July 1. Mr. Fox encouraged them all to attend the public hearing because they will need a quorum.

Review of Open Grants

Mr. Butler said he and Mr. Fox talked earlier and there had basically been no change in the status of open grants. He said he signed a couple of warrants—they gave the Brooks House an extra \$26K and the Hamilton housing plan another \$2,700. All the other grants were the same as last month. The projects include:

- **Patton Park Cannons**
- **Patton Park Basketball Hoops**
- **Historical Society Pictorial Collection**
- **Patton Estate Roof Replacement and Exterior Restoration**
- **Brooks House Renovations**
- **Town Hall OPM (Owner's Project Manager)**
- **Knotweed Removal Program**
- **Affordable Housing Trust**
- **Master Plan Housing Element**
- **Weaver Pond Restoration**
- **The Community House**

Status of Metal Plaque Signage

Discussion was postponed because Mr. Preston had left and the CPC no longer had a quorum.

Other Business as Necessary

Mr. Butler told Minutes Secretary Mary Alice Cookson it was up to her to decide how to handle writing up the meeting, either as notes or as minutes, since there was a quorum for just parts of the meeting. He identified some of the people who had been in the room for the discussion of the Town Hall building project.

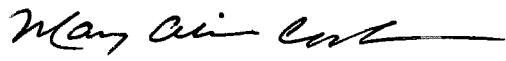
Mr. Fox said he anticipates they will be receiving two grants applications—one from the Hamilton Affordable Housing Trust and the other from the Town Hall Building Committee and

that together they will exceed the reserves. Mr. Butler said he thought the \$200K returned to the CPC from the Affordable Housing Trust was added back into the budget. Mr. Fox said he will take a look. On July 1, the CPC will only have \$300K, but it will receive another \$400K in November. Mr. Butler said they shouldn't spend money until they had it.

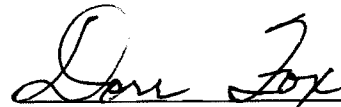
Adjournment

The CPC adjourned at approximately 9:35 p.m.

Prepared by:



Mary Alice Cookson
Minutes Secretary



Attest

7-11-19

Date