

HAMILTON COMMUNITY PRESERVATION COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF MEETING

TOWN HALL—MEMORIAL ROOM, 577 BAY ROAD

January 9, 2020

Members Present: Chair Jay Butler, Ed Howard, Robert Preston, Katherine Mittelbusher, Neil Duggan, and Shawn Farrell

Members Absent: Janel Curry, Sherry Leonard, and Chris Currier

Chair Jay Butler opened the Community Preservation Committee (CPC) meeting at 7:11 p.m. He said he would be taking some agenda items out of order. Dr. Julie Kukenberger, Interim Superintendent of the Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District, and Richard Boroff, the Open Space Committee chair, were there to meet with the CPC.

Eligibility and Funding Grant Requests from Town Hall Building Committee

Mr. Butler said he thought they would be getting a grant request from the Town Hall Building Committee (\$2M to defer Town Hall construction costs), but he was guessing they pulled the request back as he hadn't heard anything. He said the Building Committee, of which he is a member, was not ready to make a presentation at the Spring Town Meeting and would do so at the Fall Town Meeting. Any grant the CPC might approve before then would be conditioned upon voter approval at the Town Meeting.

Approve Meeting Minutes (11/14/19 Meeting)

Shawn Farrell made a motion to approve the Nov. 14, 2020 minutes. Robert Preston seconded the motion. The CPC voted (5-0) to approve the minutes.

Committee Reports

Ed Howard reported the Hamilton Historic District Commission (HDDC) is working on writing guidelines for a handbook to let homeowners in the Historic District know about requirements for such things as re-shingling a roof. The project is going well and there will be a public hearing when the project is complete. Mr. Howard said the HHDC also met with the Town Hall Building Committee for three hours and all of the HHDC recommendations were accepted.

Mr. Farrell, reporting on the Board of Selectmen (BOS), said there are many board/committee openings, including one at the Council on Aging, Recreation Committee, and the HHDC. At the last meeting, Heather Ford updated the BOS on The Hamilton Foundation. Some water

abatements and licenses were approved. There was a joint meeting with the School Committee in which Tai Pryjma was selected as new School Committee member. There will be an audit conference at the BOS meeting this Monday, as well as a discussion on the Sharon Road closing, Housing Production Plan, automated voting machines (to shave off time at Town Meetings), and a review of the FY'20 budget calendar and Town Manager goals.

Janel Curry Replacement

Mr. Butler said Ms. Curry is leaving both the CPC and Planning Board and they are seeking her replacement.

Dorr Fox Replacement

About eight resumes were received for the position, which has been made full-time. Two candidates were selected. One has been interviewed and one is coming in for an interview tomorrow. The job is posted on the website. Mr. Howard commented he wrote a letter to the Town Manager to say how important it was to find a replacement for Mr. Fox. Mr. Butler said they hope to reach a decision by next month.

Meeting with Dr. Julie Kukenberger, Interim School Superintendent

Dr. Kukenberger said she came just to make a connection, acknowledging the CPC was instrumental in several past school projects, including two playgrounds and the Gale [Associates] design study on the turf field and track replacement. She said the turf project has been reinvigorated and that she had some Title IV concerns and wanted to meet the needs of all athletes. Right now they are having to displace teams because the fields are unplayable. She thinks they are among the worst fields in the area. She gave an update on new school personnel who have been hired.

Mr. Butler provided some background on the CPC and the 2% surcharge in Hamilton, which comes from the Registry of Deeds and gets matched by the State. Hamilton receives about \$550K and the State matches it at 14%, but this year they should receive more due to a bill put through by State Senator Bruce Tarr to split a surplus \$25M among the CPA communities. Also next year, a law was passed to increase the Registry fees. He explained that projects with CPC approval on both eligibility and funding go to Town Meeting for a vote. He said the CPC seldom says no to a project. Mr. Preston noted the CPC looks into the future when considering projects, so they are always interested in hearing a list of ideas for the future. Mr. Butler said they are awaiting a report from the new Capital Committee and the Town could consider a 3% surcharge. Dr. Kukenberger said the turf project was something the whole community would benefit from and said she wanted to engage everyone to come up with the most fiscally responsible solution.

Mr. Butler said in the past the CPC had agreed to fund the engineering study for the turf field but nobody from the schools came to the meetings. He said there were health issues and limitations

discussed pertaining to the fields. Also, if the field and track start to resemble a stadium, the CPC can't fund them. There were also issues involving lighting and the effect on the abutters.

Dr. Kukenberger said a group of parents were meeting and are looking to develop a MOU [Memorandum of Understanding]. She said she thinks Hamilton-Wenham is one of three communities in the Cape Ann League without a turf field and one of three without lighting. She said lighting was key also so community members could use the track after dark.

Mr. Farrell, who said he had been involved with the turf field project for about three years, said it seemed before like the School Committee didn't have an appetite for it and people didn't want to invest their money in donations only to have the project end up dead in the water. He said the Schools have strict rules on sponsorship and signage, which has been a problem. Also, when the CPC gave money for the Winthrop School playground, it wasn't built as it was proposed. It was supposed to be ADA-compliant and wasn't.

Mr. Butler said they were told that any money had to be gifted to the School Department and once it was, the fundraising/friends groups had no say in how the project was developed. Dr. Kukenberger said the people involved then are gone now. She shared a recent success story regarding a patio that was constructed. She said they're on a new track and want to ensure they have good relationships all around, although she isn't promising a "pretty" budget. Mr. Butler talked about past history concerning budget overrides, and said it sounded like she was doing all the right things to win over trust.

Discussion with Richard Boroff, Open Space Committee Chair

Mr. Boroff said he was just testing the waters to gather ideas. He said he was working on the Open Space and Recreation Plan with the MAPC [Metropolitan Area Planning Council] writing the body of the plan and the Open Space Committee writing the goals.

Included on the list on the second page of his report, which he distributed to the CPC, was the building of an athletic field and/or turf field. Mr. Farrell said \$500K had already been earmarked for a turf field with the sale of the Patton property to the developer. At the time that was approved, money was put into the Stabilization Fund for that purpose. Mr. Butler said the caveat was that Wenham needed to pony up 40% of it if the turf field was for the Schools. If it were just for recreation fields, Hamilton would have carte blanche.

Mr. Howard commented that a donation from his company did the first lighting of the tennis courts and an issue that happened is that it increased the noise level, for ex., with ballgames happening at night. Following this was a discussion of noise issues.

Mr. Borroff noted his list was "pie in the sky" for the purpose of pursuing grants. Mr. Farrell asked if the list would be an appendix. Mr. Borroff said it would appear in the report somewhere, but he wasn't certain where. Mr. Farrell asked if price tags or potential revenue sources for each

would be identified. He thought it might be helpful to get assessed value from the Assessors and plug that information in.

Mr. Preston asked if they had looked into the Harvard Forest, an ecological research area, which was in Trust and nobody seemed to be doing anything with it. At one point the CPC had tried to buy the property. Mr. Preston said one issue is that there wasn't enough land to get to the property without issues with the abutters as there's just a narrow strip of land leading to it. Neil Duggan asked where the property was located and was informed by Mr. Preston. Nobody knew the value or if the land were in conservancy. Mr. Boroff said he will research it.

Mr. Butler commented on the objective of maintaining Cutler Park, which is across Bay Road. He said the CPC had been approached to contribute money to get rid of the invasive species to open the park up. It didn't go far with the abutters who use the park and seem to assume it's theirs. Mr. Preston said there was a dump there. There is also a pond. Mr. Boroff shared a story of visiting the site, which was a mess, and being told it was covered with glass.

Mr. Howard talked about a cemetery once being there. He said the HHDC was in process of applying to have an archeological assessment done of Town Hall property in light of the fact that Bay Road was established in 1640. He also noted he had suggested the Town might once again have a skiing and sliding slope. CPC members noted this idea has been on their potential future grants list with an amount of \$25K. Mr. Howard said he would like to see the Town take responsibility and invest money in the beach at Chebacco Lake. Mr. Farrell shared some history on why the BOS designated it as "swim-at-your-own-risk," saying the cost of lifeguard, facilities, etc., was a big bill. Mr. Boroff said he felt it was due to the Town Pool and not enough usage at the lake. Mr. Howard mentioned the Board of Health aspect. Mr. Boroff said he would add the idea to his list. Mr. Butler said he would add Mr. Boroff's list to the CPC's list also.

Mr. Farrell said he had questions about #1.2 on page 2. He asked if the property noted was the one he walked with Mr. Boroff at the Mass Audubon. He responded yes, and that it is owned by Paul Ricker's widow. Mr. Boroff said it could potentially be turned into a swamp walk.

Mr. Farrell asked who owned the wooded property along the old trolley line on Lois and Linden Sts. Mr. Boroff said part of it was owned by Bob Poole at one point. Mr. Farrell said it was a big parcel.

Review of Open Grants

- **Town Hall OPM/Design Services (\$250K grant):** The CPC approved the \$250K grant at the Fall Town Meeting. Mr. Butler has been told it will be spent by July 1.
- **Knotweed Removal Program (\$7.5K grant):** They are still looking for knotweed.
- **Affordable Housing Trust (\$100K and \$200K grants):** The Trust hasn't taken the money yet, but was awarded the \$300K and expects to use it in the fall. Today it was

announced in *The Chronicle* that the Trust was also given \$217K from the Canter Brook developer, and will get another \$217K from the developer, as well. The combined funds will be used to buy the property on Asbury Street (#436 and #439) for eight units of affordable housing.

- **Master Plan Housing Element (\$30K grant):** The project is finishing up. Mr. Butler hasn't seen the invoice for the \$30K yet.
- **Weaver Pond (\$17K grant):** The pond was treated but never raked. Money may be coming back to the CPC because the Department of Public Works didn't have the means for hauling the wet material away (due to weight and high cost).
- **The Community House (\$100K grant):** Most of the \$100K has been spent but The Community House is saving about \$6K-\$7K in escrow because there is an issue with Wenham paying for the boiler due to a Wenham bylaw.

Hamilton DOR Trust Fund Distribution 11/22/19 = \$454,083 + \$63,587 = \$517,940 = 14.1% (173 Communities) PLUS more coming due to late budget approval

The match at 14% did go through and there is another \$25M to be divided among the CPA communities. However, Mr. Butler received word that they will need to figure out if they can use the funds for this year or not. The revenue is called "unanticipated" and it wasn't included in the FY'20 budget. Mr. Butler has referred the matter to Finance Director Marisa Batista. He said, as things stand now, the CPC has no grants going to Fall Town Meeting. The CPC has about \$531K in the bank today, which will be replenished at the end of the fiscal year.

Other Business As Necessary


CPC members signed and dated the Conflict of Interest forms and pledged that they will take the required ethics training.

Mr. Farrell said the Wenham CPC had expressed interest in meeting with the Hamilton CPC. Mr. Butler said they could do that in February, and Mr. Farrell said he would set it up. They could just have a meet and greet or perhaps discuss grant ideas. Mr. Butler said he heard the Wenham CPC banned giving money to any friends groups. Mary Alice Cookson suggested the two groups might discuss the turf field project.

It was decided that the next CPC meeting will be held on Feb. 13 at 7 p.m.

Adjournment

Mr. Preston made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:29 p.m. Mr. Farrell seconded the motion. The CPC voted unanimously among those present (5-0) to adjourn the meeting.


Mary Alice Cookson
Minutes Secretary

2-13-2020
Date

