

HAMILTON COMMUNITY PRESERVATION COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF MEETING

TELECONFERENCE

August 13, 2020

Members Present: Chair Jay Butler, Robert Preston, Shawn Farrell, Richard Boroff, and Kim Dietel

Members Absent: Chris Currier, Katherine Mittelbusher, and Sherry Leonard

Selectman Present: Jamie Knudsen and Shawn Farrell

CPC Coordinator: Patrick Shannon

Other Town Staff Present: Director of Planning & Inspections Patrick Reffett
Department of Public Works Director Tim Olson

Chair Jay Butler opened the Community Preservation Committee (CPC) meeting at 7:17 p.m. The meeting was delayed while waiting for quorum, which the CPC did obtain. The meeting had also been posted by the Board of Selectmen (BOS) and Town Hall Building Committee (THBC) due to the possibility that quorums of the BOS and THBC may be present.

Two grant applicants were present: Department of Public Works (DPW) Director Tim Olson, who had submitted a grant request for the Town Hall Restoration, and Jeff Kester, Secretary of the Building and Grounds Committee for the First Congregational Church of Hamilton, who was there to speak regarding the Church's grant request for steeple and clock tower renovation.

New Committee Member

Mr. Butler welcomed Ms. Dietel as the CPC's newest member.

Approve Minutes of the February 13, 2020 Meeting

Robert Preston made a motion to approve the Feb. 13 minutes. Mr. Farrell seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken with "ayes" from Mr. Preston, Richard Boroff, Ms. Dietel, Mr. Farrell, and Mr. Butler, (5-0) unanimous among those present.

Approve Unofficial Minutes of the July 9, 2020 Meeting (No Quorum)

Mr. Boroff made a motion to approve the July 9 unofficial Meeting Notes. Mr. Farrell seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken with “ayes” from Mr. Farrell, Mr. Boroff, and Mr. Butler, (3-0). *Mr. Preston abstained because he was absent that meeting and Ms. Dietel was not a CPC member at that time; however, a vote was not actually necessary since these were unofficial notes and not actual minutes.

Committee Reports

Mr. Farrell cited current board openings for the CPC, Council on Aging and Hamilton Historic District Commission (HHDC). He reported that at its last meeting, the BOS had discussed potential dates for Special Town Meeting (STM) in the fall and Annual Town Meeting in the spring. Returning to every other week trash collection was also discussed; the BOS is currently reviewing the data. The BOS also opened the STM warrant and discussed what warrant articles may be included. They also reviewed Town Manager goals.

Ms. Dietel reported that a Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) member was nominated and will go before the BOS. An alternate position is also open.

Mr. Boroff said the Open Space and Recreation Plan was tentatively approved by the State. It has been posted on the CPC’s webpage. Mr. Boroff deferred to Director of Planning & Inspections Patrick Reffett for an update on recent Planning Board activity.

Mr. Reffett said the Planning Board was working on a flexible zoning bylaw prepared by a land use attorney that the Town of Wenham has been using for a couple of years. There is application for its use in Hamilton, particularly on sites that have valuable open space that might have potential for development for use as open space as well as for public use. He added that Canter Brook is pushing to have more of its units released from its tripartite agreement to sell more units at a faster pace than what they had originally intended, which is good news.

Status of CPC Finances

Mr. Butler discussed numbers he received from Finance Director Marisa Batista. On hand for the CPC: \$29,675.82 in the Historical Preservation category; \$61.52 in Open Space and Recreation; \$41,945 in Community Housing. In the Unreserved Account is \$549,583.35. This gives a total of \$641,265.69 as of August 1.

Search for New Committee Member

CPC Coordinator Pat Shannon had posted the application for a new CPC Committee member on the CPC web page.

CPC Grant Request for Funding of Town Hall Renovations

Mr. Butler explained this request is for funding. The CPC waived the eligibility hearing for this project because it has already gone before the CPC a number of times and was deemed eligible.

DPW Director Mr. Olson, who submitted the grant request for the Town Hall Restoration, detailed a history of the project since 2017. He said it was now about 75-80% ready to go with contact drawings. Despite additional expenses due to COVID pandemic, the estimate is below what was presented last fall. The square-foot pricing is lower. Planning Board site plan approval was given as well as ZBA approval. Mr. Olson said he felt comfortable the HHDC will approve the project also. At STM, he anticipates a CPC warrant article and a debt exclusion by the Town, which would then be subject to an election in late November or early December. Gordon Conwell Theological Seminary has made a verbal agreement to provide temporary office space for Town Hall employees at no charge—about \$200K in savings. Mr. Boroff asked where the office space would be located. Mr. Olson said Pilgrim Hall on the Seminary campus.

Mr. Olson acknowledged \$3M is a large ask, and he understands it might limit the CPC being able to fund other projects for some time. However, he said he wanted to limit the amount of taxpayer money requested at Town Meeting. While he said other grants are available and he is pursuing them, there aren't many out there and they are for small amounts.

Mr. Preston said the CPC had been approached in the past by the Schools for recreation fields and he wanted it made clear that if the CPC commits to this project, it will not be able to meet that request. He confirmed Mr. Olson's statement that after the \$3M, the CPC would only have about \$100K left to work with. Mr. Olson said he had full support of the Town Hall Building Committee and the BOS. If the \$3M is granted by the CPC, that leaves \$4.7M for the Town to fund itself, which would be about 26 cents per 1,000 on the tax rate. Ideally, he would like to keep that under 30 cents.

Other amounts that the CPC could contribute to this project were mulled over and it was agreed that \$3M is the right ask. This brought up that it may be a good time for someone to introduce a citizen's petition to increase the Town's 2% surcharge to 3%. Mr. Butler had recently presented supporting data to the BOS showing that would amount to an increase of approximately \$66 per year for a \$500K property, paid quarterly with one's property tax bill, which is about \$17 per quarter—a relatively modest increase. The CPC would then have a substantial increase in funds to work with (increasing its amount from \$563K to \$901K).

Ms. Dietel, who has a background in fundraising and grant writing, asked Mr. Olson if any fundraising had been done for Town Hall. He said he didn't have the resources or time to commit to that, but a Friends group would be welcome. Mr. Preston said he thought it circumspect to ask residents to donate to their own Town Hall since as taxpayers they would already be doing that; however, it was discussed that perhaps the public might fund certain aspects of the project, buying bricks with their names on them or something of that nature. Mr. Preston said unless the CPC moves to a 3% surcharge, it is going to be hamstrung from funding other projects, such as assistance to help homeowners maintain their homes. Mr. Butler reminded Mr. Preston that any CPC Rental Assistance was only for rent and not for mortgage payments.

Mr. Farrell asked if there were CPC money available for public relations efforts. Mr. Olson said he would work with Mr. Shannon and the social media person on staff to push out information and renderings of the Town Hall Project.

Decision on Funding:

Mr. Preston made a motion to approve the \$3M grant request for Town Hall with the appropriate provisos outlined for a “project start” clause (rather than a sunset clause) and that the balance of funding for the project be approved before the CPC releases the money. Mr. Farrell seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken with “ayes” from Mr. Preston, Mr. Boroff, Ms. Dietel, Mr. Farrell, and Mr. Butler, (5-0) unanimous among those present.

Mr. Olson left the meeting.

CPC Grant Request for Funding of First Congregational Church of Hamilton Steeple and Clock Tower Renovation

Mr. Butler explained this is an eligibility request. He said the application was complete; the applicant is the church’s Director of Operations Cece Gough. Mr. Kester, the Secretary of the Building and Grounds Subcommittee for the First Congregational Church of Hamilton, was representing the church.

The CPC has in the past given the church a grant for refinishing and repainting the clock. It was discussed that the current project will be subject to HHDC and Planning Board approval. Mr. Boroff asked why maintenance work had to go before the Planning Board. Mr. Kester did not know. Mr. Preston said it might be premature to talk about this until more details are discussed as the CPC has restrictions on using funds for maintenance. Mr. Butler asserted that the work was not maintenance, but was preserving a historic building within the Historic District.

Mr. Kester said the church is on the State record as part of Hamilton’s Historic District, but is not a registered historic structure with the State. Mr. Kester said the wood of the steeple had a great deal of rot and the wood needs to be replaced. Mr. Preston said they should look at how the Town of Wenham handled the steeple in town that it had voted to fund.

Decision on Eligibility:

Mr. Farrell made a motion to vote approvingly for the eligibility of the First Congregational Church’s grant application for its renovation. Mr. Preston seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken with “ayes” from Mr. Preston, Mr. Boroff, Ms. Dietel, Mr. Farrell, and Mr. Butler, (5-0) unanimous among those present.

It was suggested by Mr. Farrell and confirmed by Mr. Butler that they did not want Mr. Kester to leave the meeting without some idea of what to expect regarding funding. The funding hearing will take place at the next CPC meeting. Mr. Farrell explained to Mr. Kester that often the CPC wanted to see that an applicant had “skin in the game” and inquired if the church had pursued

fundraising. Mr. Kester explained the church had recently had a capital campaign, and last year they had lost a boiler. Mr. Butler asked about the number of church members; the answer was 320. Ms. Dietel offered insight from the standpoint of a grant writer, saying there is money for funding historic buildings, but the church needs to be clear on restoration vs. maintenance.

The CPC members discussed other projects they anticipated coming before the Committee. Mr. Farrell asked if the CPC anticipated an ask from the Affordable Housing Trust for another \$200K-\$250K. Mr. Shannon said he hadn't heard anything from AHT Chair Marnie Crouch regarding a specific ask. Mr. Farrell told Mr. Kester it was likely the CPC could grant the church between \$80K-\$100K. Mr. Kester said he was happy with that. He asked when the funding application was due. Mr. Butler said the CPC would need it well in advance of its next meeting, which is Sept. 10.

Review of an Open Grant

- **Town Hall OPM/Design Services**—Mr. Butler gave an update and said this grant was moving along.

Vote for Closure of Six Grants:

- **Brooks House Renovations**
- **Knotweed Removal Program**
- **Affordable Housing Trust**
- **Master Plan Housing Element**
- **Weaver Pond Restoration**
- **The Community House**

Mr. Farrell made a motion to close out all six grants listed above. Mr. Preston seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken with “ayes” from Mr. Butler, Mr. Preston, Mr. Boroff, Ms. Dietel, and Mr. Farrell, (5-0) unanimous among those present.

CPC Plan Update

Mr. Butler said he and Mr. Shannon had updated the CPC Plan, which is published on the Town website, and they had added a section about the recent affordable housing plan. They also cleaned up the Committee list and various charts.

Decision:

Mr. Preston made a motion to approve the CPC Plan Update. Mr. Farrell seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken with “ayes” from Mr. Preston, Mr. Boroff, Ms. Dietel, Mr. Farrell, and Mr. Butler, (5-0) unanimous among those present.

Annual Meeting Results

The public hearing, held at the BOS Meeting on July 27 went well, according to Mr. Butler and Mr. Farrell.

Update of Web Page

Mr. Butler said he and Mr. Shannon updated the CPC page on the Town website.

Annual Election of Officers

Mr. Farrell made a motion to nominate Mr. Butler to continue as CPC Chair. Mr. Preston seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken with “ayes” from Mr. Preston, Mr. Boroff, Mr. Dietel, and Mr. Farrell, (4-0). *Mr. Butler did not vote.

Mr. Butler made a motion to nominate Mr. Preston to continue as CPC Vice-Chair. Mr. Farrell seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken with “ayes” from Mr. Butler, Mr. Preston, Mr. Boroff, Ms. Dietel, and Mr. Butler, (5-0) unanimous among those present.

Potential CPC Training with KP Law

Potential Co-Meeting with Wenham CPC

The Vice-Chair of Wenham’s CPC had reached out to Mr. Farrell prior to COVID. The two CPCs were interested in arranging a joint meeting and training session with their Town Counsel KP Law. Mr. Farrell will follow up.

Mr. Preston thanked Mr. Butler for all of his hard work. The “motion” was “seconded” by the rest of the Committee.

Other Business as Necessary

Mr. Butler said the Town Hall Building Committee will meet on Aug. 20. At that time, they will have the latest cost estimates. After that they will send bid packages out to contractors.

Adjournment

Mr. Preston made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:33 p.m. Mr. Farrell seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken with “ayes” from Mr. Preston, Mr. Boroff, Ms. Dietel, Mr. Farrell, and Mr. Butler, (5-0) unanimous among those present.

Prepared by:



Mary Alice Cookson
Minutes Secretary



Date