

# HAMILTON COMMUNITY PRESERVATION COMMITTEE

## Minutes of the Meeting

### Teleconference

February 11, 2021

Members Present: Chair Jay Butler, Shawn Farrell, Robert Preston, Kim Dietel, and Sherry Leonard

Members Absent: Katherine Mittelbusher, Richard Boroff, and Chris Currier

Coordinator: Pat Shannon

### **Call to Order**

Chair Jay Butler opened the Community Preservation Committee (CPC) meeting shortly after 7 p.m. There was no quorum (only four members were present) so he announced it would be an informal meeting. However, a quorum was attained later in the meeting when Sherry Leonard arrived.

### **Introduction of Prospective Member**

Mr. Butler invited those present to introduce themselves to the candidate for the at-large CPC position, Richard "Rick" Johanson. Also present was Steve Ozahowski, Chair of the Recreation Board and Board of Assessors.

### **Approval of Dec. 10, 2020 Meeting Minutes**

The vote was at first postponed due to lack of quorum; however, was later approved (see below).

### **Committee Reports**

Mr. Farrell reported on the Feb. 1 Board of Selectmen meeting. He cited current Board and Committee openings. He said the BOS approved Feb. 20 as the date of the budget meeting and opening the Annual Town Meeting (ATM) warrant. The Town Manager evaluation is in process. A building permit was recently pulled for the cell tower behind Town Hall.

Mr. Butler said he just learned the Hamilton Wenham Regional School District is considering building a new school in the next three to five years. Mr. Farrell confirmed this.

Sherry Leonard joined the meeting, creating a quorum and Mr. Butler went back to the Minutes agenda item.

### **Approval of Dec. 10, 2020 Meeting Minutes**

Mr. Farrell made a motion to approve the Dec. 10, 2020 meeting minutes. Mr. Preston seconded the motion. A roll-call vote was taken with “ayes” from Mr. Preston, Mr. Farrell, Ms. Leonard, Ms. Dietel, and Mr. Butler, (5-0) unanimous among those present.

### **Committee Reports (Continued)**

Ms. Leonard reported on the Housing Authority’s porch projects and bathroom renovations. Mr. Farrell added that the property at 59/63 Willow Street had closed and is now in the control of the developer. The project will add about 18 affordable units to the Town’s subsidized housing inventory (SHI).

### **Funding Request for Patton Park Tennis Courts**

Mr. Ozahowski was representing the applicant, the Recreation Board, regarding the \$32K funding request for resurfacing the three tennis courts at Patton Park. It was determined the project was an eligible capital project as it extends the life of the courts and qualifies for CPC funding. Two quotes were obtained. Mr. Ozahowski complimented Recreation Director Sean Timmons’ competence and said the work needs to be done. He compared the situation to Wenham’s Pingree courts, which are now unusable. He said if the Rec. Dept. doesn’t act, the situation will get worse. Mr. Butler said he had received endorsements of the project from several Pickleball players. Mr. Ozahowski commented on the popularity of Pickleball and said the letters represented a lot of people who use the tennis courts.

Mr. Preston inquired about other projects coming before the CPC. He said the reality is that if the surcharge is raised (from 2% to 3%), the CPC wouldn’t receive a State match for the increase for almost two years, which wouldn’t help the present need for the Town Hall project. Since the tennis court project is currently the only request the CPC has before it for Annual Town Meeting (ATM) this spring, it was his opinion the CPC should vote to approve it.

Mr. Farrell had questions on the two quotes, which seemed identical in scope but were \$2K apart. Mr. Shannon explained one crack repair had three membranes and the other had four. Mr. Butler said they would put an initiation date on the grant of two years out. Mr. Butler said photos had been sent to show the condition of the courts and asked if those should be displayed at ATM. Mr. Farrell suggested the CPC just have the photos on-hand in case they are needed.

Ms. Dietel asked about future maintenance of the courts and whether the Rec. Dept. had funds to make sure these cracks didn’t happen again. Mr. Ozahowski said cracks happen due to trees in the area and can’t be controlled. Mr. Butler said when they had asked the Finance Director about whether this project were considered a capital expense or maintenance, it was determined it extends the life of the courts for about 10 years. A tennis company also classified it as a capital expense. Mr. Farrell said this process wasn’t just filling cracks, it involved cutting out parts out and redoing them. Ms. Leonard said she was worried someone might trip on a crack and get

injured. She was told that the cracks aren't that bad yet. Mr. Shannon said the project should start around July 1. Mr. Farrell said it would only take about five days to a week to complete.

**Decision:**

Mr. Farrell made a motion to approve the funding request for the Patton Park tennis court renovations. Mr. Preston seconded the motion. A roll-call vote was taken with "ayes" from Mr. Butler, Mr. Preston, Mr. Farrell, Ms. Leonard, and Ms. Dietel, (5-0) unanimous among those present.

With the eligibility and funding requests now approved by the CPC, Mr. Butler noted this item will appear as a warrant article at ATM.

**Review of Open Grants**

- Town Hall Renovation, Addition, and Preservation Project: Special Town Meeting (STM) approved a \$3M grant for the project and had placed a requirement that the additional \$4.7M bond needed to be approved at a Special Election, which was held on Dec. 3, but that vote failed (669 in favor to 441 opposed). However, 80% of the voters in the Town had not voted so the Town Hall Building Committee (THBC) has been meeting to determine the problem and come up with solutions. In the midst of this, the Town hired a communications consultant to help. Mr. Butler said if the Town goes to a 3% surcharge, the CPC could pick up the whole tab (\$3M grant approved plus the \$4.7M). He and Mr. Shannon have been working to figure out the numbers; however, the problem is they wouldn't see any money until 2023 even if the surcharge increase was approved at ATM on May 1 because it is a long process. There was a long discussion on numbers—if the Town goes to a 3% surcharge, it almost doubles the Town's CPC funds.

Ms. Leonard said she thought it worth pursuing because for just a short amount of money per household, there was much "bang for the buck" for getting projects through that people want. However, Mr. Butler said the THBC wouldn't want to wait two years to do the Town Hall project and there was speculation about what the appetite for the surcharge increase would be given the current pandemic, job losses, etc. Mr. Preston said unlike with property taxes, if a family can't afford the surcharge based on their median income, they can apply to have it waived. He said there aren't that many other big projects coming up that would be eligible for CPC funds. One discussed is a new turf field, but there are provisions regarding what part of the project can and can't be funded. There is also \$500K in an account that can be used for a turf field, but Wenham would have to match the amount contributed by Hamilton.

One other comment that came out of the THBC, was an ask if the CPC could bump up the \$3M grant amount. Mr. Butler said he made an attempt to figure out if the CPC could afford it and is still working that out, but his gut says no. The numbers were just too big and it would preclude the CPC from being able to fund other projects. Mr. Butler said the

Capital Committee was looking at the Town Hall project to try and whittle down the effort and do smaller renovations instead of the whole building, such as adding an elevator. Mr. Farrell said if they do any repairs, they may trigger fire suppression and ADA-compliance requirements that push them up to \$5M or so. Mr. Butler said they need to see what is decided at the Feb. 20 Board of Selectmen budget meeting and would receive guidance after that. Mr. Farrell said the BOS had agreed to move the project to ATM unless certain things happened that made that not work.

Mr. Farrell asked about the future projects on the grants list. Mr. Butler said most of them had fallen off and others, such as the sledding hill and the beach at Chebacco Lake, will likely be taken off soon. However, Mr. Butler mentioned the Chebacco Beach redevelopment might gain interest in light of the potential 50-house development proposed on 66 acres of Meadowbrook Farm property. Both Ms. Dietel and Mr. Farrell noted that no formal plans had been submitted to the Town. Mr. Shannon said there wasn't much else on the grants list now except for grants to the Affordable Housing Trust and also the Town Hall. Mr. Preston asked about the removal of knotweed (invasive species). Mr. Farrell said that grant was closed and not all the money was spent.

- First Congregational Church of Hamilton Belfry and Clock Tower Renovations: A \$75K grant was approved by the CPC. The Hamilton Historic District Commission (HHDC) approved the historic preservation restriction and sent over to the church and is waiting to have it finalized. Mr. Shannon wasn't aware of when construction will start, but believes it will be this summer.
- Affordable Housing Trust (AHT) Community Housing Projects: The AHT met last evening and approved a request for a commitment of funds by Essex County Habitat for Humanity for \$400K with proof of other funding for 434 Asbury St. (across from Canter Brook). Habitat has a commitment from the Institution for Savings and also received a grant from the Home Consortium that they are applying for in phases. They anticipate the project to build 10 units to be a three-year project. Mr. Farrell asked about the new Executive Director Meegan O'Neil, who was previously with Merrimack Valley Habitat. (Merrimack merged with Habitat for Humanity North Shore and became Essex County Habitat.) Don Preston is still on the Board of Directors and working on the project.

### **MA Open Meeting Law and Conflict of Interest Documents**

Mr. Butler said he forwarded a notice from the Town Clerk that they are all required to sign and validate they've read the Open Meeting Law and Conflict of Interest documents. Mr. Preston said he didn't receive the email. It was sent on Jan. 19 per Mr. Farrell. Mr. Butler will resend.

### **Surcharge Increase to 3%**

Previously discussed.

**Other Business as Necessary**

Mr. Shannon said according to the BOS Appointments Policy, the BOS likes to see a vote from the committee asking for the appointment and also to receive a recommendation or other correspondence from the Chair. For that reason, Mr. Butler took a roll-call vote to recommend Mr. Johanson as the newest at-large member of the CPC.

**Decision:**

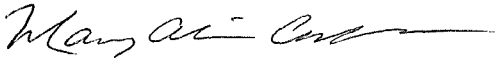
A roll-call vote to recommend Mr. Johanson was taken with “ayes” from Mr. Butler, Mr. Preston, Mr. Farrell, Ms. Leonard, and Mr. Dietel, (5-0) unanimous among those present.

Mr. Shannon said he would amend the agenda for the Tuesday evening BOS meeting to include Mr. Johanson’s appointment. Mr. Johanson was also asked by Mr. Farrell to appear at the BOS meeting. He agreed to do so.


**Adjourn**

Mr. Preston made a motion to adjourn the meeting at approximately 8:10 p.m. Mr. Farrell seconded the motion. A roll-call vote was taken with “ayes” from Mr. Preston, Mr. Farrell, Ms. Leonard, Ms. Dietel, and Mr. Butler, (5-0) unanimous among those present.

Prepared By:

	<u>3-12-2021</u>
Mary Alice Cookson	Date
Minutes Secretary	

Attest:

	<u>3/19/21</u>
Pat Shannon	Date

**Documents Discussed at Meeting:**

- Minutes of CPC, Dec. 10, 2020, Minutes Secretary Mary Alice Cookson
- Application for Appointment for Board/Committee Membership—Richard T. (Rick) Johanson
- Application for Community Preservation Funding—Patton Park Tennis Court Improvement Project, Sean Timmons
- Two photos of tennis court cracks
- Letter of Endorsement for the project by six residents
- New England Sealcoating Co., Inc. Proposal—two estimates