

HAMILTON COMMUNITY PRESERVATION COMMITTEE

Minutes of the Meeting

Teleconference

October 14, 2021

Members Present: Chair Jay Butler, Kim Dietel, Rick Johanson, Shawn Farrell, and Kirsten Bridier

Members Absent: Richard Boroff, Robert Preston, and Sherry Leonard

Coordinator: Laurie Wilson

Others Present: John McGrath, Finance and Advisory Committee Liaison to the CPC

Call to Order and Roll Call

Chair Jay Butler called the Community Preservation Committee (CPC) Zoom meeting to order at approximately 7 p.m. with a quorum present.

Introduction of New Member Kristin Bridier, HHDC [Hamilton Historic District Commission] Rep

Mr. Butler invited the board and those present to introduce themselves.

Committee Vacancy—ConCom [Conservation Commission] rep

Mr. Butler noted the CPC is still missing a rep from the ConCom. The CPC is a nine-member committee that currently has eight members.

Approval of Meeting Minutes of Sept. 2, 2021

It was decided to delay the minutes vote until the next meeting because Ms. Bridier is unable to vote on them (since she was not a member on Sept. 2) and therefore, they are lacking a quorum.

Committee Member Reports

Mr. Farrell reported on the Board of Selectmen (BOS)/Select Board. He listed the current Town board and committee openings. He said the BOS discussed an Eagle Scout project for the Senior Center involving painting and beautifying the outdoor space. A short joint BOS/FinCom was held to review the warrant, which is currently at the printer. The BOS discussed its anti-fraud

financial policy with Finance Director Alex Magee. A guest flag-raising policy was discussed and continues to be controversial. An Indigenous Land Acknowledgement proposal brought forth by a high school student was reviewed. The BOS is awaiting Town Counsel's input on questions relating to the ABCC (Alcoholic Beverage Control Commission) on a local liquor license and alcohol policy. The BOS held an anti-bias training/retreat.

In responding to a question from Mr. Butler, Ms. Bridier said the HHDC had approved a small change concerning construction in the Historic District and is waiting for revised plans on another small change. Outdoor lighting and signage for the First Congregational Church of Hamilton were approved. CPC Coordinator Laurie Wilson noted the Church would be working on its belfry/clock tower in the spring, which was approved as a CPC grant. Ms. Bridier said there hadn't been any recent discussion on any outdoor renovation work for the Town Hall. Ms. Wilson said they should put the topic on the agenda for next meeting.

Review of Open Grants

- **Town Hall Renovation, Addition, and Preservation Project:** Ms. Wilson had no updates to report.
- **Patton Park Tennis Court Renovations:** She said the courts were just finished. They came in at about \$4K under the grant amount. The basketball courts were completed at the same time and paid for through the Recreation Department's revolving fund.
- **First Congregational Church of Hamilton, Belfry and Clock Tower Renovation:** Will be started in the spring.

Mr. Butler suggested taking a vote to close out the grant for the tennis courts as Recreation Director Sean Timmons had sent the CPC a note saying the work was completed. The grant was for \$32K and \$28K was spent. The remaining escrowed funds will be returned to the CPC.

Ms. Wilson suggested holding up on that vote as was suggested by Dyan Katz in the Finance Department to make sure no more funds are needed in the event that something wasn't done properly. The CPC decided it will wait. Finance and Advisory Committee member John McGrath commented favorably on the look of the tennis courts.

Update on the Hamilton Wenham Regional School District Athletic Facilities Improvement Working Group and The Hamilton Wenham Towns United for Recreational Fields (HWTURF) Fundraising Group

Mr. Butler said the most recent meeting was on Sept. 27 at which the new Hamilton Wenham Regional School District Superintendent Eric Tracey was present. Mr. Butler read his meeting notes:

HWRHS, Conference Room, 6:00 – 7:10 PM

Attendees: Tom Geary, Jay Butler, Patrick Waddell, Peter Gourdeau, Michelle Horgan, Eric Tracy, Joe Maher, Craig Genualdo

- Approved plan for Gale Associates to do phase 1 of softball field and tennis court expansion including schematics, wetland determination, and costing
- Tom will ask Gale Assoc. to update all previous 2015 cost estimates in order to establish a project cost target goal
- Tom will ask Gale Assoc. to renew all previous permits by asking for another extension
- Past cost estimates will be value engineered as appropriate
- Fundraising effort has not yet started per Peter
- School Capital Plan for field improvements not yet enacted/approved
- Michelle agreed to help spearhead CPC surcharge increase to 3% under the field improvement cause
- Patrick expressed concern over Wenham's ability to appropriately match Hamilton's contributions via the 1/3 and 2/3's split.
- Tom announced that more comprehensive field maintenance plans are being enacted now
- Organized Town sports teams' utilization of fields is currently being limited by Craig due to their poor condition
- Eric and Tom offered to meet with the CPC as appropriate in the future and Jay indicated that it would be appreciated
- Next meeting is Monday Nov. 1.

Kim Dietel asked if the CPC could put a stipulation on a grant for a turf field saying that Wenham's CPC would have to match the amount of the grant or provide a certain amount. Mr. Butler said yes they could and probably should in light of the 2/3 and 1/3 normal split that is done by the two towns. Ms. Dietel asked if Hamilton had made such a stipulation for Community House grants in the past. He replied no. Mr. Farrell elaborated that in the past, such as for the school playgrounds, Hamilton had matched Wenham's grant. It was discussed that there is some "politics" on the committee as some are not in favor of the turf field. Mr. Butler said Mr. Geary was going to be doing some comprehensive field maintenance of the school fields that hadn't been done previously. He said the "sins of the past" were brought up, such as what had happened with the Winthrop School playground. Both Towns have said they will entertain grant requests that come from the School Department directly rather than from Friends groups.

Review of Potential Grant Requirements/Restrictions for School Department Grants for Athletic Field Improvements

Mr. Butler said a grant request for the turf field is a long way off, but he wanted the CPC to comment on potential restrictions that had been discussed over the years so he could have a sense of what the current membership might want. He reviewed his list as follows:

1. The full scope of the project including all costs and timelines needs to be presented to the CPC. Potential funding sources will need to be identified.
2. The \$500K held in escrow for recreational fields from the sale of property at the Patton Homestead must be utilized before a CPC grant can be considered.
3. Any CPC grants will be made directly to the School Department vs. the TURF fundraising group.
4. Potential restrictions on the use of CPC funds for turf material and other structures need to be investigated with the Community Preservation Coalition office and Town Counsel.
5. CPC Grants to the School Department
 - a. The School Department must commit to a capital spending plan to fund a portion of the project.
 - b. There will be a requirement placed on any grant that specifically details what the grant is funding with the provision that construction start for that portion of the project within 2 years.

- c. Detailed maintenance plans need to be developed, including an end-of-life turf replacement plan and proper recycling of turf material.
 - d. A detailed agreement with the School Department is required for the public and organized sports use of the facilities.
 - e. Safety issues regarding potential carcinogens in the turf material and thermal heating issues with the turf material need to be addressed.
6. A significant funding request from the CPC may require an effort to increase the CPC surcharge to 3%, an approximate 3-year effort that will need to be led by athletic field improvement supporters

It was brought up by Ms. Wilson that if CPC funds aren't allowed to be used to purchase the turf materials themselves, perhaps they could place a restriction to exclude the maintenance of the turf material itself and speaks only to the general maintenance of the facility itself.

Rick Johanson said one parameter he wanted to see was that the applicant "come with cash" such as what is required when one applies for a mortgage, 10% down, for example. He said that way the CPC wouldn't just be viewed as "easy money." He said it could be worded that if the applicant had the 10%, it would unlock the CPC grant. Ms. Dietel, speaking from her experience as a professional grant writer, said the idea was not unreasonable or unusual in the world of fundraising and she was also in favor of it.

Ms. Wilson brought up the issue of whether Wenham would need to match Hamilton's contribution of the \$500K it has in escrow (see #2 above). Mr. Butler said he spoke with Town Manager Joe Domelowicz Jr. about this and it was thought that Hamilton should just do what it needed to do and not worry about Wenham provided the Town Meeting decision required to utilize the funds was passed. Mr. Butler said they would need to wait until Annual Town Meeting in the spring to see if the School puts its capital plan back in motion and has money within its budget for school fields. The \$10M-\$12M project is going to need to be broken up into segments.

The Town Hall renovation project was discussed and some history given about how the project was approved twice by Town Meeting but failed at the ballot by a 71-vote margin. Mr. Johanson said with the Town's AAA bond rating, people should be happy to purchase the Town's municipal bonds. Mr. McGrath said it boiled down to a "get out the vote" effort. Ms. Wilson, as someone who worked the polls, said there was a lot of misunderstanding by people that it was an either/or decision regarding renovating Town Hall or building a turf field. She said it seemed that the younger demographics voted down the Town Hall.

Ms. Bridier asked if money was provided for the first phase of a project, if applicants could come back and ask for more funds for the next phase. Mr. Butler said yes, applicants can come back to the CPC with an ask as many times as they like.

Other Business as Necessary

Mr. Butler complimented Ms. Wilson on her work updating the CPC plan and webpages.

Mr. Butler noted the BOS had written a warrant article for reimbursing the Kaminski-Clarkes for property taxes paid on 550 Highland Street. The issue will be decided at Special Town Meeting (STM). There has been some worry about obtaining a quorum for STM. One of the votes involves granting National Grid an easement to complete its work on the cell tower, which may be one incentive for people to come out and vote.

The next CPC meeting falls on Thursday, Nov. 11, which is Veterans Day, and the CPC cannot hold a meeting on a State holiday. Therefore, the next CPC meeting will be held on Wednesday, Nov. 10.

Adjournment Roll Call

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

Prepared by:

 12/9/2021
Mary Alice Cookson Date
Minutes Secretary

Respectfully submitted as approved at the 12/9/21 meeting.
Laurie Wilson, Coordinator

Documents Discussed at Meeting:

- Meeting Minutes of Sept. 2, 2021, Mary Alice Cookson