

# Groton Community Preservation Committee

## Minutes of Public Meeting of 28 September 2005

Location: 1st Floor Meeting Room, Town Hall

Present: Bruce H. Easom (Secretary, arrived at 7:25 PM), Dan Emerson, Rick Hughson, Carolyn Perkins (Vice Chair) and Mike Roberts (Chairman)

Absent: Robert DeGroot and one as-yet un-named member of the Parks Commission

The Chairman brought the public meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

The first proposal up for discussion was the Norris Property proposal (Project 2005-1) ? gave a presentation on the proposal

The second proposal discussed was the Conservation Fund proposal (Project 2005-2) Peter Morrison, Chairman of the Conservation Commission, described the proposal. The Conservation Commission is proposing to fund the Conservation Fund with \$200,000 from the CPA open space funds. After Peter Morrison's presentation, questions were received from the public. Brooks Lyman commented that the requested sum of \$200,000 is sort of a magic number in that it is the sum that the Conservation Commission has historically asked for at Town Meeting. Mr. Lyman said that while \$200,000 represents 50% of the available funds it FY 2006, it would represent a more modest fraction in subsequent years. Mr. Lyman pointed out that the alternative of getting proposed spending on open space to a special town meeting can, in many cases, be expensive and too slow. Funding the Conservation Commission at least allows them to place a deposit on properties giving the town time to act if larger sums of money are required.

Paul Funch commented that funding the Conservation Fund through the CPA was a major reason that the CPA was adopted. Paul also stressed that speed is important in being able to acquire parcels that become available.

The Historic Document Preservation proposal (Project 2005-3) was discussed next. The Town Clerk, Onerina Malloney, described the proposal to preserve town records going back to the 1700s. The Clerk noted that it was possible for the project to be completed over a 4 or 5 year period. She noted that the proposal's management plan prioritizes the restoration to those volumes in the worst condition.

The Chairman read aloud a letter from the Historical Commission asking that the best practices be used to preserve the volumes. Rich Hughson commented that the Clerk had received only one quote for restoring the documents and that more than one may be

required. Bruce H. Easom asked the Clerk what would be the consequences of a one-year delay in the restoration to the integrity of the volumes. The Clerk was unable to provide an answer to the question. Brooks Lyman noted that, although this would be multi-year project, it did have a definite scope and end point. Alvin Collins of the Historical Commission spoke in favor of the proposal.

The Rocky Ridge Estates proposal (Project 2005-4) was discussed next. Alicia Hersey, a member of the Groton Housing Authority, (GHA), gave a presentation describing the proposal. Nine units of affordable housing are going to be created in David Moulton's Rocky Hill Subdivision. This proposal is asking that \$90,000 in CPA community housing funds be used to reduce the debt service on these 9 units which would then allow the GHA to reduce the rent it charges to the occupants of these units. The CPA community housing funds would be used to increase the inventory of lower rent housing stock in the town. Brooks Lyman added that if the GHA can lower its debt service then they can lower the rents it charges. Brooks noted that the Housing Authority does receive a small subsidy from the state and that the Groton Housing Authority is in the business of renting its affordable housing stock to those who qualify, thereby making Groton a more diverse community.

Carolyn Perkins asked about the other funding sources being used to acquire the nine units. Alicia Hersey said that the DHCD (Department of Housing and Community Development) would be giving the Groton Housing Authority a grant of \$900,000 and that the balance, after a contribution of \$21,000 from the GHA, of \$673,492 would be lent to the GHA by the Massachusetts Housing Partnership. Brooks Lyman added that the current 40B process does not generate and moderate housing. It only generates affordable housing. Rick Hughson asked for further clarification on the cost sharing numbers.

Alvin Collins asked what the process was of ensuring that Groton resident get priority in occupying these units. Alicia said that state has a set of rules that guarantee fairness but that it is oftentimes difficult to get Groton residents to move fast enough to take advantage of the priority give them.

The Community Skate Park proposal (Project 2005-5) was discussed next. The Chairman reported that the Recreation Commission has withdrawn this proposal.

The Community Preservation Study proposal (Project 2005-7) was discussed next. Alvin Collins of the Historical Commission presented a summary of the proposal. Alvin reported that many historical sites in town have not been documented. Alvin said the proposal calls for the Historical Commission to hire an outside professional to survey the town and put together a list of properties and register them with the Massachusetts Historical Commission. Alvin estimated that about 150 studies could be achieved for the requested \$90,000 and that this would be the first step in about a three-year long effort. Alvin said that the Historical Commission would like to see the information generated by this survey be available at the library, on CDs and on the internet.

Carolyn Perkins asked Alvin about some of the data forms included with the proposal submission. Alvin answered that the forms were included as examples of what would be produced by the surveying team. Dan Emerson asked if there were any matching funds available for this work. Alvin replied that the Massachusetts Historical Commission used to have funds available for this kind of work, but not in recent years. Alvin said that initial project progress might help make further funding available.

The Committee next discussed the Fitch's Bridge proposal (Project 2005-9). David Maneugian presented a summary of the proposal to restore Fitch's bridge to be used by pedestrians, equestrians and bicyclists. The overall objective of the proposal is to put together a plan for restoring the historic Fitch's Bridge over the Nashua River. After his presentation, David presented the Chairman with more signed petitions supporting the restoration of the bridge. David estimated that the cost of restoring the bridge would be between \$425,000 and \$470,000 not including between \$40,000 and \$50,000 to complete the required structural design. David expressed hope that having the structural design done would allow the project to receive highway funds earmarked for promoting alternative modes of transportation.

Alvin Collins asked if, after the bridge gets repaired, if the bridge gets back on the state's inspection list. David replied that, based on his conversation with the state, they would come out and inspect the bridge periodically. David estimated that over the next 10 or 15 years between \$10,000 and \$15,000 would be required for painting and repairing deck boards. David was not sure who would be required to pay for this upkeep.

Gordon Rauf, of the Groton Road Runners, asked what was the status of the land on the east side of the bridge and if any previous engineering studies had been done. Bruce H. Easom answered that the approaches to the bridge on both the east and west sides were public ways. David Maneugian answered that an engineering study had been done by the Peterson Company a few years ago as part of an attempt to get T-21 funding to restore the bridge. The project came in 2<sup>nd</sup> and so no funding was forthcoming. David reported going before this board again recently and receiving encouragement to submit a new proposal. Gordon spoke in favor of restoring the bridge and said that it would provide much-needed access between Groton and West Groton. Gordon also said that it might be useful to investigate using the bridge for emergency vehicle access across the river as well.

Bruce H. Easom moved to adjourn the public meeting. Rick Hughson seconded the motion. The motion carried by unanimous vote and the hearing adjourned at 10:04 PM

Respectfully submitted,

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Bruce H. Eason

18 October 2005  
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Date

Secretary  
Groton Community Preservation Committee

These minutes were approved as drafted by unanimous vote on 17 October 2005.