

# Groton Community Preservation Committee

Minutes of Public Meeting of February 2, 2009

**Location:** Legion Hall

**Time:** 7:30 PM

**Members Present:** Bruce Easom (Chairman), Dan Emerson, Mike Roberts, Rick Hughson (Treasurer), Jon Strauss

**Members Absent:** Carolyn Perkins (Secretary), Robert DeGroot (Vice-Chair)

**Guests:** Don Black, Groton Youth Baseball, Sally Smith,

**The Chairman called the meeting to order at 7:35 PM.**

Mr. Easom reviews agenda.

## **1. Public Notice Statement**

Mr. Easom reads aloud the Public Meeting Notice he intends on advertising. It is his opinion that the advertisement be published 3 weeks in advance rather than the required 2 weeks. Prices for both the Groton Landmark and Groton Herald are discussed, along with who is responsible for payment.

*Mr. Hughson moves to publish notice three weeks prior to deadline. Mr. Roberts seconds and the vote is unanimous.*

## **2. Field of Dreams Proposal**

Mr. Black begins with brief review of the project. This proposal is a joint application of both the Parks committee and Groton Youth Baseball. The intention is to create a safe and qualifying field for youth organization, including lights which would allow for evening games. To date an informal meeting has taken place with conservation, and in their opinion there is plenty of room. A site walk is imminent, and it's acknowledged that a site plan review with the planning board is necessary. The following is the feedback given by the CPA committee.

Mike Roberts: Questions economic feasibility of GYB and the costs associated with lighting, and asks if the lights are metered separate by baseball, as the Town could not afford this. Mr. Roberts also questions whether the water department been notified of the potential new well.

Dan Emerson: Great job on proposal, questions if any thought was given to the children's playground that had been mentioned in a previous meeting.

Bruce Easom: Mr. Easom recommends a letter of support from the Selectmen and a statement from the land owner granting permission. Mr. Easom questions \$60,000 vs. \$70,000 quote for lighting expenditure. It is also his opinion that research be done into a grant from the Division of Conservation Services. He is concerned that the lights may pose a problem to MIT and their telescopes, and suggests obtaining a letter of agreement from Millstone. Mr. Easom questions cost escalation from inception to creation. Mr. Easom reads aloud the Town Accountants concerns regarding the date of work, and distributes her comments to GYB.

Rick Hughson: Applauds effort to show rehabilitation of land. Suggests checking with Ms. Jenkins concerning procurement law.

John Strauss: Questions whether it may be a more comprehensive package to have the lights and the field be separated, with the field being the 1<sup>st</sup> priority. Mr. Black responds that they have been diligent in their research and they are on firm ground to proceed as is.

### **3. Communitywide Reconnaissance Archaeological Survey**

Dan Emerson: The application looks good and fits in with the CPA goals.

Bruce Easom: Mr. Easom asks how approval on private land will be obtained. He also is interested in how "study days" fit in to the allowable use of funds and how the study relates to open space and would like to see this more defined. Mr. Easom also questions whether this is a one time study and what this study will lead to. It is suggested to have a time-line and identify whether this information will be confidential or open to the public.

Rick Hughson: States that this application is well put together. The only suggestion being he would like to have a sense of the value of this application included in the final application.

### **Jon Strauss Appointment**

Mr. Strauss was appointed at the last Selectmen's meeting. There were questions concerning votes Mr. Strauss contributed to prior to being sworn in. Ms. Miller researched all meetings in which Mr. Strauss participated along with votes taken and found no conflict. Mr. Easom reads aloud response from Mr. Haddad stating there seems to be no jeopardy. Mr. Easom thanks Mr. Strauss for joining the CPA.

#### **4. Groton Grange**

Sally Smith begins briefing of project and states that the Groton Grange is an asset to the Community. The building is open to the usage of the Town. There are numerous organizations that currently use this building as well as being used for community functions such as dances, meeting place and can be rented by the public for birthday parties and other functions. Ms. Smith states this is an outdated facility and they are seeking funds to make this building more useful.

Mr. Strauss - Mr. Strauss states there is modest to serious neglect, and would like to know if \$85,000 is a logistic number. He would also like to know if there are any provisions if the project is started and there is more deterioration than assumed.

Mr. Easom - States there is a list of items in need of repair but would rather see what is going to be done with an associated cost and provisions if this cost is more than anticipated. Mr. Easom would like the emphasis to be on the exterior structure and suggests contacting Michelle Collette for suggestions and advice as she has just completed a feasibility study on the Squannacook Hall. Also, categories are mentioned and the question is asked how re-furbishing this building impacts open space and agriculture.

Mr. Emerson - Mentions how detailed the Squannacook Hall study was. Mr. Emerson would like to know that of the \$85,000 is there a clear accounting of OCEA appropriate codes to ensure this building will be safe for public use as intended.

Mr. Roberts - In his opinion he would label this project ineligible. He states the following: 1) not approved by the Historical Commission. 2.) No management Plan. 3.) No itemization of repairs. Mr. Roberts suggests having a professional perform a historical structure report.

Mr. Emerson mentions that an application for a study alone could be performed with a second application put forth for the actual repair work.

## **5. Conservation Fund**

Mr. Easom gives briefing of project. The \$100,000 requested for the Conservation fund will be used to supplement two projects that the Conservation Commission has in the works. Mr. Easom brings up the 2 contingencies for the purchase/sale agreement on the MATTBOB property. The first being a DCS land grant for 60% of the cost and the second being a Town Meeting Vote for \$100,000 to be placed in the conservation fund. Also, there is the Shattuck railroad property currently in land court.

Mr. Emerson - Asks how much money is in the bucket due to Surrenden Farms and notes that this money would have to come out of the unallocated funds.

Mr. Strauss - Asks if Conservation would consider an amendment that if the projects did not go through, the money be returned. Mr. Easom replies no.

Mr. Hughson - Satisfied with the application but questions how much money they have received in the past and mentions that there is money spent in open space every year.

Mr. Roberts - No comment

Mr. Muehlke of the Groton Conservation Trust stresses how valuable the vernal pool on the MattBob property is and that every effort should be made to obtain this property. He also states that if this property fell through there are several other property alternatives and that having real money available can make all the difference.

## **Budget Overview**

Mr. Hughson reads aloud E-mail that he had sent out to the CPC regarding the budget and reviews attached spreadsheet. He states that he has only appropriated money out of the bins received so far. With known numbers there are very little estimates. After June 30<sup>th</sup> we can allocate money we will be receiving in FY 2010.

Valerie Jenkins questions the active recreation bin and states that as far as she is concerned there is no active recreational bin, and that we need to go to Town Meeting and make this a legitimate bin. Mr. Hughson agrees and stresses that this is a virtual bin that we are keeping track of. Mr. Roberts ask if we will be going with 10 percent. Mr. Easom believes that not having a recreation bin will be in the best interest of the community, as it enables us to be more flexible.

Home valuations are dropping and its effects on the CPA is discussed. There are some concerns that if not enough money is generated, how will we cover Surrenden Farms. There is further concern that if we allocate another 10% to active recreation we have less in un-allocated to cover emergencies.

Mr. Hughson has seen some bias to “open space” and has worked hard on the active recreation proposal. He suggests that instead of an automatic 10%, this could be something we evaluate each year. Mr. Roberts asks if all would be in favor of leaving this a virtual bin and create a policy statement or create a real bin with the caveat that in an emergency could be used for surrendon farms.

Mr. Easom asks members if we would like to go to Town Meeting to establish the recreation bin, or wait and see how the virtual bin goes. He also suggests that we could set a ceiling on spending and set a floor amount balance that we will not go below. The majority feel this will

decrease flexibility.

## **Nashua River Close Out**

Discussion concerning ANRAD is debated. Mr. Emerson states that 2 studies have been performed and there are still gaps that need to be filled in. Currently \$17,000 has been spent of the \$25,000 which has been allocated. Mr. Hughson believes if we get the ANRAD done it should be to serve a purpose and not just for the sake of getting it done. Also, he will not vote until he sees who is going forth with this as in the past management of these projects has not been up to par and there have been date issues. In Mr. Easom's opinion the usefulness of this property is dependant on the ANRAD. As long as we have money left in the budget we do not have to go with Meisner/Brem, there are other alternatives such as Ducharme/Dillis. Mr. Strauss suggests not closing out project and continue discussion at the next scheduled meeting.

## **Project Updates**

### **2006-11 Basketball Court**

Mr. Strauss has received feedback from Town Counsel. There is indication that if there was previously a basketball court and this is for a replacement, Town Counsel is not in favor. Mr. Strauss will supply the E-mail to the rest of the members. It is suggested to add this to the next agenda after all members have a chance to read the E-mail. A possibility may be to bring this to Town Meeting and state our case and proceed unless otherwise objected.

### **2007-8 Conservation Fund**

Mr. Easom distributes spreadsheet to Mr. Hughson for review. It is mentioned that interest accrued once funds leave the CPA bin can be accrued into non-CPA created funds.

## **Minutes**

*Mr. Emerson moves to accept minutes of January 21, 2008 as amended. Mr. Roberts's seconded, and the motion is carried by unanimous vote.*

## **Closing**

The next scheduled meeting falls on a Holiday, so it is decided to that we will hold a courtesy meeting with Mr. Haddad on Monday the 9<sup>th</sup> of February to discuss a potential application by the Selectmen

*Mr. Easom moves to adjourn at 10:20, Mr. Roberts's seconds and the motion is unanimous.*

Respectfully Submitted by,  
Kathy Miller

