

# Groton Community Preservation Committee

Minutes of Public Meeting of March 2, 2009

**Location:** Legion Hall

**Time:** 7:30 PM

**Members Present:** Bruce Easom (Chairman), Dan Emerson, Mike Roberts, Rick Hughson (Treasurer), Carolyn Perkins (Secretary), Robert DeGroot (Vice-Chair)

**Members Absent:** Jonathan Strauss

## Public Hearing

**The Chairman called the meeting to order at 7:30 PM.**

Mr. Easom reviewed the agenda, and stated that approximately 15 minutes will be given to each applicant. After introductions of the CPC, the meeting began with the Field of Dreams Proposal.

### Field of Dreams

Mr. Black gives a brief overview of the proposed Field of Dreams Project. This is a joint proposal of both the Parks Committee and Groton Youth Baseball. They are requesting \$148,152 for an additional baseball field at Cow Pond.

Mr. Emerson: Questions whether wetland consideration has been given with regards to pesticides and such. Mr. Black responds that there have already been fields in this area and they will be following the same procedures.

Ms. Perkins: Inquires about lighting in regards to MIT, and if a site plan review has been considered for the parking area. Mr. Black agrees to the site plan review.

Mr. Easom: reads aloud the letter he has received from Dr. Stephen M. Smith of the Boston University Center for Physics. The letter states that there could be some problems in regards to the lights and lists suggestions as to how to decrease this impact.

Public: Comments from various groups that lease the observatory were in attendance and discussed how the lights would affect their various data collections and observations. Various

suggestions such as the height and angle of the lights were given. Also, there were requests for schedules as 2-4 hours after sunset is considered prime.

## **Conservation Fund**

The Groton Conservation Commission presents overview and states they are seeking \$100,000 for the Conservation Fund. This money enables the Commission to act quickly when land becomes available.

Mr. Hughson: Comments that there is a balance of between \$750,000 - \$800,000 and questions whether last years goals have been obtained.

Ms. Perkins: Would like to know if any funds other than that of Surrenden Farm have been used.

Public: Marion Stoddard states her support, as this money aids in receiving state matching funds. Mr. Muehlke of the Groton Conservation Trust states that he has respect for how the Commission has handled their money and the need to have real money available.

Mr. Hughson asks for those stating their support on more than one open space proposal, please show your priorities.

## **Communitywide Reconnaissance Archaeological Survey**

Mr. Roberts gives overview of the proposal and reads aloud letters of support from the Planning Board, Historic Commission and the Conservation Commission. He is requesting \$40,000 which will be used to help identify significant archaeological and cultural resources. This will allow the Town to take necessary steps to preserve and protects its heritage.

No comments are given by members.

Public: Al Collins states his supports as this is a key project. Michelle Collette states that the Planning Board was so impressed, they asked to co-apply, and stresses that the only way to protect resources, is to know about them.

## **Groton Grange**

George Moore gives a briefing on the Groton Grange. The requested amount for this project is \$137,000 to preserve this building.

Mr. Hughson: Would like to know if this is private or non-profit and how they are currently receiving their money. The response is that rents are received from the Lutheran church, Irish step dance school and the numerous organizations and public that rent this building for meeting space and functions.

Mr. Roberts: Would like to know the percentage that the Groton Public utilizes this building as the intent of the CPA is for the public.

Public: Support is given by Ray Lyons, Al Collins and Peter Cunningham. Michelle Collette would like to know if the plans include handicapped accessibility plans. It is mentioned that if Town funds are used the Town owns a portion of this building. Deed Restrictions and Town reimbursement are discussed.

## **Historic Documents**

Mr. Bouchard gives overview of the project which would require \$18,500 to continue the preservation of historic records for the Town of Groton.

Mr. Hughson: Questions the amount of \$18,500 as the original amount to do the entire vault was \$85,000. The cost increase over the years is discussed and Mr. Bouchard is investigating different vendors.

## **Fire Suppression System**

Mr. Bouchard presents proposal for a new fire suppression which would use a gas based system instead of the current water based system which would ruin historical documents in the event of a fire. Mr. Bouchard is requesting \$35,000 for this project.

Mr. Hughson: Responds that he is not convinced of the need for this project as the fire has to start in the vault for this to work and there are no fire hazards in the vault.

Ms. Perkins: Would like to know if this system has been reviewed with the Fire Chief. Mr. Bouchard states he is supportive.

Public: It is questioned what happens if there is a fire in another part of the building. The vaults are made of fire resistant concrete with a metal door. If there was a fire elsewhere in the building the door would automatically shut and sprinklers would not go off. The only way the sprinklers would go on is if the fire started in the vault.

## **Phase II Footstone Reinstallation**

Eleanor Gavazzi gives overview of the proposal to reinstall footstones in the Old Burying Ground in the amount of \$2,850.

Mr. Hughson: Great application and has gained a better understanding of the value.

## **Williams Memorial Marker**

Debbie Beals speaks for the Groton Cemetery Association and gives background of this project. She is requesting \$ 1,760 to install a granite marker recognizing the donation of 32 acres to the Town by Antoinette Williams in the memory of her late husband.

Mr. Hughson: Inquires whether the cemetery association is private. Ms. Beals replies yes.

Ms. Perkins: Not sure how this fits in the margin of the CPA and would have to research whether this is an allowable use of funds.

## **Unkety Brook Well Site Phase I & II**

Tom Orcutt representing the Water Department presents overview of their application which is separated into two phases. Phase I consists of an engineering review of the intended parcel in the amount of \$8,650 to obtain an appraisal of the parcels value. Phase II involves the actual purchase of this parcel.

Mr. Hughson: Inquires as to the steps that would be taken if the CPA only funded phase I. Mr. Orcutt replies that a future application to the CPA would be pursued. Mr. Hughson states that the water department has the option to “bond”. Mr. Orcutt responds that it is not necessary to raise the rates now as we are looking to preserve this site for future use and have it certified. The intent is not to develop at this time.

Public: Mr. Swezey states that the current rate payers have already invested approximately \$150,000 into this project. Ms. Collete gives briefing of the town wide survey that was conducted in the 1990’s and states that taxpayers have a history of paying to protect water resources. In the event of one massive contamination this could cause mayhem. Water is a basic need and Ms. Collette supports due diligence on this project.

Mr. Stuart Schulman believes this is the most vital issue he has heard this evening due to the climate issues we have been experiencing. Mr. Ray Lyons also states his support as he believes we only have enough for the current base and this would be vital to the Station Ave. project.

## **New England Forestry Foundation: Wharton Plantation**

Mr. Lyons and Whit Beal give overview of their application in the amount of \$350,000 to sell the Wharton Plantation site which consists of Zone I, a house lot, and well site on 45 acres. This amount represents half as they are seeking state grants for the other half. The money from the sale will be used to purchase additional land in Groton as there is intent is to buy land in the Throne Hill Area. They are willing to accept CPC funding over a five year period.

Ms. Perkins: Would like to know why they have not gone through the Conservation Fund, she informs that there is no guarantee for the future of CPC funds and does not find this feasible.

Mr. Hughson states that no formal appraisal or survey has been conducted and there is not even any certainty that a vehicle can pass over the wetlands. Mr. Hughson would like to see the pumping results from the water department, and asks Mr. Schulman why the Selectmen have chosen to co-apply. Mr. Schulman responds with the importance of water.

## **Town Diaries**

Owen Shuman gives overview of project which is in the sum of \$15,600 to contract a person to index The Town Diaries and make digital ready for the community. The Groton Endowment has done some of the indexing work and digitalizing is the next phase.

Discussion ensues as to whether a person can be hired and whether or not this project is eligible for CPA funds. The documents have already been preserved and we would only be making them accessible. The appropriate person would have to be contracted and not hired.

## **Boutwell House**

The Groton Historical Society is seeking \$35,000 to replace all the windows in the Boutwell House to help maintain and preserve this museum which is open to the public.

Mr. Roberts believes this is a worthwhile and important project. Mr. Hughson states that this is a non-profit building that receives revenue and inquires about fundraising. The response is this building is part of the fabric of Groton and contains its history.

## **Minutes**

Mr. Emerson moves to approve the minutes of January 21, 2009 as amended. Mr. Roberts seconds and the vote is unanimous.

## **Closing**

March 16, 2009 will be the next scheduled CPC meeting.

Mr. Hughson reviews Mark Haddad's proposal on thirteen place holders. Ms. Miller is asked to scan and send Mr. Haddad's proposal to the rest of the committee so we can review at the next meeting.

Ms. Perkins asks Ms. Miller to re-send a copy of Mr. Hughson's budget.

Mr. Hughson moves to adjourn. The motion is seconded by Mr. Emerson, and with a unanimous vote the meeting is adjourned at 10:50P.M.

Respectfully Submitted by,  
Kathy Miller

Minutes approved 4/23/09