

# Groton Community Preservation Committee Minutes of Public Meeting of November 15, 2010

**Location:** Town Hall  
**Time:** 7:00 PM  
**Members Present:** Bruce Easom (Treasurer), Mike Roberts, Jon Strauss (Vice-Chair), Richard Hewitt, Dan Emerson, Robert DeGroot (Secretary), Carolyn Perkins (Chair)  
**Guests:** Colleen Neff, Bonnie Carter, Carolyn Fischer, Mike Flynn, Beth Erickson, George Wheatley, Halsey Platt, Anna Eliot, Allen King, Al Collins, John Ott, Lili Ott, Terri Ragot, Brooks Lyman, Alicia Hersey

## **Public Meeting**

Ms. Perkins called the meeting to order at 7:00.

Project numbers were assigned to all the project summaries and the remaining calendar of due dates/deadlines was reviewed.

### **1. Summary Feedback**

#### **2012-01 Housing Trust Fund- Carolyn Fischer & Colleen Neff (Housing Trust)**

Ms. Neff provided a brief summary of the proposal supplied by the Housing Trust. They are seeking \$300,000 to invest into an "Affordable Housing Buy-Down Program". This program operates by the Trust searching out an eligible home that is within a specific price range & condition (a handout of current qualifying homes was distributed). After light repairs are performed the home would be sold to a qualified first-time home owner through a housing lottery. A deed restriction would be placed on the home. The proceeds would be used towards purchasing another home and the cycle would continue bringing Groton closer to their affordable housing goal.

The consensus of the Committee was that the projects falls within the scope of the CPA. The Committee then issued the following feedback and suggestions: A detailed Management Plan should be supplied stating how this money will be budgeted and who will be responsible. There should be a schedule of milestones as well as other strategies that are being considered. Research should be conducted regarding other money that may be available, and how to use funding to leverage further funding. Ms. Perkins suggested working with banks on foreclosures. The question was asked how they plan to prioritize and who will determine what home is the best value. There was some concern regarding homes that were fixer-ups and how they would determine how much repair is needed. There is always the possibility of unknowns and getting in over your head with fixer-ups.

#### **2012-02 Housing Trust Operating Expenses-Carolyn Fischer & Colleen Neff**

Ms. Fischer stated that a second application is being pursued to cover operational expenses, as the Housing Trust is a new Committee and in need of supplies to get started.

Mr. Easom began by stating his uncertainty on whether this would be an allowable expense, as this is not for the “acquisition or creation” of housing. Ms. Perkins agreed and suggested this be looked into. A suggestion was made to incorporate these expenses into the original application.

### **2012-03 Conservation Fund – Bruce Easom (Conservation Committee)**

Mr. Easom noted the current balance in the Conservation Fund is \$650,000. The ideal balance would be \$1,000,000 but the Commission would like to get to at least \$800,000. Two properties were purchased last year. One being the Gloria Fuccillo property and the second was land on Baddacock Pond previously owned by New England Forestry Foundation. Both purchases received grants of 60% re-imbursments and it was explained why having this money so readily available is important. One comment that was issued was in regards to urgency. If there is no property that is currently being considered, why ask for money.

### **2012-05 Prescott Assessment - Anna Eliot, Halsey Platt (Prescott School Reuse Committee)**

The Prescott School Reuse Committee is a 7 member Committee who has been assigned to find the best use options of the Prescott School, once the lease on the school is up. Some of the potential options are community, housing, business, and education. In order to provide recommendation to the Selectmen they are seeking funds to pay for professional services that would provide a market analysis, building assessment & cost estimates for the various usages.

Discussion ensued as to whether the school district had a use for the building, and if the Town had plans to keep the building indefinitely. It was mentioned that there has been recent work done on the building, however future use would have to be determined before any more work is performed. It is due to the numerous variables the expertise is being sought.

As no amount was contained in the summary, an approximate amount was requested by the CPC. Ms. Eliot responded that the amount would be approximately \$20,000. It was stressed that the actual amount would be necessary on the application due 1/17/2010. Mr. Emerson suggested there may be other incentives for further funding, and working with the Housing Trust may be another option. A recommendation was given to work on the management Plan, and spend some time convincing the CPC how this meets the recommended criteria. Mr. Easom had concerns that determining best use may not meet the CPA requirements.

### **2012-06 Historic Signage Program – Al Collins (Groton Historical Commission)**

Mr. Collins reviewed his summary stating that there has been a lot of interest in the past few years among Towns People to protect historical assets. Through surveys and other means, numerous historical areas and homes have been identified. The Groton Historical Commission would like to have permanent signs available at these locations which would identify the site and give a brief history. The amount requested would include design work for the signs. A package would be put together containing the history and sign, which would be available for purchase by the home owner.

Suggestions were given to check with the Sign Committee, and make sure that this would be done in full compliance of the new sign by-laws. There were some concerns that design does not comply with the CPA guidelines, so it was

suggested to research the Coalition Website and/or check with the Department of Revenue. Ms. Perkins stressed a management plan, and checking to see if there are any other funds available. Mr. Strauss ended with his opinion that there are many variables and since there is no urgency would like to see more information.

### **2012-07 Drumlin Hill Affordable Housing – Al King & Teri Ragot (Habitat for Humanity)**

Background on the potential project was given. This is land already owned by Habitat for Humanity received by donation. They are requesting \$162,500 which is approximately half the amount needed for construction of a home on this property. A fundraising campaign will raise the remainder of the \$130,000 needed for construction costs.

Concerns were raised regarding the consequences if the campaign money could not reach the required goal amount. Ms. Ragot responded that the Habitat for Humanity has money available should this occur and stressed that it is very rare for that to happen. It was suggested to clarify the money situation in the actual application as well as supply more details on the approved site. It was also suggested to contact the Board of Health regarding septic issues and to meet with the Planning Board. Ms. Perkins would like the final draft to be very specific regarding infrastructure costs, and contain a management plan that explains what will happen to the money if there is a mortgage. Mr. DeGroot asked if the project was supported and if there were any neighborhood concerns. Mr. King responded that there had been concerns previously and therefore changes to the well site have been done which will hopefully rectify that situation.

Mr. Easom finished by adding that private organizations need to contain specific language and would like the following two terms be added to the minutes, and incorporated into the final application 1.) Statement saying they will or will not allow the Town to complete an audit. 2.) Whether or not a deed restriction will be performed and the terms of the deed restriction. These are to be addressed explicitly or Mr. Easom will deem the project incomplete.

### **2012-08 Boutwell House Repairs – Bonnie Carter (Groton Historic Society)**

Ms. Carter gave a brief summary of the project and History of the Boutwell House. She delivered an account of the numerous unfavorable conditions that are ruining valuable antiques and historical artifacts. The worst being flood damage. The flooding is also damaging an apartment in the building that provides money to run the museum. The Boutwell House is registered on the National Register of Historic Places.

Some of the feedback received from the CPC pertained to the amount requested, management plan and a deed restriction. A suggestion was made to have an actual sum put into the actual application. Specific work to be performed with the corresponding cost should be outlined. A suggestion was made to research other possible funds that may be available. A management plan is necessary and since this building is privately owned a deed restriction will be necessary. The CPC would like to have the terms of this deed restriction supplied with their application. Mr. Easom also suggested meeting with the Building Inspector to see what permits would be necessary and determination on whether the building is considered commercial. There was also mention of what percentage the amount requested was in relation to the assessed value of the building in regards to ADA compliance.

### **2012-09 Squannacook Hall Restoration – George Wheatley**

Mr. Wheatley explained how he would like to restore Squannacook Hall to its original historical appearance. He understands that this will be a multi-step project. Abutters have been contacted regarding a shared septic system and he is looking into Chairlift and other possibilities.

Although there was much interest in the building being restored, the Board felt there were numerous obstacles to overcome. Suggestions were made to seek support from the Historic Commission and others, such as forming a

Squannacook Committee. It was also recommended to gather supporting data on the use of the building as it was not clear in the summary. Data should include who would use the building and how the building would be maintained. Other means of funding should also be investigated. Letters of support were requested. This is a Town owned building, and the support of the Board of Selectmen is necessary. A management plan would also be necessary. Mr. Easom stated that the 3 most crucial elements that would have to be addressed would be Parking, Septic and Cost. Mr. Easom suggested addressing certain items one at a time and coming back to the CPA for additional funds. A suggestion was also made to contact members of the Grange for feedback regarding ADA regulations.

### **2012-10 Mill Run Affordable Condo's - Brooks Lyman (Groton Housing Authority)**

Mr. Lyman gave a brief background of the Housing Authority. As the Housing Authority deals with mainly rentals, they would like to purchase 2 condo units in the Mill Run complex and convert them to affordable rentals. These rentals would rent for approx. \$800 - \$1,000 month.

Conversation entailed with regards to there being three different housing proposals and how they meet the Affordable Housing Plan. The Housing Trust is a town sponsored entity and the intention of the Trust was to oversee the Affordable Housing Plan, and supervise how much money is spent on 40B. The question was asked if the Groton Housing Authority has met with the Housing Trust. Mr. Lyman responded that this is a time sensitive issue, and the time to purchase the condos is now while they are still available. In the future they would meet with the Trust.

Suggestions were given regarding Management Plan and clarifying expenses. Ms. Perkins suggested seeking other programs for mortgage, particularly those doing 80% CHAPA.

## **2. Minutes**

Mr. Easom moved to accept minutes of September 27, 2010 as drafted. Mr. Emerson seconded. The motion passed by a unanimous vote in favor.

Mr. Strauss moved to accept minutes of October 14, 2010 as drafted. Mr. Hewitt seconded. The motion passed by a unanimous vote in favor.

## **3. Invoices & Misc. Documents**

The following invoice was signed by the Committee:

Inv. #15200	Utility Service & Assistance, Inc.	\$18,680	Field of Dreams
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Budget documents – Mr. Easom

## **4. Budget Review-Bruce Easom**

Mr. Easom has met with Valerie Jenkins, Town Accountant to review the budget to make sure both budgets are in sync with each other. A budget was put together for FY2012 projects. Mr. Easom reviewed the budget with the Committee and will supply copies to the Committee by e-mail.

## **5. New Business**

John Strauss will draft the Millstone Draft agreement.

Invitees to the next meeting are Mike Bouchard, Town Clerk for feedback on Historic Records preservation proposal, and the Great Pond Advisory Committee.

## **6. Closing**

The next meeting will be Tuesday December 7, 2010.

*Mr. Emerson moved to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Roberts seconded. All were in favor and the meeting adjourned at 10:10 PM.*

Respectfully Submitted by,  
Kathy Miller