

Groton Community Preservation Committee
Minutes from January 14, 2013 at 7:00pm
Town Hall, 2nd floor conference room

Members Present: Bob DeGroot, Bruce Easom, Gineane Haberlin, Laurie Smigelski, Russ Burke, Richard Hewitt
Member Absent: Dan Emerson
Others Present: Dawn Dunbar, CPC Administrative Assistant

Chairman DeGroot called the meeting to order at 6:58pm.

1. 2012-08 – Rehabilitation of Governor Boutwell House – Present: Al Collins

Mr. Collins said that he had a couple of invoices to present and told the Committee that the fire suppression system and the new water main into the house had been completed. He added that the heating system had also been completed and the house now had heat again. The insulators and plasterers would be starting the following week. Chairman DeGroot asked how Mr. Collins thought things were moving along. Mr. Collins said that things were moving along nicely and that he anticipated that the Boutwell House would be open by the summer.

2. Fitch's Bridge – Present: David Manugian

Chairman DeGroot said that he and Member Easom met with Town Manager Haddad that morning to discuss a possible out of sequence application for the demo/rebuild of Fitch's Bridge. He said that Town Manager Haddad was interested in the Committee's feedback and that David Manugian of the Greenway Committee was present to provide background of the project and to answer any questions.

Mr. Manugian said that Fitch's Bridge once connected Groton and West Groton. He said that the bridge had been part of the town's Master Plan for a number of years and that the plan was to demo the existing bridge, leave the abutments, and bring in a pre-fabricated bridge to be used for pedestrians, equestrians and bicycle use only. He said that Fitch's Bridge had a history with the CPC. They had received \$60,000 in 2006 to rehab the existing bridge. Because additional funding wasn't readily available at that time, they ended up returning the money. Mr. Manugian said that they had presented three (3) options to the BOS last year and the most cost effective option was the replace the old bridge with a new prefabricated one. He said that bids were handed in the previous week and that the majority of the bids came in better than what was expected (\$450,000) which opened up more options for funding. Member Hewitt asked if they were requesting the full \$450,000. Mr. Manugian said that they were going to request the full amount because acquiring state funds would require additional permitting. Member Burke asked what additional permitting would be required. Mr. Manugian said that they would have to go through Mass DOT which would require them to be held to higher standards such as additional handicap accessibility and additional paving. Chairman DeGroot said that in his meeting with the Town Manager that morning there was a second funding option which would be to have part of the project funded by the CPA and additionally appropriate a portion from the stabilization fund.

Member Burke asked why Mass DOT would have a say in this type of project. Mr. Manugian said that the Committee had approached them casually some time ago and were told that they needed to review the project. He said that Mass DOT was responsible for bridges on state roads and it turned out that bridges on accepted roads were also under their jurisdiction. Member Burke asked why the town just didn't abandon the road and make it a public right of way, thus eliminating Mass DOT. Mr. Manugian said that was a good idea. Discussion ensued about a public right of way and who would maintain it.

Chairman DeGroot asked the Committee if they could bring this request for an out of sequence application to a vote that evening. Member Burke asked what town meeting this would be presented at. Chairman DeGroot said that it would be the January Special Town meeting.

Chairman DeGroot said that they had been presented with the basic project information and that they were faced with whether to consider the out of sequence application and if so whether they would recommend to town meeting to fund all of it or a portion of it.

Member Easom said that one option they needed to consider is whether the project was time critical and what impact would it have on those applications already submitted. Member Smigelski asked if the bids received were time sensitive. Mr. Manugian said that he thought the bids were good for 60 days. He said that it was a good time to bid as the contractors were looking to line up work.

Member Haberlin said that she would love to be able to ride her horse over the bridge. She said that the existing bridge was a safety hazard and she saw the project as time urgent. Member Smigelski agreed.

Member Burke asked how much money they had in the buckets. Member Easom said that at the end of FY13 there would be \$495,000 in Unallocated and \$3,300 in Open Space. Member Burke said that if they took this application out of sequence, someone might say they are "cutting in line" in front of those who are going through the process as outlined in the timeline. He said that if the funding were to come from the town, they would be faced with bumping up against the debt exclusion. He added that it was an attractive nuisance and a "ticking time bomb." Member Burke added that whether it was taken down today or tomorrow, a new bridge wouldn't discourage kids from playing. He wondered what kind of impact this would have on the Parks Department and Conservation Commission applications. Marshall Giguere of the Conservation Commission said that the CPA had been set up as the funding mechanism for the Conservation Commission. He said that he was excited about the Fitch's Bridge project but nervous about what impact it might have on the Conservation Commission's application. Craig Auman of the Conservation Commission asked if there would be money left for their application in the spring. Member Haberlin said that it was not for them to decide. It was ultimately up to the town meeting vote. Mr. Giguere asked if they could approve more applications than there was funding for. Member Easom said that it had not been in their regular practice to bring two (2) applications to town meeting requesting from the same bin. He said that the CPC typically ranks their choices and funding until their out of money. Marion Stoddart said that she didn't want the Fitch's Bridge application to jeopardize the Conservation Commission's application. She also asked if historic reserve money could be used and added that they had documents they could provide to back it up. Mr. Manugian said that they had plans to use the existing abutments.

Member Burke moved to vote to accept an out of sequence application for funding the reconstruction of Fitch's Bridge. Member Haberlin seconded the motion.

Member Hewitt expressed apprehension toward the need for an out of sequence application. He said that it was a worthwhile project but he had not heard a compelling reason why and was concerned about funding other projects going through the application process now. Member Smigelski said that she really wanted to see the project go further. She added that her instinct was to say it wasn't urgent enough to require out of sequence consideration but wanted to hear more. She asked if they could consider funding a portion of the project and still move forward. Chairman DeGroot said that if they agreed to recommend funding a portion of the project with the remainder to come from the stability fund, it would require a 2/3 vote at town meeting. If they recommended funding the entire project, it would require a majority vote at town meeting. Member Burke pointed out that it didn't matter whether or not the application moved on to the special town meeting or the spring town meeting, at this point they would both be considered out of sequence. Mr. Manugian said that if the CPC voted to not fund the project, the BOS had discussed demolishing the bridge anyway due to the safety concern. Ms. Stoddart said that they would like nothing more than to see it replaced also.

Member Easom said that he had concerns about whether or not the town trying to save some money by bonding this project along with the fire station project meant that the Fitch's Bridge project should qualify as an out of sequence application. He added that he didn't feel it met the requirements for an out of sequence application. Chairman DeGroot said that he was torn on the urgency of it as well. He rewarded the Greenway Committee for their tenacity and asked the committee to consider the application if the numbers worked adding it would be a disservice if they didn't vet it out.

In favor of the motion made by Member Burke were Members Smigelski, Haberlin, Burke and DeGroot. Member Easom opposed and Member Hewitt abstained. The motion carried by a 4-1-1 majority.

Member Easom discussed available funds at the end of FY13. The Historic Reserve had \$95,939, the Open Space Reserve had \$3,275 and the Unallocated Reserve had \$495,566. The numbers for FY14 was \$168,839 in Historic Reserve, \$4,175 in Open Space and \$554,303 in Unallocated. He pointed out that FY14 numbers assumed no decrease in numbers from 2013. He said that if the project was recommended to town meeting and a positive town meeting

vote occurred, the money for this application would be coming from FY13 funds. Chairman DeGroot asked if the project was to be funded from FY14 funds, could it work. Mr. Manugian said that their plan was to do the work over the summer after the high water and environmental factors had become less of a concern. Chairman DeGroot said that if a bid had to be signed now, it would be ideal to have a decision now and funds from FY13 available. Member Burke thought that it might be more compelling to town meeting to see a portion funded from CPA funds and the remainder from stabilization funds. This would only require a 2/3 vote. Member Smigelski said that the BOS realized that the bridge needed to come down for safety reasons. She asked if they could use stabilization money to take it down and CPC historic money to rebuild it. Discussion ensued.

The application stated that the total project cost \$438,000 included demo, rebuild and clerk of the works. It was suggested that a letter be sent to Town Manager Haddad requesting more information with regard to the actual figures. The Committee was looking for what the actual request from the CPC would be and what the town's portion would be. Chairman DeGroot added that he would like to see a detailed management plan also.

Member Easom moved that the CPC write a letter to the Town Manager indicating that they accept the application for replacement of Fitch's Bridge and that they were expecting a complete application package by Friday, January 18th. The application was not to exceed \$280,000 from CPA funds and they expected that \$70,000 would be funded from the Historic Reserve for the bridge abutments, kiosk and portal reconditioning with the balance to be funded by the Unallocated Reserve. Member Burke seconded the motion. All were in favor with a unanimous vote.

It was decided that the CPC would meet again on Wednesday, January 23rd to discuss the Fitch's Bridge application.

3. Project Updates

- a. **2010-01: Field of Dreams** – Member Smigelski said that the project was completed and that all bills had been submitted. Ms. Dunbar pointed out that she had not received an invoice for the gates. Member Smigelski said she would speak to Don Black.
 - b. **2012-08 – Rehabilitation for Governor Boutwell House** – An update was given by Mr. Collins earlier that night.
4. Member Easom said that he had met with Patricia DuFresne, Town Accountant on December 15th to talk about the proposed FY14 budget. He said that he made a few minor changes with her. He suggested based on his meeting that they adopt this proposed budget for FY14.

Member Hewitt moved that they adopt the proposed budget for FY14. Member Burke seconded the motion and all were in favor with a unanimous vote.

5. Minutes

Member Easom moved to approve the minutes of December 10, 2012 as drafted. Member Burke seconded the motion. All were in favor with a unanimous vote.

6. Ms. Dunbar presented the Committee with an invoice to be signed for \$2,500 from the Community Preservation Coalition for annual dues.

Member Hewitt moved to adjourn at 8:55pm. Member Haberlin seconded the motion and all were in favor with a unanimous vote.

Respectfully submitted,

Dawn Dunbar
CPC Administrative Assistant