

Groton Community Preservation Committee
Minutes from March 31, 2014 at 7:00pm
Town Hall, 2nd Floor Meeting Room

Members Present: Richard Hewitt, Bob DeGroot, Russ Burke (7:10), Bruce Easom, Dan Emerson (7:25P), Gineane Haberlin

Not Present:

Others Present: Regina Beausoleil, Interdepartmental Assistant
Jim Gmeiner, Water Commissioner
Gary Hogle, Water Commissioner
Thomas D. Orcutt, Water Superintendent
Peter Morrisson, Conservation Commission Chairman
Andrew Davis, Sargisson Beach Committee
John Giger, Sargisson Beach Committee
James Luening, Great Ponds Advisory Committee

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Hewitt at 7:06PM.

Chairman Hewitt asked the Committee members present if they would like have questions answered first then move into funding talks

Member Easom stated he would like to wait until all members arrive (at the time Member Burke and Member Emerson were not present)

Groton Sewer Commission – Jim Gmeiner, Sewer Commissioner and Tom Orcutt, Sewer Commissioner, Gary Hogle, Water Commissioner

In regards to the Baddacook Pond CPC Application, Mr. Gmeiner felt that the Water Commissioners are the authority on the pond. The Commissioners gave the Great Ponds Advisory Committee a guideline of studies they would like completed before application of Sonar to remove invasive species on Baddacook Pond. Mr. Luening stated the Groton Water documented the studies they wanted. The GPAC would like the funds to take that to the next level. Member DeGroot stated he like the 2-pronged approached as there seemed to be enough concern about testing. Member Easom asked the Groton Water Department what the target was. Mr. Gmeiner answered the Water Department felt they need to have concerns addressed in order to help alleviate the concerns. At some point if moving forward there will have to be a public hearing, where they can then address any concerns brought up by the public. Chairman Hewitt stated he was concerned the Committee will be pouring money into a moving target, and feels uncomfortable supporting it without fully understanding what the Groton Water Department wants.

Chairman Hewitt went on to say that in reviewing the request from the Water Department to GPAC he is not sure some items can be funded with CPC funds such as the method to indemnify the Water Department. Mr. Gary Hogle stated that the whole point of the request is they don't know, what they don't know, so this would allow them to get a professional to provide that data. Member Haberlin asked why the Water Department doesn't fund this. Mr. Hogle answered because there is no benefit other Water supply. If anything it will end up costing ratepayers if remediation is needed. Mr. Hogle felt the indemnification was a very important point. If there are health risks, there needs to be a risk profile outlining any long-term effects. Mr. Luening stated a risk assessment consultant may be needed in order to come back with a comprehensive answer. Member Burke added he felt this may be a study to prove the un-provable. It (the study) very well may not come up with a conclusion.

Groton Pool and Golf Center – Robert M. Whalen – Driving Range

Mr. Whalen gave a brief overview of the Groton Pool and Golf Center (GPGC) request for CPC funds. He stated Chairman Hewitt had notified him of a discrepancy in the latest GPGC proposal regarding a quote from US Netting for the Driving Range. This error now makes a quote from US Netting more than a competitors (Wester Beak) proposal. He stated the difference of 2K can be found and it is not a deal breaker.

He went on to describe how Takashi Tada, Conservation Administrator performed a site walk for a preliminary wetland resource confirmation. There were obvious wetland resources on the site. Mr. Whalen stated he will have to revise his plans in order to go around these resources. He stated he would need to get a wetland scientist, and that's a definite. Member Haberlin asked if Mr. Whalen could outline what the cost benefit to the Town would be. Mr. Whalen said there is obviously no quick fix for the Country Club. His hope is that the newly hired golf pro will bring in new youth to golf at the club. With the refurbishment of the Blackbird Café he is hoping to allow the people who swim and golf there to be able to enjoy refreshments on site rather than go across the road to spend money elsewhere. The driving range is flawed and why would anyone come to use a system that is flawed. By tying these things together he is hoping to be able to bring in revenue. Chairman Hewitt asked Mr. Whalen if he had any experience managing a project such as the Country Club. Mr. Whalen replied that he has run 200M Corporations.

At this time Bruce Easom displayed a spreadsheet showing funds for disbursement coming out of the following:

Community Housing Reserve

Historic Reserve

Open Space and Recreation Reserve

Unallocated Reserve

Ledge Rock Fields – Gineane Haberlin, Park Commission Chair

Member Easom began this discussion with a statement saying the Park Commission was promised 309K last year but could only receive 269K. He feels the Committee should honor the 41K request from the Park Commission. Member Burke asked if the CPC has the 360K right now and if the Committee could earmark the 41K. Member Haberlin representing the Park Commission stated the funding needs to be available for this fiscal year, if it was done the way Mr. Burke suggested the funds would not be available till after Fall Town Meeting. Chairman Hewitt also stated the language in the warrant article would not allow it. Member Emerson stated he agreed with Member Easom and felt the Committee owed it to the Park Commission.

Baddacook Pond Revitalization – James Luening, GPAC

Member Haberlin asked if the fee outlined by the Groton Water Department for 5K for outlining indemnification and 10K for subject matter was even allowed for funding by the CPC. Member Burke stated the whole point was all roads lead to the Groton Water Department, but he feels the goal posts will keep moving. Member Emerson stated Baddacook pond is a very big resource for the town and it may open up to other communities to be able to utilize. Chairman Hewitt felt the request was not ready for primetime. Member Haberlin feels the group may go around in a vicious circle that has no end trying to satisfy questions.

At this time Member Easom explained to the attendees of the meeting that the order in which he has presented the applications on his spreadsheet are the order in which they are assigned by the Interdepartmental Assistant as they were submitted. It has nothing to do with preference for funding.

Conservation Commission – Peter Morrison, Groton Conservation Commission Chair, Takashi Tada, Conservation Administrator

Peter Morrison stated the Conservation Commission is willing to negotiate. He feels the Commission has been very cooperative in the past regarding taking a step back from full funding. Member DeGroot stated the lions share seems to be going towards the Conservation Commission. He asked if the Commission could maybe refine the request. He feels priority goes to the Conservation Commission. Member Emerson agreed with Member DeGroot based on the Commissions willingness to concede to other applications in the past. Mr. Morrison opted to wait to give a figure to the Committee until after the Sargisson Beach Application was discussed.

Sargisson Beach – Andrew Davis

Member Burke stated he understood the proposal was broken up into 4 phases each requiring 50K in funding for a total amount of 200K. Mr. Davis stated they did add the phasing option because they were asked to do so by the committee but they are requesting full funding at this time. He stated this would be the most cost efficient as well as the most environmentally conscious way to ensure a future beach opening one to two years from now. Member Haberlin asked if it could be phased into two phases. Mr. Davis stated if it was phased into 2 phases it would consist of the 1st phase which would be the North End of the site that consists of the retaining wall. The second phase would be the south portion which is the actual beach.

At this time Member Burke asked Member Easom to add up all of the current proposal being considered. The figure amounted in 201K. Chairman Hewitt stated that since the Beach is obviously Conservation Property, do they have any priorities with properties. Mr. Morrison stated the Commission is willing to take a 50% reduction in their request and would like to give the 50% to Sargisson Beach. As it stands right now the Conservation fund is underfunded and they are negotiating 3 properties.

At this time Member DeGroot explained to everyone in attendance that all of the applications qualify, but in the town's best interest the Committee must decide which applications to bring forth to Town meeting that will net the Town the most bang for the buck.

Marshall Giguere of the Conservation Commission stated it was important that the proposed work to be done along the shoreline only be done once. Repeated use will become an environmental concern.

Mr. Davis stated there were funds of about 15K that were to be used this year to open or maintain the beach. Town manager Mark Haddad stated those funds may be made available to the SBC. Mr. Art Prest stated he may be able help close the gap with approximately 5-10K from residents around the lake.

Groton Pool and Golf Center – Driving Range – Robert Whalen, Groton Pool and Golf Center Manager

Member Burke stated he understand the Groton Pool and Golf Center (GPGC) has suffered many years of neglect, and that they have made a valiant effort to incrementally improve where they are able to. That being said he was curious whether or not the GPGC can live with a reduced earmark, such as maybe just poles and netting. Mr. Whalen stated there are certain things that must be done. He stated he could get rid of the ball washer. Lighting was asked to be included so it was at \$8300. He stated he could live with reduced funding. Certain things such as a wetland scientist are non-negotiable.

At this time Mr. Tim Svarkopf asked if the Debt service to Surrenden farm was in fact in the sum of 480K for open space. He feels the taxpayers are paying enough for Open Space due to the Surrenden Farm Debt Service as it is, and they need to look into other areas to put funding towards.

Mr. Davis stated that funding for Sargisson Beach of 130K would address concerns with the Conservation Commission of the proposed work only being done once to minimize the amount of disturbance.

Member Haberlin asked Mr. Luening of GPAC if at 16K the project would even be viable. Mr. Luening stated yes, that it would get them started.

Mr. Prest wanted to say that he doesn't know about the Groton Pool and Golf Center but he felt that Sargisson Beach was a major resource in town.

Mr. Svarkopf felt the GPGC has been before the voters in the past and has always faced a tough situation. He feels it will be in the same situation this spring also.

Member Easom stated that he would defer that to Town meeting and again that the Committees goals is to send the best qualified projects to Town Meeting.

Mr. Davis stated that if the SBC application is fully funded they would be able to proceed as planned and they could even seek additional funding sources as well.

Mr. Morrison wanted to remind the Committee that for every one dollar the Conservation fund gets they usually turn around a four dollar gain to the town. Mr. Svarkopf asked Mr. Morrison to validate how that is possible. Mr. Morrison stated by reimbursement from grants applied for and being able to purchase land below market rate.

Member Easom made a motion to not recommend 2015-02 Baddacook Pond Revitalization to move forward for consideration at 2014 Spring Town Meeting. Member Burke seconded the motion and all were Aye with Member Emerson – opposed.

Member Haberlin wanted to point out that the Committee is not against the Baddacook project. Member Easom stated it just seemed the future of the investment seemed too cloudy. Member Burke was still troubled by what seemed like a lack of metrics for the studies being asked to be performed. Member Emerson stated the research could be a valuable tool for future use and that it may be worthwhile to get bench marks. Member DeGroot supported Member Easoms motion. Member Degroot stated if the objective is to fund the Sargisson project fully then all the other projects need to be pared back as well. Member Haberlin asked what would be the impact if the project was deferred till the next funding cycle. Mr. Svarkopf stated that preservation is "different" from "improvement". He feels the GPGC is a bad investment to accommodate "out-of towners". Member DeGroot stated that seemed a fair argument but again, it is up to the Town voters to decide. Mr. Morrison reminded the Committee that the Conservation Commission loaned money to the Committee for the Bridge Loan.

Member DeGroot made a motion to fund the following:

Sargisson Beach Committee 145.5K

Groton Pool and Golf Center – 47K

Ledge Rock Fields – 41K

(with funds already agreed upon for Housing Coordinator at \$47, 618K and Milestone at 23K)

With the remaining balance to the Conservation Fund Application, also receiving the utmost highest priority for consideration during the next funding cycle – Member DeGroot would later request this last statement be stricken from the minutes.

Member Easom stated this did not seem fair. Olin Lathrop stated he was worried the Conservation Commission doesn't have a loaded gun when they need one with the fund being so low. Member Haberlin stated Town Meeting will be bad for both groups. Member DeGroot stated both applications should be funded at 100K.

At this time Member Burke made a motion to withdraw the previous motion. Member Emerson seconded the motion and the vote was unanimous. Member Burke made a motion to recommend to Town Meeting the following applications:

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|---|--------------------------------------|--|
| • 2015-01 – Ledge Rock Fields: | 41K (to be available in 2014) | Unallocated Reserve |
| • 2015-05 – Conservation Fund: | 9,376.91 | Open Space & Recreation Reserve |
| | 90,623.09 | Unallocated Reserve |
| • 2015-06 – Sargisson Beach | 109,590 | Unallocated Reserve |
| • 2015-07 – Groton Pool & Golf | 47K | Unallocated Reserve |
| • 2015-04 – Milestone Restoration | 23K | Historic Reserve |
| • 2015-11 - Housing Coord. | 47,618.00 | Community Housing Reserve |

Member Easom seconded the motion and the vote was unanimous.

Minutes

Member DeGroot voted to approve the meeting minutes of January 27th. Member Emerson seconded the motion and the vote was as follows:

Burke - Aye

Easom – Aye

Hewitt – Aye

Haberlin – Abstain

Member Burke made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:30P. Member Emerson seconded the motion and the vote was unanimous.

Respectfully submitted, Regina Beausoleil, Interdepartmental Assistant