



TOWN OF GROTON

173 Main Street
Groton, MA 01450

Community Preservation Committee

Russell Burke, Chair - Planning Board
Bruce Easom - Conservation Comm.
Daniel Emerson - Housing Auth.
Matthew Frary - Park Comm.
Robert DeGroot – Historical Comm.
Richard Hewitt - at large
Michael Roberts - at large

MEETING MINUTES

Date: Monday, February 22, 2016
Time: 7:00 pm
Location: Town Hall, 2nd Floor Meeting Room, 173 Main Street, Groton
Members Present: Russell Burke, Bruce Easom, Dan Emerson, Bob DeGroot, Richard Hewitt, Mike Roberts
Absent Members: Matthew Frary
Others Present: Robin Eibye, Michelle Collette, Fran Stanley, Jon Strauss, Kerri Strauss, Michael LaTerz, Greg Sheldon, Becky Pine, Paul Funch, Mary Jennings, Ann Wortman, Helene Caden, Art Prest, Ginny Koslow-Dimola, Thomas Orcutt, Sr., Thomas Orcutt, Jr., Sue Lotz, Edythe Salzman

The meeting was called to order by Chair, Russ Burke at 7:04 p.m. Pending invoices for 2016-03 Old Meeting House were reviewed as well as an invoice from the Groton Herald for legal notice postings.

Draft minutes from January 25, 2016 were reviewed. Member Roberts commented that paragraph three of 2017-06 Groton Center National Register is worded incorrectly. Member Roberts will submit changes to Robin Eibye for updating.

Bob DeGroot moved to accept the January 25, 2016 minutes as corrected. Dan Emerson seconded the motion. The motion carried 4:1 (Matthew Frary, absent; Bruce Easom, against).

2017-01 HOUSING COORDINATOR

On behalf of Mark Haddad, Michelle Collette requests that the CPC continue funding the Housing Coordinator. The town is exploring a partnership to share the resources of our Housing Coordinator, which would result in a two-hour a week increase. The two-hour per week increase would be reimbursed from Devens via a municipal agreement. The regionalization of services will benefit the town of Groton and Devens by providing a wider range of housing opportunities for people in need.

Collette commented that the partnership would allow us to think regionally and work collaboratively with surrounding towns on regional housing issues. Collette went on to explain how vital the Housing Coordinator's role was during the time when the Groton Inn burned down, ultimately causing eight families to be displaced from their homes.

Member Emerson commented that he felt this was a great idea and asked if there are expectations of expansion in the future. He also asked if any research has been done where two towns shared a Housing Coordinator's resources.

Member Hewitt inquired about how the reimbursements would happen. He went on to request that the reimbursements go directly back to the CPC. Bob DeGroot clarified that a return mechanism should be incorporated into the final inter-municipal agreement and included with the final CPC application. Member Easom raised the concern that a reimbursement to the CPC could be problematic.

Fran Stanley commented on the benefits for both Groton and Devens.

Member Hewitt stated that he would like to see an annual report provided from the Housing Coordinator. Member Roberts questioned if two-hours each week is sufficient time, to which Fran replied that she is comfortable with the allotted time of two-hours each week for Devens.

Chairman Burke provided information on a memo dated February 18, 2016, stating that the Planning Board voted unanimously to support the application submitted by the Town Manager to increase the hours of the Housing Coordinator from 25 to 27 hours per week.

2017-02 GROTON MIDDLE SCHOOL TRACK

Jon Strauss introduced himself and began the middle school track rehabilitation project presentation. He stated that the estimated cost to repair the track is approximately \$160,000 and noted that because a recent quote for track repairs came in at \$140,000, he may increase the application amount by 15%. He went on to explain that the benefits to the town include: improved safety for the school children, repair a valuable asset for the schools, facility receives significant public use, using CPC funds minimizes the tax burden for residents.

Strauss provided a general project timeline stating his goal is to complete the CPC application process by March so the proposed project will go to town meeting for vote in April. Doing this would allow a July 2016 start date, which ideally would have the track up and running by September for the beginning of the school year.

Strauss also noted that potential additional contributors include: athletic boosters, private athletic groups and clubs as well as the Dunstable CPC.

Strauss explained that the project is essentially a "patch job" noting that to tear down and rebuild from scratch could cost up to \$600,000.

Strauss mentioned that the project has letters of support from the Selectmen, Groton Regional School District, as well as the Squannacook River Runners (SQRR). He also noted that there are two support letters pending; one from the Athletic Boosters and another from the Parks Commission.

Chairman Burke noted that the CPC received a letter of support from the Parks Commission. Member Hewitt questioned if the Town of Groton was the owner of the property. It was determined that the Town of Groton does own the property and leases the property to the GDRSD. Member Hewitt also questioned whether or not the Dunstable CPC is in support of the project. Strauss noted that he is currently working with the Dunstable CPC. Member Hewitt indicated that he's concerned about using CPC funds for school property without an agreement between Groton and Dunstable for these types of projects. Fran Stanley provided additional information on regional districts using CPC funds.

Member Easom would like to see a letter of support from the Selectmen. Strauss replied stating he has the letter of support.

Member DeGroot noted that he did not find a project management plan included with the application. Strauss replied stating the Town Manger would manage the project. The Board asked for clarification on a timeline for the project. Member Roberts went on to request that the vendor include a timeline for their work within their bid.

Becky Pine, community member and former school committee member, noted that the needed track work is long overdue and made special mention to the fact that the track is not designed for motorized vehicles. Specifically, maintenance vehicles/tractors, etc.

Paul Funch, long involved with SQRR, an organization that sponsors an annual road race that originates at the middle school track, stated that the track is essential to the Groton Road Race and is used by many people. He went on to stating that as a recipient of a similar grant, it's important to designate an onsite person to manage the project during construction. Funch made specific mention that he has never seen a vehicle on the track.

Kerri Strauss, middle school coach, noted that she feels that some of the wear and tear of the track is due to irrigation system failures and run-off water. Jon Strauss made clear that the \$600,000 estimate included many other fixes such as irrigation and grading that would improve longevity; however, he does not recommend such a large investment in the track when a smaller repair would provide approximately 8-10 years of use.

Thomas Orcutt, GDRSD student who runs on the track team explained that the track is in terrible shape and hopes that it will be repaired.

2017-04 MONUMENT RESTORATION

Member Roberts recused himself from the discussion as he would be the project manager for this project, if approved.

Member DeGroot provided an overview of the project and provided an update of the ongoing work over the past two years. He specified that there are currently fifty-three (53) historic markers throughout the town of Groton. Work will consist of location and assessment of the condition of historic markers that commemorate historic events.

This project also includes the preparation of Massachusetts Historical Commission (MHC) forms on historic markers (Form C) to update the Commonwealth's database.

Note there were no questions and/or comments from the public and no specific feedback from committee members.

2017-05 FRIENDS OF PRESCOTT

Member Roberts recused himself from the discussion as he currently sits on the Friends of Prescott committee.

Member Easom noted that as an officer of the Friends of Prescott, he will recuse himself and step out of the meeting room during the discussion for this project. Easom reached this conclusion after a discussion with the State Ethics Commission's attorney of the day.

Mary Jennings, Chair, Friends of Prescott, began by thanking the Board for their consideration. Jennings stated the importance of preserving the building as a town asset and continuing as a multi-use community

building. She notated the immediate needs of health and safety issues such as handicap accessibility along with many other items that need to be brought to code. Jennings also noted that they have received letters of support from the Board of Selectmen, Planning Board, Sustainability Commission and Groton Historical Society, and community members.

Jennings noted that the labor costs would possibly decrease as town resources could provide labor at a reduced cost per DPW Director, Tom Delany.

Ann Wortman, Vice-Chair, Friends of Prescott, made mention that most of the items on the list have a retained value. She noted that this is a perfect fit as it is in line with the Groton Master Plan and without a cost to tax payers.

Chairman Burke would like to see documentation that satisfies that the proposed work is not presumptive or pre-emptive and would be suitable for future use of the building without waste. Wortman explained with the example of moving a light fixture that may have been installed using the CPC grant. She noted that although the labor installation costs would not be recoverable, the light fixture itself could be reused. She went on to provide another example: the CPC proposal includes plans to upgrade water service to the entire building even though present use is less intense than future expected use.

Greg Sheldon, Chair, Municipal Building Committee for Prescott School, said that his committee has sent a letter in support of this project. His committee's charge from the Board of Selectmen is to create a five-year as well as a twenty-year plan. The final plan is still awaiting final edits and is designed to include renovations and financial plans to operate the building. The goal is to not be a drain on town finances and to provide a vibrant asset to the community. The revised cost estimate for the renovation of the building has not yet been delivered by the contractor. Sheldon also noted that over the past ten years, approximately \$683,000 has been spent on repair of the Prescott School.

GDRSD will be tenants until September 2017, and may renew their lease for another two years. Member Hewitt noted that if future funds are needed, they would be required to reapply each year.

Helene Caden, community member, noted that the cultural aspect needs to be protected and the decision to fund the project should be discussed at the annual Town meeting allowing the community to make the final decision. Burke replied stating that the CPC's role is to make a recommendation to the community.

After a brief discussion, committee members clarified that the Town of Groton owns the property, leases the property to the GDRSD and the Board of Selectmen sent a letter of support. (similar to the situation of the middle school track project)

Sheldon requested a plan on how to develop, manage and maintain the building. He also noted that the Municipal Committee submitted a letter of support on February 1, 2016, to bring the building up to code. Based on the vision of the report, this would be the first installment of a five year plan. The committee's final report and cost estimate will be ready in March for the annual town meeting in April.

Dan Emerson commented favorably on the application and noted that many surrounding towns have used CPC funds to renovate historic municipal buildings.

Art Prest, member of the Economic Development Committee and Finance Committee, clarified that he is speaking on behalf of the Economic Development Committee and not as a member of the Finance Committee. He also noted that he is not in support of the project due to the timing, and he's uncomfortable moving forward without a financially sustainable business plan in place. He stated that he does not want a project similar to the country club, which requires continual subsidy. He feels the application is premature

because the town has yet to see the overall financial plan for the renovation and operation of the Prescott School.

Prest also noted that this is occurring during a town budget climate where GDRSD may need a \$2.2 million over-ride, and on the municipal side there's a deep-dive look at the details of the proposed FY2017 municipal budget. Prest wondered if the CPC project could receive restricted approval conditioned on an approved financial plan.

Jennings replied that projects like this year's Prescott School repairs and the middle school track, take pressure off of the town budget. She also noted that the building is currently in use and the town is ultimately responsible to take care of such repairs.

Prest also noted that Matt Evan, the owner of Evans on the Common, is interested in purchasing the building or a lease to purchase; however, he does not want a lease only agreement.

Member Emerson commented on the merits of the proposal and the cost benefits. He stated that it's up to town meeting to decide as the CPC restricts its review to: what is legal, is it feasible, and do we have CPC funds available to fund the project.

Ann Wortman noted that the Municipal Committee has done an in depth financial analysis of the project and agrees that the money not be extended until a financially sustainable business plan is in place.

Becky Pine explained the scope of the repairs are mostly ADA and safety issues that need to be addressed.

Chairman Burke handed control of the meeting over to Vice-Chair, Bob DeGroot.

Chairman Burke left the meeting.

2017-06 GROTON CENTER NATIONAL REGISTER

Member Roberts recused himself as he is listed on the application as the project manager.

Bob DeGroot provided a description of the proposed project, which is to determine if there is enough support from affected land owners to file an application for inclusion of town center on the National Register.

The Historic Commission is meeting on February 24, 2016, to determine if the scope of the project is to remain town center wide or to restrict initial application to the First Parish Church only.

Application seeks funding for a project that will determine if Groton Town Center will move forward with a nomination. In its current form, the application seeks \$5,000 that's needed to determine if there's enough support for national town register of Groton center. Conduct public outreach to gather public sentiment.

Michael LaTerz, Historic Commission member, commented that this is an exploratory project paying mainly for administrative support costs, which will pay for mailings. Given the preliminary nature of this project, this project could possibly be funded out of the CPC administrative line item, which would mean that it could be approved by the CPC committee rather than going to town meeting. Such a change would also mean that the project is not funded out of the historic bin or the unallocated reserve. Depending on the project scope, the amount requested could be as little as \$2,000.

Member Easom noted that a project like this could be funded out of the CPC admin. budget or unallocated reserve and could be voted on by the committee vs. going to town meeting.

Bob DeGroot closed the public hearing at 8:55 p.m.

Bruce moved to delegate Robert DeGroot to negotiate/oversee details in the event of Chairman Burke's unavailability due to his pending vacation.

Member Hewitt seconded and the motion carried 5:0 (Chairman Burke and Matthew Frary, absent).

Member Hewitt wondered if the Driving Range project could be closed now that the nets are up. Robin Eibye explained that the final invoice is pending and has yet to be received.

Member Easom provided an update on a conversation he had with Steve Lieman regarding the First Parish Church project. The quotes so far are coming in about \$75,000 higher than budgeted. Member DeGroot noted that he heard a similar report from Al Collins. The committee members agreed that the project expenditures must stay within in the four corners of the document. Because of the high bids and the potential impact to the project, Robin Eibye was asked to invite Lieman to the CPC's next meeting on Monday, March 14, 2016, to discuss the matter.

Bob DeGroot moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:02 p.m. Daniel Emerson seconded and the motion carried 5:0 (Chairman Burke and Matt Frary, absent).

Respectfully submitted by Robin Eibye, Executive Assistant