

TOWN OF GROTON

173 Main Street
Groton, MA 01450



Community Preservation Committee

Russell Burke, – Planning Board
Anna Eliot, Vice Chair – Parks Comm.
Bruce Easom, Chair – Conservation Comm.
Robert DeGroot, Clerk – Historical Comm.
Daniel Emerson – Housing Auth.
Carolyn Perkins – at large
Richard Hewitt – at large

MEETING MINUTES

Date: Monday, January 23, 2023
Time: 7:00 PM
Location: Virtual Meeting via ZOOM
Members Present: Bruce H, Easom, Carolyn Perkins, Daniel Emerson, Anna Eliot and Richard Hewitt, Russell Burke and Robert Degroot,
Members Absent:
Others Present: Fran Stanley, Phil Francisco, Rick Perini, and Eileen McHugh

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson, Bruce Easom at 7:00 PM.

FY2024 CPA PROPOSALS

7:00PM 2024-01 Housing Trust Funds Request funding request totals \$200,000.

Fran Stanley presented for the Housing Authority requesting \$200,000 to potentially create affordable housing that would serve residents in unique situations. She said the Trust was previously granted \$75,000 to investigate site assessments. Other funding was utilized for emergency rental assistance for 10 families during the pandemic. Rick Perini commented that by obtaining these additional funds it would provide the Housing Trust with the ability to respond quickly to acquiring new land when the opportunity arises. Richard Hewitt was supportive of the concept and described it to be very similar to the Conservation Commission. He then questioned the difference between subsidized housing inventory and affordable housing. Fran Stanley said that there is a separate list and criteria that the State identifies as affordable housing, for example a 40B development would meet such requirements. She briefly discussed the benefits of the redevelopment of the Deluxe Building that would establish 50 new units of affordable housing. This also would provide opportunities to seniors with disabilities and the option to remain in Town. Richard Hewitt advised the Housing Trust to include the discussed details in the final proposal. He expressed concern that seniors may want to downsize and that is not being offered. Anna Eliot questioned the needs of seniors and requested to see a report on the Housing Trust's priorities. She said that the Committee is recommending that there be a grant agreement between both the Community Preservation Committee and the Housing Trust and there has been no initiation to Town Council. Fran Stanley clarified that the Affordable Trust has been reviewed by the Town

Council and legally it's between the Select Board and the Affordable Housing Trust. Russell Burke commented that the State frowns upon age restricted housing and it potentially could impact establishing any senior housing. Fran Stanley confirmed that is correct however, there are opportunities to build something very similar to the Groton Farms Association where 1 bedroom apartments were constructed and are suitable for seniors. John Sopka, resident, questioned if the \$200,000 request is 10% of the CPA funds that is already designated for housing. Fran Stanley clarified that the amount is the tax surcharge plus the state match, 10% is required to go into the community housing bucket. Bruce Easom said that the reserve fund for community housing is approximately \$500,000 and the unallocated reserve is another \$400,000.

7:10PM 2024-02 Preservation of Lake Massapoag funding request totals \$4,000.

Bob Accomazzo, property owner, was present requesting \$4,000 to treat invasive weeds on a portion of Lake Massapoag within Groton. The weeds have infested the cove and if left untreated the pond would significantly be impacted. He said that the initial treatments that commenced three years ago were extremely successful. Richard Hewitt said he would feel more comfortable if Groton residents participated in the final application. He would also like a collaboration formed between the Towns of Dunstable and Tyngsboro for ongoing maintenance. Russell Burke asked what the associated costs would be for the required maintenance. Bob Accomazzo said that a quote has been included in the application. The Committee members suggested that the applicant reach out to the Great Ponds Committee and the Groton Lakes Association to address the issue. Laura Masiello, said that she resides on the lake and confirmed that the lake is being overtaken by invasive vegetation. She said that she would contact the recommended committees.

7:20PM 2024-03 Conservation Fund FY2024 funding request totals \$400,000.

Nikolas Gualco, Conservation Administrator, was present requesting \$400,000 to replenish the conservation fund to acquire conservation property and accessory uses. He said that the funding acquired last year was utilized to purchase a 60 acre parcel on Martins Pond Road. Then a grant from Mass Wildlife was received to assist in land management and habitat restoration on that parcel. Russell Burke commented that the application was very well prepared. Richard Hewitt asked if there is a way to quantify the Community Preservation Funding from the alternate sources of funding. Nik Gualco said he prepared a table that identifies the amounts received and would ensure that it is included in the final application. Carolyn Perkins commented if the requested \$400,000 is awarded the Conservation funding balance would surpass 2 million dollars. Nik Gualco confirmed that the calculation is correct and explained that a generous earmarked donation was obtained.

7:30PM 2024-04 Rebuild Major League Baseball Diamond funding request totals \$80,000.

Don Black was present proposing to reconstruct and reconfigure the baseball diamond at the Lawrence Playground. He said that visual attachments would be submitted tomorrow and that the project would commence in early September. Carolyn Perkins questioned the management plan and requested that all information be provided on

the application in regards to who would be submitting the reports and what method would be utilized. Richard Hewitt requested that plot plans, letters of endorsements, and written estimates from the vendors be submitted. John Sopka, questioned who utilizes the field and who is responsible for managing the schedule. Don Black said that the Parks Commission is responsible for the upkeep of the field once it is completed and all citizens of Groton are welcome to utilize the field.

7:40PM 2024-05 Construct 2 Softball Diamonds at Cutler Field West Groton funding request totals \$90,000.

Don Black proposed reconstituting two softball sized diamonds to accommodate the demand for playing fields. He said that the girls' softball diamonds at the middle school were eliminated and replaced by the track. The number of participants has significantly increased to 150. Carolyn Perkins requested that a management plan be included in the application. Richard Hewitt asked if there was a lighting plan. Don Black said there are no intentions of a lighting plan; the field would be accessible from dawn to dusk. Richard Hewitt requested a plot plan and photographs to be submitted. Phil Francisco asked if there would be any impacts from the Hollingsworth Water Treatment Plant. Don Black said no. John Sopka, asked if there would be any impacts on the lacrosse and soccer teams that currently utilize the field. Don Black said that the field could be multi-recreational.

7:50PM 2024-06 Conceptual Site Engineering Costs funding request totals \$120,000.

Don Black said that the 8.8 acres is owned by the Groton Housing Authority and had been transferred last year from the Town. The requested amount would finance soil testing to determine if there is PFAS contamination, conceptual plans, and a subdivision plan. He is hoping to construct 8 single family affordable units for ages 55 and over. Russell Burke suggested a structured feasibility study that includes a fatal flaw analysis. He also requested that the access include regulatory pathways. Richard Hewitt wanted to ensure that the application includes the ultimate goal and plot plans. Carolyn Perkins requested that the application be corrected for any typos and that a management plan be submitted. Fran Stanley asked if the units would be eligible for low income rentals similar to the Petapawag Place. Don Black answered yes.

8:00PM 2024-07 Housing Coordinator FY2024 funding request totals \$55,791.

Takashi Tada was present requesting funding for the Town's annual expense of the Housing Coordinator's salary and benefits. The position entails 25 hours per week. Takashi Tada said that the health insurance costs would be determined by next month.

The Commission was supportive of the proposal.

8:10PM 2024-09 Squannacook River Rail Trail (SRRT) funding request totals \$90,000.

Bruce Easom recused himself from the hearing.

Peter Cunningham was present requesting \$90,000 to be utilized to complete the final sections of the Squannacook River Rail Trail in Groton. Phases 1 and 2 have been completed. Richard Hewitt asked if the \$90,000 would be sufficient to cover the expenses. Peter Cunningham said that he believes the amount is sufficient. The contractor is experienced and has observed the site. He recommended that the Commissioners observe the completed work thus far. Phil Francisco asked where the trail would be extended if the opportunity is provided. Peter Cunningham said it would run from Ayer, Massachusetts, continuing in the opposite direction to the New Hampshire border.

PROJECT UPDATES

NEW PROJECT UPDATES

- 2023-03 Prescott Stone Project (ROBERT DEGROOT) - no updates.
- 2023-04 Nashua Riverwalk (CAROLYN PERKINS) - no updates.
- 2023-05 Prescott Elevator Design and Engineering (BRUCE EASOM) Bruce Easom said that the Town Manager and the architect conducted a site walk with 7 prospective bidders and they are currently waiting on receiving bids.
- 2023-07 Bates / Blackman Improvements Including Accessible Path (RICHARD HEWITT) Richard Hewitt said that the majority of the work has been completed and they are waiting until spring to finish the pathways and other minor details.

CONTINUED PROJECT UPDATES

- 2020-03 Conservation Fund (BRUCE EASOM) - Bruce Easom informed the members that the Conservation Committee is working on the final documents for the Casella land.
- 2019-08 Duck Pond Restoration (RICHARD HEWITT) - Richard Hewitt said that all work would be suspended until spring.
- 2021-10 WWI Cannon Restoration (BRUCE EASOM)- no updates
- 2022-01 Maintenance Shed Restoration (ROBERT DEGROOT)- no updates
- 2022-02 Feasibility Study for Cow Pond Fields; Woitowicz Field; Cutler Field (ANNA ELIOT)- no updates
- 2022-04 Affordable Housing Site Assessment Study (DANIEL EMERSON)- no updates
- 2022-06 Squannacook River Rail Trail (BRUCE EASOM) - Peter Cunningham said that there is great progress in the construction. All railroad ties and 9/10ths of the organic material have been removed. The next phase is laying down the stone dust. The project is scheduled to be completed by March 15th.
- 2022-09 Groton Dunstable Natural Field Restoration Plan (BRUCE EASOM)- no updates
- 2022-12 Groton Country Club Recreation Courts Project (ANNA ELIOT)- no updates
- 2022-14 GDRSD Middle School Track Construction (BRUCE EASOM) - Bruce Easom said that he had conversed with Hannah Moller and she had indicated that a portion of the 1.4 million dollar note needs to be paid down. The intention was to pay \$900,000 on the principal of the 1 million dollar note. He is unaware of the final numbers that should be applied to the interest and principal and recommended that there be further discussion. Bruce Easom said he would

request the interest calculation from Hannah Moller. The field has been completed and erosion controls still need to be removed.

NEW/OLD BUSINESS

REVIEW CPC BUDGET

Bruce Easom displayed and reviewed the forecasted balances for the Community Housing, Historic Preservation, Open Space Recreation and the Unallocated Reserves. He said that there is a \$210,000 forecast of state matching. He said after calculating the CPC applications if they are approved at Town Meeting that the Committee would be approximately \$87,000 oversubscribed in unallocated reserves. Richard Hewitt asked if there are any substantial projects that are coming to a closure that potentially will have funds returning to the Community Preservation funding. Bruce Easom said that there may be \$5,000-\$10,000 in returns.

CPC INVOICES

Committee members reviewed the following invoice(s):

1) Richard Hewitt moved to approve the invoice from Phaneuf Associates for the installation of the multi-use courts at the Groton Country Club in the amount of \$50,000 with an invoice Date of 1/16/23. Anna Eliot seconded and the motion was carried by a unanimous vote.

MEETING MINUTES

Committee members reviewed the minutes from January 09, 2023.

Bob Degroot moved to approve the meeting minutes from Monday, January 9, 2023 as drafted. Carolyn Perkins seconded and the motion was carried by a unanimous vote.

Richard Hewitt moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:41.PM. Russell Burke seconded and the motion was carried by a unanimous vote.

Respectfully submitted by Kristine Fox, Minute Taker
Approved 9/25/23