



**TOWN OF
GROTON**
173 Main Street
Groton, MA 01450

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

MEETING MINUTES

Date: Monday, January 29nd, 2024
Time: 7:00 PM
Location: 1st Floor Meeting Room, Groton Town Hall
Members Present: Bruce Easom, Daniel Emerson, Russell Burke, Carolyn Perkins, Anna Eliot, Richard Hewitt, Robert DeGroot
Members Absent:
Others Present: Katie Berry, Jeffrey Ohringer, Fran Stanley, Peter Cunningham, Mark Haddad, Takashi Tada, Allison Peterson, Mike LaTerz, Richard Chilcoat, Charlotte Steeves, Chuck Vander Linden, Aubrey Theall, Sue Fitterman, Joshua Vollmar, Rick Perini, Becky Pine, Phil Francisco, Britt McKinley, Wanfang Murray

The meeting was called to order by chair, Russell Burke at 7:01 PM.

Public Hearing to discuss feedback on FY25 Complete Draft Proposals- Russell Burke opened the meeting by reading the public hearing notice.

2025-01 Conservation Commission FY25- Charlotte Steeves, Conservation Administrator, was present to discuss feedback on this project. Richard Hewitt asked if there were ever parcels that the Conservation Commission was unable to acquire due to lacking funds, to which she and Bruce Easom stated yes, historically it has happened, and it is a situation that they wish to avoid. Robert DeGroot had no questions on the project. Carolyn Perkins asked Ms. Steeves if there is a list kept on properties that are under the Conservation Commissions ownership, and if she feels that she has sufficient funds to maintain the owned properties. Dan Emerson gave positive feedback on the application. Russell Burke had no comments. Anna Eliot mentioned that exploring more conservation restrictions would help reduce maintenance costs. Bruce Easom shared that the Conservation Commission is working on an 82-acre parcel with conservation restriction. Richard Hewitt mentioned that the Invasive Species Committee would be a valuable part of management. Bruce Easom also mentioned adjusting management plan wording reference to page 13 not 3.

2025-02 Cow Pond Play Fields- Jeffrey Ohringer, member of the Parks Commission, was present to discuss the feedback on the project. Mr. Ohringer noted that this project will build upon previous CPA applications and described the work that could benefit the Cow Pond Play Field area by creating a master plan. Bob DeGroot shared that he likes the concept of the project, he would like to see item #19 of the CPA

Project Application Form Feasibility updated to show projects in other towns that were successful, and expand on the management plan with more of an overview of the procedures involved, with an oversight plan. Carolyn Perkins agreed that the management plan needs work, she also noted that she would like more detail about how this project builds upon the 2022-02 Field and Rec Feasibility Study. Dan Emerson stated that the concept is a good one, with a need for parking and traffic flow updates at Cow Pond Fields, from a safety perspective. Russell Burke had no comments. Anna Eliot shared that the 2022-02 Field and Recreation Feasibility Study, which is ongoing, is incorporated into the application, as she had provided documentation as part of this project's attachments. Bruce Easom had no comments. Richard Hewitt asked if there is a letter of support from the Affordable Housing Trust, it was clarified by Anna Eliot that the design review will be done with the Affordable Housing Trust's input, and that Heritage Landing is the proposed build for across the street. Anna Eliot noted that she would like to include the Conservation Commission as well, as they own parcel 248-39, which is held in Chapter 97. Richard Hewitt lastly noted that the project is long overdue as the Cow Pond Play Fields area is a key parcel in town.

2025-03 Milestone Markers Restoration- Mike LaTerz was present on behalf of the Groton Historical Commission, he shared that 2 of the 27 historic milestone markers are in need of repair. Bob DeGroot commented that #19 of the CPA Project Application Form Feasibility, needs updating in order to strengthen the application. Carolyn Perkins stated that the application is thorough. Dan Emerson shared that the letters of support are great on this project. Anna Eliot had no comments. Bruce Easom mentioned that on #14 of the CPA Project Application, there should be a firm number, recommending a contingency of approximately 10%. Mike LaTerz added that there will be an additional amount on the final application for police detail. Richard Hewitt had no comments.

2024-04 Pollinator Pathway-Allison Peterson was present on behalf of the Sustainability Commission, she shared information on the location of the garden pathway. Carolyn Perkins noted that the management plan needs clear identification of the project leader and contact persons, with their responsibilities listed. Mrs. Perkins also mentioned that a map showing the garden location would be very helpful, to which Ms. Peterson shared that she plans to get a GIS overhead map image. Dan Emerson suggested that for #19 of the CPA Project Application Form Feasibility, adding information on other towns who have been successful with their pollinator pathway projects. Ms. Peterson shared additional information on the pollinator pathway in general, and how it connects through town owned and privately owned lands. Russell Burke suggested that the cost seems low and adding a percentage might be needed, as some plants could get damaged and need replacing. Anna Eliot had no comments, just shared that the project can create a positive ongoing change for the community. Bruce Easom agreed that a map would benefit the project. Richard Hewitt suggested that under the management plan, creating a timeline for the project would be helpful. Bob DeGroot had no additional comments.

2025-05 Prescott School Assessment- Mark Haddad, Town Manager, was present to discuss this project and receive feedback. Dan Emerson mentioned that adding information about other towns who have done this type of building assessment would be helpful. Russell Burke had no comments. Anna Eliot first asked about the 2012 Bargmann Report, which was an assessment Prescott School, though Mr. Haddad noted that this proposed assessment is covering different building elements, focusing on its structural integrity. Ms. Eliot also mentioned her concern that the RFP has gone out, with a 10-year term, suggesting that this could limit future potential private investors. Mark Haddad shared that the assessed repairs would not be completed within 10 years, that this project would accomplish the assessment within the 5-year capital planning timeline. Anna Eliot also stated that Affordable Housing groups should be checked with, as she believes the Prescott School may be an option for fulfilling housing needs. Mark Haddad stated that the project seeks to find the cost to maintain the building for the town, and not for a change of use, it is not a re-use study, it is a building assessment study. Mr. Haddad noted that he consulted Town Counsel to confirm project eligibility. Bruce Easom had no comments. Richard Hewitt mentioned that a letter of support from Friends of Prescott would be helpful. Bob DeGroot also added that adding similar projects under #19 of the CPA Project Application Form Feasibility, adding a summary of steps under the management plan, and

additional letters of support would be ideal. Carolyn Perkins added that she would like to see the building be well maintained.

2025-06 Outdoor Fitness Court- Mark Haddad, Town Manager, was present to discuss the project and receive feedback. Mr. Haddad shared information on the selection of the proposed site, which has been decided as the Town Field area, adjacent to the basketball court behind the library, and shared the process that the project would go through. Russell Burke clarified that the contractors of the National Fitness Campaign would be the installers of the court itself and that they would follow procurement procedure. Anna Eliot added that the project would work well in conjunction with CPA Project 2024-04 Rebuild Major League Baseball Diamond. Bruce Easom added that the art work, which Mr. Haddad had mentioned as part of the project, cannot be purchased through CPA funds, just the installation of the art. Richard Hewitt asked if there would be trees removed at the site, Mark Haddad stated that he has spoken to Tom Delaney and they are hoping not to remove trees, if possible. Richard Hewitt also asked if the Country Club was considered as a site for the court, to which, Mark Haddad said yes but accessibility was limited. Bob DeGroot requested letters of support, and making additions to #19 of the CPA Project Application Form Feasibility. Carolyn Perkins confirmed that the National Fitness Campaign is a for-profit company, and that the site would be accessible. Mark Haddad shared that he is working with Michelle Collette, ADA Coordinator, and that the site would be fully accessible. Dan Emerson added that adding to the feasibility and providing letters of support would be great for this project.

2025-07 Squannacook River Rail Trail- Peter Cunningham of the Squannacook Greenway Committee, was present to discuss and receive feedback on this project, adding to the existing Squannacook River Rail Trail, creating the next phase from Bertozzi to Cutler Field. Mr. Cunningham added that the rail trail provides safe travel paths for residents, and feasibility will need to be assessed with this phase of the trail. Bruce Easom made no comments, as he has a conflict. Anna Eliot had no comments. Richard Hewitt had no additional comments, just reviewed the trail map. Bob DeGroot had no comments. Carolyn Perkins suggested noting a contact person for each piece of work in the management plan. Dan Emerson stated that item number 5 on the application, the appropriate box needs to be selected, and that a specific person be named as project manager under item number 9, and that under number 14, updating amount requested from CPC, and adding any funds committed from other sources. Russell Burke had no comments.

2025-08 Bancroft Castle Preservation Study- Aubrey Theall was present on behalf of the Groton Historical Commission, to discuss the project and receive feedback. Joshua Vollmer was also present to discuss. Mr. Theall shared information on the application, to study the preservation of the masonry remains of Bancroft Castle and its structural integrity. Bruce Easom requested placing a copy of the RFP that has gone out, and the deliverables specified. Richard Hewitt noted that the project is a good one, and that looking at parking would be helpful, during the future preservation project. Bob DeGroot praised the application, noting that item number 9, specific contacts should be listed, and that under #19 of the CPA Project Application Form Feasibility, other similar CPA projects would be helpful. Carolyn Perkins added that while there is a letter of support from the Webber family, that their permission for the project should be specifically stated and that they should be cited under item 9. Mrs. Perkins added that a Historic Restriction may be needed. Dan Emerson mentioned that additional funding listed, is helpful for a strong application, and creating parking signage would be great for the Webbers to add. Russell Burke noted that the Bancroft site has some safety issues, and the study could look at that, as well as signage showing the original state of the historic site and a narrative about its history. Anna Eliot applauded the landowner, the Webbers, in their good work in preserving the historic site, and suggested making the public aware of the current available parking. Bruce Easom added that a final cost should be placed under number 14, adding a contingency as well.

2025-09 Property Security, Safety, and Preservation- Richard Chilcoat, President of the Historical Society, was present to discuss the project, and receive feedback, he noted the importance of the different components of the project. Richard Hewitt asked if the lighting involved would be motion activated, to

which Mr. Chilcoat stated the added lighting would be motion or on-demand. Bob DeGroot mentioned that adding statewide examples of feasibility, and a letter of support would be helpful from the Historical District Commission. Carolyn Perkins had no comments. Dan Emerson had no comments on the project. Russell Burke had no comments. Anna Eliot suggested making sure there isn't any intrusive lighting that would bother neighbors. Bruce Easom suggested changing the requested amount to match the detailed budget amount.

2025-10 Housing Fund Request FY25- Fran Stanley, Housing Coordinator, as well as all member of the Affordable Housing Trust, were present to discuss the project and receive feedback. Phil Francisco addressed the committee to share some information on the project request. Bob DeGroot praised the application, had no questions. Carolyn Perkins made no comments. Dan Emerson had no comments. Russell Burke had no comments. Anna Eliot had no comments on the project, only suggesting working with other town departments as the Trust moves forward with its projects. Bruce Easom asked about the last transfer of CPA funds in the amount of \$400,000.00 to the Affordable Housing Trust, which Becky Pine, stated that the Boynton Meadows project did not deliver on its promises, though the trust is comprised of new membership. Bruce Easom shared his concern over transferring this amount of money to the trust. Richard Perini, addressed the committee to share his experience and qualifications, and the trust's earnest intent with the funds. Becky Pine noted some positive contributions of the Affordable Housing Trust over recent years. Anna Eliot asked Mr. Perini about his experience building affordable housing. Bruce Easom noted that scoring marks are made for successful past projects, and that the Trust should familiarize themselves with the failed past project. Chuck Vander Linden shared his hopes, as well as the trusts, to not let that happen again. It was noted that the grant agreement helps create trust from the committee. Richard Hewitt noted that the Grant Agreement along with confirmation from the Town Accountant regarding implementation make for a more credible application.

2025-11 Housing Coordinator FY25- Takashi Tada, Land Use Director & Town Planner, was present to discuss the project and receive any feedback. The funds cover the role of the town's Housing Coordinator, this is a recurring application. Mr. Tada noted that the insurance rates are not finalized with MIIA and is a best estimate, so a contingency is in place. Carolyn Perkins had no comments, just positive feedback on the position as well as its current occupant. Dan Emerson praised the project and its benefit to the town. Russell Burke had no comments. Anna Eliot asked if other town positions could be explored for CPA funding. Bruce Easom had no comments, just positive feedback. Richard Hewitt gave praise to the project, and agreed with Anna Eliot's point. Bob DeGroot praised the project. Phil Francisco spoke to give his support to this application, and to the Housing Coordinator role.

2025-12 Tools and Equipment for Building and Enhancing Trails- Britt McKinley and Wanfang Murray were present on behalf of the Groton Trails Committee to discuss the project and receive feedback. Ms. Murray shared information on the need for the Trails Committee to have more effective and efficient tools to better maintain the town's trails. Dan Emerson noted that item number 9 of the CPA Project Application Form needs to be completed, with specific contacts. Mr. Emerson also added that adding 10% for contingency would be wise, and that letters of support for the project are helpful. It was noted that Town Counsel had reviewed the project and found it as permissible. Anna Eliot noted that the tools have been approved to be stored at the Town Field shed, by the Park Commission, and that an inventory should be kept. Bruce Easom noted that other commissions have used a small amounts of CPA funds to leverage large projects, which is consistent with this particularly project, and is volunteer driven, he praised the project. Richard Hewitt asked about maintenance on power equipment, which Mr. McKinley shared the maintenance would be paid by donations. Bob DeGroot gave positive feedback. Carolyn Perkins praised the project.

New and Continued Project Updates were not discussed.

NEW/OLD BUSINESS

- Budget Discussion- no update or discussion occurred.
- Sign Invoices/ Project letters- No invoices or project letters were signed by the committee.
- Next public meeting will be February 12, 2024 at 7:00pm.

MEETING MINUTES

Committee members reviewed minutes from January 22, 2024. Carolyn Perkins moved to approve the meeting minutes from Monday, January 22, 2024, Bruce Easom seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

Anna Eliot moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:22PM. Bob DeGroot seconded, and the motion carried by unanimous vote.

Respectfully submitted by Katie Berry, Inter-Departmental Assistant

Approved: 2/12/24