



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

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

MEETING MINUTES

Date: Monday, November 18, 2024
Time: 7:00 PM
Location: 1st Floor Meeting Room, Town Hall 173 Main Street
Members Present: Russell Burke, Dan Emerson, Anna Eliot, Richard Hewitt, Aubrey Theall, Carolyn Perkins, Bruce Easom
Members Absent:
Others Present: Katie Berry, Judy Anderson, Mark Haddad, Connie Sartini, Stephen Woodin, John Strauss, Megan Donovan, Fran Stanley, Matt Pisani, Joni Parker-Roach, Patricia Upton, Rob Foley, Takashi Tada, Richard Chilcoat, Groton Residents

The meeting was called to order by chair, Anna Eliot, at 7:00 PM. Ms. Eliot welcomed all applicants to the Verbal Feedback on Preliminary CPA Applications Meeting.

Discussion of 2024-05 Construct 2 Softball Diamonds at Cutler Project Expense Clarification/Request from Town Manager- Mark Haddad, Town Manager, was present to discuss the request, he explained that while the two softball fields have been created on the turf, there is \$42,000 remaining in project funds, that he would like to utilize to install fencing and dugouts, completing the softball field project. Bruce Easom stated that he has no problem expanding the scope in creating the softball fields, with the provision that no additional funds be expended that haven't already been approved for the project. Richard Hewitt stated that the new application (2026-04) would not be necessary and the expenditure seems fine. Russ Burke clarified that the 2026-04 Cutler Field Softball Improvements application would be withdrawn if the CPC should approve, the project to be completed with the remaining 2024-05 funding. Carolyn Perkins, Aubrey Theall, and Anna Eliot all added that they each would see no issue with the utilization of the funds in order to complete the fields. John Strauss, Groton resident, stated that he thought the new application might be interesting for the public to review and provide comment on, explaining that casual users, many being West Groton residents, possibly not wanting a fence bisecting the park area, limiting usage. Mark Haddad shared that the local girls' softball group will be unable to utilize the fields, losing a season, should the project be pushed to FY26. Carolyn Perkins clarified that while the Community Preservation Committee doesn't decide on specificity of projects, that they are only stewards of the funding, ensuring that projects meet requirements, Aubrey Theall agreed with Ms. Perkins statement. Bruce Easom moved to authorize the additional work to be done on the 2024-05 Cutler Field project, provided that the additional field work is within the funding amount approved at Town Meeting, Russ Burke seconded, with Aubrey Theall asking that Mark Haddad go through the Park Commission before moving forward with the project, the motion carried, with Aubrey Theall and Anna Eliot abstaining.

Verbal Feedback Regarding (18) FY26 Preliminary CPA Applications

2026-04 Cutler Field Softball Field Improvements- See above discussion.

2026-05 Improvements at Cow Pond Fields- Richard Hewitt stated that it's a good project, he would like to see a schematic, and confirmed that the football field is located within the Cow Pond Fields. Mark Haddad stated that the schematics and proposal will be going before the Park Commission on December 10th, for review and approval. Richard Hewitt asked that the Park Commission give a priority order for projects, Russ Burke and Dan Emerson agreed that a priority order would be useful for the Committee. Carolyn Perkins asked for a budget on this project, which Mark Haddad did not have a number at this time, with design work still in process, but added that this, and the Town Field project, would need to be bonded. Carolyn Perkins also asked about previous Cow Pond projects that have come before the CPC, hoping to ensure that the work is moving forward. Mark Haddad shared that parking, which has always been a concern at this site, and other previously discussed projects will all be addressed under this one major project, that he and Activitas are working with the Park Commission. Carolyn Perkins asked if Mark Haddad is working with other private youth groups, as we see those applications coming in, she wants to ensure there is no duplication of effort and funding, so the Town Manager, Youth Groups, and Park Commission, should work together to request funding. Aubrey Theall had no comments. Bruce Easom stated that one of the requirements for Town Meeting is that the land owner approve the project, so the Town Manager could potentially be a co-applicant on youth group applications. Rob Foley spoke to the committee, stating that his organization has put more than \$30,000 into the properties, and that the Groton Dunstable Youth Baseball League, has asked for little to no project funding, while donating many hours of volunteering. Ms. Perkins clarified that she understands this, and shared her appreciation for all that they do, though the Community Preservation Act needs to be followed, and some things are not permissible, a youth group application isn't common as previous applications were submitted by the Park Commission.

2026-14 Town Field Improvements- Russ Burke clarified that the expense of the project is currently projected at 1.6 million. Dan Emerson shared that the project is permissible and it will be up to the Town to decide on spending. Carolyn Perkins shared her worry about the expense and Aubrey Theall agreed with Ms. Perkins sentiment. Bruce Easom stated that it meets all requirements for CPA eligibility. Richard Hewitt stated that the amount of money is breathtaking, though Town Field is a very popular place for all, and amendments should be considered carefully. Even so, Richard Hewitt stated that this project is permissible for Town Meeting.

2026-01 West Groton Rail Trail – Dan Emerson stated that the project is well within permissible guidelines. Carolyn Perkins stated that this project would qualify for funding, Aubrey Theall agreed. Bruce Easom disclosed that he is on the West Groton Rail Trail Committee, and shared updates. Richard Hewitt shared that it is a worthwhile project, and that a map and pictures are helpful. Russ Burke had no comments. John Strauss, applicant, asked about usage of 2025 funds for legal fees, a request which may come forward as a request on the Complete Draft Proposal. Anna Eliot had no comments.

2026-02 Conservation Fund 2026- Bruce Easom shared, as a member of the Conservation Commission, that they are requesting another \$400,000, as has been requested and approved for the last 3 years in a row, for land acquisition, sharing a few recent parcel acquisitions. Carolyn Perkins asked how much is currently in the Conservation Commission fund, to which Bruce Easom stated they currently have 1.4 million available, and they are asking for another \$400,000. Aubrey Theall stated that the Town is historically supportive of the funding, and stated that he has no issues with the application. Anna Eliot added that the current balance in the Conservation Commission Fund is likely to be much smaller soon, with acquisitions forthcoming. Richard Hewitt asked if the Conservation Commission would be flexible with their financial ask, which Bruce Easom said he could ask the Commission for their thoughts. Russ Burke agreed that the project meets the permissible guidelines of the CPA, though there are more requests than there is money. Dan Emerson stated that he has no issues with the application.

2026-03 FY26 Housing Funds Request- Aubrey Theall shared that this project has also been well supported by the Town in the past, and falls within the guidelines. Anna Eliot asked for more of a tracked history of how funds have been spent, to which Becky Pine gave verbal information on spending through October 2024, which can be found in the application. Ms. Pine also stated that the ask this year is for \$400,000, and that the Affordable Housing Trust heard feedback from the CPC last year, with their group

looking at getting more units for less Town funds. Anna Eliot added that the project falls within the 4 squares. Bruce Easom had no comments. Richard Hewitt asked if the Affordable Housing Trust has a target amount that they are hoping to accrue, or, if there is flexibility on their financial request, to which Becky Pine said that having 1 million available would be a target. Russ Burke echoed Richard Hewitt's comments, as did Dan Emerson. Carolyn Perkins stated that the project meets CPA funding qualifications.

2026-06 Housing Coordinator FY26- Anna Eliot shared that the project falls within CPA permissibility. Bruce Easom had no comments. Richard Hewitt stated that it is standard practice to continue. Russ Burke shared that the project is necessary for the Town, and with the affordable units currently available, having somebody on top of inventory, as well as to keep compliance, is well founded project, also not a major expense. Dan Emerson added that the project is a good investment, falling within CPA permissibility. Aubrey Theall had no comments.

2026-07 Prescott Family Educational Project- Anna Eliot read the following comments from Stuart Saginor of the Community Preservation Coalition, *"Unfortunately, there is no way for CPA to participate in this project. To qualify for CPA funding, the asset must be a building, structure, vessel, real property, historic document or historic artifact that already exists. You can acquire, preserve or rehabilitate that asset, but you cannot create new things in the historic category. A family history is not one of the six hard assets covered by CPA, nor does the project qualify under any of the three verbs in the previous sentence. This project definitely supports historic preservation, and you are creating something new (a multimedia presentation), but as you can see on the CPA allowable uses chart, "support" and "create" projects are not allowed in the historic category: <https://www.communitypreservation.org/allowable-uses>".* Bruce Easom added that the project, as drafted, would not be eligible, though the project can be re-drafted to attempt to fit within the 4 squares of permissibility. No other comments were made.

2026-08 Prescott House Preservation- Aubrey Theall shared on behalf of the Historical Commission, that no plan for preservation of the home had come through. Aubrey Theall stated that the project would be to move the asset to a new location, and that they intend to keep the project application moving forward for the time being. Bruce Easom commended Mr. Theall for getting the application in by the deadline. Richard Hewitt added that it is a daunting project, and asked what will the building might be used for and how it will be maintained. Aubrey Theall shared that all options are being contemplated, but they are at an impasse. No other comments from CPC members.

2026-09 Bancroft Castle Preservation Phase 2- Aubrey Theall shared that an FY25 CPA project was completed for an assessment of the structure, and once the final report is in, a preservation plan would come forward, the budget not being clearly defined, as of yet. No other comments by CPC members.

2026-10 Prescott Community Center- Anna Eliot read the following comments from Stuart Saginor of the Community Preservation Coalition, *"Is this building owned or leased by the nonprofit group submitting the application? If not, then the town board or committee in control of the building would have to be the applicant or co-applicant with their name at the top of the application. Due to Massachusetts's procurement laws, you cannot give public funds to a private entity to do work on a public building, so the name on the top of the application should be the town entity that will do the work on the building. See this article: <https://www.communitypreservation.org/procurement>. Rehabilitation of an historic resource is a core use of CPA funds, so this application seems to be eligible for CPA funding. However, CPA can only fund "capital improvements" according to the following definition: "Capital improvement", reconstruction or alteration of real property that: (1) materially adds to the value of the real property, or appreciably prolongs the useful life of the real property; (2) becomes part of the real property or is permanently affixed to the real property so that removal would cause material damage to the property or article itself; and (3) is intended to become a permanent installation or is intended to remain there for an indefinite period of time. As such, CPA cannot fund entry hall mats or throw rugs, nor can CPA pay for furniture such as the tables and chairs that are mentioned in the proposal. Those items need to be removed from the CPA portion of the project budget and paid by other sources. Lastly, you must ensure that the Secretary of Interior's Standards apply to all work on the building. We noted the request for new doors in the application, rather than rehabilitating the historic doors that are already there. Unless the doors are beyond repair, the Standards call for rehabilitation of defining historic features such as windows and doors. Best practice is for the budget for the project should include the hiring of an historic preservation consultant*

should be made so that they can review the work against the required Standards. Here's an article about preserving windows in historic buildings; much of the advice applies to doors, as well. <https://www.communitypreservation.org/windows>". Richard Hewitt noted that the Select Board should sign on as co-applicant to the project, and much of the application will need to be removed to fit CPA permissibility. No other CPC members had comments. Megan Donovan clarified that once modifications to the application are made, that they would be allowed to submit a Complete Draft Proposal, to which the Committee replied yes.

2026-11 GDYBL Batting Cages Remodel, Backstop Netting- Russ Burke, referring to the (3) GDYBL applications, stated that the projects seem to be capital improvements, and that the applications, would need to be signed by the Park Commission and Select Board. Dan Emerson echoed Mr. Burkes comment. Carolyn Perkins and Aubrey Theall had no comments. Anna Eliot stated that the Park Commission will be reviewing the applications on December 10th, at their regular meeting. Rob Foley added that he had gone through the requests with a now former Park Commissioner, Brenden Mahoney. Bruce Easom stated that the netting request may be a maintenance issue. Rob Foley stated there is currently no netting pre-existing. Russ Burke added that due to the short lifespan of netting, it may be the maintenance issue, not a capital expenditure. Dan Emerson provided information to Mr. Foley on contacting the Community Preservation Coalition for clarifications. Rob Foley added that no major improvements have been done to the Cow Pond baseball area in 16 years, and that he has discussed these projects with the Town Manager, as there may be potential that these requests could become part of the larger 2026-05 project. Carolyn Perkins added that synthetic turf is not permitted. Rob Foley noted that some groups are asking for much larger amounts, and his group is asking for an accumulative amount of under \$120,000, with baseball investing so much to the Towns fields. Richard Hewitt asked that the projects be prioritized and encouraged working with the Town Manager.

2026-12 GDYBL Cow Pond Dugouts- Rob Foley noted that the GDYBL is being thoughtful regarding spending, working with Boy Scouts for this particular project. Richard Hewitt asked that amounts spent by the league on fields, be included on the application. Dan Emerson added that he should provide letters of promised financial support for the project. Bruce Easom provided information from the Community Preservation Plan, requesting letters of commitment from outside donors. No other comments.

2026-13 Cow Pond Field 4 Drainage and Mounds Rebuild- See comments above.

2026-15 Provide Curatorial Storage- Dan Emerson state that the project fits permissible guidelines, Carolyn Perkins and Aubrey Theall stated they are members of the Groton Historical Society, but agreed that the project is permissible. Anna Eliot agreed. Bruce Easom confirmed the current Historical Restriction on file, no other comments were made.

2026-16 Townwide Digital Preservation Assessment- Anna Eliot read the following comments from Stuart Saginor of the Community Preservation Coalition, *"Cataloging, indexing, studying, assessing, digitization, planning and archiving of records is not allowed with CPA funds. See the attached letter from the Department of Revenue. Unfortunately, this project is not eligible for CPA funds. When it comes to documents, preservation and rehabilitation work on the actual documents is eligible for CPA funding, but not digitization or those other related expenses. This project is not eligible for CPA funds."* Aubrey Theall stated that the Historical Commission will seek other funding.

2026-17 Town Center Development Vision Plan- Bruce Easom began by stating that as this application was reviewed at the last meeting, and that it was difficult to see how this could fit within the Community Preservation Act. Richard Hewitt agreed and stated that this project may be more appropriate for the Master Plan. Russ Burke also agreed with Bruce Easom's comment, and noted that the project is more of an economic development focused project. Dan Emerson agreed that the project would not be permissible, and suggested the applicant contact the Coalition for clarity. Carolyn Perkins stated that the project is too broad, and gave examples of proper historical, housing, recreation, and open space projects. Aubrey Theall had no comment. Anna Eliot shared that this seems more like economic development. Russ Burke read directly from the preliminary application to substantiate the Committee members' comments. Greg Sheldon thanked the committee for feedback, and shared that the Destination Groton Committee had looked at a state grant previously, applying with 11 letters of support. He further shared economic expansion information, aiming to preserve the Town's character. Anna Eliot added that some of Mr. Sheldon's comments may be more

appropriate for the Planning Board.

2026-18 FY26 Williams Barn Renovation- Stephen Woodin was present, sharing that the barn is deteriorating, and the goal is to preserve the existing structure. Dan Emerson suggested letters of Town support, to strengthen the application. It was clarified that this is Town owned property, and on the state historical listing. Carolyn Perkins suggested the Conservation Commission be a co-applicant, with support from the Select Board. Russ Burke noted that the project would certainly be permissible as historical. Richard Hewitt added that a letter from the Historical Commission would also be helpful, and a priority list from the Historical Commission.

CONTINUED PROJECT UPDATES

2025-01 Conservation Fund FY25 (BRUCE EASOM)- no updates.

2025-02 Cow Pond Play Fields (ANNA ELIOT) - no updates.

2025-03 Milestone Markers Restoration (AUBREY THEALL) - no updates.

2025-04 Sustainable Groton Funding (CAROLYN PERKINS) - no updates.

2025-05 Prescott School Building Assessment (RICHARD HEWITT)- Richard Hewitt shared that the project should be done by end of year, with \$40,000 of funding to be returned to the CPC.

2025-07 Squannacook River Rail Trail Phase II Permitting (BRUCE EASOM) - no updates.

2025-08 Bancroft Castle Preservation Study (AUBREY THEALL) - no updates.

2025-09 Property Security, Safety, and Preservation (CAROLYN PERKINS) - no updates.

2025-10 Housing Fund Request FY25 (DAN EMERSON) - no updates.

2025-11 Housing Coordinator FY25 (CAROLYN PERKINS) - no updates.

2025-12 Tools and Equipment for Building and Enhancing Trails (RUSS BURKE) - no updates.

2024-04 Rebuild Major League Baseball Diamond (ANNA ELIOT) - no updates.

2024-05 Construct 2 Softball Diamonds at Cutler (ANNA ELIOT) - no updates.

2019-08 Duck Pond Restoration (RICHARD HEWITT) - no updates.

2022-04 Affordable Housing Site Assessment Study (DANIEL EMERSON) - no updates.

2022-09 Groton Dunstable Natural Field Restoration Plan (BRUCE EASOM)- Bruce Easom shared a draft sign, created by Dunstable CPC, to be funded by Dunstable CPC, with Bruce Easom installing at the GD High School. Carolyn Perkins moved to approve the sign design as submitted, Dan Emerson seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

2023-04 Nashua Riverwalk (CAROLYN PERKINS) - no updates.

NEW/OLD BUSINESS

- **Budget Discussion-** Bruce Easom shared trends from Registry of Deeds, as 2024 comes to a close, noting the percentage of collected funds to Groton has been .6% since about 2021, helping predict future years. He also added that Groton has received from the Dept of Revenue, a state match of \$266,397 which is 25.71% of Groton's actual FY2024 local surcharge revenue. Bruce Easom also described funds to be available for upcoming FY26 projects.
- **Sign Invoices/ Project letters-** Invoices and 1 close out letter was signed by the committee members.
- **Next public meeting** will be Monday December 9th at 7:00pm, and tentatively Monday December 23rd, if there is a reason to meet.

MEETING MINUTES

Committee members reviewed minutes from October 28, 2024. Carolyn Perkins moved to approve the meeting minutes from Monday, October 28, 2024 as submitted, Aubrey Theall seconded and the motion carried, with Bruce Easom and Carolyn Perkins abstaining.

Dan Emerson moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:36PM. Aubrey Theall seconded, and the motion carried by unanimous vote.

Respectfully submitted by Katie Berry, Inter-Departmental Assistant

Approved: **12/9/24** _____