

DARTMOUTH



MASSACHUSETTS

Community Preservation Committee

Howard Baker-Smith, Chairperson
James Bosworth
Michael Kehoe
Elaine Lancaster
Stuart MacGregor
Damon May
Kevin Shea
John Sousa

400 Slocum Road
Dartmouth, MA 02747-0985
Telephone: (508) 910-1824
Fax: (508) 910-1886

MINUTES

December 2, 2014

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DARTMOUTH TOWN CLERK

Members present: Howard Baker-Smith, Chair
Elaine Lancaster
Stuart MacGregor
Damon May
Kevin Shea
John Sousa

Members absent: Michael Kehoe
James Bosworth

The meeting was called to order at 6:35 p.m.

Motion:

Mr. Sousa made a motion to approve the minutes of the November 12, 2014 meeting. The motion was seconded and approved by a 4-0-1 vote. Mr. Baker-Smith was not present for the vote.

An invoice with voucher attached was circulated for review. The invoice was from Ttl-Architects in the amount of \$1,914 for the final installment of the Historic Building Inventory, Phase 2014.

Motion:

Mr. Shea made a motion to approve payment of the invoice from Ttl-Architects in the amount of \$1,914. The motion was seconded and approved by a 5-0 vote. Mr. Baker-Smith was not present for the vote.

PROJECT UPDATES

Newfield Farm Conservation Project

Dexter Meade had sent an email to Greg Barnes and Mr. Baker-Smith saying the title issues had been sorted out, and a closing was to take place. He attached an invoice from DNRT representing 75% of the grant award. Mr. Barnes had approved payment.

Mr. Baker-Smith joined the meeting at 6:53 p.m.

ELIGIBILITY FUNDING APPLICATIONS

The CPC was in receipt of three applications.

Housing Rehabilitation Loan Program - January 2015

The Town of Dartmouth seeks to determine eligibility for the continuation of the existing Loan Program. The Town would be requesting \$100,000. There were no concerns raised with the application.

Housing Rehabilitation Loan Administration Program

The Town of Dartmouth seeks to determine eligibility for the continuation of the existing Administration Program. The Town would be requesting \$6,000. There were no concerns raised with the application.

Motion:

Mr. Shea made a motion to accept the eligibility of both the Housing Rehab Loan Program and the Housing Rehab Administration Program. They are eligible activities, and they (the Town) are invited to submit full applications. The motion was seconded and approved by a 6-0 vote.

Ongoing Restoration of the Akin House

Diane Gilbert, President of Dartmouth Heritage Preservation Trust (DHPT), was present and spoke on the project and application. The preservation and restoration of the Akin House has been continuing since its purchase in 2003. In November, 2014 a Facilities Master Plan was presented which included the construction of a visitor center on the site. The property would become a cultural center.

DHPT seeks to determine eligibility for the continuation of work on the Akin House. The application listed 10 tasks for which DHPT would be requesting \$200,000 to complete. Ms. Gilbert said this work will make the House viable. It will also create a "head start" toward the preparations for the new building. Mr. Sousa questioned item 8 "Creation of off-street parking." Architect Joe Booth was present and said they will make an opening in the wall to allow cars to park on the property instead of the street. Paving will not be included. Mr. Sousa is concerned that using historic preservation funds to create a parking lot would be an ineligible use of CPA

funds. Ms. Gilbert said a precedent was set when funds were awarded to the Housing Authority for a new parking lot. Mr. Sousa said that project was related to affordable housing, not the historic preservation of a building. Ms. Gilbert said these funds are being sought more specifically for the site.

Mr. Shea questioned item 7 "Removal of the garage." The garage has no historical significance. Mr. Baker-Smith said the scope of this project is preservation and rehabilitation, adding that the statute provides certain boundaries for each CPA purpose. Mrs. Lancaster questioned item 9 "New heating system and enhanced electrical system for lighting, etc." saying the Apponegansett Meeting House does not have those features. Mr. Booth said their goal is to finish the restoration completely to the best of their ability. The application may contain items that are determined to be ineligible, but they included everything to show what they envision happening. The building needs heat to prevent further deterioration. The temperature would be kept at 56 degrees.

Mr. MacGregor said it will be critical for the full application to show what the end result will be. Attorney Dan Perry was present and said they are hoping to achieve what is necessary for the building's future function. Mr. Baker-Smith said that if the application is approved at Town Meeting, the total funds expended on the Akin House would be nearly \$600,000. Ms. Gilbert said that some of those funds were used for the acquisition and that preservation work is expensive. She feels there is insufficient appreciation of the significance of the Akin House to the history of the Town. Some CPC members reiterated that it will be important to make the case. Ms. Gilbert said that if the application is not approved, "we're done." That is why it is important for the Town to be behind it.

PROJECT UPDATES (continued)

Veterans' Housing

Mrs. Lancaster said the first application for affordable housing financing was unsuccessful. The Housing Authority has reapplied and hopes to receive notice in January.

In other business, some Committee members expressed their frustration over the vacant at-large seat. It has remained unfilled for six months. Mr. Baker-Smith will ask the Selectboard to address the matter.

A discussion took place regarding the Akin House project. Mr. Sousa said he was taken aback by the comment Ms. Gilbert made that if the proposal is not approved, "we're done." He said there is no guarantee of CPA funding for any project. Funds have been committed to this project in good faith in anticipation that the House would be something that is preserved forever. Ms. Gilbert seemed to indicate, in a threatening tone, that they will walk away. Other Committee members shared the same concerns. Will DHPT do any fundraising, or will it rely solely on CPA funds? It will be difficult to fundraise for a project that has essentially been abandoned. If the work is done to the House, how will the utilities be paid? Town Meeting members may want to see what the end product would be if the funds were to be approved. There should be some matching funds with the grant request. The business plan needs to be completed.

Members question what source of heat would be installed. It was reiterated that the Apponegansett Meeting House does not have a heating system yet has remained in existence for 350 years. It will be imperative to learn how DHPT plans to sustain the expenses. Additionally, if a visitor center is constructed, how will it be maintained? The center should be viable before CPA funding is awarded. Historic preservation is important, but the funds must be spent wisely. The Russells Mills Library and the Stone Barn Farm have been awarded funds, but those buildings are being used. In order to view the inside of the Akin House, areas would have to be cordoned off with Plexiglas. Handicap accessibility will be required. Some members expressed they feel the business plan will be the visitor center.

The Committee spoke of small matters.

There was no further business.

Motion:

Mr. Sousa made a motion to adjourn. The motion was seconded and approved by a 6-0 vote.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:12 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Susan D. Dorschied
Administrative Clerk

Approved,



Howard Baker-Smith
Chair