

# DARTMOUTH

Community Preservation Committee



# MASSACHUSETTS

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

## MINUTES

January 6, 2015

Members present: Howard Baker-Smith, Chair  
Stuart MacGregor  
Damon May  
John Sousa

Members absent: James Bosworth  
Michael Kehoe  
Elaine Lancaster  
Kevin Shea

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

### PROJECT UPDATES

#### ***Russells Mills Library – Phases I, II, and III***

Deborah Melino-Wender had submitted a close-out report. The project is complete and is a success. There is an unexpended balance of \$3,262.67 that will be recaptured to the historic preservation reserve. A historic preservation restriction has been recorded.

#### ***Veterans' Housing***

The Housing Authority has been awarded a State development grant. They can now finalize construction contracts and begin work.

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In other business, Mr. Baker-Smith has spoken with David Cressman and Michael Watson regarding the CPC's vacant at-large seat. Two people have applied, and the appointment of a new member is expected this month.

### ELIGIBILITY APPLICATIONS

The Committee was in receipt of four applications.

#### *Establishment of a Conservation Fund*

The Town of Dartmouth seeks to determine the eligibility of setting up a trust to fund the acquisition of properties for open space and recreation. David Cressman spoke on the application. He distributed a draft list entitled "High Priority for Potential Future Acquisition." The list included the addresses of properties, the owners and lot sizes. Mr. Cressman said the trust would be funded with CPA funds, to be applied for annually. Town Meeting would vote on a priority list of potential properties for future acquisition, which list would be set by Town Boards. Funds would be released upon CPC approval. Mr. Cressman said some Town officials have not been in agreement with certain grants awarded for open space preservation. They feel agricultural parcels are more valuable than woodlands. Since funds are limited, should the focus be on agricultural and recreational needs? Town boards need to work together to determine what the Town's priorities are, which priorities may not be the same as those of private groups. A certain property may become available, but some may feel it is not in the Town's best interest to acquire it. Those funds could instead be saved for the future purchase of a more valuable parcel.

Mr. Baker-Smith said the CPC reaches out annually to Town Boards and other organizations, seeking input regarding their priorities. If the Town created a list around land preservation, it could be referenced in the CPC's Needs Assessment, which is available on the Town's website. Mr. MacGregor said the trust fund would generate flexibility to enable the Town to respond more quickly than the current process allows. Mr. Cressman agreed and said it would also allow the Town to respond within the priorities of Town boards. Mr. Baker-Smith said it would be important to determine under what jurisdiction the trust would be built. Further, the decision making around the awarding of funds would need to follow an established process.

Mr. Sousa is in favor of Town boards coming together to create a priority list. Referring to the draft "High Priority" list, he said he would like to see the priorities of the Town as a whole. In doing so, land that could be used to build a facility would be included. Mr. Cressman said the list shows properties that can be acquired with Community Preservation funds. Some properties may have more than one use. Referring to a map, Mr. Cressman demonstrated that many of the properties are located near land that is already protected. A facility would most likely be built in an inhabited area. The Master Plan generally has a focus on preserving existing open space. Mr. Sousa would like to see which properties on the list are in 61A. He also said that he is proud of the job Dartmouth has done preserving open space. Setting up a fund will not solve the problem. It could be built up over time and then a portion used to acquire a property. Later, for example, a more valuable property becomes available, but there are insufficient funds to purchase it. He does not feel that a separate "slush fund" is needed.

Mr. May asked if Town boards provided input on the draft list. Mr. Cressman said no, it is in an early stage. Its contents were discussed. Mr. Baker-Smith suggested items of importance if a full application is submitted.

### ***Town of Dartmouth Historic Town Meeting Records Transcription***

The Dartmouth Historical & Arts Society (DHAS) seeks to determine the eligibility of preserving and reproducing Town Meeting records from 1674 to 1787. Robert Harding, president of DHAS, spoke on the application. The selected time period is prior to the division of Dartmouth into other towns. These records are currently in the custody of the New Bedford City Clerk. The records are in a dilapidated state, and they would be reproduced. Hard copies would be available to Dartmouth's Town Clerk, historians and others. Mr. Harding spoke about the records' contents which include transcriptions. Similar projects have been carried out in numerous CPA communities. Committee members spoke favorably on the proposed project. If a full application is submitted, it must provide who will perform the work and a cost budget.

### ***Create & Publish Media in Support of "Historic Tourism" for Dartmouth***

The Dartmouth Historical & Arts Society seeks to determine the eligibility of developing and publishing materials to increase the visibility of Dartmouth. Robert Harding spoke on the application. The project would include brochures of local historic locales, selected old houses, and a guidebook for touring. Committee members spoke favorably on the proposed project. Mr. Baker-Smith will forward electronic copies of both of DHAS's Eligibility Applications to the Community Preservation Coalition citing precedent and asking if there has been any further interpretation of the CPA which would prohibit such projects. If a full application is submitted, it must provide who will perform the work and a cost budget.

### ***Environmental Access***

The Lloyd Center for Environmental Education seeks to determine the eligibility of creating better street access to the Center and construct a waterside pavilion. No one from the Lloyd Center was present to speak on the application. Committee members' questions and concerns included if the access road work is considered maintenance. Is the pavilion a facility, the construction of which would be prohibited under the CPA? The total project cost would be \$250,000; \$125,000 would be CPA funds. The application is not clear for which aspects the CPA funding would be sought. The project may be eligible, but the statute has boundaries that may limit or prohibit certain funding. Research of the law will be necessary.

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A discussion took place regarding the Helfand Farm House preservation. Mr. May, who serves on the Historical Commission, said the matter was discussed at its meeting the previous evening. The Commission voted in support of the preservation. Dartmouth Natural Resources Trust (DNRT) is proposing preserving the exterior of the front building. They would gut the entire interior, structurally stabilize it, install a heating system, and create conference space. A breezeway would be constructed to connect the building to one of two proposed barn-like

structures that will contain office and record-keeping space. The second structure will house maintenance vehicles.

A committee of concerned citizens has been formed and is pressing DNRT to preserve the Farm House by doing as little as possible to the interior. They propose stabilizing and tightening the structure. DNRT's Executive Director Dexter Mead spoke of a forthcoming report prepared by a preservationist expert, which report is essential for the Historical Commission's endorsement of the project. Further, the project lacked details that included the extent of the interior demolition, proposed structural repairs and a budget. The CPC anticipates an application submission by DNRT for the preservation work.

A discussion took place regarding the CPC's finances. Mr. Baker-Smith distributed a budget spreadsheet that included revenue and expense figures for FY2015. The State match came in at 31.5%.

The Committee discussed small matters.

With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 8:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Approved,



Susan D. Dorschied  
Administrative Clerk



Howard Baker-Smith  
Chair