

DARTMOUTH



MASSACHUSETTS

Community Preservation Committee

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

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MINUTES

February 3, 2015

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DARTMOUTH TOWN CLERK

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

Member absent: Michael Kehoe

The meeting was called to order at 6:37 p.m.

Motion:

Mr. Sousa made a motion to approve the minutes of the December 2, 2014 meeting, as written. The motion was seconded and approved by a 7-0 vote. Mr. Baker-Smith was not present for the vote.

Motion:

Mr. Sousa made a motion to approve the minutes of the January 6, 2015 meeting, as written. The motion was seconded and approved by a 7-0 vote. Mr. Baker-Smith was not present for the vote.

FY2016 FUNDING APPLICATIONS

The Committee was in receipt of five applications for the June funding round.

Housing Rehabilitation Loan Program - January 2015

The Town of Dartmouth is seeking \$60,000 for the continuation of the existing Loan Program. There were no concerns raised or questions identified for the applicant.

Housing Rehabilitation Loan Administrative Program - January 2015

The Town of Dartmouth is seeking \$7,000 for the continuation of the existing Loan Administrative Program. There were no concerns raised or questions identified for the applicant.

O'Connor-Sisson House for Veterans (2015)

Partners in Housing, LLC is seeking \$50,000 for the development of nine units of affordable housing for veterans. Mr. Shea said two grants have been awarded from the Department of Housing & Community Development. One is for \$675,000 and the other, \$884,806. A concern was raised as to the lack of clarity of the purpose for the grant request. The applicant will need to provide further information.

Akin House Historic Preservation Project – Phase III

Dartmouth Heritage Preservation Trust (DHPT) is seeking \$267,000 for the ongoing preservation and restoration of the Akin House. Mr. MacGregor asked what the extent of public access will be. Diane Gilbert, President of DHPT, said she cannot say exactly, but they are hoping to follow the trends of other locations like it. Their goal is to make it public and accessible to the best they can possibly offer. Mr. Sousa said there are no matching funds listed in the application. It is concerning that DHPT has not been successful over the years at securing any other funding. It appears CPA funds will be the sole source for Phase III. Ms. Gilbert said the focus has been on completing the House to avert further deterioration. In 2008 there was a recession, and it was difficult to make a case. If DHPT can demonstrate success in Phase III, other sources of funding can be explored since they will be needed for the visitor center.

Mr. Sousa said there have been many other organizations that have been successful at fundraising since 2008. Ms. Gilbert said they are a small, grassroots organization that was essentially formed to save the Akin House. They have raised some money through memberships and elsewhere, but not nearly enough to complete Phase III. They are leasing the building from the Town for the purpose of preserving it. People want to see progress, and currently they do not have enough to show. She feels DHPT deserves to receive CPA funds, and if they do, they will be able to make a better case to other organizations to match those funds. They have not come back to the CPC earlier because of the concerns that were being raised. Ms. Gilbert feels they can now make a better case to the public than they could in the past several years.

Ms. Latimer said she would like to see some indication of school support such as letters from teachers and principals. She also said that due to the inaccessibility of the second floor, interpretive material should be available. She is concerned about the eligibility of parking site work. She asked that the "Site Improvements" and "Electrical" budgets be broken down.

Mr. Shea asked if this will be the final phase of the restoration. Ms. Gilbert said preservation never ends, but the work going forward from Phase III will be maintenance.

Mr. May said that he feels everything about the Akin House is worthwhile. He understands the necessity to think big. He is concerned, however, about the lack of matching funds. In the eight years since DHPT came before the CPC, there has been no other funding source. He said "It is difficult to move a project forward that has not had the benefit of that which is required of all other organizations." Ms. Gilbert said it has been a concern of hers as well.

Mr. Baker-Smith joined the meeting at 7:10 p.m. He was briefed on the discussions that had taken place and provided comment. In regards to the proposal from Partners in Housing, he expressed the same concern about the lack of clarity for the funding request. In regards to the Akin House project, he wants to know what Phase III will deliver upon completion. Will the public have access, and how will it be supported? If the cultural heritage center does not come to fruition, how will the building be used? Mr. Baker-Smith said the lease on the Akin House will be up in 2018. He wants DHPT and the Town to address what their commitment will be to sustain the property, both its maintenance and public access. He is concerned that a project costing nearly \$750,000 could result in something that is intangible.

Helfand Farmhouse Rehabilitation Project

Dartmouth Natural Resources Trust (DNRT) is seeking \$206,015 to stabilize and rehabilitate the exterior of the front section of the historic Helfand Farmhouse in conjunction with the adaptive reuse of its interior. DNRT had initially intended to gut the building and create meeting space. They have since revised their plans to instead, preserve some original features including a stair case, mantles and archways, and use the space for administrative offices. The building will be insulated and rewired. Mr. Baker-Smith is concerned that the new design may decrease the public benefit of the building. Will the benefit be substantial enough to allow CPA funding? A legal opinion will be sought.

Mr. Sousa believes there is a big public benefit. He appreciates the debates that have taken place, and feels DNRT is doing the right thing. He expects every room in the house will have displays of its farming history and that of the surrounding area. Mr. Shea would like to hear more about what the public use will be. The application states the exterior of the Farmhouse will be available for public viewing, and DNRT will provide one to two open houses per year for the public. Would that be adequate? Mr. Sousa said a condition could be that, with advanced notice, the interior could be viewed by the public. Mr. Baker-Smith said the CPC must exercise due diligence. If there is an issue, is there a solution?

David Cressman was in attendance and spoke of two prior projects that had received significant CPA funding for historic preservation. The Historic Preservation Restriction on the Stone Barn Farm is for its exterior only. What is the public accessibility to both projects? To get into the YMCA (the second project), he believes one must be a member. The Stone Barn has a variety of programs, but are they free? Are the programs sponsored by various organizations for their members or groups? He feels the Committee should look at what has been done in the past and

judge this project in a similar manner. Ms. Latimer said both the Stone Barn and the Apponegansett Meeting House have hosted numerous free programs. She has attended many.

Mr. Baker-Smith said he will ask DNRT how they envision public access to the property in its restored state. Ms. Latimer would like to see a program plan as well as more evidence of community support. DNRT will need a letter of certification from the Historical Commission. She is concerned the construction budget may be inadequate. Some members feel there should be a higher contingency allowance. Additional questions/concerns included compliance with the stringent standards of the Secretary of the Interior regarding replacements and alterations. The budget needs a clear breakdown as to the interior and exterior work. The Historical Commission must approve the plans and the work. The matching funds are solely for the interior restoration. An architectural survey provided various restoration recommendations. What are DNRT's plans regarding the recommendations? Members also discussed the possibility of a historic preservation restriction that would cover both the interior and exterior of the building.

Project sponsors will be sent letters with a list of questions raised by the Committee. They will be invited to the March meeting, which will include a public hearing.

The CPC's finances were discussed. The Akin House application was briefly discussed. The lack of matching funds remains a concern.

Motion:

Mr. MacGregor made a motion to schedule the next CPC meeting on March 10, 2015. The motion was seconded and approved by an 8-0 vote.

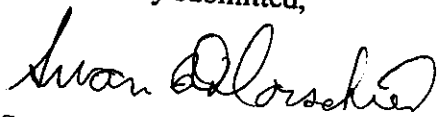
There was no further business.

Motion:

Mr. Baker-Smith made a motion to adjourn. The motion was seconded and approved by an 8-0 vote.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:37 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Susan D. Dorschied
Administrative Clerk

Approved,



Howard Baker-Smith
Chair