

DARTMOUTH

Community Preservation Committee



MASSACHUSETTS

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

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

MINUTES

March 10, 2015

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DARTMOUTH TOWN CLERK

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

Members absent: Michael Kehoe
Elaine Lancaster

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

Motion:

Mr. Sousa made a motion to approve the minutes of the February 3, 2015 meeting, as revised. The motion was seconded and approved by a 7-0 vote.

Mr. Baker-Smith circulated an invoice with voucher from the Community Preservation Coalition for annual dues in the amount of \$2,875.

Motion:

Mr. Shea made a motion to approve the invoice from the 2015 Community Preservation Coalition dues for \$2,875. The motion was seconded and approved by a 7-0 vote.

Motion:

Mr. Sousa made a motion to open the meeting to a public hearing. The motion was seconded and approved by a 7-0 vote.

The public hearing opened at 6:42 p.m.

The Committee was in receipt of five applications for funding.

Housing Rehabilitation Loan Program, January 2015 and Housing Rehabilitation Loan Administrative Program, January 2015

The Town of Dartmouth is seeking \$60,000 to capitalize the existing Housing Rehabilitation Loan Program. It is also seeking \$7,000 to fund the existing Housing Rehabilitation Loan Administrative Program. Deborah Melino-Wender spoke on the applications. The Loan Program helps income-eligible households make improvements to their homes, such as roof replacements, heating systems and lead removal. The administrative funds are used for expenses such as the services of the housing rehab. coordinator who oversees the contractors performing the work. She said two large projects were approved last year totaling more than \$80,000. Ms. Latimer asked if the Town will come once or twice per year for additional funding. Ms. Melino-Wender said once. The program mirrors the CDBG program, which is no longer available. It differs in that this program provides interest-free loans that become payable when the property transfers.

O'Connor-Sisson House for Veterans

Partners in Housing, LLC is seeking \$50,000 for the development of nine units of affordable housing for veterans. Constance Desbiens spoke on the application. Ms. Desbiens said the funding request would help close the gap that exists in the funding awards they have been given. Partners will need an additional \$50,000 which would require obtaining a mortgage. The CPC asked Partners if receiving a lesser amount would affect the project. Ms. Desbiens said the project would still move forward, but a mortgage would be necessary, which cost would strain the very tight budget. The project is underwritten to include the cost of a mortgage. Mr. Baker-Smith asked where the cost saving would be applied should the expense of a mortgage be eliminated. Ms. Desbiens said the funds would go into the operational budget. The nine units will add to the Town's affordable housing inventory. Partners expects their financing to be in place in May. Invitations to bid will follow. She projects occupancy will take place in spring, 2016. Ms. Desbiens expressed gratitude for the CPC's support of the Veterans' Housing Project.

Helfand Farmhouse Rehabilitation Project

The Dartmouth Natural Resources Trust (DNRT) is seeking \$206,015 for the stabilization and rehabilitation of the front section of the historic Helfand Farmhouse. Dexter Meade spoke on the project. In 2013 DNRT became the heir of a 36-acre property on Chase Road on which the farmhouse, a circa 1835 Greek revival, stands. Originally, CPC funding was requested for exterior work, leaving the interior to be demolished and rebuilt as meeting space. The plans for the house have changed to include preservation of the interior, as well, and to repurpose the space as offices. Mr. Meade said DNRT is requesting CPA funds for the structural stabilization and rehabilitation of the exterior only of the front section of the farmhouse. The job would entail numerous tasks including removal of the vinyl siding and asbestos shingles, and the installation of new windows. The front door would be replaced with one of an 1840 design. Columns would

be replaced and granite steps repaired. Extensive structural stabilization would also be performed. Tasks would include lifting the building, replacing or reinforcing the first and second floor framing and roof. Wet basement remediation would also be performed, which DNRT feels is essential to the long-term preservation of the structure.

Mr. Meade said the project meets the CPC's criteria in that the farmhouse is deemed historically significant, and all work will comply with the Secretary of the Interior's standards. A preservation restriction will be placed on the restored exterior of the building. The farmhouse is visible from Chase Road, and the public will be able to drive up, park and view it up close. DNRT expects hundreds of people will be able to enjoy it when they come to meetings, programs and events that are held each year at its headquarters. They will work with the Historical Commission to create one or more displays that will interpret the history and the stories of the Helfand and Potter families who occupied the house and farm.

Several audience members commented. Peggy Medeiros asked if DNRT would consider adding the historic elements of the interior staircase to the (interior) preservation restriction. Mr. Meade said no because it would negatively impact their use of the interior. Patrick Curran said he feels DNRT is asking the public to refurbish them a private building that will benefit them and not the public at large. Daniel Perry feels it is a wonderful project, and he commends DNRT for revising their original plans. Preservation of historically significant structures is a public purpose that deserves the support of the community. Kate White strongly supports the project. She feels DNRT has come up with a really good plan and hopes the CPC will support the project. Joanne Gallant, a volunteer at DNRT, said this project will enable them to be more centrally located in the Town. They are not just a "South Dartmouth organization," and they deserve a new headquarters. Don Plant, a resident of Chase Road, asked why the "L", which is the west wing of the building, is being destroyed. It was the heart of the house, containing the kitchen, parlor, guest area and one or more bedrooms. Mr. Meade said he has heard from many people that the front section of the house is the most important to preserve. He asked Mike Humphrey, Chair of the Building Committee, to elaborate. Mr. Humphrey said the L does not have a foundation, and it would be more expensive to save that space. He elaborated on the particulars of both sections of the farmhouse explaining how the decision was made to save the front. Peggy Medeiros asked if DNRT would consider having an archaeological dig performed on the demolition site. Mr. Meade said it could be considered. Ms. Medeiros said that using artifacts from the property would create the best exhibit. Bob Harding, Vice Chair of the Historical Commission, commends the process that has been followed between DNRT and preservationists in town. In regards to the heart of the house, he referenced the architectural study which identified the room with the most doors as being the heart. The current plan preserves three out of the four sides of that room. A member of DNRT spoke saying it is a challenge converting a house into office space. He is pleased with the appreciation for the project that has been shown, and the end product will be good.

Mr. Shea asked for an explanation of the public access. Mr. Meade said the exterior of the building can be viewed at any time. The headquarters will be an office building where the public is welcome to come. Individual offices may not be available for viewing while people are working. He said the exterior of the building is the purpose of the CPC funding request, and it is the area that will have the permanent restriction. An audience member said that DNRT is a

welcoming organization at their current headquarters at the old Southworth Library, and she expects that it will continue to be so in the new location. Mr. Meade said they get many visitors wanting the view the library, and they are welcome to do so. It will be a similar situation in the new location. DNRT is a non-profit, community organization that is open to the public. An audience member asked about the conference room. Mr. Meade said they are building a nice space for meetings both for DNRT's use and other organizations. It will contain 45-50 chairs in an auditorium setting.

Mr. Baker-Smith asked if the site is similar to other properties DNRT owns that have trails leading from the parking area. Mr. Meade said there is a community garden on the property which has its own entrance. There are 25 acres of farmland and some woods. Additional farmland is currently leased to a farmer. They are not sure what the ultimate disposition of the farmland will be, so no trails have been put in place. Ms. Latimer said she is totally supportive of the project, and that a wonderful process has occurred over the past few months. She would like to have seen a step up to educational programming that some of the other organizations that have received CPA funding have done. In regards to the reconfiguration of the front structure, she asked why the larger space is not to be used as a smaller conference space. She said it could contain a display section in an area that is multifunctional. Mr. Meade said that is to be a work area. Ms. Latimer said she would like to have seen a little more public accessibility that would be on a more regular basis. So many people in the community have been adamant about preserving the interior spaces, which spaces will not be that accessible. Ms. Latimer is concerned about DNRT's keeping with the guidelines of the Secretary of the Interior. She cited the proposed roof replacement. Architect Will Saltonstall said there are a number of technical issues around the roof. Those include serious degradation of the perimeter trim and leaking chimney flashing. Since the L section of the building is being removed, a significant portion of the back side of the roof will be eliminated. Considering all the factors, he feels it would be short-sighted not to replace the roof. It is not historically significant, and given all the work that is going to be done to the house, it makes sense to do it.

The project budget breakdown was discussed in regards to the separation of the interior and exterior costs. Mr. Baker-Smith said public funds can only be used where there is a public benefit. In the case of the Helfand Farmhouse, the exterior will contain the public benefit in such that the building survives and can be seen and appreciated by the public for its historic value. Attorney Anthony Savastano was present and cited the Anti-Aid Amendment which precludes the use of public funds for private purposes. It is important to separate the interior and exterior costs. Separate invoicing was recommended. Certain tasks need to be determined--perhaps by an independent architect--to be necessary for the exterior preservation.

The project budget was discussed. Certain line items will need delineation to determine their relevance to the exterior stabilization and rehabilitation. Soft costs, including construction supervision, will need to be correctly apportioned. DNRT will revise the project budget to further break down certain project costs. A line item for the cost of signage should be added. It was pointed out that the "Other (DNRT)" column cannot be considered as matching funds, since all of the items relate to interior work. CPC, therefore, will be considering a totally outright grant. Mr. Sousa said he commends DNRT for its flexibility and willingness to compromise on the issues. Audience member Katherine Plant asked if DNRT plans to have a library or a visitor

center where the public could come in and study farming. Mr. Meade said that is not part of their current plan.

Akin House Historic Preservation Project, Phase III

The Dartmouth Heritage Preservation Trust (DHPT) is seeking \$267,000 for the ongoing preservation and restoration of the Akin House. Diane Gilbert spoke on the project. Ms. Gilbert said DHPT is the temporary steward of the Akin property, which is Town owned. She said this will be the final time they will seek CPA funding for Akin, however, she cannot speak for the Town or other groups. Their goal is to show the eras of the property's life span, revealing architectural features, repairs and improvements. A house is a living, breathing entity that undergoes changes. DHPT seeks to educate the public on the life story of the house and its inhabitants. At the completion of Phase III, the building will be open to the public for educational programming; "living history at its finest." At that point they will begin planning for Phase IV which will be the Cultural Heritage Center.

Ms. Gilbert spoke of the work that would be done in Phase III. The project will preserve and retain as much of the significant features as possible. The work will include repairing the three fireplaces. The walls will reveal the various finishes that were put in place over the years. The ceilings, cabinets and cupboards will display the cultural periods of the house. Window frames and trim will be restored, and plexiglass will be installed to protect delicate wallpaper and other interior features. Second floor repairs will be made. Heating and lighting will be installed as well as barrier-free access.

Audience members commented. Peggy Medeiros said she speaks for the children of Dartmouth. When she attended Dartmouth schools as a child, no history of the Town was taught. She feels the Akin House would be an incredible resource. Patrick Curran said this project is a classic example of where CPA funds should be going. Deborah Melino-Wender said the Town is in support of the project. She referenced an analysis that had been prepared to demonstrate the resources DHPT has utilized to support the project over time. Don Plant said he and his wife support the project, and that his ancestors were founders of Dartmouth.

Ms. Gilbert had been asked about DHPT's plans to open the Akin House to the public. Ms. Gilbert said she did a survey of other comparable facilities in the area and will plan Akin's hours of operation similarly. Mr. Baker-Smith asked about plans for fundraising. Ms. Gilbert said they are exploring other grant opportunities, but foundations tend not to pay attention to small projects such as theirs. They are planning some fundraising events, but theirs cannot be compared to those of organizations such as DNRT. She hopes that Phase III will attract new membership. She also spoke of the analysis she had provided that included a breakdown of in-kind services. Mr. Baker-Smith is concerned about sustaining the property in the future. Ms. Gilbert said the fundraising will cover that. Ms. Latimer suggested contacting the Massachusetts Cultural Facilities Fund saying that their guidelines will be changing. Ms. Gilbert said that following Phase III, DHPT and the Town will be working closely to decide what is next. The Akin lease will expire in 2018. Ms. Latimer said in regards to educational program support, DHPT should be eligible for funding opportunities through local foundations. Ms. Gilbert agrees and wants to see school children visiting the house. She has lesson plans that were developed by

students at Roger Williams University. Bob Harding said he is an avid historian, and he wholly supports the project. Dartmouth is a very historical town, and it is important to support its history.

Mr. Baker-Smith spoke of Phase III saying there was a concern of there being a product available to the public at its completion--one that would be separate from the bigger vision for the property. He said Ms. Gilbert has described the Akin House as being a stable and secure place that people can access and learn from.

There was no further business for the public hearing.

Motion:

Mr. MacGregor made a motion to close the public hearing. The motion was seconded and approved by a 7-0 vote. The public hearing closed at 8:43 p.m.

The committee recessed until 8:50 p.m.

The five proposals were discussed.

Housing Rehabilitation Loan Program, January 2015

Motion:

Mr. Sousa made a motion to (recommend that Town Meeting) approve \$60,000 from the unrestricted reserve. The motion was seconded and approved by a 7-0 vote.

Housing Rehabilitation Loan Administrative Program, January 2015

Motion:

Mr. Sousa made a motion to (recommend that Town Meeting) approve \$7,000 from the unrestricted reserve. The motion was seconded and approved by a 7-0 vote.

O'Connor-Sisson House for Veterans

Mr. Shea stated he would recuse himself from the vote due to his membership on the board of Partners in Housing.

The reason for the funding request was clarified.

Motion:

Mr. Sousa made a motion to (recommend that Town Meeting) approve \$50,000 from the unrestricted reserve. The motion was seconded and approved by a 6-0-1 vote.

Funds will not be released until construction begins. The terms and conditions of the previous grant agreement will be applied to this project's grant agreement.

Motion:

Mr. Sousa made a motion to apply the same terms and conditions to the \$50,000 grant as were contained in the previous grant agreement with Partners in Housing. The motion was seconded and approved by a 6-0-1 vote.

Helfand Farmhouse Rehabilitation Project

The revised funding request is \$165,000. An adjusted budget breakdown will be provided by DNRT.

Motion:

Mr. Sousa made a motion to (recommend that Town Meeting) approve \$165,000 from the unrestricted reserve. The motion was seconded and approved by a 7-0 vote.

Terms and conditions for the grant agreement were discussed. A historic preservation restriction will be required. There will be a 10% holdback of funds until the restriction has been recorded. A separate accounting of expenses will be necessary for the CPA-funded work. Project plans will need to be submitted to the Historical Commission prior to beginning the project and if any changes occur after inception. The Commission's final approval of the work will also be required. Ms. Latimer was concerned about public access. Mr. Baker-Smith said the interior of the building will be business offices and not a public use.

Motion:

Mr. May made a motion to apply the aforementioned terms and conditions to the grant agreement for the project. The motion was seconded and approved by a 7-0 vote.

Akin House Historic Preservation Project, Phase III

Motion:

Mr. Sousa made a motion to (recommend that Town Meeting) approve \$265,730 from the unrestricted reserve. The motion was seconded and approved by a 7-0 vote.

Terms for the grant agreement were discussed. Ms. Gilbert said that when the Akin House was transferred to the Town, there was a 30-year restriction in place. She said Akin has multiple restrictions, but the temporary restriction needs to be remedied. Mr. Baker-Smith said the grant agreement could provide a holdback of \$5,000 to be released upon the recording of a permanent restriction.

Motion:

Mr. Sousa made a motion that one term of the grant agreement will be to retain \$5,000. The release of the final \$5,000 will be subject to the recording of a permanent restriction on the property. The motion was seconded and approved by a 7-0 vote.

The next meeting will be April 7, 2015.

There was no further business.

Motion:

Mr. Baker-Smith made a motion to adjourn. The motion was seconded and approved by a 7-0 vote.

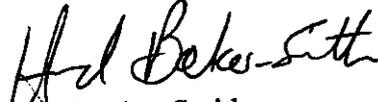
The meeting was adjourned at 9:27 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Susan D. Dorschied
Administrative Clerk

Approved,



Howard Baker-Smith
Chair