

SEEKONK COMMUNITY PRESERVATION COMMITTEE

Minutes – September 28, 2011

Present: Ron Blum, John Alves, Richard Wallace, Willit Mason, Sandy Foulkes, Susan Waddington

Absent: Jim Tusino

Guests: Eleonora Rezek, Bill Rezek, Jan Parker, Dan Horton, Claudette Peden-Tirschel, Joanne Eckhardt, Kelley Whitmore, Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Yaghjian

The meeting was called to order by Chair, Ron Blum at 7:07

The Chair introduced our new member, Sandy Foulkes, representing the Planning Board with a term to expire in 2014

Old business:

1. Minutes of the August 22, 2011 meeting were unanimously approved.
2. John Alves explained the finance statement received from the Town Finance Director so we were all on the same page. New funds from the state will come in mid to late October, but for tonight's voting we will only count the funds in hand.

New business

1. The Chair moved up the discussion of hiring a consultant for the Newman Avenue project. Because the project is time sensitive and because of potential problems listed in communications from Stuart Saginor (Community Preservation Coalition) concerning the difficulty of combining the open space part of the project with affordable housing, the Committee voted unanimously to not hire a consultant, but to purchase 10 acres at 524 Newman Ave to the projects to be considered this evening.
2. Final presentation of projects to be considered:
 - a. Old Town Hall – Dan Horton presented additional information from the design engineers. Discussion centered on the fact that the Committee had requested a break-out of funds for mold and asbestos remediation, while the revised information still covers the complete gutting of the Old Town Hall envelope.
 - b. Chimney and roof for Lt. Governor Simeon Martin House – Committee members discussed the importance of this privately owned historic house and explored other possibilities for funding this project should the committee not vote to fund the application.

- c. Town Hall and Library Documents – Jan Parker was available to answer questions which mostly went over grounds discussed in previous meetings. Ron Blum reported on his call to the Town Clerk at Acushnet who spoke highly of the work done by King Information Systems in organizing town records and providing a system for future access. Before going to King Info, Acushnet officials had talked to Easton and Plymouth where their work was similarly praised.
- d. Habitat for Humanity – Claudette Peden-Tirschel and Joanne Eckhardt assured the Committee that all Habitat expenses were very closely tracked.
- e. Yaghjian Farmland – Kelley Whitmore explained the Agricultural Preservation Restriction program. Once the land is accepted, the Town and the APR program monitor the continuance of land as farmland. The APR works with the landowner to find a farmer. No matter what, the land always stays as farmland. Mr. Yaghjian gave a short, moving statement on the importance of this land and its continuance as farmland.
- f. Jacob Hill Inn – The Rezekes described their plans to make the Inn more accessible to Seekonk residents through tours and programs and indicated that they would look into listing on the Historic Register. They emphasized the amount of money the Inn brings into Seekonk, both through taxes and through the out of town people who come to stay.
- g. 524 Newman Ave. – The application is to cover \$203,000, approximately 50% of the appraised value of the 10 acres of open space at the above address. This land lies within the Seekonk Groundwater Aquifer Protection District. An application has been made for a Water Supply Protection grant to cover the remainder.

3. Votes taken by the Committee (not discussed in order of presentation)

It was agreed unanimously that both Seekonk Land Trust projects should be funded.

- a. Yaghjian Farmland – The Committee voted unanimously to fund the application for Assistance in the Agricultural Preservation Restriction program at the Yaghjian Farmland in the amount of \$180,000. \$52,000 from the CPC Open Space Fund and \$127,000 from the CPC Unreserved Fund.
- b. 524 Newman Ave. – The Committee voted unanimously to assist in the purchase of 10 acres at 524 Newman Ave. for Open Space and Water Protection. To be funded by the CPC bond process in the amount of \$203,000, details to be clarified by the Town finance director.
- c. Jacob Hill Inn – The Committee voted unanimously not to support this application because the project, while commendable, did not sufficiently advance a public purpose and was more for maintenance than rehabilitation.
- d. Lt. Governor Simeon Martin House – The Committee voted unanimously not to fund this application because the project, while commendable, did not sufficiently advance a public purpose and was more for maintenance than rehabilitation.

- e. Old Town Hall project – Because this application still lacks figures setting apart the mold and asbestos remediation, it was unanimously voted that this application be tabled for consideration prior to the Spring Town Meeting when we hope to have these figures.

- f. Habitat for Humanity – The Committee voted to partially fund this application in the amount of \$50,000 with the following vote. Yes – 4 (Blum, Wallace, Foulkes, Alves; No – 1 (Mason); Abstain – 1 (Waddington).

- g. Town Hall and Library Documents – The Committee voted to fully fund this application in the amount of \$4,000 with 4 in favor (Blum, Wallace, Waddington, Alves) and 2 opposed (Mason, Foulkes).

The Chair requested that the final 3 items on the agenda: Signage update, Board member search, and Other new business be postponed until our next meeting which will take place October 19 at 7:00 p.m. Place to be determined.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:25

Susan R. Waddington, Clerk
Seekonk Community Preservation Committee