

Meeting Minutes
Stoughton Community Preservation Committee (CPC)
Meeting held on Google Meet
Wednesday, February 1, 2023

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Members Present: Chairperson Mark Zamanian, Treasurer Michael Barrett, and Program Administrator (PA) Barry Kassler.

Members Attending Remotely: Vice-Chair Dwight MacKerron, Members John Morton, Rich Terry, Bunmi Olotu, and Laurice Rubel [at 7:20]

Members absent: John Linehan and Donald Brady

Others Present: DPW Superintendent Paul Giffune and Finance Committee Member David Lurie

Others Attending Remotely: Select Board Vice-Chair Stephen Cavey

Preliminary Items:

Mr. Zamanian read the Governor's Order authorizing remote meetings, and announced the remote link information for the meeting.

1. **Call to Order:** MOTION: Mr. Barrett moved to open the meeting at 7:10 pm; seconded by Mr. Morton and so voted unanimously, 6-0: Mr. Morton, Aye; Mr. MacKerron, Aye; Ms. Olotu, Aye; Mr. Terry, Aye; Mr. Barrett, Aye; Mr. Zamanian, Aye.

2. **Chairperson's Report:** Mr. Zamanian mentioned that a discussion of funding priorities had been placed on the agenda to allow Mr. Morton to follow up on his comments from the previous meeting. Mr. Morton stated that the CPC's mission is enhancing the Quality of Life for Stoughton's residents, and therefore we need to be careful what we as a committee recommend. In the future, he said, our resources will decrease, and we will need to prioritize non-municipal projects. Mr. Zamanian replied that the first step is to ensure that any project reviewed meets the parameters of eligibility under the CPA. He stated that in his opinion the committee has done a good job of determining the difference between maintenance and community enhancement, rejecting projects in the former category in favor of the latter. He noted that the committee has an opportunity to get a preview of what each project will encompass via the pre-application process.

Mr. MacKerron had two comments. First, a heads-up that the Lucius Clapp Memorial Building ADA project may be coming back before the CPC. Second, he noted that

Recreation projects have dominated the Open Space category, to the point where funding for playgrounds has eclipsed funding the acquisition of open space. He sees both types of projects as worthwhile, as long as we are not neglecting one in favor of the other.

Mr. Zamanian noted that he and Mr. Kassler have spoken with Stuart Saginor of the Community Preservation Coalition regarding bonding and when borrowing is appropriate; the Coalition has a video on bonding which we will incorporate into a future meeting.

3. Administrator's Report: Mr. Kassler reported that Town Clerk Stephanie Carrara sent an email updating the status of the Vital Records project. It will need to go out to bid, and in the meantime she is giving small-scale projects to Kofile to do, using the funding previously allocated to the project.

He also reported that he had heard back from Conservation Commission Chair Gerry McDonald, who contacted the Wildlands Trust about holding a Conservation Restriction (CR) on the newly acquired Atkinson Ave property; Wildlands is willing to do that, which is a positive step forward. Mr. Zamanian asked if the Atkinson CR would include just the recently acquired land; Mr. Kassler replied that the CPA could not pay for a CR on the other open space because it was not acquired with CPA funds.

Mr. Kassler further reported that he has started looking into what would be needed for an Active Recreation CR for the six acres set aside at Glen Echo for that purpose. He noted that this is a difficult type of restriction to find a third party for. Mr. Morton asked if the playground projects we have approved will require Conservation Restrictions (CRs). Mr. Kassler replied that CRs are only required when the Town acquires the property with CPA funds, which hasn't been the case for any of the playgrounds we have funded.

4. Treasurer's Report: Mr. Barrett presented his report via screen-share, which includes the proposed CPA budget for Town Meeting (TM). He reviewed the debt balances and unissued bonding for projects which were approved as bonded. He reviewed the income side of the CPA budget, then the amounts in the Budgeted Reserve accounts, and followed with the list of appropriations for the coming Fiscal Year, including debt service payments by project, and all the proposed new projects. Mr. Zamanian mentioned the BAN (Bond Anticipation Note) for the Stoughton Depot which needed to be included in the budget. Mr. Barrett explained that the bond cannot be issued until the use of the building is determined, as there are different rates and different useful life calculations depending on whether the building is used by the Town for municipal uses, or is leased out to others. He added that we are awaiting Bond

Counsel's opinion on whether we as a committee may pay off the anticipated bond in cash without going back to TM, given that the project was approved as a bonded project. Mr. Zamanian stated that we can expect to be revisiting this item at our next meeting.

5. **Public Comments:** None. *[Ms. Rubel joined the meeting at 7:20.]*

Project Updates:

9. **Update on Student Engagement Project:** MOTION: Mr. Barrett moved to take this item out of order, as Ms. Olotu needs to leave early. Seconded by Mr. MacKerron and so voted 7-0: Mr. Morton, Aye; Mr. MacKerron, Aye; Ms. Olotu, Aye; Ms. Rubel, Aye; Mr. Terry, Aye; Mr. Barrett, Aye; Mr. Zamanian, Aye.

Ms. Olotu reported that she has been able to contact Mr. Mange, the Director of Fine Arts for Stoughton Schools. He stated that the Stoughton chapter of the National Arts Honor Society will be revived soon, and that he regards this as a good project for those students who will be nominated for membership. It remains to be seen how long it will take for the NAHS to get set up and get into position to participate in this project. Mr. Zamanian stated that this item will be carried forward to our March meeting for a further update.

New Business:

6. **Discussion and Recommendation Regarding HD 168:** Mr. Zamanian stated that we received a call from the CP Coalition regarding whether we support a petition filed in the Legislature through Representative William Galvin by a Stoughton citizen. That bill, if passed, would weaken the CPA law and affect the entire state. As a legislator, Rep. Galvin is required to enter bills which are petitioned by his constituents. Mr. Morton noted that because the bill would require CPA communities to place the CPA on the ballot every ten years, it would involve a great deal of cost, time and effort to defend the CPA. Mr. Zamanian noted that at this point, it is only a docket item – not a bill, and therefore he does not foresee the Legislature acting on it soon. He noted the amount of state financial support Stoughton receives due to its having adopted the CPA. He is requesting letters of support for the CPA from each board or committee that has a representative on the CPC. Mr. Morton stated that the proposal is not about whether or not the CPA itself is a good thing or not, but whether having it put before the voters every ten years is wise. Mr. Zamanian asked the members to bring letters from their boards back to the committee at our March meeting.

7. **New Application (Urgent Review): Stoughton Depot Repairs:** Mr. Giffune presenting. Mr. Zamanian explained that this \$200,000 request is from the Select Board, and came out of the January 17 joint meeting. Its purpose is to get the

Stoughton Depot in a condition that will allow it to open for public use. Mr. Kassler verified that the project is CPA-eligible under Historic Preservation, and noted that the committee first needs to determine whether it qualifies for Urgent Review.

Mr. MacKerron noted that this is one of only two buildings in Stoughton on the National Historic Register, along with the Lucius Clapp Building.

Mr. Giffune explained why this is an urgent request. He noted that the Select Board decided unanimously last week to put money into basic repairs to make the building secure for community cultural events. He added that it is not nearly enough to do a full renovation, nor was it intended to be. He stated that the cost estimate being used is based on a professional estimate done in 2020. He noted that the Little Theatre of Stoughton had held a yard sale there over two weekends in December. He added that the Town has received a \$25,000 state grant to do a "best use" study for the building.

Mr. Kassler clarified that the urgency is to get the building open to the public by this summer. He detailed that the purpose of the application is to provide electricity, heat and locking exterior doors, among other items. Mr. Morton noted that the work would be delayed almost sixteen months if we had to wait until the next TM cycle to address this, which would lead to higher cost and more damage from the elements. **MOTION: Mr. Morton moved to accept the application as an Urgent Review; seconded by Mr. MacKerron and so voted unanimously, 7-0: Mr. Morton, Aye; Mr. MacKerron, Aye; Ms. Olotu, Aye; Ms. Rubel, Aye; Mr. Terry, Aye; Mr. Barrett, Aye; Mr. Zamanian, Aye.**

Mr. Giffune detailed the items that would be addressed under this \$200,000 request, including "windows, flooring, door repairs, restroom renovations, gas service, boiler piping", and minor electrical work, plus a 10% contingency. Mr. Zamanian asked and Mr. Giffune verified that the windows will be sealed rather than replaced. Mr. Kassler asked if \$200,000 is a workable budget for this project. Mr. Giffune said that it is. Mr. Morton expressed the same concern. Mr. Zamanian noted that the Town is still not sure what the building's ultimate use would be. He noted that Town Planner Pam McCarthy has grant money for a consultant. He is willing to give the Select Board some latitude at this point and provide the means for the building to be opened. He is willing to vote for a higher amount if that is necessary to get the building open without falling short of funds, which he sees as a bad option; he suspects that \$200,000 will not be enough. He would like to have seen a more current cost estimate.

Mr. Barrett said had been expecting to see more detail at the Select Board joint meeting, and sees that as a major flaw in the proposal. He stated that he would rather

provide more money and see the project done correctly than skimp on funds; he does not believe \$200,000 will be adequate. He recommended going back to the Select Board to get that information and having them call a special town meeting where they can make their case, rather than to keep "throwing money" at the problem. Mr. Giffune explained that there wasn't time to get a new estimate in the eight days he has had to develop this request. *[Ms. Olotu signed off.]*

Mr. Morton stated that once the public has better access to the interior of the building, as it had in the past, people will want additional improvements. Mr. MacKerron agreed, adding that the Historical Society can hold events there that will help draw support for renovating the building. He noted the high percentage of survey respondents who placed a priority on renovating the building. Ms. Rubel agreed that once people go into the building, they will be more inclined to support further renovation. Mr. Barrett also agrees, but pointed out the need for more concrete plans. Mr. MacKerron cautioned that that would take another TM cycle. Mr. Barrett replied that if the Select Board is truly committed to this, they can call a Special Town Meeting in the fall. Mr. Zamanian agreed that it is a problem to keep throwing money at the building without a formal plan.

Resident David Lurie spoke as a volunteer for the Little Theatre of Stoughton. He noted that he spent two weekends in December with the theater group holding a yard sale, so it isn't quite accurate to say that the building isn't open yet. He did note that one weekend was in sunny 55° weather and was very well attended, while the following weekend when temperatures were under 30° participation was much lower, as the building was unheated and unlit, and relies on ambient light, which is in short supply on a cloudy day. He envisions using the building as a cultural center, perhaps including a Black Box Theater. He noted that renovating the Depot building was a top priority in a survey of town residents. Adding heat and lighting and a bathroom, he noted, will expand the availability of the Depot to any time of day, at any time of year. He also pointed out that Stoughton needs to have a centerpiece like the Depot renovated in time for its 300th anniversary in 2026. Mr. Barrett agreed with that, but noted that this request is only a bare-bones renovation, and much more work will be needed to make the Depot building into a centerpiece.

Mr. Zamanian stated that he would like to see a stronger commitment from the Town in terms of having a definite plan for the building, as well as more financial input outside the CPA Fund toward its full renovation.

MOTION: Mr. Morton moved that the CPC recommend that Town Meeting approve this request in the amount of \$200,000. Seconded by Mr. MacKerron. Mr. Terry asked how much money it would take to renovate one bathroom. Mr. Giffune

replied that it does not include enough to create two ADA-accessible bathrooms, as each one would cost \$50,000. Mr. Terry asked if Mr. Morton would consider revising his motion by adding another \$50,000. Mr. Morton pointed out that at the joint meeting, the Select Board stated that the \$200,000 would include the bathrooms. Mr. Zamanian stated that if \$200,000 won't get the job done, we're wasting time and money. Mr. Giffune replied that the project includes fixing two bathrooms to make them usable, but not ADA-compliant. Mr. Zamanian noted that the building itself is not ADA-compliant, as there is a step up to get inside. Mr. Giffune then said that \$200,000 would get us one bathroom; \$250,000 would get us two. Mr. MacKerron asked Mr. Morton to amend his motion to \$250,000. Mr. Morton said he was relying on the word of the Select Board, and they assured the public that \$200,000 would include a bathroom. He is anxious to get the building open, but he is not willing to amend his motion. He added that if \$200,000 was not enough, the Select Board should be willing to call a fall special town meeting, as suggested by Mr. Barrett. Mr. Barrett asked if it is true that getting electrical power to the building is not dependent on the funding being requested tonight. Mr. Giffune confirmed that. Mr. Morton noted that his motion could be amended by another member, but he would not support such an amendment, for the reasons previously stated. There was no amendment made. **The motion was passed 5-1: Mr. Barrett, Nay; Mr. Morton, Aye; Ms. Rubel, Aye; Mr. MacKerron, Aye; Mr. Terry, Aye; and Mr. Zamanian, Aye.** Mr. Barrett explained that his vote reflects that he does not believe this is right way to go about restoring the building, but he nevertheless is fully in favor of the Town doing the renovation, adding that he hopes to be proven wrong regarding this particular approach. Mr. Zamanian added that the Select Board has an obligation to follow through and complete the bare-bones renovation, and expects that it will be followed up with an additional project to continue the renovation, and that they will come up with an appropriate use for the building. Mr. Morton stated that he'd like Mr. Giffune to convey to the Select Board that we expect them to get this project done for \$200,000 as promised. He then clarified that his motion was for cash, not bonding. Mr. Kassler asked that, going forward, we assume that all motions of recommendation are for cash unless stated otherwise. The consensus affirmed that position.

Select Board Vice-Chair Cavey thanked the CPC for its support. He expressed his appreciation that the committee asked the difficult questions, and praised the committee for the seriousness with which they approached its review. Mr. Zamanian gave credit to Mr. Giffune for being willing to handle those questions, and for taking some of the heat generated by the committee's need to get answers to its concerns. Mr. Cavey assured the committee that its faith would not be misplaced. He said he will contact the Town Manager tomorrow, and request bi-weekly written updates on the project, and will email them to the CPC. Mr. Zamanian said he looks forward to receiving them. Mr. Barrett again asked that the Town create a long-term plan in order to keep the overall

renovation moving forward. Mr. Cavey said he will make sure that happens, and promised to give the CPC plenty of lead time before presenting future phases of the renovation. Mr. Morton commended Mr. Giffune for his candor, noting that the Select Board, as the Project Manager, will have the responsibility to follow through. Mr. Zamanian noted that Mr. Giffune will be handling the day-to-day aspects of managing the project on the ground.

Project Updates (continued):

8. Update on Glen Echo Project: Mr. Giffune reported that not much has changed since his last update. He said that the camera is working, but is still not able to transmit to the Police Station. He believes that the intercom is working, but will check. Mr. Zamanian expressed his concern that the gate motor has enough capacity to bear the load of the 20-foot arm which replaced the 16-foot arm mistakenly installed originally. He noted that if it fails prematurely due to that additional load, it should not cost the Town to replace it. He asked Mr. Giffune to look into that. He also noted that the strip of LED lights on the original 16-foot arm was not included on the 20-foot replacement, and asked that it be installed, as it was paid for. He also asked about the solar lights for the turnaround. Mr. Giffune said he believes they are on order, but will check. Mr. Zamanian asked about a defibrillator, which is part of the contract and has not yet been installed. Mr. Giffune said he would check on that as well. He added that Glen Echo Boulevard has been paved except for the final coat, which is to be done in the spring. Mr. Kassler noted that the roadway is already much improved, even without the final coat. He will email Mr. Giffune a list of the items discussed tonight for his follow-up.

10. West Street Barn Evaluation: Mr. MacKerron reported that he received a preliminary draft report today, but the analysis in that report of the age and structural integrity of the various parts of the barn has not been done yet. He asked for the opportunity to follow up with the consultant, and that this be placed on our next agenda in case he receives a final draft before our next meeting.

Administrative Items:

11. Approval of Minutes of January 4, 2023: MOTION: Mr. Barrett moved to approve the minutes as presented; seconded by Mr. Morton and so voted, 5-0-1: Mr. Morton, Aye; Mr. Barrett, Aye; Mr. MacKerron, Aye; Mr. Terry, Aye; Mr. Zamanian, Aye. Ms. Rubel abstained as she had not been present.

12. Recommendation of CPC Budget for FY 2024: MOTION: Mr. Barrett moved to recommend the budget as amended by the project recommended at this meeting. The amendment only affects the TM motion, not the article. **Seconded by**

Mr. Morton, and so voted 6-0: Mr. Morton, Aye; Mr. Barrett, Aye; Mr. MacKerron, Aye; Ms. Rubel, Aye; Mr. Terry, Aye; Mr. Zamanian, Aye.

13. **New Laptop for Program Administrator:** *Tabled.*

14. **Other Unanticipated New Business:** None.

15. **Schedule Next Meeting:** The next meeting will be held on March 1. Mr. Zamanian noted that we intend to meet hybrid again.

16. **Adjournment:** MOTION: Mr. MacKerron moved to adjourn; seconded by Mr. Morton, and so voted 6-0, at 9:19 pm: Mr. MacKerron, Aye; Mr. Morton, Aye; Ms. Rubel, Aye; Mr. Terry, Aye; Mr. Barrett, Aye; Mr. Zamanian, Aye.

Respectfully submitted,
Barry Kassler
Program Administrator, Community Preservation Committee

Approved on March 1, 2023