

Meeting Minutes

Stoughton Community Preservation Committee (CPC)

Meeting held in the SRA Office, 7 Pearl Street

Tuesday, April 11, 2023

Members Present: Chairperson Mark Zamanian, Treasurer Michael Barrett, Members John Linehan [at 7:08] and Rich Terry [at 8:32], Program Administrator (PA) Barry Kassler.

Members Attending Remotely: Vice-Chair Dwight MacKerron, Members John Morton and Donald Brady

Members absent: Laurice Rubel and Bunmi Olotu

Others Present: Kevin Weldon of SMAC

Preliminary Items:

Mr. Zamanian read the Governor's Order authorizing remote meetings, and announced the remote link information for the meeting, and explained that Governor Healey extended the previous order through March 31, 2025. He led the committee in the Pledge of Allegiance.

1. Call to Order: MOTION: Mr. Barrett moved to open the meeting at 7:03 pm; seconded by Mr. MacKerron and so voted unanimously, 5-0: Mr. Morton, Aye; Mr. MacKerron, Aye; Mr. Brady, Aye; Mr. Barrett, Aye; Mr. Zamanian, Aye.

[Mr. Linehan arrived at 7:08 pm.]

2. Chairperson's Report: Mr. Zamanian reported the votes of the Finance Committee and the Standing Committees on the eleven projects the CPC is recommending to Town Meeting, plus the budget. All CPA articles were recommended favorably, mostly unanimously, with a grand total of only three dissenting votes among the twelve articles reviewed by the four committees.

Mr. Zamanian asked that those members whose committees will be sending letters in support of the CPA to submit them by May 1. He also mentioned that he has been in discussions with a developer regarding a proposed housing complex, and has asked that some of the units contemplated be built as affordable units. He is hopeful that the developer will agree, and notes that he would be applying to the CPC for funding under Community Housing to offset his losses for the affordable housing units.

3. Administrator's Report: Mr. Kassler reported further on the status of the unresolved items at Glen Echo which he had asked DPW Superintendent Paul Giffune about. He has not heard back from Mr. Giffune despite contacting him repeatedly via email and by phone. The camera at the gate, which was the first item on the list, is working, but does not transmit to the Police Station yet, and so is not completed. He had been told that they are waiting for a part to come in, and noted that this was supposed to have been completed last summer. He suggested that at this point, the Town may want to ask for a temporary replacement camera until the part is available. The solar lights are still on backorder, and he suggested that another option be pursued, as there are other solar lights readily available. The installation of a defibrillator has not yet been done because the Fire Department requested that it be enclosed in an all-weather case to protect the battery from cold temperatures. The Fire Department was looking into finding an appropriate case, but there has been no word on any progress. Mr. Zamanian added that he has spoken to Marc Tisdelle about the lack of response, and Mr. Tisdelle intends to follow up by our next meeting.

Mr. Morton asked about the status of finding a third-party organization to hold the Recreation Conservation Restriction (CR) at Glen Echo. Mr. Kassler replied that it was still on his to-do list. He mentioned that he had spoken to Stuart Saginor of the Massachusetts Community Preservation Coalition, and they discussed potential options. Mr. Morton asked whether local organizations such as STOYAC could be approached. Mr. Kassler replied that he was considering asking the Old Colony YMCA. Mr. Zamanian noted that the Select Board had recently talked about deciding on which specific uses would be planned for the active recreation portion, as part of their Capital Plan. He will ask the Select Board to contact Town Counsel about which uses can be allowed there, and regarding creating a CR. Mr. Kassler noted that he has spoken to Stuart Saginor of the CPA Coalition, and he acknowledged that finding an organization to hold a Recreational CR can be difficult. He found that the organization designated as the holder for the one Recreational CR he is aware of, in Carlisle, no longer exists. He noted in response to Mr. Morton that the Commonwealth does have a definition for "active recreation", and added that when creating a CR, we can tailor the restrictions within it to reflect our needs. Mr. Morton suggested asking the Coalition for suggestions for organizations to hold a Recreational CR. Mr. Zamanian said we will reach out to the Coalition again.

4. Treasurer's Report: Mr. Barrett noted that he has been in contact with the Town Accountant, and gave updated figures on Fiscal Year spending to date in the Administrative Account with approximately \$22,000 in expenditures to date out of a budget of \$50,000, and on Debt Service, where spending is on track, with approximately \$304,000 paid to date and another \$72,000 scheduled for payment.

5. **Public Comments:** None.

New Business:

6. **SMAC Video Project on Stoughton Depot:** Kevin Weldon, the Media Access Coordinator from SMAC (Stoughton Media Access Corporation) presented a summary of his proposal to create a five to ten minute “spotlight” video on the Stoughton Depot building. He is interested in demonstrating the process of how a municipal project gets done as part of the video. Mr. Zamanian said that he sees this video as a great opportunity to highlight this historical asset, and the work the Town is undertaking to make it a feature of downtown that will inspire pride among Stoughton citizens. Mr. Weldon presented an illustrated document that he had put together on the video proposal. He understands that the improvements which would be done under the project that will be proposed at the upcoming Town Meeting will not likely produce much change in the appearance of the building.

Mr. Linehan asked if this would be a SMAC project or his own project; Mr. Weldon replied “both”, as it fulfills SMAC’s mission of keeping the community updated on important happenings in Stoughton. Mr. Linehan asked if there was any political content; Mr. Zamanian noted that it is non-political. Mr. Weldon stated that the focus would be on the architecture and history of the building, and would include interviews of historians and Town officials, including CPC members. He noted that there had been a serious train wreck at the station¹ in which young boys had placed railroad spikes on the track, which caused a train to derail and crash into the building, causing considerable damage and some minor injuries, but no loss of life.

Mr. Weldon’s PowerPoint presentation was displayed on the screen as he walked the committee through it. He reviewed the Town’s short-term goals for the building which it hopes to address with the new proposal on the Town Meeting warrant. Mr. Zamanian noted that the CPC has members with significant historical knowledge, including Historical Commission member Dwight MacKerron. Mr. Zamanian stressed that the interviews in the video should expand beyond Town officials and feature residents as well. Mr. Weldon’s presentation included both historic and modern photographs of the site. Mr. Zamanian noted that he had visited the building and gone up in the clock tower as part of a project the Redevelopment Authority was considering. Mr. Morton asked if the video could include the local granite that was quarried for the building from a site off Bird Street, as the quarry exists on Town conservation land and can still be seen. Mr. MacKerron stated his support and noted that he has a wealth of materials at the Historical Society related to the train station, and he urged Mr. Weldon to visit and explore them. He added that the Society recently posted a number of photos of the train wreck on their website.

¹ on August 4, 1924

Mr. Weldon again reviewed the goals he has for the video, and spoke of some of the production challenges he will face. He spoke of creating a work that will survive well into the future, so that it can be used by future residents of Stoughton.

Mr. Zamanian and Mr. MacKerron spoke about the effort that was made in the 1970s to demolish the structure and replace it with retail space. Mr. Kassler noted that the date of the building's inclusion in the National Historic Register corresponds to that date, and wondered if it was the proposal to do away with the building that had prompted people to get the building onto the Historic Register; Mr. MacKerron confirmed that it was in fact the case: the proposal to demolish the building prompted a response among Stoughton residents which ultimately resulted in the building being designated as a National Historic Landmark, and spared it from demolition. He added that a more complete version of the events leading up to the building's inclusion on the Register can be found in an article that appeared in a recent Stoughton Calendar.

Mr. Weldon said that he plans to shoot on location for at least three days. He will prepare questions for his interview subjects and will let them know what they will be asked well in advance of taping. He will put together a presentation on his proposal for the Select Board as well. Mr. Barrett noted that Mr. MacKerron's printed timeline of the history of the building should be helpful. Coordinating the video with the Town's upcoming 300th Birthday Celebration would be a plus.

Mr. Weldon asked about access to the building; Mr. Zamanian assured him that the Town would accommodate him. Mr. Weldon presented a draft production schedule. Time of day will be important, as it will dictate the lighting options. Mr. MacKerron noted that Mr. Weldon needs to keep the length of the video to a minimum in order to not lose people as viewers. Mr. Zamanian recommended making a presentation of the proposal to the Select Board, and expects an enthusiastic response. He suggested making the proposal's presentation between three and five minutes long, and limiting the number of slides. He offered to work on it with him, as will Mr. Kassler. He said that it could be done within the next couple of weeks, and then he can ask to be put on the Select Board's agenda. He reiterated reaching out to Mr. MacKerron as the next logical step in the process.

Mr. Barrett stated that electricity in the building had recently been turned on, so Mr. Weldon wouldn't need SMAC's mobile van in order to shoot video there. Mr. Weldon asked when the renovation work would be done; Mr. Zamanian replied that it depends on whether Town Meeting approves the Select Board's proposal to spend \$200,000 on immediate repairs. Mr. Linehan asked if Mr. Weldon could be given permission to

present at Town Meeting when the article comes up. Mr. Zamanian will speak to the Moderator about it. That funding would not be available until July 1. There may also be funding available from the State Legislature. Mr. Weldon asked when the building would be open for public use; Mr. Zamanian said that October is an optimistic guess. Mr. Kassler gave Mr. Weldon credit for taking the initiative to create this project, and for the work he has already done in making it happen.

7. **Bonding Webinar:** This item was tabled until later in the meeting.

Project Updates:

8. **Update on West Street Barn:** Mr. MacKerron reported that just before tonight's meeting he received a copy of the consultant's report, and it is almost complete. He will forward it to the committee when he gets a chance to review it. Mr. Zamanian asked that this update be put on our June agenda. He also asked Mr. Morton to speak to the rest of the Conservation Commission about local agricultural use on the property. Mr. Morton believes that they already have asked Town Counsel for his opinion, but will check on it.

9. **Capen Reynolds Grant Application Update:** This item was tabled until later in the meeting, as Mr. Terry is at the Select Board asking them to accept a gift from the Friends of Capen Reynolds to pay for a landscape architect to modify the plans for the dog park in order to comply with the specifications of the Stanton Foundation, in order to be eligible for Stanton's grant program. Mr. Kassler explained that the Stanton Foundation had made specific requests in order to make the project eligible for its grant program, and had recommended a few landscape architects who would be able to create plans echoing those changes. He noted that we probably would not have an answer on whether the project was awarded the grant in time for Town Meeting, but these actions indicate that Stanton is seriously considering a favorable response.

Administrative Items:

10. **Approval of Minutes of March 1:** MOTION: Mr. MacKerron moved to approve the minutes as presented; seconded by Mr. Barrett and so voted, 6-0: Mr. Morton, Aye; Mr. MacKerron, Aye; Mr. Brady, Aye; Mr. Linehan, Aye; Mr. Barrett, Aye; Mr. Zamanian, Aye.

11. **Approval of Revised Grant Agreements:** Mr. Kassler presented the revised grant agreements for both municipal and non-municipal projects. He will send one to the applicants for each CPA-funded proposal on the Town Meeting warrant. Mr. Zamanian noted that the Finance Committee was very much in favor of our instituting

this policy. **MOTION: Mr. Barrett moved to approve the two grant application forms as presented; seconded by Mr. Linehan and so voted, 6-0: Mr. Morton, Aye; Mr. MacKerron, Aye; Mr. Brady, Aye; Mr. Linehan, Aye; Mr. Barrett, Aye; Mr. Zamanian, Aye.** Mr. Kassler noted that he intends to give all of this year's applicants a heads-up that the Grant Agreements will be sent to them after Town Meeting.

Project Updates (continued): [Mr. Terry arrived at 8:32 pm.]

9. Capen Reynolds Grant Application Update: Mr. Terry reported that the Select Board just voted to accept the \$6,000 donation from the Friends of Capen Reynolds to pay for a landscape architect to modify the plans for the dog park to meet the specifications of the Stanton Foundation in order to be able to secure their grant. Mr. Zamanian gave Mr. Terry the news that the Finance Committee had recommended his article unanimously, and the Municipal Operations Committee (MuniOps) had also recommended it. Mr. Terry was pleasantly surprised.

Mr. Terry reported that he visited the dog park in Abington. He also spoke to the Randolph Town Offices regarding their dog park to see if there were any complaints from the neighbors. Most neighbors were happy, but one who had lodged a complaint when the dog park first opened ended up moving. There have not been any other complaints since.

Mr. Zamanian stated that the feedback he had gotten was that there were concerns at MuniOps about whether parking would be adequate, and regarding traffic. Mr. Terry stated that there is a proposal at Town Meeting to reconfigure the intersection at that location, and new parking spaces that have been added to the plans.

New Business (continued):

7. Bonding Webinar: The committee decided to watch the video on their own rather than take up time in a meeting. It runs about thirty minutes. This will be put on our June meeting agenda for discussion after the committee has had a chance to see it. Mr. Kassler will email the link to the video to the committee.

Administrative Items (continued):

12. Other Unanticipated New Business: Mr. MacKerron announced a walk to take place at Glen Echo this Saturday at 9:30 am. The walk will included a stop at the 1896 marker of the boundary with Ponkapoag Indian land.

13. Schedule Next Meeting: May will be Town Meeting month, so there is no good May date for the committee to meet, nor will it be necessary. The committee will meet next on the first Wednesday in June, the 7th.

14. Adjournment: MOTION: Mr. Barrett moved to adjourn; seconded by Mr. Terry and so voted, 7-0, at 8:50 pm: Mr. Morton, Aye; Mr. MacKerron, Aye; Mr. Terry, Aye; Mr. Brady, Aye; Mr. Linehan, Aye; Mr. Barrett, Aye; Mr. Zamanian, Aye.

Respectfully submitted,

Barry Kassler

Program Administrator, Community Preservation Committee

Approved on June 7, 2023