

Minutes – Community Preservation Committee – Dec. 3, 2008  
Approved Jan. 7, 2009

Present: Sean Conley, Chair; Al DeVito, Lesley Eaton, Glenn Hearn, Ginny Jones, Dale Julier, Bruce Keep, Susan Phelps; Tony Nevin, Admin. Asst. Absent: Peter Rodegast.  
Guests: Marian Irving, Joe Doebler, Cathlin Baker

A quorum being present, Sean called the meeting to order at 5:35 pm. The minutes of the meeting of November 19, 2008 were reviewed and approved unanimously with one abstention. Updated budget statements were reviewed. Tony reported that the Town Hall renovation committee is going to put an article requesting \$100,000 in CPA funds on the Town warrant as authorized in April 2008.

After introductions, the guests described work to be performed under application FY09-10, historic restoration of the WT Congregational Church. Marian summarized five components of the proposal: Installing ADA-compliant bathrooms; an ADA-compliant ramp; kitchen renovations that comply with health and safety codes; excavation and replacement of the foundation; and restoration of the clock and weathervane. Cathlin described various church-based community benefits in addition to its contribution to the historic character of the town, and Joe summarized some aspects of the budget. CPC members raised questions and made recommendations about the proposed work. First, it was noted that if there is to be a full basement under the church, it might have to be ADA-compliant, increasing costs substantially. The church was urged to engage an architect, conduct engineering feasibility studies, obtain cost estimates, and get advice from building inspector Ernie Mendenhall. Second, mandatory railings for the proposed ramp would have less visual impact if the ramp were to be located on the Music Street side of the church. Third, the CPC recommended that the church submit separate proposals, year by year, reflecting up-to-date cost estimates, and suggested that the first year's budget could include architectural and engineering studies. In relation to the historic preservation restriction that is required to insure the town's public interest in perpetuity, Marian stated that the United Church of Christ would stand behind any such agreement if the local congregation were to disband, and Sean stated that the public interest might be protected by the town's historic district regulations (Tony will check on this). Marian, Joe, and Cathlin departed.

The CPC reviewed the status of application FY09-02, cemetery survey. After Tony summarized opinions from the CP Coalition, Massachusetts DOR, and Town Counsel, all of which stated that the cemetery survey was not eligible for CPA funds, Ginny moved that the application be taken out of consideration. Al seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

After the CPC reaffirmed eligibility of proposal FY09-03, preservation of historic cemetery records, Glenn reviewed the eligibility of FY09-04, Town Hall sidewalk, for CPA funds. Gary Blau, a DOR attorney, stated in an email message that the project could be eligible as restoration of a historic neighborhood, with brick sidewalk and fence compatible with those in front of the church and the grange hall. Glenn described issues

related to drainage and materials based on discussions with Kent Healy, Ben Moore, and others involved in the town hall renovation project; and Ginny reported that the town hall renovation committee gave “cautious encouragement” to the sidewalk project. With the understanding that the proposed sidewalk would be brick, and that Glenn will explore costs and present a final budget, Al moved that FY09-04 be considered as eligible for CPA funds. Dale seconded and the motion passed unanimously with Glenn abstaining.

After discussing schedules for future meetings, votes, and warrant article submission, including a public hearing before voting on recommendations to the town, the CPC agreed to hold a public hearing on January 14, 2009 at 7:00 pm in Howes House, with notices published in the Gazette two weeks in advance, press releases to both papers, and advertisements in the week of January 7. All applicants will be invited to attend. In addition, summaries of all eligible projects will be placed on the CPC website. To prepare for the hearing and discuss any new developments, the CPC will meet in Howes House at 5:30 on January 7, 2009.

The meeting adjourned at 7:10 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Tony Nevin  
Administrative Assistant