

Braintree Community Preservation Committee
Minutes

September 14, 2009
Thayer Public Library

Present: Anne Murphy (Chair) Mike Dorn
 Linda Raiss (V-Chair) Dick Fletcher
 John Dennehy Darryl Mikami

Absent: Pat Flynn

Also present: Christine Stickney, Director of Planning & Community Development

Meeting convened at 7:30 PM

Administrative:

Minutes of 6/8/09, 6/22/09 and 8/10/09 were tabled for review by members for the next meeting.

CPA Ordinance: Christine reported that she and Carolyn Murray, Town Solicitor, had developed a draft version. However, due to work load issues Carolyn has been unable to compile the final version. The Department of Planning and Community Development has offered to provide clerical services if she needs them. Dick Fletcher felt the committee should be able to review a draft prior to any action by the Town Council. Christine will look into this for the next meeting.

Web Page/Draft Press release: Christine has forward information to the Mayor's office but it continues not to be posted. She has discussed the matter with Peter Morin. Anne Murphy agreed that she will request a meeting with Peter Morin to see why these items can not be accomplished.

Draft Financial sheets: Linda Raiss and Dick Fletcher provide members with four handouts (2003, 2008, 2009 & email from Accounting). Reviewing the sheets Linda explained the information inserted to date and why other years have not been completed as of yet. Year 2003 is fairly straight forward since it was the first year of the program. Moving to the spreadsheet of 2009 was the next fairly straight forward year since there was no CPC for a period of time and the Finance Director merely allocated the 10% into each "bucket." Year 2008 showed how the spreadsheet works because of running balances and projects appropriated and underway drawing down on the "buckets." Dick Fletcher noted that the records of the Accounting Department appear to differ from the recommendations originally put forward by the last CPA committee. [The original wording of the articles for appropriation of CPC funds were changed on the warrants. He felt the Committee's past recommendations were accurate because the committee knew what was available in each of the "buckets."] The votes of Town Meeting resulted in "paper deficits" in some buckets, although, overall, the funds were available. Linda and Dick's attempt to reconcile Town Meeting records with the Accounting records has been difficult. Linda noted Mark Lin, Town Accountant has been very cooperative but the paper trail is somewhat challenging.

Anne Murphy asked about the deficit [\$6,095] in the admin funds in FY09. Linda explained that not all of the FY09 accounts have been closed. John Dennehy asked about the appropriation for the Elm Street cemetery project. Christine noted that the Mayor requested that these funds remain available for the newly constituted Historical Commission. Linda suggested that it is possible there will be between \$300,000 and \$400,000 to be returned to the CPC funds when the funds from completed projects are “returned.”

An e-mail from Mark Lin was provided to the members to inform them of the amounts available in each of the accounts. Of concern was the “0” balance in the Open Space account since prior years’ figures reflected funds available. All agreed this needs explanation. Anne Murphy suggested that we request the latest audit figures which may be FY2008 from the Finance Department and see what they reflect in comparison to what we see on the spreadsheets. Anne noted that if we find these to be different then we need to have a discussion with Mayor Sullivan and the Finance Department. John Dennehy expressed his concern that as members of this committee we are accountable for the finances and if we can not even get a handle on it at this point we need to do something prior to appropriating any new projects. Darryl Mikami added that this goes back to his original request about one dedicated account for Community Preservation Funds.

Applications for CPA Funding:

Members were provided with application packages of the following projects:

Historic Map Preservation Project	(Engineering)	\$5,000 (Historic)
Town Forest Trail Project	(Councilor Clifford)	\$3,400 (Open Space)
Original Thayer Library	(Mayor/ P& CD)	\$35,000 (Historic)
Taber Court land acquisition	(Conservation)	\$134,000 (Open Space)
Highlands School	(School Dept.)	\$398,800 (Historic)

Original Thayer Public Library – Dick Fletcher asked for a further explanation of what the architectural preservationist’s responsibilities would be under this funding. He also asked about the interior of the building and what is proposed. Christine explained this request dealt with the exterior only and noted the estimate and scope of work. If funded, a request for proposals would be issued to bring such a person on board to develop the assessment that could be used for the next step restoration. Christine intends on pursuing a Massachusetts Historical Commission Round 16 Grant for funding for the exterior which includes exterior accessibility issues. The interior is another aspect currently under review by the Mayor as to what intentions they have for the building. The exterior treatment of the building requires an historic preservation architect and depending on what is proposed for the interior, other issues relative to Building Code, HVAC and accessibility may require an additional assessment. Dick wanted to make sure that if the proposal were funded it would result in actual restoration of the exterior and not be shelved. Christine assured him of her intentions to submit a grant for the next round; she also noted that Representative Driscoll had succeeded in having funding added to a municipal bond legislation that will also be a funding source.

Historic Map Preservation Project – Dick Fletcher questioned if the request should include restoration and/or proper preservation of the maps. Christine said she would prefer to submit another application as she would have to figure out what maps were in need of restoration and seek an estimate.

Town Forest Trail Project – John Dennehy noted he is very familiar with what Councilor Clifford is trying to do and he thinks it would be a good thing for Town Forest. Members noted his response to maintenance and Christine said that may be able to be handled under the Conservation Fund.

Taber Court land acquisition – Mike Dorn raised a concern he had with the storage of equipment on the site and possible contamination. Christine noted a 21E should be done prior to any commitment. That would uncover any issues. Discussion turned to the landowner being the responsible party. Members concurred as to its location along the river but questioned access to the lot and the proposed price. Christine noted that Kelly Phelan has asked for appraisals to be done that may show something different. Linda Raiss commented that the property is only assessed at \$18,000. Mike Dorn then questioned why \$130,000? Why doesn't Mr. Quirk consider a donation. Discussion on the urgency of the proposal called into question if this needed to be funded now or if the Conservation Commission could try and negotiate the price down if not consider for donation to the Town.

Highlands School: - Given the complexity of this request, members were some what hesitant to discuss it tonight in any great detail. Linda Raiss had questions she would like to see answered by the applicant prior to next meeting: estimates, if the previously funded Hollis School restoration came in over budget and where would the additional funds for the project have come from; why the wood trim around the new windows was not replaced at the time of their installation; further information as to the cleaning of the masonry; is the proposal for the whole building or only original building (pictures are from all over) and finally the lighting – where to be located. Anne Murphy and Darryl Mikami expressed their disappointment with the application and the fact it failed to respond to the criteria and requirements of the application packet. Anne Murphy suggested that a letter be sent to the Dr. Kurzberg, providing them with 30 days to re-do their application in accordance with the packet and address the historic aspects of the project as they relate to the historic significance of the building. Members also noted that some of the scope of work is maintenance not fundable under the CPA act. Staff will prepare a draft letter and e-mail to members for their review.

Mr. Dorn MOTION to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Mr. Dennehy – unanimously voted.

Meeting adjourned at 8:55PM

Submitted by: Christine Stickney