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February 24, 2014

****Approved** Meeting Minutes
Huntington Conservation Commission
1/21/2014**

Commissioners in attendance: Roman Livak, Cindy Sprague, Margaret Fowle, JB Bryan, Rebecca Ryan
Public in attendance: Aaron Worthley, Terry Boyle

Margaret calls meeting to order at 7:10

Review and approve minutes, review mail:

- VLT newsletter
- Roman motions to approve 12/17/14 meeting minutes with Cindy's edits, Cindy seconds: All in favor- motion passes, minutes approved.

Public Questions and Comments:

- No public questions and/or comments

Town Hall Committee (THC) Conservation Fund Application Review

- Aaron Worthley & Terry Boyle present to discuss request on behalf of THC
- Application submitted to HCC Conservation Fund 1/14/14
- After discussion and evaluation of budget, they are requesting larger amount than discussed at Dec. meeting which THC feels will enable to have a more financially stable project
- Would like to use excess funds to pay for heating the building over time (allocate those funds to operating costs, assume it will last for several years).
- Roman shared report from Grounds Commission of averages annual maintenance cost of Huntington Town Buildings over 8 year period. Library costs are roughly \$22K per year.
- Minimum project vs. expanded project
- Minimum project- enough to open building and meet minimum requirements of funders
- Expanded project- based on additional funding from Vermont Housing and Conservation Board (VHCB) & Vermont Department of Historic Preservation (VDHP)
- Expanded project includes insulation (\$26K) and structural improvements (\$40K)- structural improvements include floor joist repair, storm windows, etc.
- General administration & program management budget lines: grant reporting, bidding, permitting, etc.
- Timing for VHCB: meetings in March & June, would most likely hear THC request in June
- March 1st is deadline for VCDP to show that all "ducks are in a row"- 3 issues Selectboard has to address
- Next Selectboard meeting is 2/3/2014
- Roof replacement estimate: 4 bids so far to replace with standing seam. Current roof is shakes on strapping, with standing seam over it.
- Is the THC requesting \$30K, though \$35K is listed in expanded project. Application submitted is for \$30K.
- Is THC planning on requesting additional funds from HCC? Can/should HCC consider multiple requests from a single applicant?

- Aaron thinks it's likely that the THC will return to the HCC for additional funding for other projects in the future.
- Do they have any estimates for what it would cost's to heat the building? The last time it was heated was in the late 90's. Will the town be responsible for ongoing maintenance?
- Since it will be a town building, THC thinks the town will be responsible for ongoing maintenance.
- Plan is to have revenue stream from functions and events to cover operating expenses.
- Roman does not think there is need at the moment for a restored Town Hall.
- What we don't have in town is stage and large open floor space.
- Parking: rec field, town offices, school. 3 handicap spots in front of the building and side of road parking as well

THC Application: Review of Criteria for Use of Huntington's Conservation Fund

1. General criteria for Conservation Fund

- a) Preserves historical resources: Yes
- b) Sustained financially without burdening the Town? This is a stated goal of THC, but can this be known for sure? Private parties, weddings, classes, concerts, bingo, etc. are suggested potential revenue streams.
- c) Leverages additional funds? Margaret thinks this is clearly shown. THC must show they have funds committed to accomplish additional items required by VCPD. Roman questions the process with VCPD and the conditions imposed.
- d) Facilitates the vision for Huntington as articulated in Town Plan? Yes
- e) Is largest, best, most at risk example? Yes- only example of Town Hall building with stage and wood floor.

2. Criteria for Historical Resources

- a) Defines or maintains special landscape or setting? Within Historic District.
- b) Preserves historical structure, features, and character? Yes
- c) Extensive example of period craftsmanship with extensive exterior detail? Yes- period appropriate for turn of the century agricultural building. Extensive exterior detail- moot point since the example is simple building.
- d) Very early example of its type? Not necessarily, no. Two Town Halls in Huntington predate it, but they are no longer in existence.
- e) Rare type that has undergone little change? No.
- f) Resource represents essential function in towns past? No records to prove, however anecdotally yes meets this criteria
- g) Associated with important person, movement, or function? Charles Washington Henry mural.

General discussion of application

- Margaret: meets more criteria than many other projects submitted thus far
- JB: agrees it meets requirements for the fund.
- Cindy questions change of request from less than \$10K to now \$30K. Is this the minimum amount needed, and how did that change?
- Reassessed operational costs for first few years and need additional funds to cover operating expenses. THC does not believe they have a viable project without this amount.

- Another grant to VDHP had to be pushed back a year because of conflict with VCDP monies in same year.
- \$30K will allow for stronger likelihood that grants needed for extended project will be approved.
- What percentage completion would the expanded project get the building to? Don't know the exact answer. Outcome would be fully functional building that can be used. There would still be remaining projects that could improve the building further.
- **JB motions that HCC makes recommendation that Selectboard award \$30K to Town Hall Committee. Roman Seconds. Discussion:**
 - Roman is not happy with the amount requested but would ultimately would approve
 - Cindy feels project clearly meets criteria, however is concerned about what Town as a whole would feel about spending such a significant amount on the Town Hall.
 - Public would have opportunity to weigh in and comment at Selectboard hearing.
 - If in 5 years this project fails, there still is an improved asset the town is left with.
 - Current conservation fund balance is roughly \$208K, with \$16K in annual contributions.
 - HCC feels that THC has done thorough job with their planning and application

Motion that HCC recommend to Selectboard that they approve this use of the Conservation Fund. All in favor; motion passes.

Fund Application review process:

- Ranking process would be helpful with review of applications. Rebecca created draft checklist to consider.
- How many criteria must one application meet? There are no clear guidelines on this. Should there be parameters around costs of request? A cap?
- Number 7 on "Conservation Fund Application Process" needs to be strengthened.
- Look at Selectboard minutes, review Rebecca's ranking example, and discuss in detail at next meeting.
- The amount request is leveraging is significant in considering application.
- Should 7 & 8 be switched regarding the process for moving HCC approved requests through the Selectboard and Public Hearing.
- If Selectboard recommends increasing or decreasing amount, it should come back to HCC.
- HCC should have ability to only partially approve requests.
- If HCC does not approve request, would it still go to public meeting? No, but Selectboard would still be notified.
- If HCC approves application, it should go to Public Meeting.

Project Updates

ECOS

- Next Tuesday (1/28/14) is presentation by Aaron Worthley at Huntington Library with ECOS maps.
- ECOS wants sign in sheet

Special Places Tour

- Gillette Pond special places tracking tour.
- Difficult to plan with weather. Potential dates: February 8, 9th or 16th?

- Advertising: FPF and pin up at Beaudry's
- What is focus: natural resources & tracking. Discussion about dam is inevitable- good conversation to have of what would it look like with the dam gone.
- Geology & hydrology would be an interesting component- any local experts to invite? Wally Jenkins could potentially lead tracking walk.
- Who will coordinate meeting time and details? JB! 9:30 at Huntington end of Gillette Pond. Shoot for 8th; backup will be 15th. Put something on FPF and sign in Beaudrys,

Sugarmakers Open House

- Date: March 22, 2014
- Goal is to have brochures ready at town meeting, Aaron W. will most likely update brochure.
- Margaret will contact Sugarmakers.

Town Forest Update

- Table discussion for next meeting

Gillett Pond Update

- Rebecca Ellis is setting up meeting with representatives.
- Girl Scouts are doing title search work and then will meet with FoGP

New member recruitment

- Roman would serve as co-chair if Margaret or Cindy wanted to stay on?
- Town Fair after town meeting
- Posting on FPF and talk to friends and neighbors
- Some members have individuals to reach out to

JB motions to end meeting, Roman seconds, all in favor. Motion passes.

Next Steps

- Rebecca: draft memo to Selectboard regarding approval of HCC requests; Margaret will review before submitting. Rebecca email Barbara soon to tell her it will be on the agenda. *Memo: request that Selectboard schedule Public Meeting regarding this proposal, because HCC recommends it is considered for approval.*
- Margaret- bring maps and sign in sheet to ECOS talk.
- Cindy- ask Wally if he could attend a special places the 8th and lead tracking tour.
- JB- post of FPF about Special Places tour. Meet on Huntington End parking lot at 10:00. Be prepared to be outside for few hours. Include note that HCC is seeking members.
- Margaret: Sugarmakers and ask Aaron to update brochure. Include note that HCC is seeking members?

Draft minutes sent to Town Clerk: 1/25/ 2014

Approved minutes sent to Town Clerk: 02/23/14