

**COMMUNITY PRESERVATION COMMITTEE
TOWN OF NEEDHAM, MASSACHUSETTS**

**Minutes of Meeting
January 30, 2008**

Present: Paul Siegenthaler –Chairman, Jane Howard – Vice-Chairman,
Janet Bernardo, John Comando, Bruce Eisenhut, Brian Nadler,
Sheila Pransky, Sandy Tobin

Town Staff: Patricia Carey, Staff Liaison
Nikki Witham, Recording Secretary

Guests: Jack Cogswell – Selectman; Kate Fitzpatrick- Town Manager;
Nellie Aikenhead - Trust for Public Land; Steven Popper – PPBC
Project Manager
Sam Bass Warner, Diana Kleiner, Moe Handel, Elizabeth Handel,
Richard Oetheimer, James Hugh Powers, Carol Boulris, Debbie
Schmill, Bill Lenahan, Susan Abbott

The meeting convened at 7:35 PM in the Eliot Performance Center.

Minutes of January 16, 2008: Ms. Howard made a motion to approve the minutes of January 16, 2008 meeting. Mr. Eisenhut seconded the motion and it was unanimously passed.

Chairman's Comments: Mr. Siegenthaler opened the meeting and reminded the guests that this was a regular Committee meeting and not a meeting for public comments. It is a chance for the Committee to hear from the proponents of the proposals. There will be time for public input at a Public Hearing to be held at a later date. If anyone wishes to express comments, he suggested that it be put in writing to the Committee.

Review of Proposals: Meeting with Proponents:

FY 2008-2 Preservation of Historic Hearthstone Farm- Kate Fitzpatrick, Town Manager introduced Nellie Aikenhead from the Trust for Public Land. Ms. Fitzpatrick explained to the Committee that the Town would like to acquire a portion of the McCracken property on Nehoiden St. The Board of Selectmen, Park and Recreation Commission, and Conservation Commission are all in agreement that this land should be purchased. The hope is to create another access to the adjacent camp property, and preserve a parcel of open space in a built-up neighborhood. The Boards are also mindful that the barn and home have become a part of Needham's history. Ms. Aikenhead explained The Trust for Public Land (TPL) and what they do. The main idea of the TPL is to help public agencies acquire and protect lands. They have done projects in Dedham, Medfield, and Dover and they tend to gravitate towards places where development is strongest. Typically a town's Board of Selectmen would give TPL a call and ask for

assistance to protect a piece of land. TPL then goes out and negotiates with the landowner. In this case that person is Mrs. McCracken. Once an agreement is reached TPL then has site control. They go back to the Board of Selectmen tell them of the agreement and then from there gather the appropriate appraisals, title searches etc. The TPL uses their own money for the initial purchase and then will look to the Town for the funds so that the title is transferred to the Town. When asked by Mr. Siegenthaler whether there would be enough time between now and Town Meeting, Ms. Aikenhead said that although it is a tricky project, it is certainly possible. They need to find a buyer for the home and barn who is willing to buy with the restrictions that go along with owning an historic home. If there is not enough time to come to an agreement before Town Meeting, Ms. Aikenhead couldn't state what would happen, but said there were options to review. Mr. Siegenthaler asked if a restriction would be put on the property with the purchase. Ms. Aikenhead said there would be a conservation restriction on the parcel purchased by the Town, and a historic preservation restriction on the parcel with the buildings. Mr. Nadler asked, if the value of the full property was \$3 million, but the house portion only sold for \$1 million, would the Town have to seek additional funding? Ms. Aikenhead explained that the agreement that she would try to work out would be with two separate buyers, so that the Town would not have to help fund the full purchase price. Ms. Fitzpatrick stated that no additional funds would be sought for the purchase. Ms. Tobin expressed concern that the value of the parcels seemed to be higher than current market rates. Ms. Bernardo asked what would happen if the Town funding were approved, but there was no buyer for the second parcel. Ms. Aikenhead is not sure, as it is part of negotiating with the owner, but there are different options that are available. Mr. Siegenthaler asked if additional funds would be requested from CPC for improvements to the parcel. Ms. Fitzpatrick said it was a possibility. Mr. Siegenthaler asked, without getting involved with negotiations, if it seemed possible that the owners would consider selling the parcel. Ms. Aikenhead said that an offer has been made and she is optimistic. Ms. Carey showed the Committee a GIS map showing the parcel in relationship to the full area. She reiterated to the Committee that the Conservation Commission and Park and Recreation Commission are working together to support this project. Ms. Howard asked how TPL was paid for its services. Ms. Aikenhead said that they are paid through donations, and often receive donations from the sellers. There is no fee to the Town.

FY 2008-1 Town Hall Renovation- Mr. Siegenthaler noted that the Board of Selectmen had recently voted on a plan for the renovation from three options. Ms. Fitzpatrick, Jack Cogswell from the Board of Selectmen, and Steve Popper from PPBC were there to speak on behalf of the proposal. Ms. Fitzpatrick stated that the Board of Selectmen had voted to move forward with the option that restores the auditorium but uses it for office space. She would like to work with the Committee on how best to request the funding. According to the architect, the historic features, external restorations, and an outer tower providing accessibility would be eligible for CPA funds. There are still discussions about the eligibility of the temporary walls on the second floor. The Board of Selectmen are considering requesting only the \$1.5 million design funds at May's Town Meeting. Ms. Pransky feels there is a need to talk about putting restrictions onto the proposal. She would like to see some language reflecting how much the project can change from the

proposal, noting discussions that were held on whether the stage area should be restored or removed, even though the stage restoration is part of the proposal. Mr. Siegenthaler suggested thinking about some sort of deed restriction, too. There was a question about a time table for construction. Ms. Fitzpatrick told the Committee that they would be looking to move out of Town Hall in December 2009, with construction funds requested at the November 2008 Special Town Meeting or May 2009 Annual Town Meeting. Ms. Bernardo asked if the \$1.5 million design fund was adequate for the project. Mr. Popper stated that it seemed appropriate to the PPBC based on other recent construction projects. Ms. Carey reminded the Committee that items placed on the warrant by the deadline could be amended at Town Meeting, within the rules of the CPA legislation.

Review of Fund Balances: Mr. Siegenthaler passed out a spreadsheet he created, to use when reviewing the fund balance information provided by Assistant Town Manager Dave Davison.

Next Steps: The consensus of the Committee was that they were ready to vote on whether to place design funds for the renovation of Town Hall on the Annual Town Meeting warrant. **Mr. Comando made a motion to put a placeholder on the Town Meeting warrant for \$1.5 million in design funds for the FY2008-1 Renovation of Town Hall project. Ms. Pransky seconded the motion and it was passed unanimously.** Ms. Tobin asked if a vote was necessary this evening for the Hearthstone project as well. Mr. Siegenthaler said that the other four projects would be reviewed at the next meeting and a vote would be taken on each for inclusion on the warrant. He reminded the Committee that they were merely voting for placement on the warrant, but their vote on whether to recommend funding would be made later in the process.

Other Business: Ms. Carey asked if a written response should be sent to Needham resident Moe Handel who had made a request for action by the Committee. Mr. Siegenthaler will send a response to Mr. Handel.

Next Meeting Date: The Committee will meet on February 13, 2008 in the Newman Conference Room at 7:30 PM.

Ms. Pransky made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:35 PM. Ms. Bernardo seconded the motion and the meeting adjourned at 9:35 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Nikki Witham
Recording Secretary