

Town of Agawam
Community Preservation Committee

Committee Minutes
November 24, 2008

Members Present: Henry Kozloski; Chair, Louis Russo, Richard Maggi, Christina Thompson, Ray Moreau, Vi Baldwin, Tom Tierney

Others Present: Jennifer Bonfiglio; CPA Secretary

Absent: Corinne Wingard, Richard Bennett

Meeting called to order at 6:30 PM by Chairman Kozloski.

1. *Approval of May 27, 2008 minutes:* Motion by Louis Russo to accept minutes as corrected of 10/1/08 as corrected. Second by Vi Baldwin. Vote: Unanimous. 2 abstain
2. *CPA Financials:* CPA financial report and summary provided to members by Jennifer. It was also stated that a 35% state match will be expected next year which will substantially decrease our revenues and make for a tough year. It was also noted that our fund balance is lower due to borrowing from FY09 last year to complete the park

Henry and Jennifer advised the committee of the Newton Supreme court ruling in which no recreation projects can be done with CPA funds if there is already an existing recreation use. There is currently a senate bill on the floor to change proposing a change to the CPA act. The CPA coalition has been contacted to offer support.

Tom Tierney feels that CPA funds should be spent on projects that benefit all citizens and not just a select group, such as schools.

Henry and Louis both feel that schools are also “neighborhood” parks and can be used after school hours.

3. *Thomas Smith House Application for Funding \$99,062.15*
Judy Anderson, project manager and Historical Association member spoke on behalf of project. She gave a brief history of the Thomas Smith House and provided pictures of the work that has already been completed using CPA funds.
Vi Baldwin asked why there is such a difference among each vendors price. If they received the same job description, why such a disparity. Judy Anderson indicated that an itemization and specs were given to vendors for each category: General Construction, Electrical, Masonry, and Landscaping. Initially there were discrepancies in the bids. She asked each vendor which materials they would be using and to explain their price further. Not all vendors responded to her second request. Additionally, when the inspectors came in, more information was received on the scope of the project, so additional information was added to the specs and Judy requested a new quote from all vendors that had responded to her last request.
Vi Baldwin asked what the time frame of bids were. Just stated that she started the process in June 2008. She contacted 25 vendors and it took her 6 months to get to this point to reach the figure requested. She also indicated that it was difficult to find contractors willing to bid due to the preservation/restoration guidelines and CPA billing and payment issues. She also stated many electricians had difficulty bidding due to the

historical preservation issue. She chose contractors that were sensitive to the historical preservation aspect, although they were typically more costly. She indicated upstairs will be mainly left as is except for the electrical and ADA requirements which were an additional cost.

Tom Tierney asked if the contractors had a state license. Judy stated that Roy and Bobskill are in the application. The mason will provide one.

Just stated that the house will be opened to the public, schools will be invited, and the house may be used for demonstrations/speeches to various clubs and organizations.

Louis asked if all the preservation work has been completed thus far to ensure no damage is done. Judy stated that one ceiling is still damaged and some issues remain due to the foundation and brick hearth.

Henry asked if this request will complete the cost of the project. Judy stated yes.

Rich Maggi asked if there will be a fee to enter the house. Judy stated that yes, a fee will help pay the mortgage and possibly restore the old barn. Volunteers have paid the mortgage in the past.

Richard Maggi asked what would they do if they were denied. Judy stated they would not be able to open to the public because it would not be handicap accessible, therefore they could not generate any revenue.

Richard Maggi asked if there are diagrams and/or illustrations demonstrating handicap accessibility. Judy refers to the application for specs. The original drawings which have been modified with the help of an ADA consultant. The earthen ramp (pavers or dirt) has been approved and because it is under 6" it does not require a railing.

Judy stated the house will not be heated. Access is limited seasonally.

Henry asked if students would pay access fee. Rick indicated that has not been decided, although individuals probably would, but not school field trips.

Richard M asked if there is other funding. Judy stated no. She also stated that historical grants have not been received because most are 50/50 match.

Robert McGovern, Historical assoc. member states that this is the only building of this kind and dates back to the 1700's. The work done to date is phenomenal.

Richard M would like to see in writing that the ADA compliance is met. Just stated that she does not have that. Jennifer will send a written request to the ADA commission.

Henry indicates that the balance of the historical account is \$165,000. The average annual deposit of revenues is \$35,000.

Judy asked if there are any other historical applications.

Henry states that the money has been awarded in the past to the Town Clerks office, the Barn restoration, G.W. Monument and Thomas Smith House. There are no other application pending.

Henry stated that he is concerned because the Town has given close to \$200,000 in CPA funds for this projects and the Historical Assoc. may charge resident an access fee.

Judy states that she is very gracious CPA has invested so much and would hate to see funding stop so close to completion. Henry feels that the building is not falling down and structurally sound due to CPA funding and other funding sources should be considered.

Carol Miller states that if CPA funded this final application, they would not come back for any additional funding.

Judy stated that the original plan was scaled back and changed to preservation with no restoration to reduce the cost.

Vi Baldwin asked if there was a septic system. Judy stated she contacted the health department and no problems were foreseen. Vi asked what if there is additional expense.

Judy stated that the 15% contingency will cover and/or cutbacks will be done.

Richard Maggi stated that most committee members do support this project, but feel the pressure and responsibility to the Council and taxpayers.

Ann Bellico states that a lot of money has been invested but feels that this last phase is needed to open the house to the public.

Rich Maggi asked if a 50/50 matching grant was available. Judy stated that money must be in a pool or an endowment to apply. And CPA is sometimes a deterrent to other funding.

Vi Baldwin suggests putting the project to bid again and re-negotiate the existing bids to make the request more attractive. Margin of profit can be less in this economy. CPA funds are limited and the committee would hate to deplete the fund.

Rich Maggi states the chosen contractors are higher priced and he would like to see firm quotes. Judy indicated that it was difficult to obtain, no one responded to the request for detailed quotes. Rich feels more homework is needed.

Rich M. motions to table until all requested material is received. 2nd by Tom for discussion.

The committee states they want a notification of ADA compliance & new bids. Richard suggests specifying what you want and then obtain new quotes.

Ric Scortino states that Judy is not an architect, to be specific is difficult. When there is a lack of bids received usually the best bid is generally accepted. Judy stated that they also based their decision on the contractor that is the most sensitive to the preservation issue.

Bob McGovern states that the contractor is not chosen just on price but also experience.

Vi Baldwin states that the scope of work provided by Roy Construction is detailed. She suggests Judy use this as a model and request additional quotes by providing them with the punch list.

Ric Scortino states that the law reads the lowest and most responsible bidder may be chosen.

Rich Maggi appreciates Judy's efforts but feels due diligence is required before any recommendation can be made to the council. He also expresses concern that if the state was to audit and we cannot support our decision with documentation, CPA is held accountable.

Bob McGovern feels that Roy has met the bid with documentation. The other bidders have not met bid requirements and therefore should not be used.

Henry states that CPA is just trying to be responsible and must study long term needs and goals of the Town.

Ric Scortino offers a compromise by suggesting that if the inspector general rules on the bid legitimacy, will that be okay? Ann Bellico also states that the Historical Assoc. is a group of volunteers and cannot afford an architect.

Vi advises Judy that electrical and construction bids are only needed. The landscape bid is sufficient.

Henry calls for vote to table until next meeting. Vote: Unanimous.

4. *Other Business*: Ray suggests the committee become more pro-active such as looking into preserving the Town Hall.
5. *Motion to adjourn* at 9:00 PM by Richard Maggi. Second by Louis Russo. Vote: Unanimous