

Community Preservation Committee

December 14, 2009

MEMBERS PRESENT; Mr. Bulman, Mr. Lane, Mr. Leavitt, Mr. Limbacher, Mr. Scott, Mr. Trafton, Mr. Wood, Mr. Snow (arrived late 7:11 left early 8:05)

OTHERS PRESENT; Ms. Pipes, Ms. Brown, Mr. Patterson, Mr. Roberts, Ms. Curran, Mr. Wait, Mr. Ball, Mr. Bjorklund, Mr. Sharry

I Call to Order 7:05 P.M.

II Acceptance of Agenda; MOTION by Mr. Leavitt, SECOND by Mr. Wood and UNANIMOUSLY VOTED to accept the agenda as submitted 8-0

III Application Hearings

1. Archival Restoration Project, Ms. Brown – Ms. Brown gave the members an update on the project. In 2007 there was a preservation survey done to establish what the value of materials was and how best to proceed. Also in 2007 they began to rebind the records starting with 20 sets of land records. In 2008 a WPA card file, contain 76,000 cards, dating back to the begging of the meetings was copied and scanned. An additional 70 volumes of land records were rebound. They started to form a disaster plan. Two early books, the Litchfield Family in America and Records of the First Parish in Hanover (which at one time was a part of Scituate), that were in very poor condition were digitally scanned and copies were given to the Scituate Library and the Scituate Historical Society. In 2009 was restored and rebound. Also two years of Town Meeting records dating to the 18th and 19th century we restored and rebound. Two fireproof safes were purchased for storage of the most important records. Two Plymouth Country Atlas' from 1879 and 1903 were restored and rebound, including the addition of that section of the Scituate Atlas that was razored out of the original. Plans are under way for the purchase of one more fire proof safe and two sections of roller shelving for easier access of the heavy volumes of the land records, which are used most often. Final bids are due in for security and fire safety, and will be reviewed with the Deputy Fire Chief to see if the comply with the Fire Departments needs. Plans are, as money permits, to begin to send the older volumes that still need to be rebound out and that includes the remaining Town Meeting Minutes, the Selectmen Meeting Minutes and the last of the land records. The archivists would also like to begin to work with the birth records from 1636 to 1800, which have been transcribed and put into a volume, to make it a more permanent volume. Currently birth records to 1844 are transcribed. Vital records from 1844 on the archivists would also like to scan as no secondary records of them exist. Ms. Brown also stated that everything done to date has been labeled and dated that it was made possible the CPC funds. She stated they still have \$47,000 remaining. Mr. Bulman asked if those funds were going to be used for climate control and security of the basement. Ms. Brown answered climate control and security, they have already done dehumidifying. They will not be able to financially or safely effect and real changes in the air-conditioning or heat due to the restrictions of the building. They are looking at the fire alarm and smoke detector systems. Lockers have been installed so researchers can leave there materials in them, thus brings limited things into the research area. Cameras are also being considered. Mr. Scott asked if the improvements being made to the physical facility were based on the recommendations made from the original survey. Ms Brown said that they were, she went on to say that the original survey was very concerned with security, water and the environment. They are noticing a significant difference since the installation of the dehumidifiers. Mr. Bulman mentioned that there had been another applicant who wanted to restore old records and asked Ms. Brown if the archivists would be able to keep them also. Ms. Brown said that Ms. Foster, the Town Archivist, had been speaking the Ms. Robbins (the other applicant) and that it would be possible. Mr. Limbacher asked at

the end of the three year program what percentage of documents will be preserved. Ms. Brown guessed it would be about 80%. Mr. Limbacher suggested for a relatively small amount of money it might be wise for the archivists to apply again to finish the project in full. Ms. Scott wanted to know if there were any records of churches in the archives. Ms. Brown said there were but she couldn't off hand say which ones.

2. Bates House Purchase , Mr. Ball – Mr. Ball stated that the house was historically significant, probably the most recognized house in Scituate, due to the story of Abigail and Rebecca Bates. The house was built in the 1600's; it has been difficult to establish an exact construction date because the early records are scarce. The main significance of the house is its association to the Bates Family who owned the property for many generations. Mr. Ball went on to say that the property has not had a lot of owners, the Bates family owned it to the early 1900's, then the present owner's grandparents purchased it and it has remained in her family since. The present owner is very concerned with preserving the house. The Historical Society proposed to purchase the property for \$350,000. It has been appraised at \$550,000 and the Town's assessment on the property is \$473,900. The current owner is willing to sell it well under fair market value because she wants to make sure the property is preserved. Mr. Ball went on to say that the property has been very well maintained. The Historical Society is willing to put \$25,000 into a maintenance account, and proposes that the Town also put \$25,000 into the account, bring the total requested funding to \$375,000. The proposal allows the current owner to remain at the property as long as she wishes, without paying rent; she would pay for utilities, lawn care, etc. Any major repairs would be paid for from the maintenance account. When the present owner leaves the Historical Society would then rent the property, similar to the Light House. Also the property would be open to the general public when the other historical properties in town are open. Mr. Ball said that it is critically important that there be a companion article at Town Meeting that would give custody and administration of the Bates House to the Scituate Historical Society. Mr. Ball read to the committee members the article passed at the 1968 Town Meeting giving custody of the Light House to the Historical Society. The present owner would not be willing to sell the property if this article did not pass at Town Meeting. Mr. Bulman stated the home is in excellent shape. He explained to the members that the present owner would have a life estate and what that was. He informed the Board that when an appraisal is done the value of the life estate reduces the assessed value. However, in his opinion, he still feels it is a tremendous value. The present owner is also requesting a historical restriction on the property. Mr. Bulman wanted to clarify that he did not believe that under the guidelines of the CPA they would be able to approve \$25,000 for a maintenance fund. Once the Society owns the property and it need repairs then they could come before the CPC with an application but maintenance can't be approved in advance. Mr. Wood asked when the \$550,000 appraisal was done and he was told Sept. 15, 2009. Mr. Bulman reminded the Board that the CPC would have to obtain its own appraisal regardless. Mr. Trafton asked if the property was listed on National Register of Historic Places and if it's not how does the addition to the building effect that. Mr. Ball said that Mass. Historical has been approached; the application is based on the fact that the property is significant do to its association with the Bates Family rather than trying establishing a date for the original construction. He further stated that the main core of the house is very old and the addition is not visible from the street and doesn't feel it will impact the application negatively.
3. Harborwalk, Mr. Patterson – Mr. Bulman reminded the Members that this project has received letters of support from just about every Board and Committee in Town. Mr. Patterson presented an artist's sketch of what the project would look like; he gave an overview of the project and sighted how it fit the CPC criteria. Specifically open space, providing unimpeded views of environmentally and historically important places such as Satuit Brook, Lucien Rousseau Landing and Scituate Harbor. The project provides for recreation both active and passive. Historically there would also be interpretive signs explaining about Satuit Brook and the Rousseau Landing where the mossaing industry was run out of. Additionally this project links the trail on the Driftway to the rest of the Harbor and eventually by the Bates House and down to the Light House. Mr. Patterson stated that this idea is not new, in his research he found documents dating back to 1957 where a Harborwalk is

mentioned. It's also mentioned in the Town's Master Plan and in 2002 as study was done for the Planning Board that specifically mentioned the creation of a Harborwalk along the water's edge of Cole Parkway. Mr. Limbacher, as the liaison to this project, suggested that a contingency figure be added to the project cost and also that there be a feasibility study done to see if this walk can be extended to the Scituate Maritime Center. Mr. Limbacher confirmed that it is consistent with the Town's Master plan and he is in favor of the project. Mr. Scott is also in favor of the project. Mr. Snow, although in favor of the project did voice his concern about the cost of the project. It was confirmed that no parking spaces would be lost. There is \$20,000 in private donations for this project. Mr. Leavitt is in favor of this project and suggested that the whole of Cole Parkway could be cleaned up some. Mr. Trafton asked who would be responsible for maintaining the property. It is Town owned and would come under the jurisdiction of the DPW.

4. Girls Softball Field, Mr. Wait – Mr. Wait reminded the Board of the previous CPC vote and the contingencies built into that vote. One of them being that a wetlands study be done and it was determined by Mr. Richardson that a vernal pool did indeed exist. Mr. Wait stated that with the vernal pools existence they would only be able to get about 200 feet versus the 230 they had hoped for. Mr. Wait said he wanted to take the project to the Conservation Commission informally, although he is aware that Mr. Kalishes doesn't support that idea. However, Mr. Wait feels in order to save money there is no sense in designing the field with the parameters that they have, then fill out a full notice on intent, then bring it to the Conservation Commission. He would rather get a general sense of the Conservation Commission before spending money. The question was asked if a fence would need to be installed to keep balls from going into the vernal pool. Mr. Bulman understands Mr. Wait's point however one of the stipulations of the vote was to receive approval from the Conservation Commission. Mr. Wood reminded the Board that they voted for a softball field that would support a men's league that would require 230 feet. He also read a portion of Mr. Richardson's report stating "that all efforts should be put in place to protect, conserve and enhance this scientifically handsome vernal pool." Mr. Wood thinks having bulldozers come right up to the edge of the vernal is wrong and CPC should stop the project. Mr. Bulman said that if the Conservation Commission approves the project then it's their job to protect the vernal pool. There was discussion regarding how the number of 230 feet was arrived at. Mr. Wait said that is what the Recreation Commission thought they had to work with, and that a girl's field would work with 195 feet. Mr. Scott asked Mr. Wait what the MIAA requirements were. He replied that a former member of the Recreation Commission, Mr. Parks, who was an athletic director in N. Quincy, gave him that number. Mr. Scott asked to have that confirmed. Further discussion was held on building the fields on the land fill. At this time that is not possible. The Board was reminded that a big component of this plan was to have the girl's field on the high school campus. Ideas were discussed about moving different sports around to different fields and Mr. Sharry said that it wasn't feasible to replace one sport for another on the same field just as changing the configuration of the fields to fit the girls softball field isn't feasible. There is just a shortage of fields.

IV MOTION by Mr. Limbacher, SECOND by Mr. Lane and UNANIMOUSLY VOTED 7-0 to adjourn the meeting.

Respectfully Submitted,

Karen S. Crowell