

## CPC MEETING MINUTES 11/13/2018

Blauvelt called the meeting to order at 5:30 PM. All members were present except Sharpe.

**Minutes:** Smith moved to approve the minutes from October 9 and 16. Higa seconded. All were in favor.

### Application Reviews:

#### Conservation Commission for McAllister Wildlife Refuge

Cons. Comm. Chair Jeff Cohen was present along with Ms. Jess Toro of Native Habitat Restoration. Toro said there are two areas we propose to address with this next work. These are areas that are overgrown with shrubbery and bittersweet vines. She said we use a forestry mower which is heavy duty mower to cut down invasive vines and plants and mulch it on site. The machine is very gentle on the soil – it does not compact it and we can even use it in wet areas. She said some of these invasives are 6 to 12 feet tall. She said once these big ones are taken down then in the future we can manage the area easier with brush hogging.

She said the first area is a really a wet meadow. It is down the slope from the hedgerow we mowed this year. She said the second area is a wet meadow within the forest. She said with a DCR grant we hope to mow it this winter, and then, with this CPA grant, we will have Greenagers hand pull the invasives in one portion. In the other part we will hand apply herbicides. Then we can compare the two areas to see how they differ and determine which removal method is best. She said the DCR grant we seek is \$12,000.

Smith said this project has a lot of merit and is well thought out. You get a lot done for not much money. But she asked how much money is needed over the next 5 years? Toro said we hope to always get grant support and matching funds, but we need about \$30,000 of work over the next few years.

Bozutto asked about existing Conservation Commission funds. Cohen said there are wetland funds but they are restricted to wetland protection act issues.

Fick asked about using goats. Toro said you need a lot of goats for an area this large. It's tough to get that many. And these are really big invasives. Maybe goats could be used for maintenance in future once the big stuff is down. Cohen said goats would need fences and that is not really what we want at McAllister.

Blauvelt asked, do you think you will get the DCR grant? Toro said it is early but we think so because it is specifically for municipalities and for forest management.

Bailly asked if the goal is for total eradication of the invasives. Toro said our goal is really about control. Once there are few of them, they cannot thrive but the native species can. She said some of the invasive plants are toxic to amphibians, so we really want to focus on getting these plants out. In the future maintenance will be easier, done with a brush hog yearly, and the plants can't go to fruit or regrow to the extent they have been let to. Cohen said that this property has not been touched for 30 years so there is a lot of work we need to do. He said we are waking up now to its needs. He said also a Friends of McAllister is being formed as a organization and that is good show of community support for this resource area.

### **Mahaiwe Theater doors**

Blauvelt recused himself.

Janice Martinson and Tim Shroepfer from the Mahaiwe spoke. Martinson said people come to our theater and come up our outside ramp, but then they struggle to open those heavy doors. She said the doors are beautiful, but they are very heavy. She said they are wide enough for ADA standard, but they are just tough to open. So the proposal is to install push buttons so the front doors and the bathroom doors can open automatically.

These will be "open to "assist" devices so the hydraulic assist helps the person open the door. This helps elderly, the physically challenged, and even young children. Martinson said these devices are less expensive than the fully automatic doors.

She said the work will be done according to the proper historic standards.

Howe reminded the applicants that the work will require HDC approval. Rembold clarified that is not needed for CPA, it is needed prior to building permit. Higa asked if a CPA grant will help Mahaiwe get other grant funds. Martinson said yes, it always looks good to other agencies when we have local support.

### **Ramsdell Library Study**

Bozutto and Blauvelt recused themselves.

Patrick Hollenbeck for the Library Trustees spoke to the Committee. He said he has spoken to the library building commission in Boston. They have funding regulations that are strict but they make sense. One is that it is essential that you have a building program that meets their definition and it is for a 20 year horizon. In order to get significant building renovation funds from Boston we need to do a building plan first, so we can get in line for grant programs. So we need to do this first. This will help us move along to the next step, including starting a foundation to raise funds to help fund renovations. He said there is state and foundation money out there which is important because taxpayers can't pay all what it will take.

Howe asked what the Ramsdell library report that was just done has to do with this. Hollenbeck said that Ramsdell Report was to assess community needs at the library. It did say that we need to address accessibility issues and we should first start with a temporary ramp. But that is something we should do anyway, immediately, and not part of this CPA application.

Bailly asked about the timeframe and next steps. Hollenbeck said once we have the funds we can get this work done quickly.

Bailly asked if they might come back and ask for CPA funds again next year for the next phase. Hollenbeck said is possible, that we ask for funds for an architect for further study. Bailly asked why it has not been done before. Hollenbeck said he is not sure; but for a while it was not clear that there could be funds from Boston until 2027 but that's not true. He said he called the state and they said it makes no sense. But nobody here did anything to follow the money.

Howe asked about the Historical Commission and Society archives on the second floor. Hollenbeck said the Ramsdell report showed support for that being a community space, so we'll have to work that out.

Fick said it's good to see this again, because when Ramsdell was asking for CPA a few years ago it was not clear what their steps were. We suggested the library take this type of study, so it's good now to see it.

Smith she wants to have a town vote that we are willing to spend money to redo that building. The number floated once was \$2 million, and I want people to say we will support that amount or whatever portion the Town needs to put in. Higa said they won't have that number unless they have a study like this done first. Smith said part of the problem is lack of town wide commitment.

Smith said she wants to know how the number of 7,016 customers is counted. Bozutto, a library employee, said she thinks the tally is per customer coming through the door but is not sure. Smith said she remembers that when she was a Trustee they told me the count was not per person but per transaction. She wants some clarity on this. Hollenbeck said remember this is not ADA accessible no matter what the count is. Smith said I want to know what the number means.

Smith said I believe the difficulty is there has never been a town wide commitment. It's time to ask if there is a commitment. Bailly said that is a loaded or open ended question. People will not vote on that. You need a dollar figure for voters to consider and you cannot get close to that number until you do one of these studies.

Smith said if there is a vote to fund it, she will honor the majority, but she won't keep throwing money at this building until we have an idea of what it will take. Rembold asked Smith if a Town meeting vote on this particular CPA request would be what Smith was looking for? Smith said no, not this small amount. If it was a vote for \$2 million, then yes.

Rembold said there were \$300,000 or so approved at town meeting a few years ago. He asked Hollenbeck what the status of that was and why it isn't being used for this study? Hollenbeck said he thought it was for accessibility work. It will be burned through quickly once we start to use it. Once we go over \$100,000 in work then we need to do the whole building, and we don't have all that money. Hollenbeck said the Town Manager thought that amount could be used to make the first floor accessible. But Hollenbeck said this study will help us figure out what we can do with that 300,000.

Higa asked if it could be used later. Hollenbeck said yes is thinks so.

Smith said she needs to see what that amount can be used for – she is not feeling comfortable.

Higa asked if it could be used for the temporary ramp. Hollenbeck said no. That was capital money and the temporary ramp is just temporary. He said the money is there but we have to have a plan to use it.

Smith said there are too many what ifs here. She said she understands Hollenbeck's commitment and the Trustees commitment, but we have not had a town wide commitment.

Howe asked about the timing for the temporary ramp. Hollenbeck said asap. It is outside this CPA; he is trying to raise funds elsewhere right now.

**Committee Member Reports** - None

**Citizens Speak** – None

**Next Meetings** – Monday Dec 3 and Monday Dec 17

**Adjourned:** 6:38 PM

