

TGSC 12/1/11 Minutes

Present: Bob Ward, Mary O'Donnell, Ken Stevens, Wendell Chamberlain, Jean Naumann; acting Chair. Absent: Keith Elder, Paul Tura, and Richard Dennehy. Also present for the Recreation Commission: Paul Maloney, Ken Moali, and Andy Davis.

At 7:08, Acting Chair Naumann called the meeting to order with a reading of the Charge of the TGSC to the Rec. Commission (RC), followed by introductions and an invitation to the guests to relate how their committee interacts with town government.

The Chairman of the Recreation Commission (5 elected members), Andy Davis, outlined the make up and functions of the Town Rec. Dept. and its Director, Sue Woodward, and her assistant. They produce four brochures a year outlining the various programs offered to town citizens (over 4,000 participants yearly), manage all the ball fields in town, coordinates with KYSO (Kingston Youth Sports Org.) on the maintenance and use scheduling of the fields and grounds, and runs the operations at Grey's Beach (snack shack rental), and did over sight of a drainage reengineering project to upgrade the facilities at the beach. The drainage project was 150K. Their budget consists of; 25K for field maintenance from town, 25k income from rental of cell tower. The fields and programs take in over 200K yearly, administered through a revolving account (seasonal programs and sports accounts administered separately). The cost difference in maintenance for the Opachinsky Complex is between 36 and 38K made up by KYSO donations. They maintain a fee schedule for the various participants. They also gain fees for the use of the Reed Building, and have oversight of its upkeep. They now have oversight of the newly acquired Hall Property, which will be developed for ball fields and open space through the use of CPC (Community Preservation Act/ Commission) funds. KYSO has raised hundreds of thousands of dollars that has gone to the maintenance, upkeep and upgrades in recreational infrastructure with a volunteer professional grounds specialist. There is great communication between Rec. and KYSO. They all (Rec.) agreed that their main wish is for a full time administrator. They all stated that their two part time employees work more hours than they are paid for. Communication with all relevant town departments (BOS, Highway, CPC, Police and the Town Accountant mainly) was stated as excellent. Budget wise, they are level funded, with some assistance from the Sampson Fund and the Town with respect to the Reed Building upkeep (also with assistance from CPC and the Standing Building Committee. They would like to see more revenue derived from the cell tower and perhaps from a wind turbine and better recycling of beverage containers. There was a brief discussion about the clean up of the Hall Property with respect to the paintball operation and its attendant paraphernalia. Mr. Davis stated that he thought that Mr. Hall was responsible for its removal through the purchase and sales agreement, and or that the operation will remove its equipment when they move. The concern is of the excess of old tires, barrels, storage containers and spent paintball residue that litter the sight. This has to be cleaned up before ball field development can take place.

Questions from the TGSC included: Ms. O'Donnell queried as to any future Rec. planning, to which Mr. Davis responded with an articulation of the outline for a future

development plan for Camp Nekon, to be presented to the BOS by the Conservation Land Review Committee (of which he is a member). Campsites and pond use (fishing and canoeing) could generate some revenue. There are no plans for a playing field at the offal pits site due to right of way issues with Raboth Road. Mr. Moali stated, with respect to Camp Nekon, that the Rec. Com. did not wish to take on the responsibilities of maintaining Camp Nekon without a revenue stream. Mr. Ward asked the Rec. Com. who does the grounds keeping. It is contracted out, with Mr. Moali stating that Rec. is planning to go before the Wage and Personnel Board to fund a part time grounds keeper with the objective to save money. Ms. O' Donnell wondered whether (with proper planning) a revenue stream could be generated from usage fees for off road vehicles who are routinely and illegally misusing open space and conservation lands. Mr. Davis stated that there are wetlands issues at stake.

8:07 PM. Presentation by the Community Preservation Committee, represented tonight by; Ken Moali (Chair and Rec. Com. representative), Craig Dalton (Historic Com. rep.), Marilyn Kozodoy (Conservation Com. rep.), Don Ducharme (Housing Authority rep.), Wendell Chamberlain (rep. at large). Other members not present; Matt Hamilton (Fin. Com. Rep.), Paul Ricci (rep. at large), Dave Gavigan (Planning Board), and Charles Comeau (Open Space Com. Rep.).

Vice Chair Naumann commenced the discussion with describing the TGSC's function as an information gathering exercise into the workings and functions of town government and queried the guests as to CPC's relation and function within the governing structure. Mr. Moali then discussed the evolution of the CPC from the Town's acceptance of the Community Preservation Act in 2005 with its levy of a 3% real estate surcharge. The 3 mandated recipient categories are: Open Space (min. 10%), Affordable Housing (10%), and Historic Preservation (10%). The remaining 70% can go to any of those areas plus Recreation and Conservation. The highest revenue for any given year has been around \$2.1 million with the matching State Funds (derived from Deed filings), to an average take over the last years of over \$1 million due to the decline in the real estate market. The States match has declined to a 36% match. The figures for this year were down. The Adams Library restoration has been the largest recipient of funds and the project is now underway with the final disbursement. The Housing Authority has only spent 50k on affordable housing (Habitat for Humanity unit on Grove St.) with a large accrued balance still to be spent on any projects. Mr. Moali stated that there is some preliminary planning on creating an affordable housing trust fund to administer those monies. The CPC sets a high bar for eligibility, sound presentation and application approval with the applicant having to show a real and necessary need and benefit to the community. Ms. Kozodoy stated that the eligibility criteria and requirements on the application are very specific and hold the applicant to a very high standard. She stated that the information for applying is easily accessible to the public online. Mr. Moali then described the application process, rating system, recommendations to Town Meeting and timeline. It can be a rather lengthy process. The establishment of an affordable housing partnership trust fund would speed up the flow of CPC funds in that area and would, in Mr. Moali's judgment, greatly benefit the Town. That concept was recently presented to the BOS by the Housing Authority. Ms. O'Donnell stated that it did not receive a good hearing due to lack of good presentation and the cumbersome amount of paper work involved (State manual of

guidelines in the Housing Authority Bill), and whether it served Kingston's present conditions, wants and needs. It is very complicated and involves HUD and the State. Mr. Ducharme then proceeded to explain what the Housing Authority's perspective was. He said that the Town of Kingston is currently updating its affordable housing plan which hasn't been done since 2004, and said plan is currently before the BOS and the Planning Board for adoption. He stated that the new Town Administrator needed more time to analyze the plan because he was not up to speed yet on the State's 40B law and the affordable housing strategy inherent in the establishment of a trust fund. He referred the TGSC to the handout provided that outlined the implementation strategies of the affordable housing trust in building and maintaining units. Trustees would be appointed by the BOS, functioning as a developer, investor, lender, property manager or a housing service provider. It allows the town to move swiftly on property acquisitions and sales when needed. Monies can go into the trust from other sources other than CPC. This is a streamlined process to quickly provide affordable housing in order to meet the Town's 10% requirement under Chapter 40B which gives developers incentives to build affordable housing. He stated that the plan (with the trust strategy), upon being deferred, is scheduled to go before the BOS again for acceptance and then before Town Meeting for approval. Ms. Naumann wanted to know whether funds transferred from CPC into the trust needed to be voted on at Town Meeting. Mr. Moali responded that the trust would make a recommendation to the CPC that funds be transferred and Town Meeting would then vote to accept the CPC request. Ms. Naumann asked whether there were provisions in the trust to make loans to first time home buyers or bailout payments to assist in foreclosure as other towns have done. Mr. Ducharme said the trust could do that. Given that the CPC funds reserved for affordable housing only amounts to about \$357K, wouldn't it make more sense to make some to issue small loans or down payments on units rather than try to build a large housing complex (Ms. Naumann). Mr. Ducharme agreed, adding that the fund is small but is growing every year and could be leveraged. Mr. Moali didn't think that making small loans would help build your housing stock quota. Ms. O'Donnell opined that affordable housing issues should be solved locally without State mandates, using local criteria, and that the affordable units should be dispersed evenly throughout the town, using existing housing units with deed restrictions for Kingston residents who have lived in the town for the past 5 years. Mr. Dalton and Mr. Moali both stated that there have no credible affordable housing projects presented to the CPC since the McFarland Farms plan back in 2005. More needs to be done.

The Vice Chair then steered the discussions back to the CPC's procedures for accessing funds, moving on from the strict requirement aspect. Does the CPC advance its own projects? Mr. Moali stated that he sponsored and presented the application for the Reed Building roof repair project and the patio project on behalf of Recreation, which he was a member of. He did not initiate the project, and does not think the members should be pro active in pursuing personal projects per understanding of the CPA. Mr. Dalton didn't think that the Act specifically spelled that out. Mr. Moali stated that in the past, members have been proactive in presenting projects to the CPC on behalf of the Boards they serve on, but believes that in the future he will not accept applications from governing members, in the spirit of transparency. Mr. Chamberlain believed that the CPC was more of a deliberate body with expertise in the areas of concern. Mr. Ward conjectured whether

the CPC might as a whole come up with a plan for ideas to be considered for funding as an agenda item at meetings. Mr. Moali agreed and stated that these things should be considered at the annual public meeting before consideration of projects. He receives applications through advertisements. Ms. Kozodoy stated that the Act encourages the committee to study and recommend how best to spend CPC funds. The recommendations usually come after a group has made their presentation after strict consideration of the merits of application filing. These filings are generally from the Boards that the members represent, based upon ideas and needs expressed during and over the course of the year at those Board's meetings. Any person from the public can apply and often do (Ezra Wright Complex). Can a Town Dept. or Committee apply (Ms. Naumann)? Yes, Cons. Com., and Faunce School through Building Com. has done it, as well as private non profits in the historic area. Mr. Ward wondered how you fund all the qualified projects with limited resources. Mr. Moali stated that the CPC uses an intricate rating system to score the projects with full committee participation and long hours of vetting and discussion. Mr. Moali believes it is a good rating system based on a composite of other town's rating systems. Mr. Ward asked whether there was a guide for the applicants and were the rating system questions available to the applicant. Mr. Moali said no, but the application asks the same questions that the rating form asks, and if you give the applicant the rating form, they will tailor their responses. Mr. Chamberlain, responding as a CPC member, said many applicants file under multiple categories to get the maximum favorability ratings. Mr. Moali cited the Calista Property acquisition as a multiple category filing. Mr. Ward recommended that in the future the CPC should make available the scoring criteria to the applicant in the spirit of fairness and transparency of open government given that it is the taxpayer's money you are spending. He would also recommend making the scoring tighter to lessen subjectivity, and educate the public on the process and how to receive a packet that includes all necessary info and timelines. Mr. Ward also wanted to know what plans are in place to administer the acquisitions after purchase, and are these plans being carried through. It's Mr. Moali's opinion that after the purchase is made, it's that Boards responsibility to administer and maintain those properties (Open Space, Conservation, Recreation, etc.). Ms. Kozodoy wanted to assure the TGSC on the validity of the rating scale to evaluate the projects. Mr. Dalton also wanted to add that the CPC has evolved into a valuable resource in helping the Town restore and maintain its historic buildings and records and cited the proposed restoration of the Town Wharf as an example that is currently before the CPC. Ms. Naumann believes a record should be made of all the town projects that have been funded through the CPC, perhaps through a website. People forget how much has been funded through CPC. Mr. Moali believes more needs to be done for Recreation through pending legislation to enhance the Act's attention to maintenance and harm to existing infrastructure and stabilization of the State's CPC Fund. He believes the CPC is a very active and educated body who have spirited and informative discussions and debates that produce good outcomes. Ms Kozodoy referred the TGSC to Community Preservatin.org for all information, or the Community Preservation Coalition. There was some discussion of the Maple Ave. School. The Vice Chair thanked the CPC for their participation.

9:20pm.to 9:44 pm. Old Business: scheduling of the Housing Authority and the Historical Commission for the 1st Thursday in January, 2012, at 7:00 pm., and to defer acceptance

of the Nov. 17th minutes until next meeting. It was also mentioned that the Committee extend an invitation to the T.A. to provide input. On the Chair's report it was mentioned that Richard Dennehy has stepped down from the Committee. The links to the GIS and Australian Ballot have been provided and should be researched further. There was a short discussion of the application of the Australian Ballot to local and state politics and what it would take to move toward the prospect of implementation at Town Meeting.

Motion to adjourn at 9:44 made by Mr. Ward, 2nd by Ms. O'Donnell. Accepted unanimously.