

## **CPC Endorses \$408K Request For Marconi Site Work**

**by Alan Pollock**, CAPE COD CHRONICLE 11/19/09

CHATHAM — Saying it makes no sense for the town to leave the Marconi project half completed, the community preservation committee (CPC) voted Monday to recommend spending \$408,730 to complete site work and utility improvements at the Chathamport campus.

The funds are needed to install a septic system, a driveway and a parking lot, providing the basic services necessary for the town to lease the operations building to the Chatham Marconi Maritime Center (CMMC), and eventually, the hotel building.

The Community Preservation Act provided \$870,000 last year to fund the recently completed exterior renovations of the four brick buildings on the town-owned site, but without utility service and safe vehicle access, the first tenant—the CMMC—is unable to occupy the building. Once that site work is completed, the CMMC will then carry out basic interior improvements that will allow the operations building to meet building codes; only then can the town issue a certificate of occupancy for the building.

While some members of the board of selectmen lamented the need to return to the CPC for additional funds, CPC members concluded two weeks ago that it makes sense to help the project go forward, chairman John Kaar said Monday.

“It did not seem to make sense for the town to walk away at this point,” he said.

Originally, the CPC application was for \$446,645, an amount that included a contingency of more than 10 percent for unforeseen expenses. But that first figure anticipated that the town would be required to pay a premium under the state's prevailing wage law, and that requirement has since been waived by special legislation (see related story). Kaar recommended that the contingency be reduced a

corresponding amount, leaving the bottom line request at \$408,730.

Alan McClennen, Jr., the town's consultant for the Marconi project, advised against reducing the contingency, saying the influx of building projects using just-released federal stimulus funds could have the effect of pushing up prices. "I can't tell you what the bidding climate is going to be like in a few months," he said. But pressed by CPC members, McClennen said the town could make due with the smaller amount.

CPC member Ira Seldin said he would prefer that the committee vote to "look with favor" on the application, but hold off on a formal endorsement until later, when it can be judged in the context of other funding applications. But Kaar said given the selectmen's decision last month to send the matter to the CPC, the committee should take a stand on the application.

"The town isn't going to decide how to move forward on this until we act," he said.

The funds will need to be approved by town meeting voters to be granted.