

## MEETING MINUTES

### Town of Acton Community Preservation Committee

February 26, 2009  
Acton Memorial Library

Attending: Peter Berry, Walter Foster, Nancy Tavernier, Corrina Roman-Kreuze, Ken Sghia-Hughes, Susan Mitchell-Hardt, Tory Beyer, Jon Benson, Janet Adachi, and Kristin Alexander, Assistant Town Planner. Also present were Pat Clifford (Fin Com Observer), Anne Forbes (HDC Observer), certain 2009 CPA project applicants, and members of the public.

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Ken Sghia-Hughes at 7:35 p.m.

- I. Approval of 2/12/2009 Minutes. The minutes of 2/12/2009 were approved as amended.
- II. Appointments with Project Applicants.
  - A. Windsor Building. Dean Charter, Municipal Properties Director, spoke and provided a handout in support of his previously submitted, 2/19 written request that the Committee re-consider its preliminary decision on 2/12 to not recommend CPA-funding for the project. Mr. Charter's request for reconsideration also included a modified request for funding of \$155,000 to restore the building exterior only. Mr. Charter addressed the Committee's earlier questions about parking and building access and reiterated the benefits, financial and otherwise, of doing the project sooner. Committee members expressed appreciation for the building, the aim of the project, and Mr. Charter's successful efforts as project manager on other Town building projects. The Committee still was disinclined to recommend any funding without a completed space-needs study and input and support from the entire Town. Some members voiced a preference for eventually having the entire building restored and not merely the first floor, and some said that the Town should take fuller advantage of public meeting space available at the schools, sometimes at no charge.
  - B. AHA Pre-Development Funds; Capital Fund. Kelley Cronin spoke and provided a handout in response to questions about AHA and ACHC income requirements that the Board of Selectmen (BOS) asked during Ken's and Jon's warrant-article presentation on 2/23. Although anyone with an income under 80% of the median for the metropolitan area is eligible for affordable housing, including AHA housing, the actual income of AHA residents is significantly lower, with the vast majority falling below 30% of the median.

Ken noted that during the warrant-article presentation to the Finance Committee on 2/24, the Fin Com asked about the likelihood that AHA would secure funding for the construction itself. Ms. Cronin said that the State sets aside funds annually for affordable housing development; the recent federal stimulus funding will expand

available funds; and the Department of Housing and Community Development sometimes has access to bond-funding. The estimated cost of the construction project is over \$3 million but the actual cost could be lower, given the current economy and opportunities for lower contractor quotes. Nancy noted that AHA buys condominium units to rent them out and does not participate in condo buy-downs as does ACHC.

Charles Sullivan, 122 Nonset Path, and an abutter of the AHA's Sachem Way property, expressed his concern about the conceptual design for the housing units and leaching field, and the potential negative impact on his property, including on the water table and wetlands. He also expressed concern about creating an enclave of low-income units rather than distributing the units throughout Town. He described his proposal for a group of private citizens to purchase the parcel and donate it the Town as conservation land, but noted that neither AHA nor the Conservation Commission seemed receptive to the idea. He added that when he moved to Nonset Path, the AHA Director at the time said that there would not be further development on the parcel.

In response, Ms. Cronin said that the abutters would be meeting this month with the engineer to discuss the leaching-field issue; the AHA had considered other sites for development but decided on Sachem Way, which AHA already owned and for which the development cost therefore would be lower; Ms. Cronin and her predecessor also understood that the parcel could not be developed further due to the limited capacity of the North Acton sewage treatment plant, which is why Mr. Sullivan believed there would be no further development; and Ms. Cronin was surprised to learn that the parcel would support a septic system.

III. Report on Meetings with BOS and Fin Com. Ken and Jon reported on the warrant-article-review meetings with the BOS on 2/23 and Fin Com on 2/24.

A. BOS. The BOS had questions, mentioned above, about the income levels for the different populations served by the AHA and ACHC. The BOS ultimately cut funding for a space-needs study from the budget, but supported the formation of a volunteer committee to do the study.

B. Fin Com. The Fin Com had a number questions, objections and concerns.

1. Wright-Holden. If the state owns the property, why the proposal for CPA funding? Peter Grover, Historical Commission, submitted a 2/26 response to the Committee, explaining that only the HC can do the historical survey; the owner is not required to do or pay for it. Anne Forbes noted that the building, which already is on the cultural resources list, is 1 of the top 10 heritage landscapes, is surrounded by legislatively protected land and is across Route 2 from conservation land, has not been well-studied or documented. Tory added that once the survey is done, the Friends of Wright-Holden is likely to receive donations that will help to defray the cost of necessary work.

2. CPA Account. Balance? \$4.5 million, which includes the open-space set-aside, Bruce Freeman trail funds and the unused NARA Pavilion funds, among others; the account accrued interest of \$100,000 in 2008.
3. ACHC Account. Balance? \$135,000 is the current uncommitted balance, which will increase to \$185,000 with the addition of the \$50,000 on the warrant-article for Town Meeting. The balance reflects the receipt in 2005-2008 of \$720,000 through the Community Housing Program, and the expenditure of \$160,000 for the Willow Central purchase, \$20,000 for administration and \$405,000 for Lally Terrace and a 2-bedroom unit.
4. Civil War Exhibit. One Fin Com member objected to payment for expenses over budget and questioned the use of the separate warrant-article for those expenses.
5. John Robbins. Some Fin Com members were concerned about using CPA funds for the benefit of private property.
6. Cemeteries. One Fin Com member objected to funding.
7. Windsor Building, Woodbury Lane. Several Fin Com members opposed funding of the projects.
8. AHA. One Fin Com member asked why AHA needed funds for capital improvements and had not saved to cover the cost.

IV. Project Funding Recommendations – Final Deliberations and Vote. Committee members voted to approve the following funding recommendations:

- A. Civil War Exhibit Enhancement. \$8,000, covering only the proposed new expenses.
- B. Windsor Building. No funding. Do space-needs study first.
- C. Historic Streetscapes. \$10,000.
- D. 17 Woodbury Lane. No funding. Do space-needs study first.
- E. Wright-Holden Farm. \$1,000.
- F. Town Cemeteries. \$14,000. The proponent should leverage CPA funding by pursuing funds from the Cemetery Commission, which has substantial funds that might be available to cover some of the estimated \$28,000 cost of this project.
- G. John Robbins House. \$42,075.
- H. Historic Preservation Set-Aside. \$44,000.
- I. Open-Space Set-Aside. \$425,000.
- J. AHA Pre-Development Funds. \$152,000.
- K. AHA Capital Fund. \$150,000.
- L. Community Housing Program Fund. \$50,000.
- M. CPA Program Support. \$59,080.

V. Review and Approval of Warrant Articles. The Committee voted to approve the warrant article, as amended, pertaining to CPA funding recommendations; to reaffirm the earlier vote to approve the warrant article pertaining to the Bylaw amendment; and to withdraw the warrant article for an appropriation to cover the Civil War Exhibit budget overrun.

VI. Miscellaneous. Nancy will circulate for Committee comment a draft article for The Beacon about the Committee's final recommendations.

Next Meeting. The next meeting will be on Thursday, March 12, 2009, 7:30 p.m. The Committee will discuss the Town Meeting presentation.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:00 p.m.

- Janet Adachi, Clerk