

COMMUNITY PRESERVATION COMMITTEE
Minutes, February 9, 2012
Acton Memorial Library

Members present: Walter Foster (chair), Janet Adachi, Tory Beyer, Roland Bourdon, Doré Hunter, Andy Magee, Betsy Mercier, Susan Mitchell-Hardt, Ken Sghia-Hughes
Also present: Steve Noone (Finance Committee observer), Roland Bartl (staff)

The meeting was opened at 7:35pm.

1. Updates on Project Proposals

A. FOLF – Lower Fields Project

Dave Wilson and Cathy Fochtman updated the Committee on the current project status. The CPC request has been substantially reduced due to the fact that the school district was not comfortable with the easement required by the inter-municipal agreement. The CPC request is now \$225,000 for the skatepark alone, according to the following budget:

Bowl construction	\$80,000
Fencing	\$10,000
Driveway and 11-space parking	\$70,000
Drainage	\$15,000
Gravel base and soil replacement	\$15,000
Lighting (5 poles)	\$25,000
Contingency	\$10,000

The applicant provided additional information in response to Committee member questions, as follows:

- *What portion of the work will be outsourced or would the project use Town labor?* The applicant believes it would be put out to bid.
- *What about the bonding?* The CPC would not need to bond. The skatepark portion is \$225,000. The School District is going to bond the lower fields project, at probably \$1,500,000, ABYS will take a \$1,000,000 loan and ABYS has \$200,000 raised already. The School District has also committed \$275,000-\$300,000 out of its budget for operating expenses. The School Committee still has to approve the plan next month.
- *How does this leave the Recreation Department regarding use of the fields?* It will be 100% for the school and there will be no inter-municipal agreement.
- *What about parking?* The 11 parking spaces to be created will replace the 11 existing spaces at the skatepark. The school will have to come up with the 117 additional spaces needed for the lower fields.
- The applicant explained that there are 2 other bowls scoped out for the skatepark, but not included in this project. This project would not encroach on these future bowls. The other bowls are estimated to cost around \$105,000 and \$180,000.

- *What about the \$10,000 left over from the previous CPC allocation?* The skatepark has relinquished that money already.
- *Will the drainage accommodate future bowl locations?* It's part of the parking, not the bowls.
- *How does the lighting fit in to the project?* The lighting goes for the parking only (not the fields). The fields have separate lighting, which is part of the School project.
- This project is standalone, in the sense that if the lower fields project is voted down by the School Committee, the skatepark project would still be viable and would move forward. But the lower fields project depends on the skatepark project to provide access.
- The new bowls require a new parking lot configuration.

B. Town of Acton - Windsor Building

Dean Charter could not make it to the meeting tonight. Roland Bartl provided an update. Dean has provided a \$20,000 estimate for bathroom and kitchen upgrades to the Windsor Building, as requested by the Committee. The adjusted total cost for the proposal is now \$50,000.

The Committee discussed whether Dean really wanted the bathroom and kitchen renovation, or whether he is just responding to our request for the quote. The Committee wasn't sure about his desire for this, or if he thinks it makes sense. The sense of the Committee was that this would be useful and that we would likely not be funding further improvements beyond this any time in the foreseeable future. One concern was that a renovated bathroom would become a public restroom for the Farmer's Market, leading to problems with the plumbing.

2. Report – 2/7 Finance Committee Appointment

Roland and Walter presented on the CPC projects to the FinCom on Tuesday. There were not too many questions from the FinCom. The following concerns were raised:

- Windsor Building project—They had grave reservations due to the fact that there have been previous proposals to fix up this building for lots of money with no specific uses identified. The concern is that there may be a desire to redo the work we fund at a later date, and that the bulk of the stabilization of the building has already been done.
- HDC Revolving Loan Preservation Fund raised concern due to the process issues, especially the DOR approval requirement.
- Historic landscaping around the South Acton train station raised concerns due to eligibility questions.
- 468 Main St—they asked if the lift is movable, if it is deemed not needed in the future.
- Town Hall Tower Clock—they had questions about how the replacement mechanism works
- ACHC—There were questions about funding after the initial 2 year membership in the regional organization is up

- Sachem Way—There was interest in the causes for the increase in cost.
- FOLF—There were questions about parking, usage, and funding. FOLF was also on the FinCom agenda separately, and were there to answer questions specific to their project

3. 2012 Projects – discussion of funding recommendations

The Committee members each in turn provided their recommended funding levels for each project. The Chair instructed the committee members to skip over the Historic Commission Preservation Loan Fund project for tonight, since the applicant has not obtained the requisite letter from the DOR to allow this project to move forward.

The committee reached consensus on Open Space, Memorial Library windows, Town Hall Clock, ACHC regional services, AHA development, and the committee expenses.

The Committee discussed the following projects.

The Skatepark (FOLF): The cost of the skatepark seems high, given the scale of the project. Although the skatepark project itself could wait another year while the details and costs are firmed up, it feels like the project is hostage to the lower fields project, which depends on it.

The skatepark project benefits the whole town as well as the school field project. The fact that the parking lot and bowls have to move to accommodate the lower field access means that the skatepark project is more expensive. In addition, there is no matching money for the skatepark, since all the other available funds are going to the lower fields project. But the Town is getting both facilities, so it makes sense to coordinate the developments to benefit everyone.

There was some disagreement on the funding levels for 486 Main St and the Windsor building, which the committee discussed. The predominant question on the Windsor building was whether a use has been identified for the building.

4. Exchange Hall – vote release of funds with revised award letter (holdback)

Roland Bartl reported that the National Park Service signed off on the final of 3 sign-offs for the completion of the building to their historic preservation standards. The one missing requirement is the handicap access according to the Architectural Access Board. The AAB has issued a ruling about what is required to make the building accessible, all of which Mr. Berger says he can do, with the exception of the elevator. This is a result of the lack of adequate parking to enable the full use of the building. Since the Town cannot use the building without the AAB access, we do not have the access that is required under the CPC award. This proposed amendment of the award letter to withhold \$31,948 would be agreeable to Mr. Berger.

The Committee discussed removing the option for Mr. Berger to install the elevator at a future date and to receive disbursement of the withheld portion of the award. The Committee did not want to drag out the process and did not want the burden of continued monitoring of the building status.

We got the value that we intended, i.e. the preservation of the building. What we truly lost is the access to the building, and \$30,000 seems too high for the value of that access. The public use of the building was not a major part of the project for the CPC. Based on a value of \$100/night, one night a month for 15 years, and accounting for inflation, the Committee estimated a total value of about \$18,000. The consensus of the Committee was to withhold \$18,000 from the total award, and to close out the project for the CPC. Roland Bartl will draft a new vote to amend the award letter for the next CPC meeting.

5. Minutes of 01/26/12

The minutes of the January 26, 2012, were approved with amendments. The Committee discussed the relative importance of recreation in the CPA law, and previous funding levels for recreation in the Acton CPC.

6. Administrative Update

There was no update.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:40 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Ken Sghia-Hughes, Clerk