

## MEETING MINUTES

### Town of Acton Community Preservation Committee

April 16, 2009  
Acton Town Hall, Room 204

Attending: Susan Mitchell-Hardt, Ken Sghia-Hughes, Roland Bourdon, Ron Schlegel, Tory Beyer, Corrina Roman-Kreuze, Walter Foster, Nancy Tavernier, Jon Benson, Janet Adachi, Roland Bartl, Town Planner. Also present was Pat Clifford (Fin Com Observer).

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

- I. Approval of 3/12/2009 Minutes. The minutes of 3/12/2009 were approved.
- II. Review of Proposed Award Letters. The award letters were approved as amended.
- III. Discussion of 4/7/2009 Town Meeting Presentation and Results. Committee members applauded Ken for his presentation of the CPA Warrant Article, and handling of some difficult questions from residents.
  - A. Amount of Information in Presentation; Placement of Article in Warrant. Opinions were mixed about the value of taking time during the presentation to inform the residents about past CPA-funded projects. Some residents were impatient to hear about the current, recommended projects, or considered the information about past projects to be “bragging”; at the same time, other residents, who were new to Town Meeting, found the background information to be interesting. The Historical Commission, after observing the residents’ reactions to the Committee’s presentation, omitted a lot of background information from its slide presentation for the final article in the warrant.

Some members suggested that the CPA article should have been included with the appropriations articles, which draw a different audience than do the non-appropriations articles. The Committee also discussed the possibility of including CPA funding information with other financial information in either the Warrant itself or the Budget Supplement.
  - B. Role of Selectmen with Respect to Town Proposals. The Committee members discussed the need for the Board of Selectmen (BOS) to be actively engaged in “vetting” any Town proposals for CPA funding. The Town proposals submitted last fall were not fully prepared and the Committee spent hours in review and discussion only to conclude that funding would be unjustified. A number of 2009 projects had no support from the constituencies that stood to benefit from the projects if the projects had received funding. The BOS also should be more supportive of the Committee and the role it fills as a unique appropriations committee. Roland Bartl said that the process

of getting Town CPA proposals list-ready for the BOS was difficult and usually very last-minute.

Committee members agreed on the need for the Committee to communicate with the BOS about the Town projects issue, whether via a letter, requesting a more cohesive presentation of Town projects having BOS support or face-to-face in discussions between/among the BOS and some Committee members at a BOS meeting.

- C. Need to Build Support for CPA Projects. Pat Clifford noted the potential for taxpayer concern about the authorization of Associates to participate in Committee decisions, given that the Committee is essentially an appropriations committee responsible for a large sum of taxpayer money. Committee members agreed on the need to build support for the Town's CPA participation and CPA projects, and to encourage better projects. Members of Town boards represented on the Committee or having an interest in the categories for which CPA funding is available, could show their support for each other's CPA proposals at Town Meeting and the polls. At the same time, members also suggested the possibility of having to reduce project-funding, given the dwindling amount of state matching funds.
- D. Affordable Housing Opponents. Some of the opposition at Town Meeting to affordable housing was from a group of residents opposed to development, who were part of an organized effort to oppose the affordable housing proposals.
- E. Administrative Costs. The "hold" on this part of the CPA article was surprising, though the resident making the request seemed to have a genuine question. Pat Clifford noted that Town Meeting consideration of individual projects in the CPA article is increasingly arbitrated, and decreasingly a matter of unanimous vote.

#### IV. Announcements and Reports.

- A. Godley Letter (E-Mail). Resident Vera Godley is unhappy with the provision of funding to the privately owned Powers Gallery. But it is the residents who voted at Town Meeting to approve the funding. A public expression of appreciation from Larry Powers might be a well-received gesture.
- B. Recreation Projects. Roland Bartl noted the need to educate the community about certain CPA-related issues, such as the constraints on funding for recreation projects. Pat Clifford said that it would be helpful to know what other towns have been doing about recreational projects in the wake of the Seideman v. City of Newton decision. She said that Concord has mostly Town-sponsored BOS projects in the affordable housing and historical preservation categories.
- C. 2009-2010 State Match. The State match this fall will be lower. The State fiscal year ends at the end of September, and the distribution of the match is in October. Fees from mortgage refinancing also go to the Registry, though the match still is likely to be

low. 141 communities participate in CPA; one town reduced its surcharge and one ended its participation.

- D. Update on CPA Fund Account. Roland Bartl reported that the numbers in the Town Meeting presentation, though not the Warrant, were off by about \$9,000. \$50,000 was left over from the Morrison project but not all of it came back to the CPA account, about \$5,000 went to legal expenses for that project.
- E. Theatre III Sign-Off. Brian Bendig sent a letter on behalf of the Historic District Commission, with a couple of suggestions about tagging windows with the date of restoration and colors, but otherwise signing off.
- F. Committee Membership. After five years on the Committee, Nancy is not seeking reappointment. The terms of Walter, Susan and Peter will expire 6/30/2009, so they need to decide whether they wish to be reappointed. Roland Bartl and the Town Manager's office will need to know their plans soon. The at-large members need to go through the BOS, which is likely to support reappointment.
- G. Next Meeting. The next meeting will be on Thursday, May 14, 2009, 7:30 p.m.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:50 p.m.

- Janet Adachi, Clerk