

**Town of Acton Community Preservation Committee
Minutes, December 13, 2012
Acton Memorial Library Meeting Room**

Members present: Roland Bourdon (Chair), Tory Beyer, Dave Clough, Betsy Mercier, Susan Mitchell-Hardt, Ken Sghia-Hughes, Dore' Hunter (Associate), Peter Ashton (Associate)

Also present: Roland Bartl, Kristin Domurad-Guichard, Herman Kabakoff, Anne Forbes, presenters and members of the public

Roland Bourdon opened the meeting at 7:35.

1. Minutes for November 29 meeting were approved unanimously.

While waiting for the first presentation, Dave updated the Committee on the recommendations from the Board of Selectmen for the Town applications. The Town is withdrawing the Goward Playground, the NARA Electrical Shed, the NARA Sign, and the Asa Parlin Building. The Board of Selectmen also recommended reducing the Historical Preservation Loan Program request to \$100,000.

2. Open Space Committee (\$400,000 request):

Peter Ashton presented for the Open Space Committee. There are several prospective properties that the committee is negotiating now. It is likely that the Anderson property (180 Newtown Road) will be finalized this Spring in time for the April Town Meeting. Total parcel is 39 acres. The Town would buy 20 acres, and 10 more would be preserved as open space as part of a PCRC development.

The \$25,000 Open Space Preservation Fund will need to be accessed as the process moves forward. The CPC can expect a request to access these funds in the Spring.

3. The Acton Arboretum—Wildflower Boardwalk (\$24,000 request):

Bettina Abe presented for the Town Natural Resources Department. The current boardwalk is about 20 years old and is rotting. The Town has been repairing the boardwalk for the past 4 years, but the rot is very extensive and is becoming beyond the scale of the current volunteers to handle. The boardwalk needs to be rebuilt. There are literally thousands of species of wildflowers, and this area of the Arboretum sees thousands of visitors each year. This trail opens up the Arboretum to disabled people as well. The Friends of Acton Arboretum (FAA) will donate an additional \$5,000 for the project. Many other volunteers support the Arboretum with plantings and maintenance of the Arboretum. The boardwalk is within 100 feet of a wetland, so the Town will file for a Certificate of Determination with the Conservation Commission.

4. Historic Streetscape/Shade Tree Program (\$10,000 request):

Dean Charter presented for the Town Municipal Properties Department. This is a continuation of the program started 3 years ago with CPC funding. The program was well received and resulted in 24 trees being planted. There are additional trees with disease and damage that need replacing, and this will allow the program to continue. The trees that have been planted are starting to grow and develop a canopy, such as along Windsor Avenue. Most of the trees planted so far have been disease-resistant American Elm. The Tree Warden (Dean Charter) decides the location of the tree plantings.

5. Asa Parlin House (Withdrawn):

Tory Beyer explained that the Historical Commission met to discuss the situation for this project. Bill Dickinson provided more information about the consultant's report for the building. The building is historically significant in its current location, and it is worth preserving. The 20th century additions are increasing the rate of degradation of the building. Therefore, the Historical Commission wants to remove the newer additions and try to give the building another 25 year "shelf life" so that we can preserve the building for future "baby steps" of rehabilitation. The Commission may come back next year for the first of these "baby steps". The asbestos abatement alone will cost about \$60,000, so the HC may use the existing CPC funds allocated for this and for further structural stabilization. The intent would be to leave the historic façade of the building on the street front in order to preserve the streetscape. Removing the more recent additions will also open up green space behind the building. An open question to the CPC: If the HC came back next year with a \$100,000 request for a more modest project, would it receive a better reception?

Existing \$80,000 funding would be short by ballpark about \$100,000 to remove the newer portions, remove the asbestos, and seal up the remaining building. There was some debate among the Committee whether the asbestos abatement would be eligible for CPC funding. (Maybe as part of a larger preservation project, but not as a demolition project!)

6. Item 6 covered at the beginning of the meeting.

7. Additional project application—Town of Acton, Open Space Acquisition, 81 Wood Lane

This application is not being submitted. The parcel is so small, that the extra costs associated with the transaction, administration and monitoring would equal the cost of the purchase, so it does not make sense to use CPC funding.

8. Project Review schedule: The Committee decided to adjust the schedule for January 10 to start the Elm St presentation at 7:45 and slide the other presentations up

commensurately. The Committee decided the Morrison Property and the Preservation Loan Program both need to stay on January 24th to give them time to prepare. We will ask West Acton Baptist Church if they can move to January 10th at 8:45, and Sachem Way to 7:30 on January 24th. That way we can eliminate the January 17th meeting.

9. Annual Report: The Committee reviewed and edited the Annual Report for the CPC. The Annual Report was approved unanimously.

10. Administrative Update:

The Town has submitted the request for 5% CPC funding for administrative support.

Theatre III offered to give us a tour on January 12 or January 19. Roland Bartl will ask them to schedule us for 10am on the 12th with the 19th as a snow date.

Exchange Hall will be meeting with the Board of Selectman to work out an agreement on conditions for release of the CPC funds, including installation of an elevator and the preservation restriction.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:20pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Ken Sghia-Hughes