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Minutes  
Town of Acton Community Preservation Committee  
February 14, 2013  
Acton Town Hall Room 204

TOWN CLERK, ACTON

Members Present: Roland Bourdon (Chair), Tory Beyer, Dave Clough, Walter Foster, Amy Green, Betsy Mercier, Susan Mitchell-Hardt, Corrina Roman-Kreuze, Ken Sghia-Hughes, Peter Ashton (Associate), Dore Hunter (Associate)

The meeting was opened at 7:30 by Chair Bourdon

1. Review minutes of 1/24/2013; correction of typos and info on Sachem Way replacement cost alternatives; Roman-Kreuze moved to approve with minor edits; Sghia-Hughes seconded; all in favor
2. Morrison Farm discussion and questions to Bill Mullin (Morrison Farm Committee, MFC)
  - a. Is it possible to phase the project and funding? Response: any part of Implementation Plan could be cut or phased at discretion of CPC, but would not recommend it as later phases may not get built if they are not funded up front and delays would continue; there will be several bidding rounds for studies, design and permitting, so will not all be built at once in any case
  - b. Is the timing laid out? Response: yes, over a number of years. As an example, the proposed bridge will likely have to wait for Bruce Freeman Rail Trail to move forward to take advantage of easier access and need for bridge
  - c. Has bond counsel given opinion? Response: not yet, will go to them after Town Meeting. Mr Bartl indicated that bond counsel has done a preliminary review of the project and had seen no red flags
  - d. Was the Town's Space Needs survey used for the design and planning? Response: No, this is a parallel effort and that the Town needs to move make the choice to move ahead now
  - e. Are the comments letters of DocuShare? Bartl indicated that letters received up until about 5:30 tonight were posted, and that letters arriving later than that will be posted tomorrow; some discussion that neighbor had expressed concern of not being notified; Mullin responded that there is a March 6 open house to which neighbors will be invited
  - f. Has the Finance Committee discussed bonding? Kabakoff (Finance Committee) responded that it has not been discussed in formal open session in detail. Mullin indicated that he had made a presentation to the Finance Committee that included an overview of bonding. Kabakoff also said that he had told the Finance Committee members about the bonding webinar that Saginor (Community Preservation Coalition) had conducted

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- g. When would you get historic permits? Response: after Town Meeting
- h. How does CPC know what the most up to date information is? Response: it has been hard to be responsive and formalize changes as they are a Committee subject to Open Meeting Laws; there will continue to be changes thru the whole process, and Board of Selectmen (BoS) will make final choices on site plan, materials etc.
- i. Elements (especially Morrison Nature and History Center; MNHC) are changing and haven't settled down yet; how can Committee make determination as to applicability of CPA funds; Response: Need CPC to approve concept so the Town can move ahead with bidding and design and permitting, the costs presented are the best estimate at this time for the proposed plan. The BoS is making policy here on what the proposal is, not CPC's job.
- j. Is the BoS still behind the project? Clough responded that the MFC was in front of BoS on 2/25 to discuss potential changes to MNHC. BoS has not pulled support.
- k. If there is a consensus on many of the Implementation Plan elements, such as the trails, boardwalk, mowing field etc, could the MNHC just be deferred? Response: the current proposal is in general agreement with the old Kelleher Report other than no more soccer fields. Not touching the house at the request of the BoS. If delay the MNHC, then also delay generation of revenues from that facility
- l. When the Town has done major capital improvements in the past, such as NARA, has it been common to get approval/funding of the concept before getting final bids and plans? Response: Yes. Tidman added that at NARA there had been many plan changes after initial approval, including moving the bath house, moving the amphitheater because of ledge, not building the picnic pavilion; Town Manager had taken charge of moving project forward
- m. What do you see as the presentation at Town Meeting? Response: Will be as precise as possible; all of the elements are there but will have to go through final design studies
- n. Who would see this forward? Response: BoS will have to decide
- o. This is a historic setting, CPC needs to consider if this can be funded with historic funds
- p. How are the different elements allocated within CPC categories? Bartl responded that CPC actually would not have to do this. Other projects would/could be used to achieve the 10 percent set asides
- q. Committee round table
  - i. Some elements are set, some are moving
  - ii. Hard to vote on something that isn't concrete
  - iii. Plan before us is consistent with Kelleher report; has added even more historic components
  - iv. In general feel that the concept elements are very beneficial to town
  - v. Do it all now, don't piecemeal it or it won't get done

- vi. There are outstanding issues, but the due process will continue to be sure these issues are addressed
- vii. Has been studied and considered for a very long time, its time to move forward
- viii. Bonding is a very big step and a big commitment, should be avoided if possible
- ix. What will happen to the house
  - x. If we bond the MNHC and it doesn't get built, what happens to the bond
  - xi. Phasing could make sense at this point, especially for the MNHC
  - xii. Do have to have some faith that the right thing will be done as siting/design moves forward; NARA is an example
- xiii. Must realize that there is the possibility that may still come back for more money
- xiv. Should be more clear on what the MNHC is for and how it will be used
- xv. Long over due, this plan should be moved forward. This is the way capital improvements are done in Acton
- xvi. All the goals of the CPA are incorporated, which is a big bonus
- xvii. Will never be able to satisfy everyone bt the plan has great elements
- xviii. Recognition of what Mullin and MFC committee has accomplished
- xix. Positive place to bring elements of Acton's history, agriculture and nature together
- xx. Bonding rates are very low at this point and should take advantage of this
- xxi. Something needs to be done with the house one way or the other
- xxii. Fits in with Acton 2020 goals

Aside: Kabakoff asked if CPC expects to be ready to be in front of Finance Committee of March 5 with final recommendations as there is only one scheduled CPC meeting between now and then. Yes.

- 3. NARA Picnic Pavilion: Committee round table
  - a. This has been a long time in coming
  - b. Will generate revenues
  - c. Is this the best value that can be gotten for something that isn't even 4 season
  - d. Architecture is different than what is already there
  - e. Current tents are used up; project is needed
  - f. 4 season probably not a great use
  - g. Seems very expensive - \$480,000 with the previous money that has been allocated and committed
  - h. Design Review Board had some comments that if structure was not post and beam it might be cheaper
  - i. BoS did rank this #1

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- j. Previously allocated money will stay allocated unless the Town actually pulls the project; there is not a time limit when funds will come back to CPC.
4. Open Space Funding: Committee round table
    - a. seems right
    - b. Has recently been about this amount every year
    - c. May need to take money from here to fund another project
    - d. Bonding is a possibility to buy land; may be more than one project out there
  5. Arboretum Wildflower Boardwalk: Committee round table
    - a. Like it
    - b. Good value
  6. Street Scapes: Committee round table
    - a. Like it
    - b. Dean Charter has done a good job in the past in looking for deals to stretch the funds
  7. Preservation Loan Program: Committee round table
    - a. Sghia-Hughes provided an update: none of the questions that had been raised (such as mechanisms and costs) have been addressed. This has been a 2 year effort but there does not seem to be a viable plan to bring to Town Meeting
    - b. Should also look to the Arlington experience and how that may or may not apply
  8. NARA Comfort Station: Committee round table
    - a. A useful thing for a small amount of money
    - b. Essential for NARA, especially Miracle Field
    - c. In general presentation, multiple use of storage area and concessions tand should be stressed
    - d. Lesson learned – would have been good if it had been realized when Miracle Field was being designed that this would be a need
    - e. Lesson learned – NARA might benefit from a master plan for item such as this and Picnic Pavilion
  9. Elm Street Playground and Tennis Courts: Committee round table
    - a. Re-using equipment for cost savings is a plus
    - b. Heavily used area
    - c. Need to improve what is there
    - d. Reaches out to a constituency that CPA doesn't often get to help
    - e. Tennis courts need repair or they will just get worse and cost more to repair

10. CPA Program Support: Committee round table
  - a. General all in support
  
11. West Acton Baptist Church (WABP) Belfry and WABC Master Plan: Committee round table
  - a. General all in support of Belfry
  - b. Some question as to Master Plan and funding used to consider building programming
  - c. Under CPA, "Rehabilitation" does allow re-use of facility for current uses, which would need to consider how facility will be used, so is an appropriate way to use CPA funds
  
12. Sachem Way Siding Replacement: Committee round table
  - a. Sghia-Hughes provided update: Housing Committee had not been able to meet before filing with CPC; clear first choice is Alternative 1, which would be the most expensive. Had requested \$203,000, but now need +/- \$345,000
  - b. Preferred Alternative is much more durable
  - c. State would have required this material use if they were funding this
  - d. State does not have available funds to make up the difference
  - e. Town Counsel had indicated that we should make it clear that this is not a maintenance project
  
13. Administrative Updates
  - a. Next meeting – come in with spreadsheets filled out
  - b. Question – does Morrison Farm expenses include demolition of the barn (not eligible for CPA funds)? Mullin was aware that those costs should not be included; need to confirm; Most recent costs did include \$30,000 to cover bond expenses
  - c. Discussion of whether or not an additional meeting is required and when warrants must be written; will keep to current meeting schedule

Foster moved to adjourn; Roman-Kreuzer seconded; all in favor

Meeting adjourned 9:55 pm