

**Minutes**  
**Town of Acton Community Preservation Committee**  
**November 20, 2014**  
**Acton Memorial Library**

Members Present: Peter Ashton (Chair)\*, Peter Berry, Tory Beyer, Walter Foster, Amy Green (Vice Chair), Susan Mitchell-Hardt, Ken Sghia-Hughes, Joe Will (Clerk)

Others Present: Kristen Guichard (Acton Assistant Planner), Roland Bourdon (Finance Committee observer)

\*Peter A attended via cell speakerphone. Amy chaired the meeting. Two motions were voted by roll call. Tory brought cookies.

Amy opened the meeting at 7:33 PM.

**I. Minutes of October 9, 2014**

It was moved, seconded, and voted unanimously to approve the minutes as presented.

**II. CPA account balance**

- \$833,837.00 from Town CPA surcharge; \$263,941.00 from State match; \$21,469.00 interest earned in FY14, plus \$2,454.53 General Fund balance results in FY15 Fund balance of \$1,121,701.53.
- At another point in this meeting, Joe questioned whether the Fund should try to recapture the \$69K approved several years ago for improvements at the School Street playing fields. Kristen will check with Tom Tidman or Cathy Fochtman on this.

**III. Tally of project applications**

- Kim Gorman, Planning Secretary, prepared a spreadsheet and other information related to CPA applications for 2014. Kristen shared Kim's packet of information with the CPC.
- There are 14 applications plus an Administrative Support request from the Town Manager.
- There is nothing related to the Wright Hill purchase debt service (something that we will have to keep track of each year). Peter A estimates that it will be ~\$65K per year. Should it come from the Open Space set aside or be appropriated each year? We don't know. We will see when we review all applications.

**IV. Preliminary review & discussion of project applications**

There was a brief introduction of each project.

- Open space Set Aside (\$400K) is what it's been the last couple years.
- Community Housing Program Fund (\$150K) is a "pretty typical request," like last year's.
- Assabet River Rail Trail (ARRT) Easement Acquisition (\$160K) would be mainly targeted for the permanent easement in front of the Beacon building, but some temporary easements will also cost \$. A discussion ensued about the history of ARRT easements, bases for the current request, and the process for going forward.
- Discovery Museums (~\$177K) for Discovery Woods and Creativity Playscape.

- Acton Woman's Club (AWC) (\$70K) to complete a project, purposely underfunded by the CPC last year so that the AWC could seek additional funds from another source. That effort was unsuccessful, but because the completion of Phase 1 this year better defined the remaining needs, the Phase 2 amount requested this year is less than the shortfall of last year's award.
- Acton Housing Authority (AHA) (\$35K) to hire a consultant to study current situations in Town in an effort to get additional affordable housing.
- Acton Historical Commission (AHC) (\$7K) to fund steps for listing Forest Cemetery in North Acton on the National Register of Historic Places.
- Acton Department of Natural Resources (~\$52K) for irrigation wells at the Acton Arboretum and the Morrison Farm Community Gardens. Cost savings from two new wells should be evident as last year's Morrison Farm water bill was \$800 and the new systems would each have an expected life of 50 years.
- Acton Department of Natural Resources (\$36K, \$12K for each of three years) for removal of invasive water chestnuts from two sites. Would such a project be eligible for CPA funds? Yes, as other towns have funded like projects.
- Acton Department of Natural Resources (~\$25K) for replacement of the Fern Boardwalk and removal of some trees at the Arboretum, with some funding/work leveraged through different sources. A discussion ensued on the toxicity associated with black walnut trees.
- Acton-Boxborough Regional Schools (ABRS) (~\$132K) for Nature Play Spaces. Committee members could see the concept realized (but in much grander manner) at the Ripley School in Concord by visiting in person or reading about it on Facebook or the Ripley School Website.
- Acton Recreation Department (\$105K) for a restroom to serve the new NARA Picnic Pavilion. Question: NARA fees could include \$s for restrooms, so how much leverage would Recreation Department provide for this project as the restrooms could help NARA make even more \$ with a more attractive property?
- Acton Recreation Department (\$160K) for Phase 2 of the Skatepark expansion, a 4,000 ft<sup>2</sup> Skate Plaza.
- Acton Recreation Department (~\$21K) for safety improvements at NARA in the form of barrier gates at both ends of the road that connects the lower and upper parking lots. Joe pointed out that recommended safety improvements, as the project had been presented to the Acton Board of Selectmen (BOS), included a solar lighting plan for the parking lots. The BOS had ranked this more ambitious project #2 in its prioritization of Town projects submitted to the CPC.
- Administrative support (~\$75K): Kristen detailed the work that Town staff does in support of the CPA in Acton.

## **V. Set project review schedule**

- Kristen will provide an updated spreadsheet showing a schedule for CPA Project reviews by the CPC.
- It was noted that Town Counsel (TC) will be reviewing the projects in conjunction with the schedule. Walter suggested, and the Committee agreed, that we could economize on the TC review process by just sending the questionable ones to TC. An example of a project that is not questionable, because it has been approved many

times in the past, is the Open Space Set Aside. The CPC determined that the projects needing Town Counsel review are those of the Discovery Museums, the Acton Woman's Club (the proposal contains some "new stuff"), the NARA Picnic Pavilion Restrooms, and the NARA Safety Improvements. (It was noted that TC has already given a recommendation that the Invasive project is eligible.)

**VI. Assign project liaisons**

- Kristen's updated spreadsheet will include project liaisons.

**VII. Administrative update**

- none

8:50 PM — It was moved, seconded, and voted unanimously to adjourn.

**Dates:**

- 12/04/14 CPC Meeting (Library)  
(7:35 Open Space, 7:50 AHA, 8:10 Community Housing, 8:30 ARRT)
- 12/18/14 CPC Meeting (Library)  
(7:35 AHC, 7:45 Wells, Boardwalk, Invasives; order tbd by Natural Resources)
- 01/08/15 CPC Meeting (Library)  
(7:35 AWC, 7:55 ABRS, 8:15 Discovery Museums)
- 01/15/15 CPC Meeting (Library)  
(7:35 NARA Restroom, NARA Safety, Skate Plaza; order tbd by Rec Dept)
- 01/22/15 CPC Meeting (Library)  
(7:35 Administrative support)