

Minutes
Town of Acton Community Preservation Committee
December 04, 2014
Acton Memorial Library

Members Present: Peter Ashton (Chair), Peter Berry, Tory Beyer, Amy Green (Vice Chair; arrived at 8:18 with the start of the Community Housing presentation), Susan Mitchell-Hardt, Ken Sghia-Hughes, Joe Will (Clerk)

Others Present: Roland Bartl (Acton Planning Director), Roland Bourdon (Finance Committee observer), Kelley Cronin (Acton Housing Authority Executive Director), Nancy Tavernier (Acton Community Housing Corporation Chair)

Peter A (w/cookies) opened the meeting at 7:34 PM.

I. Minutes of November 20, 2014

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

II. Project Hearings

- Open Space Set-Aside Fund, \$400,000
(Town of Acton, Open Space Committee (OSC))

Peter A filled in for Andy Magee, OSC Chair, who had a conflict. Peter reviewed with slides what the OSC recommended at its November meeting and detailed in its application.

- It still is not known what the Wright Hill parcel acquisition debt service (from the Open Space set aside) will be. The Town may include the Wright Hill long-term bonding as part of a bonding package that would be voted at the April Town Meeting.
- A slide of the December OSC agenda listed open space preservation opportunities that could occur in the next 6–18 months. The list did not include three of the top five parcels on the OSC’s priority list.
- Roland Bartl asked whether it’s time to think about increasing the CPA property-tax surcharge. Kristen Guichard ran the numbers to estimate how much additional we would have received from the state match with a doubling of the surcharge from the current 1.5% to 3% — about \$100K. The Committee suggested that this would be a good topic for a future meeting.
- Roland Bartl said that the Acton 2020 Committee has discussed the idea of setting up a fund outside of the CPA for land purchases. One possible advantage of this would be acquisition of land in smaller environments, e.g., for pocket parks.
- Ken pointed out that donations can be made to the set-aside fund.

- Affordable Housing Consultant/Project Feasibility Study, \$35,000
(Acton Housing Authority (AHA))

Kelley described the AHA and shared a handout of the current state of affordable housing in Acton. She reviewed with slides what the AHA detailed in its application.

- The amount requested is based on costs for similar past services.

- The AHA will allow the CPC to review its RFP for hiring a consultant.
- A discussion ensued on what is possible with public housing, related costs, and results possible from a consultant’s findings.

- Community Housing Program Fund, \$150,000
(Acton Community Housing Corporation (ACHC))

Nancy reviewed with slides what the ACHC detailed in its application, including fund-support for development of a Housing Production Plan (HPP) by June 2015.

- The Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) will help towns prepare a HPP. The MAPC has a “wonderful” website, www.housing.ma.

- There will be a HPP public forum Thursday, 12/11, 7–9:30, in Town Hall Room 204.

- Nancy will be meeting with the Historic District Commission (HDC) to discuss possible common interests of the ACHC and the HDC, e.g., the possibility of adapting the inside of a large, historic home for use by more than one family.

- Nancy thanks the CPC for its past support and generosity.

- Assabet River Rail Trail Easement Acquisitions, \$160,000
(Town of Acton)

Roland Bartl reviewed with slides what the Town detailed in its application.

- The Town today authorized Avery Associates to do appraisals for budgeting purposes. The appraisals are due by mid-January. It is hoped that they will fall into the \$160K–\$211K range.

- Roland will provide the CPC with final “worst case” dollar estimates by mid-January. The Town will try its best in negotiating the easements, and then will turn back to the CPC the \$ that are not needed.

- The Town expects to start conversations with property owners in February 2015. All easement acquisitions must be completed by August 2015.

- The ARRT is complete through Marlborough and Hudson. Acton is the “lead” for the Acton and Maynard portions. Progress in Stow is indeterminate. To bypass some possible resistance in Stow, there is conversation about a possible alternate route involving the Assabet River National Wildlife Refuge.

- An easement sought from the MBTA near the South Acton train station could evolve into shared parking for the Town (weekends for ARRT users) and the MBTA (weekdays for commuters).

- If all goes well, the Acton portion of the ARRT could be completed late winter or early spring 2016, one year after completion of the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail.

III. Administrative updates

- There are schedule changes for upcoming meetings. See chart from Roland, or see listing below.

- Is everyone comfortable with 3 days scheduled for deliberations (last year we needed 2)? We could add 02/05 for deliberations. Per Roland Bartl, if we have to have another meeting, we’ll find something.

- The Recreation Department is turning back the funds designated in 2007 for School Street ball fields.

- The Rec Department’s deletion of solar lighting from its “Safety” bid for NARA may be in response to the suggestion by Selectman Mike Gowing that NARA tie into the town grid that is supplied by the solar project at the Transfer Station.
- Will the Committee get a presentation on administrative support? We did get a breakdown at the last meeting. Also, it’s in DocuShare.
- Peter A points out that the private interests involved with Wright Hill owe us a reckoning on the sale of part of the property. Franny Osman expects that the CPC will be getting something back. Peter will keep bugging Franny on this.

9:16 PM — It was moved, seconded, and voted unanimously to adjourn.

Note: At this meeting, Roland Bartl also distributed a handout showing Town Counsel opinions on previous-year applications that are quite similar to this year’s applications. This is follow-up to a discussion at the 11/20/14 meeting regarding the possibility of not submitting for Counsel review any of the current applications that are similar to Counsel-approved applications of prior years. See the 11/20/14 minutes.

Dates:

- 12/18/14 CPC Meeting (Library), Project Hearings
(7:35 Wells, Boardwalk, Invasives; order tbd by Natural Resources; 8:15 AWC)
- 01/08/15 CPC Meeting (Library), Project Hearings
(7:35 ABRS, 7:55 AHC, 8:15 Discovery Museums)
- 01/15/15 CPC Meeting (Library), Project Hearings
(7:35 NARA Restroom, NARA Safety, Skate Plaza; order tbd by Rec Dept)
- 01/22/15 CPC Meeting (Library), 7:35 Administrative Support, then deliberations
- 02/12/15 CPC Meeting (Library), deliberations
- 02/26/15 CPC Meeting (Library), deliberations
- 03/12/15 CPC Meeting (Library), Town Meeting prep
- 03/26/15 CPC Meeting (Library), Town Meeting prep
- 04/06/15 Town Meeting (ABRHS)