

MEETING MINUTES

Town of Acton Community Preservation Committee

February 4, 2010
Acton Town Hall, Room 204

Attending: Doré Hunter, Tory Beyer, Ron Schlegel, Jon Benson, Susan Mitchell-Hardt, Walter Foster, Corrina Roman-Kreuze, Mike Gowing, Ken Sghia-Hughes, Roland Bourdon, Janet Adachi, Roland Bartl, Town Planner. Also present was Steve Noone (Finance Committee Observer),

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Jon Benson at 7:32 p.m.

- I. Approval of 1/21/2010 Minutes. The minutes of 1/21/2010 were approved.
- II. Proposal: Open Space Acquisition and Preservation Fund – Draft Policy on Purpose, Permissible Uses, Procedures. Committee members discussed the draft that Peter Ashton, Chairman of the Open Space Committee (OSC), had prepared and the OSC had approved. Mr. Ashton explained that the proposed policy was similar to the policy for the Acton Community Housing Corporation fund, but with the Board of Selectmen (BOS) rather than the Town Manager authorized to approve fund withdrawals. Committee members agreed to delay further discussion until Town Counsel had reviewed and commented on the draft.
- III. Proposal: Test House – Supplemental Material. Committee members reviewed and discussed the February 3 material from the Acton Historical Commission providing additional movers' bids, and the February 4 memorandum from Doug Halley, Acton Board of Health Director, about the proposed use of the Test House for storage of emergency supplies.
- IV. Recapture of Appropriations. Roland Bartl reported that \$320 in unused monies from the 2008 set-aside to for direct expenses--principally the cost of signs for Community Preservation Act (CPA)-funded projects—would be returned to the general CPA fund. The Planning Department still has 11 unused signs in the office, so there is no need to buy more.
- V. Discussion of Recommended Project Funding Levels. Committee members expressed unanimous support for full funding of all proposals except the following:
 - A. Open Space Purchase – Caouette Land. The proposed purchase still is under negotiation. The Board of Selectmen will discuss the proposed purchase at its next meeting.
 - B. Theatre III – Assessment of Preservation Needs. Nine members recommended full funding; two recommended no funding.

- C. Windsor Building Restoration. Three members recommended full funding; eight members recommended partial funding of \$50,000 - \$75,000 to cover the cost of simply preserving the building. Dean Charter, Acton Municipal Properties Director, reported that he and Doug Tindal of the Finance Committee had agreed that funding of \$70,200 would be reasonable; the slightly large amount would cover the cost of the hinged garage doors plus an eight percent (8%) contingency. Mr. Charter said that the interior would remain unsuitable for meetings but, with the hinged doors open, would be useful for casual, “street” events and would be handicapped-accessible. Committee members unanimously supported funding of \$70,200.
- D. 468 Main Street Windows. Two members recommended full funding; one member recommended one-half funding of \$10,000 to replace the second-floor windows that were in poor condition; eight members recommended no funding. Mr. Charter said that the second-floor windows were leaking air and water, in addition to being historically incorrect, and that replacing them would cost \$7,480. Committee members unanimously supported funding of \$8,000.
- E. Town Hall Windows. Four members recommended full funding; seven recommended no funding. Mr. Charter said that the motivation for replacing aluminum storm windows with wooden ones was historic preservation rather than energy-efficiency, as well as making the windows more usable for employees. He could do the project in two stages, completing the work on the first floor (the historic ground floor below Room 204) in one year, and the work on the second floor in another year. The first-floor windows are smaller and would not require staging, so the two-stage cost-split could be 40%-60%.
- F. Test House Relocation. Four members recommended full funding; seven members recommended no funding. Committee members expressed a range of opinions: that a delay in funding would be a delay forever; that saving the building would be nice in an ideal world but made no economic sense; that the siding might not be original; that using CPA funds to save the house would only lead to the need for more CPA funding for windows and the like; that moving the house would make more sense if the aim were the historicization” of Old High Street, which was unlikely.

Anne Forbes of the Historic District Commission said that the Test House was a valuable, unique historic property, though it had been altered, and was part of a powder mill area that had been significant for 150 years. She understood the difficulty of the Town’s potentially owning and having to maintain such a small building. She asked whether the house might be leased in the new proposed location, for example, as a small workshop. Doré explained that Doug Halley was hoping to avoid having to provide utilities in the building. Roland Bartl said that Old High Street was zoned commercial and leasing to a private party would require the addition of parking, improvements and other complications though those could conceivably be worked out.

G. Bruce Freeman Rail Trail. One member did not participate in the voting; ten members recommended full funding.

The next meeting will be on February 25th, 2010, 7:30 p.m. The warrant article must be final by the end of February. The Committee will discuss the two remaining proposals as to which the preliminary voting is divided, and conclude the final vote on the 2010 proposals.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:55 p.m.

- Janet Adachi, Clerk