

Minutes for CPC Meeting of 12/1/05, 7:30 pm – 9:30 pm, Acton Memorial Library

Attending:

Peter Berry, Tory Beyer, Catherine Coleman, Matt Lundberg, Andy Magee, Susan Mitchell-Hardt, Ken Sghia-Hughes, Ed Starzec, Nancy Tavernier, Roland Bartl

Absent:

Walter Foster

Matt opened the meeting at 7:30pm.



Application Presentations:

HABITAT FOR HUMANITY (HFH) HOME DEVELOPMENT

Bill Schumacher and Megan Foley represented Habitat for the presentation. A handout of the presentation was given to each member of the CPC. As part of the presentation, Mr. Schumacher stated that the estimated cash costs for the project has increased to \$100,000. In response to questions from the Committee members, the following information was provided:

- With regard to selection of the partnering family, HFH considers the need for housing (e.g. issues of safety or sub-standard housing), the ability of the family to pay (i.e. do they have a steady income and are they responsible), and the willingness of the family to partner (i.e. to work on the house).
- The selection process is open to anyone in the State.
- Design and legal services are usually donated for HFH houses.
- A suggestion was made to investigate the possibility of donated materials from Acton businesses in the modular home industry.
- Regarding possibly non-conformance of a potential lot, the applicant stated HFH may need a variance for wetlands setback (may be 5' over), as well as frontage (have 125' vs. 150' required) and possibly lot size (marginally okay). Andy stated that obtaining a wetlands setback variance for new construction would be difficult and stressed the need to talk to the Conservation Commission about this issue.
- Location of potential lot in North Acton is good. The unit would fit in well with the surrounding neighborhood.
- The comment was made that a Town-owned lot would be nominal cost, but would require Town meeting approval to allow transaction.
- Total cash budget is \$100,000, exclusive of donated services, materials, and labor.
- HFH considering using a "friendly" 40B process so that variances are easier (simpler) to get. There was some discussion on the Committee as to whether or not a 40B process would be simpler or faster.
- HFH is agreeable to having funds granted contingent on obtaining a lot and proper permits in place.
- Recommendation was made to have the affordable restriction be written for "in perpetuity".

ACTON COMMUNITY HOUSING CORPORATION (ACHC) WILLOW-CENTRAL STREET

Nancy Tavernier represented the ACHC for the presentation. Following the presentation, the following information was provided in response to questions from Committee members:

- Regarding whether HFH could build the single family unit, Nancy believed it would be too difficult legally and logistically to have 2 developers on one single lot.
- The lot cannot be sub-divided, since that would make both subsequent lots non-complying.
- The ACHC considered using its money from the fund established with last year's CPC money, but the cost is simply too high. The fund would be exhausted by this single project.
- Trying to find State funds to purchase the lot would take too long. The interest on the back taxes owed on the lot is continuing to accrue so that any extra delay means more cost to acquire lot.

ACHC is confident that it will secure the additional funds to make up the difference in costs. One source is the \$400,000 donation to the Town for affordable housing from Pulte.

- The pro forma was put together by Ryan Bettez and does include the standard "fees" for developer's costs

ACTON HOUSING AUTHORITY (AHA) McCARTHY VILLAGE

Kelley Cronin presented the application for the AHA. A site plan for the project was distributed to Committee members. After a brief review of the project history, the following information was provided in response to questions from Committee members:

- The AHA could potentially get some pro bono services for the project.
- The volleyball play area could be eliminated from the plan, saving up to \$9,000.
- The AHA will not ask for more money for this project after this round of funding.
- Had concerns around the bidding issue with the project coming back.

ACTON HOUSING AUTHORITY HOUSING DEVELOPMENT STUDY

Kelley Cronin represented the AHA for the Housing Development Study to formulate recommendations for increasing the affordable housing supply, especially in light of the recent changes in State regulations regarding local housing authorities. The following information was provided in regard to the application:

- The AHA is confident that it will be able to fund such a study for \$25,000. The AHA has already talked to a consultant about the effort required and might be able to negotiate a reduced rate.

- The AHA is not necessarily looking to be a developer. The recommendation could be to purchase more condominiums, for example.
- The study would be put out to bid, probably in 2 separate proposals, one for the development study, and one for financing.
- Potential sources of funding for housing projects recommended by this study include the State Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD), CPA funds, and tax credits. The study would also look at other potential sources of funding.
- The comment was made by a Committee member that he would rather fund a resulting project than the study leading to the project.
- The AHA can make the final report available to the public or present it to the public.
- The AHA would write the RFP, with possible help from the Massachusetts Housing Partnership (MHP)
- Committee members expressed a desire to see more detail, along the lines of an RFP, for the scope of the proposed study, especially before Town Meeting.

Approval of Minutes—The minutes of 11/17/05 were approved unanimously.

The Committee scheduled a site visit to the Historic Stone Chamber for December 11, 2005. All those attending will meet at the Monument Company on Main Street in North Acton at 10:30am. The site visit will be posted by Roland, since a quorum of members is expected to be present.

A comment was made and discussed that the Committee should be deliberate in adding wording to the Town Meeting Warrant Articles to include any additional requirements and changes to proposed projects so that they are properly documented in the articles that are passed. Alternatively, the CPC can write an M.O.U. to which the applicant can refer.

Roland informed the Committee that Town Counsel has been instructed to review the appropriate applications, to be accessed directly from the Town website.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:30pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Ken Sghia-Hughes, Clerk
Community Preservation Committee