

Minutes
Town of Acton Community Preservation Committee
January 22, 2015
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: Roland Bartl (Acton Planning Director)
(Roland Bourdon sent a note that he was unable to attend due to illness.)

Peter A opened the meeting at 7:34 PM.

I. Minutes of January 15, 2015

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

II. Committee Deliberations on Project Requests and Recommendations

Roland reviewed the funding situation. There is a gap of about \$440K between \$ available and \$ applied for.

- Historic Preservation requests do not reach the required minimum amount, so some \$ for HP should go into a set-aside
- The amount requested for the Assabet River Rail Trail is increased to \$169K per Roland's recent email update.
- The spreadsheet now shows the Wright Hill \$7K debt service (but that would be coming out of the OS set-aside). The amount is based on a Steve Barrett estimate. The final amount won't be known (although the \$7K is firm for this year) until the Town gets a bonding package together, and that could improve the debt service cost.

The Committee then reviewed applications and offered opinions, project by project. Roland and Joe kept notes that are available in a "Projects Discussion" file prepared by Roland with input from Joe.

III. Administrative updates

The Fin Com has scheduled our appearance before it for Wednesday 03/04. Peter A says the meeting should be on a Tuesday, so the correct date is likely 03/03.

9:35 PM — It was moved, seconded, and voted unanimously to adjourn.

Dates:

02/12/15 CPC Meeting (Town Hall – Faulkner Room), 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)

Please view the "1-22 Projects Discussion Notes" at
<http://doc.acton-ma.gov/dsweb/View/Collection-6613/Document-49265>

Approved: 2/12/15

CPC – 1/22/15; projects discussion

AHA – project feasibility study

Preparation for another housing project

Housing projects take a long time to plan and materialize

No particular site in mind at this time

ACHC – Community Housing Program Fund

Skipped one previous year

The AHA and ACHC requests are \$75K+/- over the required CH minimum.

Continued support for the program important

AHA & ACHC work a lot together, although there is no overlap of the AHA project with ACHC work

Some of the ACHC funding goes towards strategic planning

Did not fund full amount requested last year

ToA – Forest Cemetery

Has Civil War burials in it

Goal would be to inventory all three Acton cemeteries eventually

Relatively small project

Add more for contingency! \$10,000! And reduce set-aside, which otherwise would be about \$33,000.

Cemetery Commissioners now on board

What does the CPC get out of this? More visibility and the highlighting of the Forest Cemetery as a historically significant resource

AWC – Phase 2 preservation / accessibility

Give the AWC credit for trying to get other funding even though the efforts did not succeed

Now trying to finish the project

AWC is a vibrant part of the community. It's a good organization and a good steward of the historic building. This is a good, well thought-out project

Funding would complete project. In fact, the AWC thought we might get back some of the requested amount

ToA - Open Space Set-Aside

400K is right number, but since there is a funding shortfall, this is an obvious place where we can reduce an amount

But not too dramatic a reduction

Bonding is always an option for open space acquisitions

Requested amount is +/-1/3 of available funding

ToA – Arboretum Fern Boardwalk/Tree Removal

Main expense would be boardwalk

Boardwalk condition is a safety concern

Wood is rotting

Needs updating for handicapped accessibility

Community leverage about \$1,500

Arboretum is important part of town

No votes in favor of this project by BoS members does not necessarily mean they are opposed

Are, say, NARA security gates more in line with CPA purposes than a boardwalk?

Could tree removal be excluded (except the failing maple would have to go)? Tree removal is only \$2850 of the amount requested.

Couldn't sell the timber but could use it for other future projects

ToA – Water Chestnut Removal

Could we fund just one pond? There is cost savings in doing both ponds at same time.

Would waiting a year make difference?

Need to make three sweeps in consecutive years.

A three-year contract would guarantee the cost as proposed

If funded one year at a time, cost increases, if any, would be funded by Nat. Resources.

Amy will double check on dealing with one year at a time.

ToA – Irrigation well Arboretum

Good case made for need

AWD funding support

More-needed immediately (than Morrison Farm)

ToA – Irrigation well Morrison Farm

Difficult to irrigate gardens from farmhouse

AWD funding support

If house becomes occupied, the house can no longer be the water source

Less-needed immediately (than Arboretum)

Concern about location of well where the overall plan for the Morrison property is not completed at this time? How will it fit in?

Could put this off another year, but it was put off last year

ABRS – Nature Play Spaces (includes some comment on Children's Discovery Museum (CDM) project)

Design work funded last year is done

Sites at 4 elementary schools

ABRS anxious to go forward. The application says that all 4 of these would be done in the summer of '15.

Can they really do all four in one year? The schools are reliable for doing work promptly (compared to Town projects).

If funding is shorter than requested, they would phase in on each site rather than develop one or two sites initially.

Couldn't the schools do two sites properly and have the next two come out even better?

One year's funding does not / cannot commit any future funding awards

The total requested by ABRS and CDM is a lot of money for one type of recreation area.

Fund CDM creative playscape first and learn from it

The schools started first. If we fund CDM first to learn from it and it's not finished until spring '17, we would be putting off the schools for a long time.

Funding last year's design signaled a commitment, maybe. It's appealing that it's leveraged at 4 different places. The schools are talking to the PTSOs this month and next. Also, the schools could perhaps help fund some out of their budget.

If we would give the schools, say, \$25K, that would be a problem. Give them more, but not enough that they couldn't resist raising more.

Do we whittle down the schools' dollars and have them scramble to get more, or do we fully fund and have other projects come back to us next year?

Nature play spaces at schools would impact more families. CDM play spaces would be fancier but it's more of a private place. Opposite view: CDM would serve more people than school play spaces would.

The school project would be on public land as opposed to the CDM project

Locations of proposed play spaces at some of the schools seem problematic, but this is due to individual school situations.

Morrison farm has been discussed as a nature play space location, also

CDM – Discovery Woods/Creative Playscape

CDM project wouldn't start until next year. Maybe we could partially fund the CDM and fund both projects. The CDM funding could be split up

CPA funding is part of a match for bigger grant to the CDM – there is end-of-year deadline for getting the match, \$3M

Much more leverage than ABRS project

Connection to Great Hill is a big plus

Legal: has conditional "YES"; suggests conservation restriction and/or public access easement. CR would cost \$20K, or so.

ToA – ARRT

Fully fund (at expense of Open Space) and require turn backs go into Open Space?

Ask if other Town funds can be brought to bear? Roland has \$70K or so left from the 2004 appropriation. He also has not more than \$15K given to the Town for sidewalk and bikeway improvements (one in \$7K range for ARRT; another for BFRT).

Wheeling and dealing on easement acquisitions is no longer allowed. We can only offer full payment. If someone wants to accept less, it has to be of their free will. If someone wants to donate an easement, there is a donation form, no matter the easement cost. We can't split cost between a donation and payment.

Is it possible to simply transfer the easement on the Anderson/Wedgewood property from the back to the front? Roland will inquire, but can't push too hard. This would be a BoS matter as well.

It is not feasible to bring the Bike Trail out to Main Street at Sylvia Street.

ToA – NARA safety improvements

Police Chief is concerned about the safety issue (night trespass, hot rodding).

Expensive solution. A chain would work.

ToA – NARA pavilion restroom

Need to look at other/cheaper options?

This can be paid for out of pavilion-use fees. The Rec Comm should review its rate structure, make adjustments, and use a revolving account. At the very least, it can include the capital cost of a restroom immediately.

How does this fit into the Master Plan for NARA? Is something like this symptomatic of what's happening to NARA.

Check on whether this can be funded if use restricted to pavilion renters only.

ToA – O'Grady Skate Park ph. 2/skate plaza

Most worthy of rec. projects to finally get it done

Best thought-out plan/concept so far.

Who will really monitor the facility?

It would be good for the Rec Dept to have a plan for its use. Right now it's a trap for graffiti and trash.

Boxborough must fund their share (40K of the 160K requested)

ToA – Admin. Funding

Fund it

Is this retroactive for the past year? No, it's for the coming year. This year we should be using less for legal services.