

Minutes
Town of Acton Community Preservation Committee (CPC)
February 16, 2017
Acton Town Hall Room 204

Members Present: Bill Alesbury (Vice-Chair), Peter Berry, Tory Beyer, Dean Charter (Associate), Walter Foster (Chair), Amy Green, Susan Mitchell-Hardt, Carolyn Kirkpatrick (Associate), Ken Sghia-Hughes, Joe Will (Clerk), Ray Yacouby

Others Present: Roland Bourdon (Acton Finance Committee), Cathy Fochtman (Acton Recreation Director), Kristen Guichard (Acton Assistant Planner), Tom Tidman (Acton Natural Resources Director)

Walter opened the meeting at 7:30 PM. Tory brought cupcakes to honor Ken whose last meeting will be next week. Note that the 02/09 meeting was cancelled due to weather.

I. Citizen Concerns

- none

II. Minutes of January 26, 2017

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

III. Recreation Department – Project Updates

- NARA Picnic Pavilion Restrooms

In response to CPC observations from the previous meeting on the possibility of increasing the proposed number of restrooms from two to four, Cathy shared information on such a larger facility. The price for the larger facility would be \$232,500, compared to \$155K requested for the smaller facility. Cathy pointed out that one bathroom unit per 100 attendees to a Pavilion event is standard, and Recreation and Natural Resources would be comfortable with a two-unit structure.

- NARA Parking

Tom shared an updated visual on the proposed new Upper Parking Lot. Instead of vehicle access being limited to the east end (requiring challenging turns-around when the lot is full), the new lot plan now allows egress at the west end. Related consequences of the new design include 24 parking spaces instead of 20 and also a change in providing access to playing-field parking for crowded events. Cost for the reconfigured lot would be unchanged from the cost for the original lot.

- Skate Park

Per Walter, the Chair of the Boxborough Recreation Commission is willing to give another try to having Boxborough fund in 2017 a portion of the Skate Plaza.

Boxborough Town Meeting 2016 had turned down a \$40K proposal that, together with \$135K Acton CPA funding, would have allowed for completion of the Skate Plaza — the last “piece” of the Skate Park.

IV. Acton Community Housing Corporation (ACHC) – New Initiatives

- Re CPC concerns on the ACHC reference to unspecified new programs in its proposal for 2017 funds, ACHC Chair Nancy Tavernier agreed that the wording in question (although used in previous applications) could be removed from the proposal as long as the CPC agrees that the deletion does not otherwise diminish the proposal. The CPC so agrees.

V. Project Deliberations

- Peter reviewed the Board of Selectmen prioritization of the six Town proposals. See <http://doc.acton-ma.gov/dsweb/View/Collection-8355/Document-58161>
- Walter pointed out that \$27,808 of CPA funds are needed to fulfill the historic preservation set-aside requirement.
- Kristen pointed out that the Arboretum request has to be categorized as a Recreation project rather than an Open Space project, as the project does not qualify for CPA funding under Open Space requirements.
- The CPC then reviewed the Committee members' suggested project awards with Kristen adjusting members' amounts in an Excel spreadsheet projected overhead.
 - Regional Housing Services Office (RHSO): The CPC agreed to one-year funding (\$25K) rather than the requested two-year funding (\$50K).
 - Morrison Farm Well: The CPC did not reach consensus on this, as some members do not see it as a good investment. Some also expressed concern that the Town still lacks a Master Plan for Morrison Farm.
 - NARA Parking Lots: There appears to be consensus on funding the Upper Parking Lot per the modified plan shared by Tom earlier in this meeting. Funding the Lower Parking Lot was questioned and Committee members are tending to approve funding half (\$25K) the amount requested (\$50K) with the condition that funds be used solely for the Upper Lot. It was pointed out that the current plan for the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail (BFRT) requires some modifications to the existing lower parking lot to provide 11 parking spaces dedicated to BFRT users. The plan for the new Lower Parking Lot would allow the Town to provide 11 dedicated BFRT dedicated spaces without modifying the existing parking lot. Some CPC members question the need for modifying the existing lot at all and would like Cathy to provide the CPC by its next meeting (02/23) with the process and timing for getting the BFRT to approve a change that would give the BFRT 11 dedicated spaces in the existing lot in lieu of BFRT gaining its spaces by modifying the existing lot.
 - NARA Picnic Pavilion Restroom: Consensus reached on funding a two-restroom facility (\$155K) rather than a four-restroom facility (\$233K).
 - Open Space: Consensus reached (\$450K).

No final vote was taken on any award. Consensus has not been reached on two of the projects (Morrison Farm Well and NARA (Lower) Parking Lot), and for the latter the Committee is waiting for more information from Cathy. The Committee was reminded that awards do not require unanimous votes, i.e., the Committee doesn't have to reach consensus on all projects. Also, it was noted that an agreed-upon amount for any project could still change.

A final vote will likely occur at the next meeting, 02/23. Walter will not be here, but will try to attend by phone.

VI. Administrative Updates

- In addition to the 02/23 meeting, the CPC has meetings scheduled for 03/02 and 03/09. Warrant articles (including CPA awards) are due March 8. If Kristen can have a draft of our warrant articles by the 02/23 meeting, with conditional drafts for the Morrison Farm Well and the NARA Parking, then the CPC can approve the articles on 02/23 and it wouldn't have to meet 03/02. The CPC would still meet 03/09 to help Walter finalize his presentation of the CPA awards to Town Meeting.
- The Town Finance Committee has to vote its views on the CPA articles (e.g., to recommend). It has asked Walter to attend its 02/28 evening meeting. Other CPC members are welcome to attend as well to show support for the work of the CPC. Walter will ask for a meeting time slot.
- Walter reported that the Annual Report was sent to Committee members and there was no feedback.
- Peter updated the CPC on the Americans United-Town of Acton litigation re the CPA award to the Acton Congregational Church. The Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court has accepted direct review of the litigation, docket number 2016-P-1675. The American Civil Liberties Union of Massachusetts has filed an amicus brief on the side of Americans United.

9:25 PM — It was moved, seconded, and voted unanimously to adjourn.