

TOWN OF ACTON
Open Space Committee
Minutes
Friday, December 1, 2017
7:30 AM
Acton Town Hall - Room 9

Attendees: Katie Green, Richard Hatfield, Joe Will, Emilie Ying, Matthew Mostoller, Dave Marshall, Will Hill, Terry Maitland, Tom Tidman, Andy Magee, Susan Mitchell-Hardt, Clare Siska, Barbara Epstein.

Recording Secretary: Fran Portante

Issue #1: Vote minutes of October 6 and November 3, 2017.

Dick moved that the minutes of October 6, 2017 be accepted, Terry seconded the motion and it passed unanimously,

Dick moved that the minutes of November 3, 2017 be accepted, Matt seconded the motion and it passed unanimously

Issue #2: Newtown Road – Town Meeting Preparation

Tom and his staff have put a presentation together. Walter Foster will be presenting at Town Meeting in his role as CPC Chair. Andy is prepared to assist as needed. The motion in the Article is to approve \$770K from CPA funds and \$30 from free cash.

ACT has already raised the \$30K to repay the funding gap. Congratulations to Susan!! ACT will be acknowledged for their fundraising at the Town Meeting.

Susan raised the issue that page 11 of the “Power-point” presentation was not accurate or possibly misleading. It illustrates Lot 3 with no frontage. This is likely to raise the question of why the town is paying \$400K for a technically unbuildable lot. In actuality, the narrow easement next to Lot 2 was considered more of a liability to the town to own and maintain. Therefore, while the appraised value was based on 2 buildable lots, the Town agreed, as part of the P&S agreement, to forgo the easement since the land will be protected permanently through the Conservation Restriction.

The P&S agreement reflects the easement across the rear of the property but excludes the frontage easement for Lot 3. It was agreed by all that the presentation at TM must be able to adequately explain this to the attendees. There also needs to be a slight adjustment in the lot size based on the easement reduction.

Issue #3: 2018 CPA Application

\$450K has been requested from CPA funds for this year. Andy will be appearing before the Community Preservation Committee on Dec. 21. He is asking the Open Space Committee to give him permission to adjust the original request to allocate \$420k for the purchase of real property and \$30K for endowment and maintenance, per Acton Conservation Trust.

Terry moved to adjust the request, Dick seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Issue #4: Brief Review as necessary:

53 River Street: Katie reported that, due to slow response from the community in forming the Committee, the BoS is changing the charge. Peter is acting as liaison, not a member. Membership will be adjusted. The Finance committee is looking to OSC for funding recommendations. OSC's position is that: 1. The Committee is willing to support funding of open space improvements to a certain dollar amount as voted previously, but will not provide any recommendations that pertain to housing or other use. 2. The Committee will definitely provide input for open space. It was noted that the OSC did not recommend the purchase of this site solely for open space at the amount asked and paid for.

Quarry Road: no update

6 Piper Lane: Sale of the property is reportedly under agreement, brokered by Omni Properties. The lot is listed at \$795.

Stonefield Farm, Martin St: Discussions continue.

24 Liberty Street: Sale is under agreement. Conjecture is that the purchaser is a horse farmer from Carlisle.

Issue #5: Presentation by Clare Siska, Acton Dog Park Committee

Clare Siska, representing the Acton Dog Park Committee, gave the presentation to the OSC. She noted there were about 2,000 dogs in Acton. Many of these cannot be allowed off-leash. She cited the benefits to the community as well as the dog owners of such a dedicated space. Two major challenges are funding and finding a suitable location. The Dog Park Committee wants to start fund-raising in the spring. Clare asked for support and endorsement from the OSC.

Committee response: The Committee is supportive, but this particular project is not in the purview of the OSC. Will noted that he views the project as supportive of conservation values. A reasonable size for a dog park is about 2 acres and it requires additional space for parking. Great Hill is a popular location for dog owners in South Acton. But it is not necessarily a popular venue for a permanent Dog Park due to use and parking conflicts. Soccer fields increase the traffic and pose access issues. Dog owners don't care for the site since there are parking issues as well. Morrison Farm is not a consideration.

Andy concluded that the OSC is not ready to endorse any action, but is available for consultation and asks to be kept informed.

- **Next Meeting – January 5, 2018, 7:30 AM (Acton Town Hall – Room 9)**

Meeting adjourned: 8:25 AM