

Minutes for the CPC Meeting of Jan. 13, 2005, 7:30 pm-10:45 pm, Library Meeting Room

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TOWN CLERK
ACTION

Attending:

Peter Berry, Walter Foster, Bob Coan, Susan Mitchell-Hardt, Catherine Coleman, Nancy Tavernier, Ken Sghia-Hughes, Andy Magee, Matt Lundberg

Kristin Alexander

Absent:

Stacy Rogers

Audience:

Anne Forbes, Betty McManus, John Murray, Don Johnson Larry Sorli, Dean Charter, Belle Choate, Michaela Moran, Rob Whittlesey

1. Discussion re: Amendments to CPA Bonding Requirements - John Murray, Don Johnson

Mr. Murray recapped the topic. For a full discussion of the issue see John Murray's Interoffice Memo of 12/2/04 to the Board of Selectmen entitled, "Borrowing as Authorized by the CPA, (MGL C 44B)", which was distributed to the CPC. It states that "the Act authorizes the issuance of long term debt, but does not insure or require that debt service be paid from the Town's CPA Fund. In fact, by requiring the issuance of "general obligation bonds" requires the tax base of the Town to be the guarantor.

Mr. Murray proposes getting all the parties together including Treasurers and FinComs to discuss the issue and to fashion the best possible solution. Mr. Murray would like to propose a legislative amendment to the CPA which would allow each town to have the opportunity to choose general obligation bonds or revenue bonds.

(The FinCom voted to oppose any general obligation bonds put together by the CPC).

ACTION: It was agreed that we will ask to have this issue addressed at the Feb. 12, Regional Meeting of CPC's in Wellesley as it is not urgent that we get a legislative amendment passed this year.

ACTION: Susan will ask the Coalition how many CPC's have bonded projects and to have the bonding issue placed on the agenda for the Regional Meeting of CPC's on Feb. 12.

2. Jones Tavern Chimney Stabilization

Larry Sorli, President of Iron Work Farm, described the project. (For details, see the application). He commented that Dave Berquist, a specialist in Masonry Restoration, and former Acton native, gave the quotes which Mr. Sorli believes represent the upper end. The actual cost could be closer to \$30,000.

Iron Work Farm will commit \$2000 from their funds and have raised \$2000 from a letter sent with their Annual Appeal which is still ongoing.

Comments and Questions from the CPC and Mr. Sorli's and Ms. Forbes' replies:

It was commented that the contribution of \$4000 to offset the cost was not mentioned in the application. It was agreed that the applicant will send the CPC a letter announcing the contribution before the final vote on Feb. 10. In one week Walter will advise the applicant about revising the amount of the request.

It was commented that the funding request should match the best estimate of the cost of the project. In other words, given that Mr. Sorli believes that \$30,000 will cover the cost of the project, that would be the appropriate amount to request.

It was commented that a contingency fund should be built into the request.

It was asked where the chimney stabilization fit in to the context of other restoration efforts.

Mr. Sorli commented that financial help will be needed to repair the roof; the house was painted in '98 and two sides need it again.

It was commented that Town Counsel stated that when the tavern roof was reshingled with MHC funds, its owner conveyed a preservation restriction to MHC in connection with the grant. Town Counsel recommended that the CPC should require a similar preservation restriction in exchange for commitment of funds in order to ensure project eligibility.

Ms. Forbes advised that pursuing a second preservation restriction will require deciding who will administer it and whether it will cover the whole project or just the chimney. She learned from Michael Steinitz, the state officer at Mass. Historical Commission to whom one applies for restrictions that any additional PR on the property would be subordinate to the one MHC holds. Ms. Forbes read an email message from Mr. Steinitz explaining MHC's position. She will forward a copy to the committee.

It was commented that the public bid law will apply.

ACTION: Peter Berry will talk to the town and clarify the public bid process as this is the first non-profit applicant; he will also get Town Counsel's opinion.

It was inquired about programming - the hours the Jones Tavern is operated as a museum and how the hours may change over time. It was replied that the house has viewing hours which are expected to increase. For example, they may bring in other area schools such as Maynard. It was added that the Historical Commission is interested and supportive.

3. Town Hall Slate Roof Replacement

The applicant, Dean Charter, explained the project. (See application for description of project).

Comments and Questions from the CPC and the applicant's replies

The project cost summary indicated that "costs might be offset if the existing slate roof is sold to a buyer of used slate." It was asked what the value of used slate was. Dean replied that the value is "iffy" as it depends on whether or not the vendor who takes all materials has a buyer or not.

It was asked if an inflation adjustment for 2005 should be included. Dean replied that it's hard to predict. Ideally they will start in Aug. or Sept. and would like to avoid delaying the start for one year due to inflation.

It was commented that CPA funds are supposed to supplement, not replace, town funds. (Re-roofing Town Hall is in the 4 year capital improvement plan). Dean replied that the 5 year capital plan takes 10 years. (There are roof leaks now). Under normal circumstances Dean would agree, but these are not.

Dean was asked about using asphalt singles.

Dean would consider it, but it goes to the heart of historic preservation. If the town uses asphalt now in this tight budget time, the town will never go back

to slate, and CPA funds couldn't be used. In the long run the slate roof is more cost effective.

The high cost of staging was questioned. Dean explained the complicated nature of the pipe staging justifies the expense.

4. Technical and Administrative Support for Development of Affordable Housing (AHA)

The applicant, Betty McManus for the AHA, explained the project. (See application for description of project). Ideally the support Betty provides to the ACHC would be handled by the Planning Dept. so in that sense the application is from the Town of Acton. The funding will go to the ACHC.

Comments and Questions from the CPC and the applicant's replies

The applicant was asked to clarify her request. Betty replied that the ACHC will need to hire a technical assistant for approx. 2 hr/day, who will get messages, use a computer, and compile papers; technical work will be farmed out. The AHA will need to rent office space as they will lose their's after July and they will need telephone service. They will be able to give the town money from the fund for copying. The \$20,000 might last 2-3 years. The ACHC must audit the financials for Crossroads and Franklin Place. The developers provided funds to cover the audit but this is an important statutory function that has been added to the ACHC.

It was commented that the AHA is a state funded agency created by Town Meeting whereas the ACHC is more like the EDIC, quasi-independent and with a different charter. It doesn't feel right for the CPA to be the savior in this situation. The implication to the town is that it doesn't have to take responsibility.

Nancy Tavernier proposed to increase the Community Housing Program Fund by \$20,000 and to set up a trust fund in lieu of the Affordable Housing Support application.

ACTION: A letter recording these changes will be sent to the CPC.

5. Design and Construction of Recreational Area at McCarthy Village

The applicant, Betty McManus for the AHA, explained the project. (See application for description of project).

Comments and Questions from the CPC and the applicant's replies

It was commented that the budget seemed vague, and it was not clear if there were opportunities for in kind donation.

It was asked if the tenants had been surveyed as to what they would like. Ms. McManus has met with the tenants who indicated they would like tetherball, badminton, and skateboard opportunities.

It was asked if funds could be raised from businesses; Ms. McManus commented that the Housing Authority provided the space as leverage. It was asked if the tenants could provide sweat equity; Ms. McManus was not sure.

6. Meeting Schedule

1/27: 7:30 pm - 8 pm, Discussion of Open Space Set Aside Fund and Set Aside for Admin. Expenses will be followed by brain storming session. (Use flip chart).

It was agreed that next year the Open Space Set Aside Fund will be submitted as a formal proposal

2/3: Initial allocation of funds. (Use stop watch to time comments).

2/10: Final decisions on proposals

2/24: Submit Town Meeting Warrant Article

The CPA proposed Warrant Article will be on the agenda for the BoS meeting of 2/7 and for the FinCom meeting of Feb. 8.

Peter Berry will speak to the FinCom.

Approval of the Minutes of Dec. 2 and 16 was deferred until the next CPC meeting on 1/27.

7. Annual Report

Catherine Coleman will incorporate Andy's edits and send it out.

8. New Business:

- Walter commented that the Morrison Farm Re-Use Committee will meet next Tuesday or Thursday evening.

- Mark Draisene, Executive Director of MAPC, is on the agenda for the BoS meeting on 1/24 where he will discuss MAPC's proposed raid on the CPA Trust funds.

- Re: FOLF, the agreement between the District and Town is finalized. FOLF has fundraised more than \$250,000 and have \$220,000 at hand.

- Habitat for Humanity spoke with the BoS about the town's donating land for their project. The Selectmen were supportive but can't justify giving them a valuable piece of land in this override year; it might not pass at Town Meeting floor.

Jane Shurtleff would like to return to the CPC to amend her proposal to apply for funds to purchase a parcel of land valued at approx. \$200,000 as it is clear that Habitat needs the land first. The original request was for \$35,000; proposals are not usually amended up that dramatically. The CPC expects to receive a letter with a presentation at the next meeting.

Respectfully submitted:

Susan Mitchell-Hardt