

Minutes
Town of Acton Community Preservation Committee (CPC)
December 07, 2017
Acton Memorial Library

Members Present: Bill Alesbury (Vice-Chair), Peter Berry, Tory Beyer, Dean Charter, Walter Foster (Chair), Amy Green, Greg Johnson (Associate), Carolyn Kirkpatrick (Associate), Nancy Kolb, Joe Will (Clerk), Ray Yacouby

Others Present: Kelley Cronin (Acton Housing Authority Executive Director), Dennis J. Dale (Dale Design, Inc., Landscape Architect), Doug Herrick (Acton Historical Society Co-President), Robert Hummel (Acton Assistant Town Planner), Amber Klauer (Acton Historical Society), Bill Klauer (Acton Historical Society Co-President), Hart Millett (Acton Historical Society Treasurer), Nan Towle Millett (Acton Historical Society), Susan Mitchell-Hardt (Acton Conservation Trust President), Kevin O'Brien (Habitat for Humanity North Central Massachusetts Director), Carolyn Read (Habitat for Humanity North Central Massachusetts Executive Director), Nancy Tavernier (Acton Community Housing Corporation Chair)

Walter opened the meeting at 7:30 PM. He welcomed Greg as a new Associate member and noted Dean's step up from Associate to Regular member.

I. Citizen Concerns

- none

II. Special Town Meeting (TM) Wrap-up

- The Newtown Road CPA-funded land purchase passed w/90% approval. Thanks for Andy Magee's help, to Susan Mitchell-Hardt and the Acton Conservation Trust for their wonderful donations, and to all CPC members who were able to be at the TM so late.

III. Project Hearings and Review

- **Development/Acquisition Funds for New Affordable Housing Units – \$75,000**
 - Kelley gave background on the Housing Authority and presented this project. CPC members expressed concern over the use of "project" in the Narrative as it seems to suggest, particularly the last bullet, that there is a specific project for which the requested funds are targeted — a bit of confusion that caused a similar AHA proposal to be turned down at the 2017 TM. Kelley explained that the funding could be for hiring consultants, feasibility studies, site testing, a down payment on a piece of land, engineers, architects, legal help, upfront seed money to leverage other funds, and so on — various costs that would help the AHA with its work. The CPC suggests that the AHA might want to use "initiative" in place of "project" and delete the last bullet. Another possibility is to cite a past project, like the housing on Sachem Way, as an example of how such funds could possibly be used.

- **McCarthy Village Siding and Decking Replacement – \$75,000**

- Kelley also presented this project. The CPC noted the alternative costs in the project documentation (\$158K base bid, \$147K using AZEK decking in lieu of ipe (wood), \$137K using vinyl siding in lieu of fiber cement (along with AZEK decking)). Kelley explained the factors that will affect the final choices. It was noted that leveraging CPA funds is helpful and anything that leverages at least 50% of a project is “great.” Total cost of this project is \$173K, with the State funding the design cost and over half the construction cost. If this project should make it to TM, the specific cost figures and the percentage of leverage can be very helpful, as would be McCarthy Village pictures.

– Hosmer House Campus — Planning Services – \$188,546

- Bill Klauer presented the project for the Acton Historical Society (AHS). It was observed that the project has been prompted in part by the Kelley’s Corner streetscaping initiative and Acton’s Complete Streets program. The CPC generally agreed that making the site a showpiece is a “right use” of CPA funds. One concern is Town Counsel’s suggestion that the proposal address the adherence to Federal preservation standards when it is not clear how these standards would apply to landscaping and other activities not expressly related to an historic building. Another concern is the work (principally tree clearing) that would be done (for \$16K) on adjacent Regional School District (RSD) property. There would have to be a detailed written agreement with the RSD on this and it should be done sooner rather than later to better allow the CPC to award funds for work on land that the project applicant doesn’t own or control. Peter believes that the School Committee would have to vote to allow the proposed work to occur on school property, and some letter to that effect should suffice. There has to be conversation on this with Town staff for more direction, and the CPC will work with the AHS and RSD, on this. Any issues with the RSD and the Town should be cleared up by January or February. A non-concern is the need for historic preservation restrictions as there are already three on the site. Are there any funds available to leverage this project? No, not at this time but the AHS is always looking for whatever leverage might be out there.

– 43-45 School Street, Historical – \$38.650

presented jointly with

43-45 School Street, Housing – \$53,000

- Carolyn Read presented the projects for Habitat for Humanity of North Central Massachusetts. The architect is donating his time. Habitat has a “really high” confidence level for \$41K in donations (\$10K matching funds are in hand). Leveraging also includes \$50K from the Acton Community Housing Corporation (ACHC), and Habitat continues to look for more assistance. The CPC observed that the price for historic windows seems high, but noted that costs at the Citizens Library in West Acton and at the Town Hall were about \$1K per window as such windows have to meet Historic District requirements. (Dean was Project Manager for the Citizens Library project, so he can provide references for window work.) Peter noted that the Town acquired the property for non-payment of taxes, then sold it to Habitat, so the house will be private property and Habitat will not be obligated to do public bidding. These will be Habitat’s third and fourth homes completed in Acton.

Whereas the projects are very well leveraged, it would be helpful for TM to see the CPA percentage share. Also, pictures would be very valuable at TM to help the public identify the building.

– Regional Housing Services – \$50,000

- Peter described the project. The Regional Housing Services Office (RHSO) works with Nancy Tavernier of the ACHC. Nancy described the RHSO as a “tremendous help,” detailing some of the things it does to help the Town, as it is under contract to the Town, not to the ACHC. This is a two-year funding request similar to past requests which the CPC, in the recent past, has cut down to one year. Robert observed that the funding can be for two years if the two-year amount would be needed to help meet the 10% housing commitment, but that funding for one year would be sufficient if two-year funding would be difficult. It was pointed out that the RSO has moved to Knox Trail in Acton.

The above presentations were for scheduled times during the evening. Some presentations did not need their entire allotted times so the CPC business below occurred between presentations.

IV. Minutes of November 16, 2017

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

V. Administrative Updates

- CPC members have received copies of the Town Counsel legal opinions re the 2018 proposals. Walter reviewed the opinions with the CPC.
- The schedule for the next meeting (12/21/2017) was shown on the agenda. The CPC liaisons for the 12/21 projects should be in touch with the project presenters. In particular, they should look at the legal review of their project and share the review with the project presenters. Project presenters should try to respond to any questions or issues that Counsel has raised about a project. Robert will make the review public on DocuShare.
- All members seem okay with the January 11, 2018, meeting date.
- There is nothing new on the lawsuit re funding of an Acton Congregational Church project.

9:22 P.M. — It was moved, seconded, and voted unanimously to adjourn.

The next CPC meeting: 12-21-2017.