

Minutes
Town of Acton Community Preservation Committee (CPC)
February 08, 2018
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), Joe Will (Clerk), Ray Yacouby

Others Present: Roland Bartl (Acton Planning Director), Roland Bourdon (Acton Finance Committee), Ann Chang (Acton Memorial Library (AML) Trustee), Cathy Fochtman (Acton Recreation Director), Susan Mitchell-Hardt (Acton Conservation Trust President), Wanda Null (Acton Historical Society Arthur Davis Curator)

Walter opened the meeting at 7:31 PM. Tory brought cookies.

I. Citizen Concerns

- none

II. Minutes of January 25, 2018

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

III. Project Deliberations

Prior to deliberations:

- Ann reported that Powers Gallery has reduced its proposed cost of framing the Arthur Davis etchings, enabling the AML to lower its funding request from \$12K to \$10.5K. The AML has not sought any framing estimate from any other framers. It was reiterated that the AML Trustees' \$3K contingency is to cover costs above the \$10.5K, i.e., costs after the CPA funds are used.

Deliberations:

Roland provided an updated spreadsheet showing various \$ amounts related to the 2018 projects. Committee members had filled out most of the cells in each of their columns, showing their initial thoughts on funding the projects. The Committee reviewed each project. (Regular member Nancy Kolb was absent, but has been in touch with Walter. Walter shared Nancy's thinking when appropriate.)

- Regional Housing Services Office (RHSO), \$50,000
Unanimous on full funding.

- Acton Housing Authority (AHA) Development/Acquisition Funds, \$75,000
Unanimous on full funding.

- AHA McCarthy Village Siding and Decking, \$75,000
Unanimous on full funding.

- Habitat for Humanity 43-45 Spruce Street Interior, \$53,000

Unanimous on full funding. Joe explained that the lesser amount he entered was to be fully augmented by \$ in the Community Housing set-aside fund.

- Habitat for Humanity 43-45 Spruce Street exterior, \$38,650

Unanimous on full funding.

- Hosmer House Landscape, \$188,546

Near unanimous on full funding. Joe explained that the lesser amount he entered was to be fully augmented by \$ in the Historic Resources set-aside fund. Dean entered a lesser amount, not having heard at that time of the withdrawal of the North Acton Schoolhouse project that was requesting \$315K. Dean also expressed concern about site control with some of the proposed work being on Acton-Boxborough Regional School District property. There needs to be a reach-out to the District to discuss this and, ultimately, an agreement in writing. Perhaps any site control issue could be covered in the funding letter from the CPC. Otherwise, Dean has no problem with bringing his entry up to the full requested amount, but will wait until the next meeting.

- Kennedy Building Rehabilitation, \$51,000

Significant disagreement on funding. Points made:

- Following the previous CPC meeting, Dean followed up with an email to Tom Tidman on the issues and suggested that Tom amend his request. Re furnishings and finishes, Dean suggested that some on the Committee might be in favor of an upgrade in finishes as opposed to furniture. Roland as well mentioned to Tom that the furniture part seems in jeopardy.

- It's not clear why the applicant didn't "put that (furniture funding) in Column B".

- The Committee has to separate out: "Is this a "worthwhile project?" as opposed to "Is this appropriate for a CPA project?" One might not be against the project, but it doesn't seem to be the intent of what the CPA should do.

- Legally, can furnishings be part of a project?

- There is no problem with the project per se, but the applicant should move the funding for interior design and furnishing to some source other than the CPA.

Without the applicant telling the CPC that it is willing to do this, the CPC should not fund design and furnishings. There should be a dialog with the applicant on this.

- There is concern with calling this "historic restoration." This doesn't "rise" to a historic resource.

- Furnishings don't seem too different from frames (see Arthur Davis etchings commentary below). But the project has a noble mission. It warrants to be funded at some level.

- The Acton Historical Commission has made the determination that the Kennedy Building is an appropriate historical resource. Its January 23 letter also points out that one of the building's original functions was to serve as a maintenance building.

- This project was ranked high by the Board of Selectmen (BoS). Is there any insight from the BoS? The BoS didn't have a big discussion. Joan Gardner talked of accessibility and what visitors see/feel.

- It is good that the project is extremely leveraged. There is a bunch of dough from the Cemetery Commissioners. The Town could make up more. If this is such a high

priority for the BoS, the Town operating budget or the Cemetery Commission could come up with the difference.

- The Town has been trying to fund this forever. This has been on Town radar for a long time.
- One could feel guilty if the CPC doesn't provide accessibility.
- What would Town Meeting (TM) folks feel about this? Not sure that they would be in favor of it.
- It seems that the CPC would like to see a reallocation of source funds for this project. The CPC would have to hear something new in advance of the next meeting.
- The BoS will approve this, but not sure it will be recommended by the Finance Committee.
- We are not yet ready to move the ball forward on this project. We will come back to this at the next meeting.

- Woodlawn Cemetery Gates, \$31,000

Unanimous on full funding.

- Arthur Davis Etchings Restoration, \$12,000

Unanimous on full funding at \$10,500. (See paragraph at the start of this section.)

Concern was expressed at the fact that there was no competitive pricing for the framing as (the original) \$6K seemed extremely expensive. There could be a condition on this in the award letter. Walter will follow up with Ann on this.

- Open Space Set-Aside, \$420,000

Unanimous on at least full funding. Given 1) that the original request was for \$450K before the applicant identified the Support Fund need (next funding item), 2) that there are more CPA \$ available than requested, and 3) the importance of open-space acquisition, some felt that funding should exceed — at \$450K or \$500K — the requested amount. The fact that the CPA funds available exceed the funds requested led to a brief discussion of what to do with excess CPA funds; should they be allocated or should they be carried forward in a general CPA account? The latter would allow the Committee to have some leeway next year and/or to have funds available for other projects that may arise at any time. As with other projects, the Committee will have to come to final consensus on Open Space funding at the next meeting.

- Open Space Support Fund, \$30,000

Unanimous on full funding.

- Camp Acton Accessible Campsite, \$10,012

Unanimous on full funding.

- Skatepark Expansion, \$76,000

Near unanimous on full funding. Points made in the ensuing discussion:

- This is a proposal from the Recreation Department, and there is concern about the Recreation Department “sitting on” \$0.5M for projects from previous years, having had to turn back \$75K early this year for a project that it did not begin in the required time. There seems to be a “capacity problem” in getting projects done, so why tie up a lot of money (about \$600K including this project) with another project?

– Is there a timeline for this project? Per Cathy, the designer, Stantec, already under contract, gave a ballpark timeline estimate of 8-10 weeks to complete the engineered design plan. The bid process then would take 5 weeks and might involve Town Counsel. Construction 10-12 weeks. (There has already been one construction bid.) Getting out the bid documents shouldn't be heavy lifting. There's a lot of standard stuff that doesn't need reinvention.

– The Committee could require a tight timeline for building, and any schedule enforcement that the Committee can do would be good. Once voted, funding would be available after TM in April. It seems that this phase, once funded, could be completed before December of this year.

– Cathy has about 8 months of things happening, so it's likely the skatepark would not be done by December. Perhaps a timeline should have all the preliminary work done by winter so that it's "ready to build" in April.

– The award letter could require some reporting procedure, say a progress report within 6 months.

– This project has been long in the making and it would be good to see it done. The award letter could reflect the Committee's concerns about project progress, or the Committee could get some commitment from the Town Manager in getting this project prioritized; that it can go "full-bore ahead." Whereas the bid process could require Town Counsel input, the Town Manager is the gatekeeper on getting access to Town Counsel. There should be a firm commitment from the Town Manager's office that this project will receive prompt attention. One problem: The current Town Manager retires at the end of June, so there will be a Town Manager transition. Nonetheless, sitting down with the current Town Manager, talking about this, and gaining some insight as to why things don't get done could go a long way to resolving concerns about project progress.

– Could some money be spent on this project upfront in anticipation that it would pass TM? No, one has to wait for TM approval before doing anything.

– The project should be called "Skatepark Completion" instead of "Skatepark Expansion."

- NARA Performance Improvements, \$25,000

Unanimous on full funding for the accessible ramp (\$6K); unanimous on zero funding for the sign (\$19K requested). An argument against the sign is the same as at past meetings: It would be used by various Town departments, not exclusively by the Recreation Department. It was also noted that for something as necessary as the ramp, there should be adequate funding in the Town operating budget.

- CPA Program Support, \$56,049.60

Unanimous on full funding.

- CPA HR Set-Aside 2009 Make Up, \$823.10

Unanimous on full funding as Committee hands are tied on this by statute. Roland explained that unused historic resources funds awarded in 2009 have been returned, resulting in historic resources not having received the statutory 10% for that year by the above amount.

Between now and the next meeting, Planning will update and post the spreadsheet on DocuShare. At the next meeting, deliberations are likely to focus on the Kennedy Building, Open Space, and Skatepark proposals, but any of the other projects can be revisited as well. Walter will ask that Nancy weigh in, and there could be a follow up on the Hosmer House Landscape project vis-à-vis the School District land. Following deliberations, Walter will entertain a motion for a final vote.

IV. Administrative Updates

- The next CPC meeting is February 22.
- Cathy distributed copies of the “NARA PARK MASTER PLAN 2016-2026” to Committee members.
- The conversation on rail trails is now about when in Spring will be the ribbon cutting. Right now, folks are looking at the end of May for both the Bruce Freeman and Assabet River Rail Trails.
- Walter will represent the CPC at the February 27 meeting of the Finance Committee, time still to be determined. All CPC members are welcome to attend.
- Senator Jamie Eldridge attended last Monday’s BoS meeting. Revenues from the State surcharge on real-estate dealings have been up this year which should mean there will be more State \$ for the CPA next year.

9:07 PM — It was moved, seconded, and voted unanimously to adjourn.

Next scheduled meetings: 02/22, 03/08, 03/22