

Minutes for CPC Meeting of 5/5/05, 7:30 pm - 9:30 pm, Library Meeting Room

Attending:

Peter Berry, Walter Foster, Bob Coan, Susan Mitchell-Hardt, Catherine Coleman, Ken Sghia-Hughes, Matt Lundberg, Stacy Rogers, Andy Magee, Roland Bartl

Absent: Nancy Tavernier

Audience: Bill Mullin, Mike Scanlan, Anne Forbes, Mary Ann Ashton, James Karis (Acton Weekly)

1a. Approval of Minutes from 3/10/05

The minutes of 3/10/05 were approved unanimously.

2. Discussion re: Next Steps

- May 15, 2005: End of the season celebration party at Peter Berry's.
- Election of Officers and Membership

Andy's appointment with the ConCom ends June 30 and both Andy's and Nancy's terms with the CPC expire then also. It was discussed that it might be possible for the ConsCom to appoint Andy as an Associate Member if that position is not needed as a way to bring forward a new person to the Commission. That would allow the ConCom to re-appoint him to the CPC as their representative. However, it is not possible.

- By July 1 the CPC will need a new appointment from the ConsCom as well as two appointments (including Nancy) to fill the associate positions.

- (It was commented that the Associate Members are in an awkward position as there isn't an opportunity to become a full member).

(5 candidates have applied for one associate position).

- The process for filling the Associate Positions is through the Volunteer Coordinating Committee (VCC).

ACTION: Roland will email Nancy that she must re-apply by sending a letter to the Selectmen.

Walter commented that it is appropriate for the CPC to suggest that Nancy be renewed; then the Selectmen can consider it. The CPC could write a letter or go to a Selectmen's Meeting and recommend her re-appointment.

Election of Officers:

ACTION: It was agreed that at the CPC meeting of 6/23 the CPC will elect officers effective in July.

Community Preservation Plan - FY 2007

It was commented that the CPC had an abbreviated process for getting feedback on the plan last year and that the plan will require few changes.

It was agreed that the CPC would redraft the plan with current dates and have it available before the public hearing.

ACTION:

Each CPC representative should talk about their section of the plan with their interest group. (An update to the open space section could include a comment that CPA funds are seed money for land acquisition; it alone is not adequate to purchase a large parcel such as the Robbins Mill Pond Land (RMPL).

- Housing and Historic Preservation should bring their comments back by 5/19.
- Open Space and Recreation should bring their comments back by June 9.
- By the June 23 CPC meeting Roland will incorporate the feedback and re-draft the Plan.

Appendix:

- Include a copy of the Warrant Article and updates about the projects from the project liaisons.
- A table could be created showing projects pending and finished.

ACTION: Project liaisons will contact applicants from last year's projects for updates.

Updates on Project Completion

Skateboard Park:

The walls are up. It will be completed by mid to late summer.

Assabet River Rail Trail (ARRT):

The ARRT is one step closer; the deed for the easement was signed (by Anderson). (The easement will go around the building).

- The town has received notice from the state that acquisition funds will be withdrawn. Acton had \$150,000 to acquire the land. The MBTA will sell the land for \$1.00.

Two years ago Maynard needed funds to make a purchase. \$70,000 was transferred from the Acton fund to them leaving \$80,000 for Acton. Some funds were given to Maynard because it's a priority for Acton to connect to downtown Maynard. Unspent funds will revert back to the government.

- Hudson will finish their section this year.
- Acton has been discussing the issue of environmental liability with the MBTA for 4 years.

Update on the Morrison Farm Re-Use Committee:

There were a series of presentations at the last meeting.

- The first was about the cemetery; It's expected that the cemetery field will last 7 or more years. The Cemetery Dept. and Natural Resources make use of the barn for storage of equipment.

- Tom Michelman spoke about the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail (BFRT) and the Recreation Commission spoke about recreation needs.

A number of concepts were discussed such as a working farm, disk golf, dog park, etc..

- One recreation field is envisioned in the upper field area.

- Parking is an issue. An effort will be made to minimize it on site. The committee is looking at satellite parking on Rt. 2A. Parking is being considered at Brookside Shops and Colonial Spirits Plaza if a light is installed at either location and at Donelan's.

- A teen center is no longer being considered on the Morrison Farm or anywhere else. The proponents will focus on creating programs.

- It is expected that the committee's work will be done in 4-5 more meetings and will result in a final report.

As it will no longer be necessary to spend \$50,000 for a consultant to indicate that an appropriate use for the Morrison Farm is a working farm and a recreation field, the \$50,000 will revert to the CPA.

As there are many historic sites on the farm, it is likely additional CPA funding will be sought.
- Since the Morrison Farm Committee will be seeking CPA dollars to fund their the projects, a Town Meeting vote will be required

ACTION: Bob was asked to get an update about about the Historic District Signage and Cultural Resource List projects and to report back.

Meeting with Senator Pam Resor

Sen. Resor gave a history of passing the CPA. An effort was made by the Executive Dir. of the Mass. Assoc. of Conservation Commissioners to create a Land Bank program; however, the program did not have statewide appeal. Because an open space platform was not enough, as many legislators were from urban areas, Housing and Historic Preservation were brought in.

Funding such an initiative through real estate transfer tax was not equitable as it was a tax on people coming to town.

Pam and others came up with a different approach where everyone could share the burden equally. It was not atypical that the final outcome took 15 years; the CPA is still evolving. Some of Sen Resor's towns can't add to their tax burden for those on fixed incomes. Residents from those towns ask why can't they get another source of funding for the same needs particularly since their money goes into the CP Trust Fund.

One solution would be for more than half the 351 towns to adopt the CPA. We are close to 100. Another solution, on which the CPA Coalition is working, is to see towns such as Quincy, Malden, and/or Medford adopt the ACT. Sen. Resor resists using the hotel/motel tax as the local match for urban areas.

- Another conundrum is that the more towns which participate the fewer we can fully fund.
- As refinancing is stopping, having a "surplus" is less of an issue.

It was commented that the moderate income senior exemption was critical for Acton to address the fixed income issue. The CPA has been well received in Acton and has resulted in a broad array of projects.

Senator Resor indicated that there is a proposal to set up a dual system like the Self Help and Urban Self Help programs which would become an urban preservation Act. It was commented that many of Acton's CPA projects could translate to urban areas such as the skateboard park and FieldTurfing Leary Field.

- Pam admonished the CPC to be ready to focus on any one area as well as funding all the categories.

Senator Resor was asked if she can brag about her hometown's CPA projects/experiences to others. She commented that based on how the press reported the Leary Field project she had had concerns as it was depicted as frivolous; however, she's more comfortable with it after hearing more information.

It was commented that the state is looking to sell parcels of land and it would be helpful if the town knew in advance.

Senator Resor commented that two years ago the House or Senate gave DCAM (Department of Capital Assets Management) the power to sell surplus land by removing the need for legislative authorization and virtually eliminating municipal involvement. Senator Resor along with MAPC are working toward reinstating municipal partnership when selling surplus lands.

Public Comments:

Bill Mullin addressed the charge that Field Turf is frivolous and a luxury by commenting that it has been used in Chelsea, three times in Cambridge, two times in New Bedford, once in Fall River, and twice in Waltham. Field Turf is utilitarian and efficient. Leary Field leveraged one third of the funds and used contingency funds.

Mary An Ashton commented on the ongoing coalitions created around specific projects giving them broad-based community support. Many of them have resulted in community building for the town. Many of these projects can empower urban and suburban communities. Another example is the TJ O'Grady Skatepark.

New Business:

Visit to View Restored Civil War Flag:

The CPC and guests were invited by the Library Director to the second floor of the Library to view the newly restored Civil War flag of the Isaac Davis Post of the Grand Army of the Republic.

- It was agreed to post photos of completed CPA projects on the town website.

NEXT MEETINGS:

May 19 and June 9

Respectfully submitted:

Susan Mitchell-Hardt