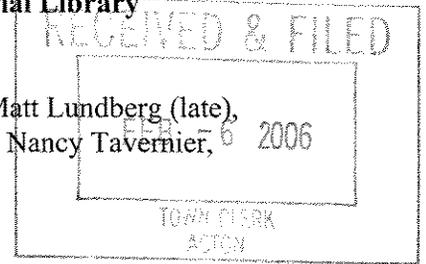


Minutes for CPC Meeting of 1/5/06, 7:35 pm–10:30 pm, Acton Memorial Library

Attending:

Peter Berry, Jon Benson, Tori Beyer, Catherine Coleman, Walter Foster, Matt Lundberg (late), Andy Magee, Susan Mitchell-Hardt, Ken Sghia-Hughes (late), Ed Starzec, Nancy Tavernier, Roland Bartl



Susan opened the meeting at 7:35pm.

Nancy acted as Secretary pro tem until Ken arrived at 8:00pm.

Application Presentations:

The Committee members introduced themselves.

APS—GATES SCHOOL PLAYGROUND

Chris Fenniman made the presentation to the Committee.

- Playground structure is designed for ages 5-12
- The current pressure-treated wood structure is unsafe. It cannot be sanded, due to splintering.
- Hoping to have school parents help with the assembly of the structure
- Asking for 50% funding from CPA funds, and 50% from school and private fundraising

Questions from Committee and Responses:

- How is current structure not in compliance with code? Modern structures are required to meet ADA accessibility requirements. The current structure is not ADA-compliant.
- What happens if there is no CPA funding? There would have to be more private fundraising to raise the necessary funds.
- There would be additional expenses for installation if there is no parent involvement.
- How much of the school budget goes to other school playgrounds?
- Concern was expressed about using CPA funds for dedicated school use. This could be viewed unfavorably at Town Meeting.
- The applicant was urged to work with potential vendors to reduce the project cost.
- The applicant confirmed that the new structure would be ADA-compliant.
- The existing structure is 16-17 years old?
- The proposed structure would require little maintenance.
- Additional concern about using CPA funds for school projects was raised, but having leveraged funds is good.
- The suggestion was made that the Leary Field model of 1/3, 1/3, 1/3 funding from CPC, school, and private funds would be better.
- If the bids come in over the proposal estimates, the applicant would do additional private fundraising to make up the difference or possibly decrease the size of the structure.

(Ken arrived and took over as Secretary).

TOWN OF ACTON—FITZGERALD PIANO RESTORATION

Mary Ann Ashton presented the application to the Committee. The applicant provided pictures of the piano in its current condition and a second professional estimate of the restoration costs, which was approximately \$21,000. The applicant also provided a letter from the Memorial Library Trustees indicating general lack of support from the Trustees for permanently locating the restored piano in the Memorial Library.

Following the presentation, the following information was provided in response to questions from Committee members:

- The CPA funding requests remains at \$17,000. The applicant plans to raise approximately \$10,000 to cover the additional expense for restoration and provide funding for on-going maintenance costs.
- In order to be eligible for CPA funding, the piano would have to reside in an historic building
- The question was raised whether the piano would require a controlled environment (temperature and humidity). The applicant stated that the professional restorers did not think that this was critical to the life of the piano.
- There would probably be a need for a volunteer group (“Friends” group) to ensure maintenance of the piano. The Town would be financially responsible for maintenance, but a “Friends” group could help offset maintenance costs.
- Several Committee members expressed concern about the strongly-stated reluctance of the Library Trustees to allow the piano to be housed in the Memorial Library. There was also concern that the piano may see little or no use in the Library.
- A suggestion was made to consider locating the restored piano in a private historic building, such as the Powers home on Nylander Way.
- Several Committee members expressed strong support for locating the piano in the Memorial Library, and commented on the sense of community that such historic pieces bring to Acton.
- The applicant was urged to provide more leveraging of funds through private fundraising.

Additional comments from the audience were:

- If located in the Memorial Library, the piano would be placed in the new section of the Library
- The project is proposed with significant leveraged funds, and it would require a great effort to secure more private funds for such a project.

TOWN OF ACTON—ARBORETUM

Cathy Hatfield, Cathy Fochtman and Tom Tidman gave a presentation and provided handouts to the Committee. The Project has been downsized to \$24,000 requested from the CPC. The revised project scope has reduced trail length, eliminated the cobble edge of the trail, and eliminated the gateway entrance.

The following questions and comments were made by Committee members and the applicant.

- The Town may come back to the CPC for additional funding in future years to implement parts of the project that were eliminated from this year's application.
- Redesigned trail will require more maintenance than original proposal. The Town will be responsible for all maintenance.
- Is there a "clearinghouse" list of handicap-accessible trails and facilities in Town that this facility should be included on? No one knew of such a list.
- Will revised plan for trail still provide handicap-accessible trails? Yes, the trails in the revised proposal will meet the same requirements for handicap-accessibility as the originally proposed trail design.
- It would be very useful to have the budget broken out and to show just how much leveraging there is. Several Committee members suggested items that could be considered leveraged items, including: grant money for self-guided tours of the proposed trails, purchase of benches, sweat equity, previous trail re-work, signage and trail guides.
- What is a fragrance garden? It includes plants with strong fragrances in the bark, foliage, and/or blossoms.
- What is the sensory garden? This is the same as the Fragrance Garden, and merely highlights the multi-sensory, interactive aspect of the garden (tactile, olfactory, visual).

OPEN SPACE SET-ASIDE

Andy Magee presented the Open Space Set-Aside proposal. The Open Space Committee is a standing committee formed by the Board of Selectmen last year as a result of a recommendation from the Open Space and Recreation Plan. The Open Space Committee is requesting \$400,000 be set aside for future land acquisition. This, along with the \$500,000 previously earmarked for open space, would allow the Town to begin to seriously consider a land purchase for preservation.

In response to a question about how the set-aside money is held, the comment was made that the funds are held in liquid, very conservative investments that do earn some interest, along with all CPC funds. It is not known if the interest accrues to the set-aside amount, or if the interest is entirely unencumbered.

Approval of Minutes—Consideration of the minutes of 12/15/05 was postponed until the next meeting.

The Committee will hear from Dean Charter this week if and when we can visit the Fitzgerald Piano on Saturday.

Susan volunteered to respond to a request from the CPA Coalition for updates to activity in Fall 2005. She will report to them that we had no Town approvals this past Fall.

The Committee welcomed new Associate Member Jon Benson to his first meeting.

The Committee discussed the process and schedule for decision-making with respect to this round of proposals. Peter e-mailed everyone a useful article about decision-making. He proposed a process over three meetings, to include brainstorming (no discussions or judgements, only ideas about the projects and presentations), an initial cut of allocation by each individual member, and the final cut. The Committee agreed to the proposed process, and decided to use a flip chart for the brainstorming session. Roland will try to book a room with usable walls to hang the charts for that meeting. The Committee will try to reach consensus if possible.

The schedule of meetings was determined as follows:

1/26/06	Brainstorming session
2/9/06	1 st cut by each member—draft of allocation of funds
2/23/06	Final cut—consensus

The issue of “judgment call” proposals was raised as one needing further consideration. Town Counsel has indicated on certain proposals that eligibility is not clear from a legal standpoint, and the Committee will have to make the “judgment call”. The Committee will need to establish a consistent policy regarding these proposals.

Walter reminded everyone that any questions about Town-sponsored project can be addressed through him.

Peter suggested that after Town Meeting the Committee look at the eligibility criteria for CPA funding.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:30pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Ken Sghia-Hughes, Clerk
Community Preservation Committee