

MEETING MINUTES

Town of Acton Community Preservation Committee

December 3, 2009
Acton Memorial Library

Attending: Mike Gowing, Roland Bourdon, Ken Sghia-Hughes, Walter Foster, Corrina Roman-Kreuze, Susan Mitchell-Hardt, Doré Hunter, Tory Beyer, Janet Adachi, Roland Bartl, Town Planner. Also present was Steve Noone (Fin Com Observer).

Vice Chairman Walter Foster called the meeting to order at 7:38 p.m.

- I. Approval of 11/12/2009 Minutes. The minutes of 11/12/2009 were approved as amended.
- II. Assignment of Committee Liaison for Test House Proposal. Doré will be the liaison for the Test House Preservation Project.
- III. Appointments With Project Applicants (3 of 9)
 - A. 468 Main Street - Window Restoration and Replacement. Request for \$22,000; presentation by Dean Charter, Town of Acton Municipal Properties Director. As Mr. Charter explained during his preliminary presentation on October 1, 2009, the Town proposes to restore windows on the first floor and replace the historically inaccurate casement windows in poor condition on the second floor. Mr. Charter generated the price for the project on the basis of the two-window quotation included with the application; the quotation is from the same vendor who worked on the West Acton Citizens Library. A price-break for the expanded number of windows is unlikely, given that the window work is labor-intensive. The project is subject to the prevailing-wage requirement under state law, which increases the project cost. The requested sum does not account for any contingencies, the cost of which will come out of the Municipal Properties budget. The department also will cover the cost of maintenance. The project will require sealed bids.

Since the October 1 presentation, Municipal Properties has moved from Town Hall to the 468 Main Street house. The house is not handicapped-accessible, so Municipal Properties, whose work generally does not require in-office interaction with the public, was a good candidate for the new space. The building has additional office space still unoccupied due to the access issue, which also limits use of the conference room to Town staff. Mr. Charter said that the Town could create a parking area with an accessible main entrance in the rear; the work to make the house handicapped-accessible would not be eligible for CPA funding. The basement is dry and contains recently installed HVAC equipment, as well as some stored public records from the Town Clerk's office. Municipal Properties has been updating the electrical system gradually. The kitchen remains largely unchanged. The previous owner installed ten-

inch I-beams to stop the sinking of the first floor, which is noticeably unlevel in spots. On the south side is a fieldstone chimney and fireplace in bad condition that, to be useable, would have to be torn apart and reconstructed; it is not part of the heating system but could be used with a wood stove. The restoration of the chimney and fireplace might be a project eligible for CPA funding.

- B. Acton Town Hall – Historic Window Restoration. Request for \$100,000; presentation by Dean Charter. As Mr. Charter explained during his preliminary presentation on October 1, 2009, the Town proposes to restore only the 1864-era windows, meaning the windows in the Faulkner Room and the offices below, and replace the poorly functioning triple-track storm windows with wood, historically correct versions. The quotation included with the application is from the same vendor who worked on the West Acton Library, although there are other businesses purportedly offering the same or similar service that could be considered as part of the sealed-bid process. The restoration would use old-growth wood; the storm windows would be new-growth wood. The windows would be finished with three coats of special, low-VOC (volatile organic component) paint. Although Mr. Charter did not have specific calculations, the project presumably would improve the energy efficiency of the building. The additional cost of mouth-blown-glass panes would come out of the Municipal Properties budget, as would any cost contingencies.

The building otherwise is in good condition. There was some discussion of the cracks in the Faulkner room walls, and possible impact of the proposed window-work. Mr. Charter said that there was a significant amount of testing during the recent ceiling work in the Faulkner Room; the building has settled quite a bit. Doré noted that at one point, a new foundation and the current ground floor space were built under the original Town Hall structure, which was raised and held up with steel for about a year during the construction. The cracks in the walls could date back to that time. Mr. Charter said that there currently are no other, potentially CPA-eligible Town Hall projects.

- C. Windsor Building – Historic Restoration and Adaptive Re-Use. Request for \$168,000; presentation by Dean Charter. Since his preliminary presentation on October 1, 2009, Mr. Charter has modified the price and scope of the original \$320,000 project to reflect the November 16, 2009 vote of the Board of Selectmen in support of a more limited project encompassing only exterior restoration. The modified proposal is for the restoration of existing exterior elements, installation of two out-swinging reproduction engine doors on the front of the building, and the addition of a ramp to the existing side entrance to make it handicapped-accessible; the ramp and other access-related work would account for roughly \$30,000 of the proposed budget for the entry. The basement may require some foundation work. The project will begin with the replacement of the roof, continue with removal of the windows for restoration, progress to the carpentry work and finish with scraping and painting. The restoration will take a year and will not be completed until the summer of 2011. Residents interested in using the space will be able to reserve it through Municipal Properties.

Any costs not covered by the contingency will come out of the Municipal Services budget, as will the cost of ongoing maintenance.

Mr. Charter and other Town personnel will furnish in-kind services, including general-contractor services, bid-preparation, landscaping, design, and the installation of a new septic system. The area in front of the building also will require reconfiguration with historically appropriate materials to create a ramp flush with the first floor, as would have existed to provide access for the trucks originally garaged in the building. Mr. Charter agreed to furnish the Committee with a list of the proposed in-kind services.

There will be no electrical-system work. The heating system, which was donated, is in good condition and the plumbing is operational. The building already has a fire-detection system so, with the addition of the handicapped-accessible ramp, the first floor could be used for public functions; the second floor, lacking handicapped-accessibility, will remain closed to the public but can be used for storage. Mr. Charter said that installing an elevator to make the second floor handicapped-accessible would not be a justifiable expense, given the small area (900 square feet), and the maintenance costs that the Town would incur, including for monthly elevator inspections and a backup power source. The use of the building to store the old fire truck, previously restored with CPA funding, would be a problem due to the risk of damage to the fir floor, among other things, but Mr. Charter would be interested in having the old, Town-owned hand-pump device in the building.

A number of residents expressed support for the original proposal that included restoration of the first-floor interior. Walter explained that the proposal before the Committee was the modified one, limited to exterior work; he thanked the residents for their interest and continuing support of the Town's CPA participation and CPA projects.

Walter noted that Town Counsel has confirmed that the three Town proposals, above, are eligible for funding under the historic-preservation provision of the CPA.

IV. Other Business.

- A. Piper Lane. Roland Bartl noted the opinion of Town Counsel that the acquisition of frontage on Piper Road would not be eligible for CPA funding.
- B. Possible Section 61A Open-Space Acquisition. Mike said that discussions were ongoing and the acquisition might be an item for the next Town Meeting.
- C. SB 90 Presentation. Susan told Stuart Saginor of the Community Preservation Coalition of the Committee's interest in having him provide an update on SB90 in January after the state legislature reconvenes. Mr. Saginor would prefer to focus on building support among communities for SB90, and will not be appearing before the Committee.

Next Meeting. The next meeting will be on Thursday, December 17, 2009, 7:30 p.m.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:20 p.m.

- Janet Adachi, Clerk