

## MEETING MINUTES

### Town of Acton Community Preservation Committee

December 17, 2009  
Acton Memorial Library

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

Chairman Jon Benson called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.

- I. West Acton Citizens Library Restoration – Wrap-Up Report. Jennifer Friedman, Librarian, and Dean Charter, Town Municipal Properties Manager, reported on the project, including the financial information that Mr. Charter has provided in greater detail in his memorandum of 11/30/2009 to the Committee. The original CPA appropriation was \$119,500, but the library project required less than \$85,000, so the Town will return the unspent balance of approximately \$35,000 to the Community Preservation Fund. Ms. Friedman credited much of the savings to Mr. Charter's having served as the general contractor, bidded out the project in pieces rather than as one large project and hired numerous local tradespersons. The Town's contribution was in the form of in-kind services by Mr. Charter and other employees for interior and exterior work, with a value of about \$12,000.

The library is an attractive addition to Windsor Avenue, is well-used, served an important role last summer for the newly organized West Acton Farmers Market, and is becoming the community center that Ms. Friedman and others envisioned. Committee members expressed their appreciation for the restored library and Mr. Charter's efforts in coordinating the restoration.

- II. Approval of 12/3/2009 Minutes. The minutes of 12/3/2009 were approved.
- III. Appointments With Project Applicants (2 of 9)
  - A. Community Housing Program Fund (Acton Community Housing Corporation). Request for \$50,000; presentation by Corrina in lieu of Nancy Tavernier, Chairperson, Acton Community Housing Corporation (ACHC). The ACHC has used and will continue to use the Fund for such purposes as making small capital improvements to existing affordable units; covering a portion of the purchase price for condominiums that the Acton Housing Authority uses for low-income rentals; providing buyer-counseling services and down-payment assistance; hiring a lottery agent whenever an affordable unit becomes available. ACHC also would like to re-do the "ready buyer" list and will need the services of a consultant to assist with that task. Activity in the Condo Buy-Down program has been limited, with current pricing for market-rate

condominium units being so low. The current Program Fund balance is approximately \$112,000 (\$750,000 in funds received during 2004-2009, less \$638,000 in committed funds). The amount of annual CPA funding has varied, ranging from relatively modest sums up to \$160,000 and \$170,000 in a couple of years.

- B. Development Funds – Sachem Way (Acton Housing Authority). Request for \$250,000; presentation by Kelly Cronin, Executive Director, Acton Housing Authority (AHA), and Bob Whittlesey. Since the 2009 Town Meeting, when the Town approved CPA funding for Sachem Way pre-development work, the AHA has received a planning grant from the state, and hired a development consultant (among 12 applicants) and an architect, Baker/Wohl Architects (among 21 applications). The selection of the architect involved review by the state of all applications, and review by a local committee of five applications that the state recommended. The Acton committee, which included an abutter, Sachem Way resident, local architect, local realtor, Ms. Cronin and Robert Schoen, unanimously recommended Baker/Wohl to the AHA. Pre-development funding will cover work through next summer, at which point AHA will apply for a Chapter 40B permit.

The AHA will be applying for state development funds, as well. The state prefers to see commitment at the local level, so CPA funding will be important in the AHA's effort to secure the balance of the funding from the state. Other towns are using CPA monies as the local match for state funding of new low-income housing: Sudbury is creating 10 units with \$600,000 of CPA funds; Chelmsford and Holliston are making similar use of CPA funding. State funding is available for the construction of new housing units, but not for the purchase of existing housing units to be used for low-income housing, which is why the AHA is pursuing new construction. The AHA is reasonably sure that the state will provide funding but is prepared to go through more than one round to secure funding. If AHA does not receive state funding and has to cut costs, it has the flexibility and time to let the project sit if necessary.

The Acton waiting list for low-income housing includes 259 for family units; 120 for elderly/disabled units; and 142 for Section 8 housing.

Committee members discussed what effect the Sachem Way units would have on the percentage of affordable housing units in Acton. Affordable units currently constitute about 6.7 % of total housing units in the Town; the addition of 12 Sachem Way units would raise the percentage minimally to 6.85 %, but only assuming no growth in the number of market-rate units.

Relations with the abutters are reasonably good. The abutter on the local review panel reportedly was very pleased with the development team; the engineer has some interesting ideas for the site, such as rain gardens and other "green" concepts. Allen & Major Associates is the engineering firm. Baker/Wohl has LEED-certified architects, but Sachem Way will not necessarily be LEED-certified.

It could be two years before construction begins, given the constraints on governmental funding. Steve Baker of Baker/Wohl will be in charge of the project and the others will report to him.

The mortgage listed as a line-item in the proposed budget represents the anticipated development funding that will not be grants, and will have to be repaid. The development consultant is working with AHA on this issue. For some state funding, the repayment obligation is deferred as long as the housing units continue to be used as affordable housing.

- IV. CPA Administrative Support, 2010. Roland Bartl noted the inclusion in the meeting materials of the December 17, 2009 memorandum to the Committee from Steven Ledoux, Town Manager, formally requesting the appropriation at the 2010 Town Meeting of 5% of available CPA revenues to pay the Town for the cost of providing administrative support to the Committee.
- V. Review and Approval of 2009 Annual Report. The report was approved as amended.
- VI. Other Business.
  - A. Theatre III. Tory reported that the applicant has asked whether the architect should attend the project-presentation on January 7, 2010. Committee members agreed that whether or not the architect was present, the applicant needed to be prepared to explain the derivation of the proposed fees for the architect.

Next Meeting. The next meeting will be on Thursday, January 7th, 2010, 7:30 p.m.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:52 p.m.

- Janet Adachi, Clerk