

# **Morrison Farm Committee**

Application to the Community Preservation Committee

With Respect To

The Morrison Farm Implementation Plan

## **Supplemental Information**

January 24, 2013

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Exhibit A

Letter from Recreation Commission  
Dated 1/8/13



**Town of Acton Recreation Commission**  
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Karen Jarsky, Commission Chair

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January 8, 2013

Mr. Roland Bourdan  
Community Preservation Committee  
472 Main Street  
Acton, MA 01720  
Re: Morrison Farm Project

Dear Mr. Bourdan,

The Acton Recreation Commission is in support of the Morrison Farm Implementation Plan (MFIP) and wishes to provide this endorsement of the CPA application for funding.

The MFIP calls for the creation of recreational elements such as a boardwalk and trail system throughout Morrison Farm, a picnic/playground area near the Ice House trailhead, and a broad, open area that will be mowed but not graded, to be called "The Playing Field." And, of course, Ice House Pond itself will be available for activities like fishing and boating. The project represents an exciting opportunity to engage Acton residents of all ages with the Town's natural resources.

Recreation Commissioners have been providing input on the design of the playground, which we feel strongly should tie in with both the farm theme and historic location of the old Ice House, where it will be located. The whole of Morrison Farm is intended to be available for active and passive recreational activities, and the playground should serve as a gateway to the natural play discoveries to be found throughout the Farm.

Town planning documents such as the Open Space and Recreation Plan and the Acton 2020 Plan advocate for the provision of facilities that are up-to-date, accessible and address the needs of underserved populations. The Morrison Farm program will provide a very prominent introduction for many residents to Acton's extensive conservation land network. Conservation trails often remain an untapped resource, and the Recreation Commission recognizes they could be marketed more extensively for recreation purposes.

In conjunction with activities focused on history, nature and agriculture, the Recreation Department is investigating methods for providing therapeutic, inclusive and adaptive recreation opportunities for disabled children and adults—something Town residents have expressed a need for. Morrison Farm will provide excellent opportunities to provide such programs. The MFIP opens pristine conservation areas to underserved populations.

The Town Recreation Department has agreed to manage Morrison Farm and the Morrison Farm Nature & History Center with support from the Conservation Commission for the protection of the 15 acres of forested land, which the MFIP recommends be designated as Conservation Land.

The Acton Recreation Commission is seeking your assistance in providing strong support for this project that will mean so much to our community. Thank you in advance for your assistance.

Sincerely,

Karen Jarsky  
Town of Acton Recreation Commission Chair

Exhibit B

Letter from Historic Commission  
Dated 1/14/13



MASSACHUSETTS 01720

ACTON HISTORICAL COMMISSION

January 14, 2013

Morrison Farm Committee  
Attn: Bill Mullin, Chair  
Town Hall  
Acton, MA 01720

**RE: Morrison Farm Project – Review of CPA Application**

Dear Mr. Mullin:

The Acton Historical Commission has reviewed the application materials submitted to the Community Preservation Committee for the Morrison Farm project. As the historical resources associated with the Morrison Farm are located outside of the Town's historic districts, historical review and oversight falls to the Historical Commission.

While the Commission remains supportive of the historic elements of the project, there are certain aspects of the CPC application that the Morrison Farm Committee should ensure are addressed or considered, as applicable, as you move forward with your application and the project:

1. Captain Robbins Alarm Stone – For various reasons, it is imperative that the Alarm Stone not be moved from its current location. As mentioned in our December 2012 letter to the CPC, the Alarm Stone should not be disturbed or relocated without the Historical Commission's written approval.
2. Robbins Homestead Foundation – The remaining foundation for the Robbins site should be preserved using due care and appropriate archaeological methods.
3. Missing Inventory Forms – The inventory forms will need to be attached to the application for each of the 3 protected historical resources: the Alarm Stone (form #929), the Robbins site (form #930) and the Morrison Farm buildings and grounds (form for "Area O").
4. Secretary of Interior Standards – The application will also need to incorporate a statement of how the project will comply with and adhere to the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Archaeology and Historic Preservation.
5. Appropriate Allocation of Historic Funding – As the project will tie together various historic, open space and recreational elements, it will be important to allocate the proportion of requested funding for each element.

6. Archaeological Survey – We recognize that the Committee has anticipated obtaining an archaeological survey for work in the vicinity of the Robbins site, but it will also be important to evaluate whether such archaeological survey work will be required at some or all other areas of the project where the ground will be disturbed.

We appreciate the Morrison Farm Committee's dedication to this worthwhile project, and its willingness to seek input from this Commission on the project's historic elements. As the body responsible for such historic oversight, the Commission would appreciate being kept apprised of the work and communications regarding the historic considerations, and we will continue to be available to offer guidance on the same. We look forward to working with you as the project moves forward.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "William Dickinson", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

William Dickinson, AIA  
Vice-Chair  
Acton Historical Commission

cc: Roland Bourdon, Chair, Community Preservation Committee

## Exhibit C

# Morrison Farm Proforma Operating Plan (Draft)

**Note:** Attached is a proforma budget for the operations of Morrison Farm. At this stage, we are still vetting some of the numbers and expect to have a more refined model in the next few weeks.

Nonetheless, we believe that the overall trends toward being a cash flow positive operation will not change in a material way.

--Bill Mullin, Chair, Morrison Farm Committee

--Cathy Fochtman, Recreation Director, Town of Acton

Morrison Farm  
Revenue and Expense Model

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10
<b>Revenue</b>										
Donations	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000
Facility	\$13,000	\$26,000	\$39,000	\$52,000	\$65,000	\$68,250	\$71,663	\$75,246	\$79,008	\$82,958
Programming	\$5,200	\$10,400	\$15,600	\$20,800	\$26,000	\$27,300	\$28,665	\$30,098	\$31,603	\$33,183
<b>Total Revenue</b>	\$28,200	\$46,400	\$64,600	\$82,800	\$101,000	\$105,550	\$110,328	\$115,344	\$120,611	\$126,142
<b>Expenses</b>										
Operating & Maintenance										
Allocated Labor Costs	\$35,000	\$36,050	\$37,132	\$38,245	\$39,393	\$40,575	\$41,792	\$43,046	\$44,337	\$45,667
Direct Labor Costs	\$31,760	\$32,713	\$17,000	\$17,510	\$18,035	\$18,576	\$19,134	\$19,708	\$20,299	\$20,908
Costs	\$0	\$0	\$30,000	\$30,900	\$31,827	\$32,782	\$33,765	\$34,778	\$35,822	\$36,896
<b>Total Expenses</b>	\$66,760	\$68,763	\$84,132	\$86,655	\$89,255	\$91,933	\$94,691	\$97,531	\$100,457	\$103,471
<b>Net (Before Reserves)</b>	<b>(\$38,560)</b>	<b>(\$22,363)</b>	<b>(\$19,532)</b>	<b>(\$3,855)</b>	<b>\$11,745</b>	<b>\$13,617</b>	<b>\$15,637</b>	<b>\$17,812</b>	<b>\$20,154</b>	<b>\$22,670</b>
<b>Capital Reserve</b>	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$11,745	\$13,617	\$15,637	\$17,812	\$20,154	\$22,670
<b>Aggregate Capital Reserve</b>	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$11,745	\$25,362	\$40,999	\$58,811	\$78,965	\$101,635



**Town of Acton Recreation Department**

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Cathy Fochtman, Recreation Director

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To: Tom Tidman, Natural Resources Director

From: Cathy Fochtman, Recreation Director

Date: January 21, 2013

Re: Morrison Farm Operating Plan

## **Morrison Facility and Programming Oversight**

### **Historical Overview of Recreation Department**

The Acton Recreation Department has been in operation since 1998. Since inception, it was chartered to be administered as a self-funded department to support NARA, which opened to the public in 1999. The original staff of Recreation director and secretary has now expanded to one director, two full time administrative staff, and two part time administrative assistants. The current staff has been at the helm for half of the department's 14 year existence and is a partner with the Natural Resources Director and Recreation Commission; together they have contributed to the significant expansion of the infrastructure and operation of NARA.

### **Accomplishments**

- *Facility additions and changes:* Amphitheater - Sound and lighting system installation, snackbar/storage/green room building, landscaping; Bathhouse – custom designed weather panels, bathroom and snackbar upgrades, landscaping; playground updates, upper parking lot expansion, Miracle League field.
- *Programming expansion:* First Town Hall online payment and registration system in 2010, regular social media presence on Facebook, Twitter, Blog, and Constant Contact E-News; expansion of program services and providers, including local businesses: Acton Chinese Martial Arts, All Seasons Tennis Club, and Acton Gymnastic Academy.

- *Event expansion:* From 4 annual special events back in 2000 to over 30 today, sponsorship increases and loyal contributors from the business community, Free Summer Concert Series performer variety, ticketed concerts, close collaboration with community organizations – Acton Lions Club, Acton-Boxborough Rotary Club, Acton Chinese Language School, Danny’s Place Youth Services, and Middlesex West Chamber of Commerce, addition of cultural events including Town 275<sup>th</sup> Anniversary and Chinese New Year with Acton Chinese Language School, Acton Chinese Culture Day, Sri Lanka Day and Essence of India.

### **NARA Revenue Model Success**

Each year, the Recreation Department supports the supply and service needs of its programs – a town licensed day camp, town licensed public beach, programs and events at NARA and other municipal locations. Unlike other Town Department buildings and grounds which are funded through the Municipal Properties Department, Recreation underwrites building and grounds supplies, maintenance and services, including utilities - electric, water; fire safety, plumbing, and septic. NARA building and grounds expenditures from January – December 2012 for building supplies, routine maintenance and utilities included payments to NSTAR, Constellation Energy, Acton Water District, Acton Hardware, Rogan Electric, Bee Busters, Patriot Lock, Big Belly Solar, Concord Lumber, and A&M Fire Protection, totaling \$19,540.77.

Those familiar with Town finances are aware that the fiscal year operates from July 1 – June 30. Since NARA operates seasonally from May through November, it is useful for program analysis purposes to take a snapshot and compare calendar year performance from year to year.

A recent review of January – December 2012 revolving account revenue performance shows that Recreation preliminary revenue receipts totaled \$427,291.05, an increase of 26% over January - December 2011 figures. Nine out of thirteen categories showed increased growth over the preceding year. Bear in mind that the revenue accrued over the 2012 calendar year is budgeted for expenditure through the remainder of FY13 (through June 2013). See exhibit 2.

Because of our success building a self-sustaining operation at NARA, it is exciting to be part of the Morrison Committee’s team, enhancing another Acton “jewel”.

### Morrison Farm Operating and Maintenance

The operating and maintenance support of the Morrison Farm Nature & History Center would mirror that of other Town buildings. Based on discussion with Municipal Properties Director Dean Charter, the operating expenses for the Morrison Farm Nature & History Center building would be similar to that of the Council on Aging building, located at 50 Audubon Drive. A budget of \$35,000 would cover the following expenses:

Building & Grounds maintenance:	\$ 5,000
Supplies (cleaning, paper goods, etc.)	\$ 2,000
Trash removal (Natural Resources Crew)	\$ 0
Utilities	(\$18,000)
Electric	\$12,000
Water	\$ 500
Natural Gas	\$ 5,500
<u>Contractual (cleaning service)</u>	<u>\$10,000</u>
 Total	 \$35,000

## Facility Use

There are local and out-of-state nature center facilities that offer corporate and private rental services which were reviewed for cost comparison.

- Nature Center at Broadmoor Wildlife Sanctuary, Mass Audubon, Natick, MA  
\$400 per day, capacity 50 seated/80 assembled  
[www.massaudubon.org/Nature\\_Connection/Sanctuaries/Broadmoor/facilities.php](http://www.massaudubon.org/Nature_Connection/Sanctuaries/Broadmoor/facilities.php)
- Nature Center at Moose Hill, Mass Audubon, Sharon, MA  
\$225 per hour, business hours/\$275 per hour, after hours, capacity 76 seated  
[www.massaudubon.org/Nature\\_Connection/Sanctuaries/Moose\\_Hill/facilities.php](http://www.massaudubon.org/Nature_Connection/Sanctuaries/Moose_Hill/facilities.php)
- Asbury Woods Nature Center, operated by Millcreek Township School District, Erie, PA  
\$150 per hour, \$750 per day  
[www.asburywoods.org/rentals/room-rental](http://www.asburywoods.org/rentals/room-rental)
- The Gardens on Spring Creek, operated by City of Fort Collins, CO  
Evelyn Clark Classroom  
\$35 per hour for profit/\$25 per hour non-profit, capacity 35  
[www.fcgov.com/gardens](http://www.fcgov.com/gardens)

Discussion with these organizations revealed that their facilities are heavily program oriented and less dependent on rentals. The frequency of rental occupation for our Morrison Farm model assumes more reliance upon rentals to outside organizations in the early years as programming becomes more robust. See chart below.

Morrison Farm Facilities				
Location	Acton Resident/Non-Profit (8AM-5PM)	Acton Resident/Non-Profit (After 5PM)	Non Resident/ For-Profit (8AM-5PM)	Non Resident/For-Profit (After 5PM)
Nature & History Center Small Function Room (Max Capacity 8)	\$ 25 per hour/\$ 150 full day	\$ 50 per hour	\$ 35 per hour/\$ 250 full day	\$70 per hour
Nature & History Center Large Function Room (Max Capacity 100)	\$ 75 per hour/\$ 500 full day	\$100 per hour	\$ 150 per hour/\$ 1,000 full day	\$200 per hour
Picnic Area - Ice House Pond	\$ 35 half day	\$ 70 full day	\$ 75 half day	\$ 150 full day
Community Garden Plot	\$ 30 annually	-	\$ 40 annually	-

This is a proposed rate schedule for the facilities at Morrison Farm. "Full day" rental rates offer a reduced rate for daytime use. Bookings exceeding 6 hours will benefit, because "full day" is less expensive than the hourly rate. (e.g. Large Function Room Rental: \$75 x 7hrs = \$525, Full day is \$500; \$150 x 7 hrs = \$1,050, Full day is \$1,000). Certain options such as use of an outdoor tent, kitchen use, A/V equipment use for meetings, etc. would be offered for an additional fee.

Full booking capacity: 1 resident full day booking @ \$500 per day x (365 days) = \$182,500.

Year 1: .5 full-day resident bookings per week @ \$500 x (52 weeks) = \$13,000

Year 2: 1 full-day resident bookings per week @ \$500 x (52 weeks) = \$26,000

Year 3: 1.5 full-day resident bookings per week @ \$500 x (52 weeks) = \$39,000

Year 4: 2 full-day resident bookings per week @ \$500 x (52 weeks) = \$52,000

Year 5: 2.5 full-day resident bookings per week @ \$500 x (52 weeks) = \$65,000

## **Programming**

In partnership with the Acton Historical Commission and other organizations and individuals offering a depth of historical, natural and agricultural knowledge, programs and seminars will be offered to the public. The Recreation Department has a well established system for developing, promoting and administering programs to the public and it is anticipated that programming revenues will grow steadily as a base of tried and true educational programming is established and the infrastructure of the grounds and facilities support more programming opportunities.

It is conservatively estimated that programming will return the following revenue assuming the instructor retains 80% and the Town retains 20% of the fee:

Full booking capacity: 10 registrations x (365 days) @ \$50 x (20% profit) = \$36,500

Year 1: 10 registrations per week @ \$50 x (20% profit) x (52 weeks)= \$ 5,200

Year 2: 20 registrations per week @ \$50 x (20% profit) x (52 weeks)= \$10,400

Year 3: 30 registrations per week @ \$50 x (20% profit) x (52 weeks)= \$15,600

Year 4: 40 registrations per week @ \$50 x (20% profit) x (52 weeks)= \$20,800

Year 5: 50 registrations per week @ \$50 x (20% profit) x (52 weeks)= \$26,000

## **Staffing and Cash Flow**

With Town staff, the Morrison Committee has developed revenue estimates, using certain assumptions. The following are major assumptions made with respect to operational aspects of the cash flow:

1. Revenue will come from multiple sources: donations, facility rentals for corporate and private events, program registrations, picnic rentals, and community garden plot rentals. It is intended that fees from programs will cover their related expenses. While fees have not been set, representative fees for facility rentals and programming revenues are used in the model.
2. One Recreation administrator (20 hours per week @ \$19,760) with one administrative assistant (10 hours per week @ \$12,000) will be responsible for overseeing the facility and programming operation at Morrison Farm and any other municipal recreation activities. It is anticipated that as Morrison Farm activities expand, that more coverage will needed to meet demands and staffing will increase.

3. **Summary:** Based on these assumptions, we project that the financial results of operating Morrison Farm facilities and programming will be as follows: In Year 1, revenues are projected to be \$28,200 and expenses \$66,760 for a net expense of (\$38,560). In Year 2, revenues are projected to be \$46,400 and expenses \$ 68,763 for a net expense of (\$22,363).

Exhibit 2. Recreation Department Revenue by Calendar Year

Jan- Dec	Programs		Facilities			Beach				Events	Camp	Fees	Financial	Merchandise	TOTAL
	Camp Acton		Camp Acton	Picnic	Fields	Daily Passes	Memberships	Swim Lessons	Boat Rental						
2011	\$57,038.40	\$660.00	\$9,630.00	\$6,735.00	\$39,239.00	\$23,499.00	\$9,177.00	\$2,725.00	\$30,923.56	\$126,839.10	\$9,722.35	\$80.08	\$23,048.75	\$339,317.24	
2012	\$79,810.40	\$810.00	\$8,125.00	\$6,150.00	\$37,363.00	\$26,710.00	\$9,514.60	\$1,495.00	\$41,900.42	\$145,379.80	\$39,250.69	\$882.66	\$29,899.48	\$427,291.05	
% change	39.92%	22.73%	-15.63%	-8.69%	-4.78%	13.66%	3.68%	-45.14%	35.50%	14.62%	303.72%	1002.22%	29.72%	25.93%	

\* \$35,347.51 Goward Playground donations in 2012. Fees include reimbursements to Town from Sports Leagues for their share of Town sports lighting and site amenities

## Exhibit D

# Revised Morrison Farm CPA Application Backup Financial Information

**Note:** The budget has been change to add \$30k of bond issuance cost. As such, three tables in the application are affected. The new tables follow. By submission of this supplemental information, the Morrison Farm Committee requests that its application to the CPC be amended to include these new amounts.

### Total Project Costs

No.	Element	Year 1	Later Years	Total
1	Trails	\$153	\$396	\$549
2	Infrastructure	\$499	\$155	\$654
3	Morrison N&H Bldg	\$910	\$75	\$985
4	Meadows/Playing Field	\$10	\$10	\$20
5	Robbins Memorial	\$35	\$20	\$55
6	Ice House Area	\$185	\$25	\$210
7	EAV Common	\$0	\$70	\$70
8	Arch, Eng, Survey, Legal	\$214	\$25	\$239
	<b>Total</b>	<b>\$2,006</b>	<b>\$776</b>	<b>\$2,782</b>

### Total Costs Allocated to Expensed Costs and Bonded Costs

No.	Element	Year 1 Expensed	Year 1 Bonded	Later Years Expensed	Later Years Bonded	Total Bonded	Total
1	Trails	\$0	\$153	\$0	\$396	\$549	\$549
2	Infrastructure	\$0	\$499	\$50	\$105	\$604	\$654
3	Morrison N&H Bldg	\$0	\$910	\$75	\$0	\$910	\$985
4	Meadows/Playing Field	\$10	\$0	\$10	\$0	\$0	\$20
5	Robbins Memorial	\$35	\$0	\$20	\$0	\$0	\$55
6	Ice House Area	\$0	\$185	\$25	\$0	\$185	\$210
7	EAV Common	\$0	\$0	\$70	\$0	\$0	\$70
8	Arch, Eng, Survey	\$214	\$0	\$25	\$0	\$0	\$239
	<b>Total</b>	<b>\$259</b>	<b>\$1,747</b>	<b>\$275</b>	<b>\$501</b>	<b>\$2,248</b>	<b>\$2,782</b>

**Allocations per Segment of CPA**

<b>Category</b>	<b>Year 1 Expensed</b>	<b>Year 1 Bonded</b>	<b>Year 2 Expensed</b>	<b>Year 2 Bonded</b>	<b>Totals</b>
Open Space	\$53	\$141	\$98	\$11	\$302
Historical	\$121	\$727	\$99	\$47	\$993
Recreation	\$86	\$880	\$79	\$443	\$1,487
<b>Totals</b>	<b>\$259</b>	<b>\$1,747</b>	<b>\$275</b>	<b>\$501</b>	<b>\$2,782</b>