

Comments and Questions on Morrison Farm CPA Project Application  
from Isabella V Choate for CPC Meeting January 24, 2013

A few preliminary thoughts and questions as follows.

The application package seems to be missing information such as:

- Historic inventory forms for Morrison house barn, icehouse etc, Robbins house site, Robbins Boulder, and Woodlawn Cemetery which would help in understanding the historic significance of the parcels.
- While it mentions generic permits in the cost sheets specific permits required along with their likelihood of approval are not listed which goes to the feasibility of the total project.
- There is nothing about the future maintenance and operation budget, which also goes to establish feasibility. Department resources are strained and will continue to be in the future. There are issues maintaining existing facilities. What is the worst-case scenario if revenues don't meet expectations and outside fund-raising declines.
- There is no listing of the architects and engineers preparing the plans. In presentations the concurrence of all the architects involved in the design has been mentioned. Who are they?
- While this project has been around for a long time and abutters have been involved in the past reports there is nothing in this application to indicate that they have been made aware of the changes made since the 2010 feasibility report and subsequent Board of Selectmen's positions (11/2010.)

As a town project this building and associated development bypasses all zoning and site plan review however the valid design concerns that review affords should not be ignored. Unfortunately once these funds are voted except for the hearings on the wetlands issues there is no more opportunity for public input. Most people cannot easily visualize how a completed project will look. The pictorial concept sketches provided are just that. With no scale and no reference points to existing conditions even the best of us have difficulty understanding them.

I would like to see the following addressed:

A site plan for new building showing details of utilities, septic, parking, storm water runoff, lighting. Including ADA access from building to gardens be completed.

An explanation of the changes to the design from the Kelleher Feasibility Study. In particular why the new building is so disconnected from the original farm buildings. Why it is sited into the open agricultural landscape. Why the number of permanent parking spaces is more than originally planned when there were playing fields. What are the plans for the Morrison Farm house and the area around it? How will it's future uses impact on the overall scheme. It sits at the mid point from EAV Green to the Robbins Memorial. Are we creating another Asa Parlin?

How many of the existing garden plots are lost to the new building? Will those be replaced by expansion of the area? If not replaced what impact on potential revenue as the gardens are part of recreation's self-funding model.

Since these are all organic garden plots the close proximity of the parking lots to the gardens is a concern. Pollutants from vehicle emissions and runoff from lots. Snow storage from the lots especially the upper lot will drain to the gardens as well.

Has the impact the building will have on sunlight for the gardens been considered. It is very close in this concept plan to the west of the gardens and appears likely to shade them.

Proposed well for garden plots is not a typical irrigation well as it is not supplying underground sprinklers. Would it be non-potable?

Why isn't an archaeological survey being proposed for the area of the new building? Why is it just limited to the Robbins house site? The mapping done by PAL as part of the CPA funded Archaeological Survey designates most all of the farm and icehouse areas as high sensitivity for both Pre-contact and Post-contact.

Since most if not all of the historic elements in this project are now eligible for National Register listing how do the proposed activities impact on that eligibility? Given the emphasis on the truly historic nature of both the Robbins house site and the agrarian landscape dating to the 1600s it seems something we would want to have in place.

Not looking for immediate answers but these are some of my concerns.  
Thank you.