

Community Preservation Committee  
Town of Acton  
472 Main Street  
Acton, MA

To the members of the committee,

Last month I sent a few brief questions about the Morrison Farm Implementation Plan application, mostly about what I saw as missing information in the application. I read the responses provided by the chair of MFC. With the project in flux while I have issues with the answers, I see no point in going on about them. So here are few my key thoughts as you start your deliberations.

MFC emphasizes the “conceptual nature” of the plans as presented and once they get their funding they will actually design it. The comparison has been made to NARA and the conceptual nature of those plans versus the finished park. NARA was a gravel pit, highway yard with piles of rocks, dirt, junk and no buildings. People used it as a dumping ground. In contrast the Morrison Farm property is already beautiful woods, meadow, trails, active garden plots and structures. We had nothing to lose at NARA taking a chance on changeable conceptual plans, as anything would have been an improvement. That is not the case at Morrison.

MFC has made it very clear the house is in the lap of the Selectmen. The MFIP ignores the house completely. I don't think you can have a viable plan without knowing how the house and its surrounds are going to be used. Cutting out a lot and selling the house has been floated or maybe renting it out. Either way requires a defined space. We already have one house, bought to expand the library, sitting there with no use. No area around it to make it a viable lot. I don't think we need to create another one.

The barn is currently used to house equipment used by the Natural Resources/Cemetery/Recreation grounds crew. Where is it going to go if the barn is demolished. Is it going to be left outside? Are we going to build a new storage shed?

Now to the new building and the financial model to make it self-sustaining. I read with interest the support letters of all the groups who would use it. Do we expect the schools or Discovery Museums will pay to use it? Are we creating programs to justify it? Will the Natural Resources/Cemetery/Recreation crews be able to maintain another complex, or will the same statement about stretched resources as the cause the lack of maintenance at the skateboard park be made in the future for this building.

The CPC has been fairly successful at town meeting. That success is rooted in your vetting process of the projects place before you. In other words you are prudent with the taxpayers dollars. You have cut requests. You have sent projects back to the drawing board. You have staged funding and conditioned the release of the balance on the

results of a study. This project will be the first bonding request using CPA funds. (Not sure any of us completely understand the implications of bonding.) I ask you to use that prudent vetting process which has worked in the past as you look long and hard at this project.

Sincerely,  
Isabella V Choate