

From: LINDA MC ELROY [meadowpond@verizon.net]
Sent: Wednesday, February 13, 2013 9:30 AM
To: Community Preservation Committee
Subject: Letter of resignation from MF committee
Attachments: Letter of resignation to the Board of Selectmen 0128113.docx

Members of CPC,

Attached you will find my letter of resignation from the current Morrison Farm Committee. I sent it earlier to the CPC chair, but apparently it was not circulated. The date on the letter can be verified either by the BOS or the Town Clerk.

I am resending it now, to be sure that the entire committee sees it, as I understand that since I resigned, a great number of folks within the town, both on committees and from the citizenry at large, have expressed their dissatisfaction with various elements of the MFIP as presented before CPC at its last meeting. My reasons for resignation are given in the letter and need not be repeated here, except to say that it was the lack of transparency in the process and the almost total disregard of the MFRC recommendations published in 2007 that caused me the distress I cited in the letter.

I was one of the appointed members of MFRC, representing the Land Stewards. I believe that it is important to respect the work of an earlier committee, in this case, comprised of a much larger number of members, appointed by the then BOS, so as to represent as many of the constituent groups within the town who might have an interest in the committee's deliberations as possible. Additionally, that original committee met regularly over a period of 18 months, did due diligence on every topic, finalized recommendations on only those issues on which consensus among the committee's members had been achieved. This is in contrast to the process and development of the current MF committee's Plan.

The illness referred to in the letter was not caused by stress related to the MF committee's work, but healing was retarded by that stress.

Sincerely,

Linda McElroy
TTT Director

Linda S. McElroy
8 Valley Road
Acton MA 01720
January 28, 2013

Board of Selectmen
Town of Acton
472 Main Street/ Town Hall
Acton MA 01720

Att: Ms. Harting-Barrat

Dear Ms. Harting-Barrat,

I am sending this letter to you to tender my resignation from the current Morrison Farm Committee, effective immediately.

There are two reasons for this decision; the first impacts the second.

- The *Morrison Farm Implementation Plan*, as it was presented to the CPC on January 24, 2013, causes me some grave concerns. Consequently, I do not feel that I can defend certain portions of it, particularly the elements pertaining to the proposed new building, the area around it to be developed for parking, and its impact on the current gardens. These components are in conflict with the recommendations made by the original Morrison Farm Reuse Committee, of which I was a member. That committee met for 18 months, did due diligence on all issues that led to the carefully considered Recommendations, and involved all the communities affected, with open forums, and ample opportunities for input and discussion.

Additionally, the *process* by which the MFIP has been developed has not been transparent, and there has been no opportunity for an up or down vote on any of the subgroup decisions. When I agreed to serve on this committee, I did so with the expectation that I would, at some point, have the opportunity to make input and express my concerns about the building portion of the Plan. Because of the 'distributed leadership' model employed by the chairman—to make possible the project's extremely fast trajectory—there were no meetings of the whole committee in which up or down votes could have been taken on the various sub-elements of the Plan.

I had made my position known (as an observer), along with 3 others who spoke up forcefully, at the very first meeting, stating that I felt the project should be phased; that the plans for the area around Ice House Pond seemed well thought-through and well designed; and that no building should be constructed until it was determined (that is studied) what uses the communities likely to be involved with the farm and field areas would wish to see such a building equipped for.

In light of the objections that the committee has received from Isabella Choate, and Nancy Tavernier, two well-known and well-respected long-time volunteers for the Town of Acton, together with my own misgivings about the need, expense, and appropriateness of the currently proposed building, I find myself *unable* to defend the Plan as it has now been defined.

- This situation is causing me stress, and, as I am trying to recover from an illness that impacts my eligibility for total hip replacement surgery this spring, together with the adjustments that surgery and changes in lifestyle that I will have to undergo to address other health issues, I feel that I cannot give the necessary energy to the further work of the Morrison Farm Committee. The energy that I do have, I wish to devote to my one main passion for the Town: the Trail Through Time.

I realize that this decision will be a disappointment to the MFC, but I will be able, as an off-committee member, to follow through with certain issues pertaining to masonry and archaeology at the Robbins Homestead and Monument, the area of the Plan that I was 'assigned' to work on.

Very Sincerely Yours,

Linda S. McElroy

Cc: Town Clerk, Town of Acton
Morrison Farm Committee