

Minutes
Town of Acton Community Preservation Committee
March 7, 2013
Public Safety Facility

Members Present: Roland Bourdon (Chair), Tory Beyer, Dave Clough, Walter Foster, Amy Green, Betsy Mercier, Susan Mitchell-Hardt, Ken Sghia-Hughes, Peter Ashton (Associate), Dore Hunter (Associate)

The meeting was opened at 7:35 by Chair Bourdon

1. Ashton provided update on potential Open Space land purchase.
 - a. Town appraisal came back and is close to the Owner's appraisal
 - b. Trying to make April Town Meeting, will have a warrant place holder just in case; otherwise will shoot for June special Town Meeting
 - c. Financing – could bond all or part of it or use set aside for all or part of it; will write warrant to have both options
 - d. There are other potential purchases in the pipeline so seems best to maximize bonding so that the set aside can be used for immediate future
2. Review minutes of 2/28/2013; minor edits noted; reviewed comments from Anne Forbes
 - a. 3. d.i – Clough clarified that there was, in fact, a Board of Selectmen (BoS) vote on demolishing the barn
 - b. 3.d.iv – asked if demolition costs were just taking out of bonding or from entire costs. Bartl clarified that entire costs include the bonding, so demolition costs were effectively taken out of both
 - c. 3.d.vii – does the wording mean that “:renovation”, in context of CPA include general public use as well as storage. General discussion that intent was that for either use the current barn is not suitable; language in minutes reflects what was said at the meeting
 - d. Sghia-Hughes moved to approve; Mitchell-Hardt seconded; **Vote:** all in favor
3. Clough reported on Board of Selectmen (BoS) update - NARA pavilion was in front of Design Review Board (DRB) last night; there was a general discussion that since the pavilion is ready to go to bid that no substantial changes would be feasible as it would add engineering/design costs. Could possibly save up to \$50,000 by deleting masonry and metal roof~~changing timbers to steel~~, but would not fundamentally change the design; lit dance floor could be taken out to save \$19,000; only a new design with steel framing would save significantly; design (whether timber or steel) has to be strong enough to withstand winds; likely break ground after summer programs are done;
4. Discussion of Morrison Farm Implementation Plan (MFIP)
 - a. General discussion of whether or not CPC could allocate components into CPA categories (ie, Recreation, Open Space, Historic)
 - i. Might be easiest to not allocate; would mean that in future years all the set asides would have to be met outside of the bond payments

- ii. Can't decide on allocations in future years – if we can't do it now then would be even harder in future
 - iii. Discussed Town Counsel opinion that changing status of woodlot 15 acres from municipal property to conservation land is an “acquisition” under CPA. Appraised value of land would change if status is municipal, conservation land, or even with a Conservation Restriction (CR).
 - iv. CR would be a stronger protection of the land (permanent) than change in designation to Conservation Land (which could be changed with 2/3 vote)
 - v. Could allocate some elements easily, but perhaps not all of them
 - vi. There are very clear values for Open Space, Recreation and Historic Preservation, but perhaps not a straight line cost; protection of historic/ agricultural vistas, for example, is a high value with a low cost
 - vii. Discussed how to parse the costs, particularly to pull out costs for historic tasks (ie, Alarm Stone, Robbins foundation etc)
 - b. Sghia-Hughes moved to allocate entire costs to General categories; Green seconded; Discussion
 - i. Allocation to historic categories is justified and not doing so takes away from fact that MFIP is three pronged – historic, open space and recreation
 - ii. Sghia-Hughes withdrew motion and Green withdrew second
 - iii. Kabakoff noted that if allocation subject comes up in Town Meeting, CPC may need to provide specifics on the cost allocation per CPA category
 - c. Foster moved to allocate 5% Historic, 5% Open Space and 90% General; Clough seconded; Discussion
 - i. Reviewed line item costs to support the 5% historic
 - ii. Discussed difficulty of tracking future expenditures to confirm if funds were used in each category, as well as possibly when the expenditure occurred for bond payment
 - iii. Re-iterated that there are intangible values to the project that should be allocated as long as project stays within the general parameters of the MFIP then the future allocations just need to meet the “gestalt”, not the number crunching approach
 - iv. Foster moved to amend his motion to allocate 10% Historic, 10% Open Space and 80% General; Clough did not withdraw second so 5%/5%/90% vote on the floor
 - v. Clarified that each CPC in the future could decide to allocate the bond payment to Recreation as opposed to just General
 - vi. **Vote:** Foster and Sghia-Hughes abstained; Bourdon, Beyer, Clough, Green, Mercier, Mitchell-Hardt in favor;
- 5. Bonding MFIP
 - a. Foster moved that CPC recommend appropriating \$2.505m for MFIP and bonding it for no less than 15 years; Sghia-Hughes second; Discussion

- i. This puts all the MFIP costs into year 1 so that there does not need to be future allocations
 - ii. Eliminates future year bonding costs and maximizes advantage of current low bond rates
 - iii. 2nd year costs are put into bond, which frees up CPA money
 - iv. General discussion of bond rates, possible ramifications of adding Open Space bond; how much discretionary funds would be available in future years after bond payment is allocated
 - v. Bond payment will also go down each year, and CPA funds will likely go up, even if marginally
 - b. **Vote:** all in favor
- 6. Draft Warrant – Morrison Bond
 - a. Discussion of wording such as mentioning connecting bridge and East Acton Village Green; Bartl added language
 - b. Removed requirement for “permanent displays depicting the nature, ecology and history of the farm and area” as this should not be a requirement, even though it will likely occur; Bartl removed entire #2)
 - c. Discussed if need to say building must be used for recreational purposes; definition too hard to nail down in language and potential uses were itemized in the CPA request so no need
 - d. Anne Forbes asked if CPC can say on what authority the barn has been deemed not suitable for public use, and that that includes storage
 - i. Clough indicated that info came from Dean Charter
 - ii. Forbes said that the Building Commissioner had only said that barn can’t be used for public assembly, nothing about storage
 - iii. Some discussion; will remove language “deemed unsuitable for public use without extraordinarily costly repairs and upgrades”
 - iv. Can have discussion of storage versus public assembly at Town Meeting; Forbes suggested getting Building Commissioner or some such expert to clarify
 - e. Removed language referring to a CR
 - f. **Vote:** all in favor
- 7. Draft Warrant – CPA Article
 - a. Sghia-Hughes moved to allocate current year MFIP funding as 5%/5%/90%; Foster seconded; **Vote:** all in favor
 - b. CPC needs to allocate money to Historic Preservation to meet CPA required allocations; Bartl will calculate (including allocation under MFIP), there will be a small amount of unallocated funds this year
 - c. Bonding expenses: Carry them (\$30,000) under both MFIP and Open Space in case one does not go thru; intent will be if both bonds get approved then costs will be split; if both go thru there will be unspent funds
 - d. Bartl changed language on Open Space bonding; all the language will be in that warrant
 - e. Herman Kabakoff (Finance Committee)
 - i. asked if CPC agrees to tacking Open Space and MFIP bonds together. CPC would allow but Town Meeting approves or not

- ii. Foster re-capped what Ashton had stated at beginning of meeting before Kabakoff arrive
 - iii. Asked what if Town Meeting votes down the Open Space bonding? CPC could go back in future, get approval by BoS and have another Town Meeting
 - iv. Kabakoff indicated that, anecdotally, some FinCom members might object to bonding when there is set aside money available; there is no assurance of knowledge of what is in the pipeline for Open Space purchases in near future
 - f. Additional minor edits of project summary paragraphs and to make consistent with what has been discussed
 - g. Foster moved to approve CPA Article with edits as discussed; Mercier seconded
 - h. Mercier queried on some of the language in Elm Street playground and tennis courts. “Since 2008, the project has transformed, but the price remained the same”.
 - i. Foster moved to amend his motion to accept the additional edits to Section J; Sghia-Hughes seconded; **Vote:** all in favor
8. Draft Warrant – Open Space Purchase
- a. Discussed that it should be made clear at Town Meeting that if both the Open Space Bond and MFIP Bond go forward, they will split the costs (assuming Open Space purchase even makes the April Town Meeting)
 - b. Discussion on how to fund Open Space purchase
 - i. Open Space set aside will be +/- \$2.5m
 - ii. If we draw down the set aside, we would not have any cushion if a land purchase comes up
 - iii. \$2.5m is not a lot of money of a good sized purchase does arise
 - iv. Perhaps should have a target for what the set aside should max out at
 - v. Usually allocate a good amount to Open Space every year; if CPC feels that the bond is taking too much of a given year’s budget, could reduce the allocation to the Open Space set aside to free up discretionary funds
 - vi. Might be worthwhile to put a least a little bit into the current Open Space purchase from the set aside
 - vii. Can’t settle on a dollar amount today as the purchase is not definite and we don’t know the price yet
 - c. Foster moved to keep the draft article on the warrant as a placeholder; Clough seconded; **Vote:** all in favor.
9. Administrative Updates
- a. Bourdon reported on presenting recommendations to the Finance Committee who then voted to support the recommendations
 - b. March 14th meeting cancelled as there would be no staff support available
 - c. March 21st is next meeting; go over Town Meeting presentation

10:55 Mitchell-Hardt moved to adjourn; Clough seconded; **Vote:** all in favor

Meeting adjourned