

Minutes for CPC Meeting of Oct. 2, 2003, 7:30 pm-9:45 pm, Library Meeting Room

Attending: Peter Grover, Walter Foster, Andy Magee, Catherine Coleman, Mimi Herington, Peter Berry, Susan Mitchell-Hardt, Roland Bartl

Guest: John Ryder, FinCom, 9:30 pm

Absent: Carol Todzia, Alison Gallagher, Chris Schaffner, Joe Nagle

1. Approval of Minutes

Walter Foster recommended a change on p 4: change "amendments from the floor aren't allowed to "new projects proposed from the floor aren't allowed."

The minutes of 9/18/03 were approved as amended.

2. New Business

a. Response to John Ryder's email on behalf of FinCom re: its unanimous recommendation to CPC that they consider bringing multiple warrant articles to the floor of Town Meeting, rather than just one: The CPC agreed to table this discussion for now and to ask more experienced CPC's how they handle it. The committee can also received guidance from DOR's bulletin and from Town Counsel.

b. Discussion of David Stone's email where he recommended posting each proposal on the website.

- Roland suggested that it would be more efficient to post a data sheet with all the applicants and the nature of the proposed projects. If people want more detail, the proposal will be in the Planning Dept.

- Roland and his staff will reply to questions from applicants who wish to know where the committee is in the process.

c. Discussion of e-mail issues

- A few people have requested to be on the CPC e-mail list - should this opportunity be advertised to all citizens? Is this preferential treatment?

If this were advertised to all citizens, the committee could have a flood of emails. It might be more advantageous to ask those on our email list to come in front of the committee rather than to communicate by email.

- Fin Com wants to do an independent financial analysis, and they will email the committee. This could lead to substantive discussions occurring by email. The committee must be careful to not have an email discussion.

d. Discussion of need for neutral, non-political financial person

- Mimi recommended having a neutral, non-political financial person on the committee who could receive proposals and review them, look at their budgets and comment on each line item.

- Roland suggested that when the committee gets costs for certain things that the Engineering Dept. could do a comparison against a price list. Mimi suggested that since some projects are duplicated in other towns, their costs could be compared against those in other towns. Roland stated that such work could be divided among the CPC.

e. Andy's report on last week's CHAPPA Conference

- Newton and Nantucket presented. In Newton the CPC negotiated with a developer for a 70 acre parcel to obtain some open space and some low income housing. It was agreed that affordable housing projects are the most complex.

- Pizzella and Saccardi, both CP Coalition officials, stated that not only will those towns who adopted the CPA receive 100% state match on Oct. 15, but because of low interest rates, etc. they expect 100% state match for the next 4 years!

2. Discussion re: Changes to Draft Community Preservation Plan

A host of minor editorial changes were made.

- Roland e-mailed the committee a review of the comments received on the draft CP Plan. Most of them dealt with issues re: Historic Preservation.

- Peter Grover recommended leaving as is the goal to "Update the existing...Cultural Resource Inventory and Archival Records."

- Anne Forbes questioned whether or not a signage program would be eligible for funding. The CP Coalition says it's allowable.

a. Discussion re: whether or not every Historic Preservation project that receives CP funding requires a deed restriction.

- Roland didn't find it in the law.
- A purchased property requires a deed restriction.
- Roland added that the town could purchase a deed restriction rather than buy it outright.
- Properties in the Historic District don't need a deed restriction.
- Historic preservation restriction costs could be built into the administrative expenses.

b. Feedback re: the Draft CP Plan:

- At the public meeting the comments from the public were positive.
- The FinCom commented that the document is very clear and that it's a good product.

Action: Roland will keep the master copy of the CP Plan. When the committee is done making changes, he will put it on the website and try to have parts of it published in the Beacon.

Action: Roland volunteered to re-work the Project Application Form. It will become a cover sheet, and he will send the committee a copy.

- put under Application Instructions that the committee may go back to the applicant for additional information including restrictions on the property.

3. Communications Committee Report

- a. Continue publicity for soliciting proposals before the Nov. deadline.

Action: Roland will make copies of the updated draft of the CP Plan for OktoberFest.

- b. Discussion re: Informational meeting for project proposals

Oct. 30, two weeks before proposal submittal - the committee will hold an informational meeting with a period for Q&A. The format will be similar to that of the committee's last public hearing.

Peter will explain:

- that the committee won't have answers to everything and for people to email technical questions to the committee.

- that if your project meets the goals of the CPA, go ahead and submit it.

- d. Discussion re: continuing publicity for soliciting proposals before Nov. deadline.

- Peter recommended putting an announcement in the Beacon each week that the Plan is available and the deadline for proposals is 11/14. Catherine will keep trying - space is more difficult to get now.

- John Ryder suggested submitting a letter to the editor as it might get in.

- d. Discussion re: Oversight of Funded Proposals

- Peter recommended hiring an auditor with the administrative money to ensure the funds are spent properly and that this might be a subject to discuss with other CPC's.

- Andy suggested that it would be worthwhile to invite a CPC member from Westford and Bedford to meet with the committee for one hour to discuss how they handle oversight issues, etc.

Action: Catherine will invite someone from the Bedford CPC and Susan will invite someone from the Westford CPC to meet with the Acton CPC from 7:45 pm - 8:45 pm, Oct. 16.

Action: The committee will pull together some questions and make use of those questions which Walter already pulled together.

- e. Discussion re: creating a standard acceptance letter:

- John Ryder recommended having a standard proposal acceptance letter. He recommended having an attorney draw up an acceptance letter which delineates the committee's expectations.

- Walter stated that the Town Treasurer plays that role as the funds are from tax revenue, and he must account for those funds.

- John stated that getting banks to have their law department review subordination agreements takes time - he suggested having a generic one drawn up.

- Peter Berry said that he can get someone to do it from his real estate division.

- f. Discussion re: creating letter to applicant indicating their proposal is received:

- Mimi recommended that the committee issue a letter to the applicant indicating that their proposal is being considered.

Action: Mimi will draft the letter.

g. Discussion of creating a quick action fund:

- Roland raised the question about creating a quick action fund for holding property, or for emergency historic preservation or affordable housing projects. - It was suggested that we ask the Bedford and Westford CPC members how their committees created such a fund.

- Roland suggested that the CPC write a proposal to itself whose project would be to create a quick action fund.

- John Ryder suggested creating a policy to set aside a percentage/year. He suggested using the FinCom's model where they have a small discretionary budget for plowing. It requires a 2/3 vote of the FinCom to release the fund.

4. Next Meetings:

October 16, 7:30 pm, Rm 126, Town Hall.

October 30, 7:30 pm, Library Meeting Room (Informational Meeting).

Respectfully submitted: Susan Mitchell-Hardt