

Minutes for CP Committee Meeting of 2/5/03, 7:30 pm, Library Meeting Room

Attending: Walter Foster, Andy Magee, Allison Gallagher, Chris Shaffner, Joe Nagle, Peter Berry, Catherine Coleman, Peter Grover, Susan Mitchell-Hardt, Mimi Herrington, Wayne Klockner, Roland Bartl, Nancy Tavernier

Review: Nancy Tavernier and Anne Forbes are on the e-mail list for receiving minutes, etc.

Introduction:

We had an introductory session last meeting

We reviewed the bylaw

We discussed timing and funding.

Our most important task will be electing a chair which we will discuss at the end of the night.

Recorder assigned: Susan Mitchell-Hardt agreed to take the minutes. Walter stated it would be ok to rotate taking the minutes.

Secretary's Report: The minutes from 1/23/03 were accepted with a few changes.

Handouts: copies of the Master Plan Update; report on CACP meeting with Bob Wilbur, Chair of Stow CP Committee on 12/3/02; Questions from Walter Foster/Answers from John Murray; Commentary on Assessors' outreach efforts re: exemptions for seniors; list of Community Preservation Committee members, addresses, etc. (Joe Nagle's address is changed to 6 Jennifer Path).

Selection of Meeting Dates: We agreed to meet every two weeks in order to ramp up quickly. Temporarily we will meet alternating Tues and Thursday.

Next Meetings: 2/27, Thursday, 7:30 pm, Rm 204 or library Meeting Room
3/18, 7:30 pm Tuesday, Rm. 204

Reports:

- Discussion of e-mail from John Murray: The town tax software had to be rewritten in order to get the surcharge out in the 3rd quarter tax bill. Acton's surcharge is about \$478,000 less some exemptions

- The town voted in two exemptions - they were publicized in the tax bill.

- Mr. McMullin's seminar on exemptions at the COA received rave reviews.

- there are concerns about the process and confidentiality (John Murray and Steve Barrett are the only two people to see the applications).

Publicizing exemptions:

- they were publicized at the COA seminar
- the BoS support the idea of an article in the Beacon re: Exemptions.
- Walter tries to mention the exemptions at BoS meetings which are broadcast on cable.

ACTION: Susan will write a draft Q&A sheet about exemptions indicating whom to contact in Town Hall, examples of who qualifies for exemptions and an introduction of the CPC who are promoting the ad.

- She will ask Dorris to put it in the Beacon pending Town Hall approval as well as the Action Unlimited.

It will list examples of who would qualify:

- a 60 year old couple with a combined income of less than \$59,000
- a senior living alone with annual income less than \$52,000
- a low income family of four earning less than \$60,000.

Timing of exemptions:

ACTION: Bring question to Town Counsel.

- We will try to regularize them with other exemptions which have deadlines.
- The CPC may establish an overlay account to refund the exemptions when processed.
- The overlay account will be administered by the Treasurer's Office.

Appropriation of funds for administrative costs:

- the process can't happen prior to April Town Meeting as the funds aren't certified until Sept.
- We could make appropriations for administrative expenses retroactively at a fall Special Town Meeting, perhaps by a citizens' petition.

Discussion of potential raid of Trust Fund:

- Walter recommends keeping an eye on the communitypreservation.com website.
- The Community Preservation Coalition (CPC) does a legislative watch.
- it would be difficult to pass a bill to repeal the CPA as 58 towns are counting on it. Many people are invested.
- Nancy stated that the majority of all state senators have at least one constituency in the CPA.

- Matching funds are at 100%, and there is no pending legislation to repeal the CPA.

Recent seminars:

Report on Joel Lerner's Seminar on CR's on 1/25 at Clock Tower Place

- A CR is a legal agreement between a landowner and a conservation organization that permanently limits specified uses and development of the property to protect its natural scenic features. ...
- All land purchased with CP funds must be under a conservation restriction.
- CP funds may be used to reimburse costs which are part of due diligence when purchasing a property such as developing baseline data, appraisals, survey, preparation of document and recording.
- MGL Ch. 184, Sect. 32 also gives the Mass. Historical Commission the authority to approve Preservation Restrictions, which will be required under the CPA when CP funds are used to preserve buildings. Anne Forbes advises the CP committee to begin thinking well in advance about who might be appropriate holders for a PR on any town-owned building that might benefit from CP funds.

Future seminars:

Sat, March 1, 8:30 am-3:30 pm, First Parish Church, Bedford, MA, Community Preservation Act Conference

3/15, Saturday, 8:30 am - 4:30 pm, Mass. Land Trust Conference, Bancroft School,

Worcester, MA, at least one session on CPA and many on conservation restrictions

Selection of Chair:

- Chair is a critical role which will require much offline time. The Chair will research questions - more so in the start up year.
- Roland will help with the agenda and offer guidance
- Chair will run biweekly meetings; put together agenda; will see that action items from the last meeting are attended to.
- Roland will do research and put things together.
- The chair will make a report to April Town Meeting; shepherd the plan and projects resulting in what is presented at Town Meeting floor
- The Chairmanship can change with the change of FY (6/30); then a new person could be re-elected
- There can be a Vice Chair
- Andy suggested a communications person - we'll need lots of outreach.
- Roland suggested we could have a subcommittee outline things that need to be done to get a 5 year plan.
- The Chairman should assign subcommittees.
- Walter is not available as he is chair of the BoS, etc.
- Walter will solicit feedback from the BoS.

- e-mail Roland who you would like and he will compile names.

Misc.

- communitypreservation.org website lists projects by year and type.
- our job is to appropriate the CP funds. The mission statement is well informed by the statutes, Master Plan and OSRP.
- it would be possible for each of us to receive a draft copy of the Open Space and Recreation Plan - the final version is not ready.
- The Rec. Commission has identified projects on a 5 year plan
- Andy suggested we could combine our money with the state money and broaden our scope.

What to accomplish at the next two meetings:

- 4/7 is Town Meeting.
- Report that there's money collected, how much has been spent and what's left.
- We brought in \$478,000 - (there is no raid on the Trust Fund). By town Meeting 3/4 of the money should be in an interest bearing account.