

Memorandum

March 16, 2015

To: Acton Board of Selectmen

From: Morrison Farm Committee

Subj: Response to ACHC Recommendations for Use of the Morrison Farmhouse, dated December 5, 2013

At our Committee meeting on January 7, 2014, we reviewed and discussed the recommendation from the Acton Community Housing Corporation regarding the use of the Morrison Farmhouse. Several of us toured the Morrison Farmhouse with members of the ACHC on October 29, 2013 and had the opportunity to see the work that has been done to date to make the farmhouse ready as a residence, as well as to see the work that would still need to be done.

The current plans for the Morrison property focus on making the property more welcoming and accessible to Acton's residents so that more people can appreciate the unique history and qualities of the property. The planned improvements, which were funded with Community Preservation funds at last spring's Annual Town Meeting, include:

- (1) Survey and document the historic foundations adjacent to the property at the Robbins Homestead and Ice House, and reinforce and preserve the Robbins Homestead foundation.
- (2) Create improved parking by the Ice House Pond.
- (3) Create a trail and boardwalks along the western edge of Ice House Pond.

Other uses would continue, including the meadow area and the community gardens. At this time we have no plans for the buildings on the property, but we expect to monitor how the property is used with these improvements and see what future uses might be envisioned.

The result of our discussion is that the Committee supports the rental of the Morrison Farmhouse, as laid out in the ACHC recommendation, with the following recommendations:

- (1) There should be no long-term lease.
- (2) The committee does not believe that access to the community gardens and fields needs to be moved.
- (3) The committee recommends that additional investments in the farmhouse be kept at a reasonable level in that rental of the house may be temporary and

additional work beyond what has been identified and listed in the ACHC recommendation letter may be required before a tenant can move in.

- (4) The rental supports affordability without being put on the inventory of affordable housing.
- (5) The tenant would not be a caretaker of the Morrison property, and would only live in and maintain the house.

The Committee voted unanimously to support the five aspects of this recommendation, and to convey this to the Board of Selectmen.

Robbins Homestead & Ice House Foundations		Ice House Trails	Ice House Pond Parking and Picnic Area	Farmhouse	Barn	Totals
2014 Cost	\$27,000	\$153,200	\$49,500	\$0	\$0	\$229,700
Description	Archaeological surveys at Robbins Homestead and Ice House foundation; stabilize Robbins Homestead	ADA accessible stone dust pathway along Ice House pond edge, and Boardwalks #1 and #2	Clear and resurface (gravel) Ice House Pond parking area, add picnic tables, signs	Make recommendation to BOS	Continue to study	
Defer to later Cost	Unknown	\$446,200	\$145,160	Unknown	Unknown	
Description	Handicap access to Robbins Homestead	Marsh boardwalk and bridge crossing to Bruce Freeman Rail Trail	Playground adjacent to Ice House Pond parking area Boat launch			