

MEETING MINUTES

Town of Acton Community Preservation Committee

September 9, 2010
Acton Memorial Library

Attending: Walter Foster, Roland Bourdon, Andy Magee, Susan Mitchell-Hardt, Ken Sghia-Hughes, Janet Adachi, Kristin Alexander, Assistant Town Planner.

Also present were Steve Noone (Finance Committee observer), Anne Forbes, Historic District Commission, Peter Ashton (Open Space Committee and soon-to-be CPC Associate), Carolyn Kilpatrick and other representatives of the Acton Women's Club, and Linda McElroy.

Chairman Walter Foster opened the meeting at 7:35 p.m. He welcomed Andy Magee, who replaces Janet as the Conservation Commission representative.

I. Public Comments on Community Preservation Needs in Acton; and the Draft 2011 Community Preservation Plan.

Fire Stations. Walter mentioned the e-mail to the Committee from Bob Evans, suggesting the use of Community Preservation Act (CPA) funds for work on the fire stations in the Town Villages. Walter forwarded Mr. Evans's e-mail to the Board of Selectmen (BOS) for further consideration among potential Town projects for CPA funding.

Acton Women's Club. Carolyn Kilpatrick said that the Women's Club would be interested in securing CPA funding to update the club building that it owns. The building is an historic structure on the historic register. The proposed work would include re-doing entrances—including one to be handicapped-accessible--, work on the garden and walkways, and the installation of insulation for greater energy efficiency and a chair-lift on the stairway. Ms. Kilpatrick noted that last year, the Women's Club had approached the Committee and conferred with Town Planner Roland Bartl about CPA-funding.

Andy suggested that the Women's Club review the description in the draft 2011 Plan of work that is eligible for CPA funding. He added that Tory, who was absent from the meeting, is the Historical Commission (HC) representative and contact on historical-preservation proposals.

Historic Resources Inventory Form. Anne Forbes, referring to her 9/9/2010 e-mail to the Committee, reiterated the importance of including the completion of an historic resources inventory form as part of a proposed project if an inventory form does not already exist that may be attached to the application. The Women's Club is an example of property that already has an inventory form, so attaching an inventory form to the application is not an issue. But if a building does not have an inventory form, the potential impact of the project on the building features will be difficult to discern.

Andy asked about the approval process for an historical resources inventory form. Ms. Forbes said the inventory form is submitted to the Town and the HC is responsible for filing it with the state. Andy expressed concern about the possibility of amateur inventory forms; Ms. Forbes said that the completed forms must meet state standards even if amateurs prepare them. Her thought was to include a sum in the CPA award to cover the cost of the inventory form.

Walter said an applicant should get the inventory form done prior to applying for CPA funding, given that what can be done with the funding will depend to some extent on the inventory form information. Even if the Committee does not approve a project, the applicant still should get the inventory form done. Walter asked whether the inventory form was costly, citing Morrison Farm. Ms. Forbes said that inventory forms for larger projects can be expensive. The HC, which is responsible for the Town-wide inventory, can provide guidance to the Committee as to which properties should be required to have inventory forms. A potential applicant for CPA funds should work with the HC on the inventory form issue.

Andy suggested that the Plan perhaps should require an inventory form with the application, and if there is no inventory form, the applicant should apply next year after getting the inventory form done.

Ken asked about properties lacking inventory forms that might qualify for CPA funds. Ms. Forbes mentioned buildings from the 1920s-1940s, which are at the bottom of the list to be inventoried.

Required Application Copies. Peter Ashton asked why the Plan requires 15 printed copies of each application, in addition to an electronic copy. Walter said some Committee members lack the capacity to receive electronic documents; and the printed-copies requirement eases the burden on Town staff.

Proposed CPA Amendment: SB 90. Steve Noone asked whether the state legislature had taken any action on SB 90. Walter said there had been no action, but that if a proposal has deep support, as is the case with SB 90, but is not approved in the current two-year legislative session, the proposal is likely to come back in the new session. The projected state match for local CPA funds is around the same level as for 2010.

II. Committee Discussion of 2011 Plan.

Page 2. Delete reference to SB 90.

Page 3. Modify reference to Caouette purchase, which has not yet occurred.

Clarify the reference to the Gaebel property: sale is of house and house lot, and proceeds of sale go back to the Open Space Set-Aside.

List Peter Ashton as an Associate, subject to the BOS approval of his appointment at the upcoming meeting on 9/13/2010.

Page 14-15. Make consistent the references to “Acton Cultural Resources List” and “Historic Properties Survey,” which Ms. Forbes confirms are not interchangeable terms but refer to two distinct sets of information.

Historic Inventory Attachment. Modify the footnote reference to provide that the Committee may require an applicant with an historic property proposal to submit an historic property inventory form. Committee members did not want to require an inventory form without providing advance notice to potential applicants, but at the same time wanted to strongly encourage applicants to provide such information.

Pages 16, 19, 23: Application Copies Requirement. Require 3 printed copies and an electronic copy of the complete application; 12 printed copies of the application form/narrative only.

The Committee approved the 2011 Plan, as amended.

III. Appointment: Trail Through Time. Linda McElroy reviewed the work done so far—chamber, Wheeler Farm restoration—and presented her proposal for Phase III of the Trail Through Time Project encompassing restoration of the mill area, which would entail removal of the little red shack, an archeological survey, masonry work (to recreate the mill and other foundations, the mill raceway and the upper/lower sluices), and construction of an information pavilion whose design the Committee approved earlier and whose appearance could be reminiscent of the original mill. Ms. McElroy said that Phase III, and the concomitant funding, could be done incrementally, at perhaps \$5,000 per sub-part.

Committee members agreed that Ms. McElroy should submit the full Phase III for funding rather than seek funding piecemeal. Walter noted that the Committee prefers that applicants complete the work covered by prior grants before seeking more funding, and that Ms. McElroy should endeavor to complete the previously funded Phase II work.

IV. Minutes, 6/24/2010. Approved.

V. 9/7/2010 Letter to DHCD in Support of AHA Rental Housing Fund Application. Approved.

VI. Tentative Special Town Meeting, 9/28/2010. Given that the Phase 2 testing report on the Caouette parcel recently became available to the public, the Committee discussed the Caouette parcel, and the tentative Town Meeting pertaining to it, in the public meeting without convening an Executive Session. Janet could report only that the Phase 3 study was underway; the recent re-appraisal of the property did not create additional issues that had been a concern before the completion of the re-appraisal; and the issue at Town Meeting presumably will be cleanup costs. Some Committee and audience members expressed concern that so little information was publicly available with the Town Meeting date so close.

VII. Review 2010-2011 Committee Meeting Dates. No change.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:35 p.m.

- Janet Adachi

Documents Discussed and Attached

8/16/2010 e-mail from Bob Evans, and 9/7/2010 respond from Walter Foster re proposed used of CPA funds for fire stations

9/9/2010 e-Mail from Anne Forbes, re applications for historic properties and historic resources inventory forms

Community Preservation Plan 2011 – September 2010 draft

Trail Through Time Proposal Issues

Minutes, 6/24/2010 - draft

9/7/2010 letter from Committee to DHCD in support of AHA Rental Housing Fund application

2010-2011 CPC Meeting Schedule