



TOWN OF ACTON

COMMUNITY PRESERVATION COMMITTEE (CPC) MEETING MINUTES

September 27, 2022 - 7:30 PM

Virtual

Present: Bill Alesbury - Chair (BA), Steve Trimble - Vice Chair (ST), Dean Charter - Select Board Liaison (DC), James Colman (JC), Walter Foster (WF), Victoria Beyer (VB), Nancy Kolb (NK), Alissa Nicol - Clerk (AN), Lori Cooney - Associate (LC)

Absent: Ray Yacouby

Others Present: Kaila Sauer - Assistant Town Planner, Kristen Guichard - Planning Director, Nora Masler - Assistant Town Planner

BA called the meeting to order at 7:30 PM and read the notice regarding virtual meetings.

I. Regular Business

1. Resident Concerns – none

2. Review and approve minutes from previous meetings

JC moved and NK seconded the motion to approve the minutes of 7/23/22. Minutes were approved by a vote of 7 (ayes) and 2 (abstentions). ST noted that minutes of 8/23/22 were missing details regarding the need for the committee to hold officer elections again. AN agreed to include this in a revision of the minutes. DC moved and ST seconded the motion to approve the minutes, as amended, of 8/23/22. Minutes were approved by a vote of 8 (ayes) and 1 (abstention).

II. New/Special Business

3. Election of officers

As noted in the August meeting, officer elections were held prematurely. AN nominated BA as Chair, seconded by DC. BA was elected by a vote of 8 (ayes) and 1 (abstention). BA nominated ST as Vice Chair, seconded by JC. ST was elected Vice Chair by a vote of 8 (ayes) and 1 (abstention). BA nominated AN as Clerk, seconded by VB. AN was elected unanimously.

4. Public Hearing - Draft 2023 Community Preservation Plan

JC suggests changing “interview applicants” to “applicants present proposals for questions and discussion” on “Process and Timeline” chart. Agreement is voiced by some committee members. No objections. KS will make this change. JC moved to close the Public Hearing, seconded by NK. Motion passed unanimously.

5. Ratification of 2023 CPA Plan

ST moved to ratify the 2023 CPA Plan, seconded by JC. Motion passed unanimously.

6. Discussion on Redesigning the CPC Admin Funding Model

BA introduced a discussion on the nature of funding project application process; Acton is only town among (Best Practices) comparison towns to fund indirect incremental costs such as tax collection, Town Manager’s office; most towns also fund non-salaried expenses such as signage, annual membership in Community Preservation Coalition, etc. Last year, ~\$61K was spent on administrative costs (~\$10K of that was legal expenses)

DC noted that Acton was an early adopter of CPA, adopted 5% towards admin cost with no problem, one previous award was subject to court case, resulting in \$100-200K legal fees, an example of unexpected costs not incurred by CPC directly

WF clarified that CPC has no participation (past or future) in legal matters as this is the purview of the Select Board, the question of admin costs/funding has been visited many times by previous iterations of the committee, decisions should be based on what is best for Acton and within statutory parameters

JC asked what are examples of indirect costs; BA notes about 2/3 of admin funding was spent on Town Manager salary, tax collection and legal fees

AN asked for clarification of text read aloud; BA noted that coalition guidelines stipulate that direct incremental expenses (signs, memberships, legal fees, etc) be funded by a “pool” to be used during the fiscal year with unspent funds returned to the general fund at the conclusion of the fiscal year

III. Administrative Matters and Updates

7. Next meeting dates

- a. October 11th -
 - i. Project Status will not be completed in time for review at this meeting, but will be on 10/25/22 agenda
 - ii. Potential Large Project Preview Session will likely not materialize per BA

iii. Preliminary Review of CPC 5YP Results will be on agenda, along with a review of bonding impact assessment drafted by BA

Additional administrative updates -

WF asked for an update on Gardner Field playground construction. ST noted that, per Rec Director, a reengineering of the park is required; also noted that he attended a meeting to discuss the 3 Main Street projects (McManus Manor, Acton Dog Park, and an exercise circuit park between the two), design funds for coordinating these projects were allocated by Select Board from ARPA funding

WF also noted that the Elm Street basketball courts reconstruction is school responsibility, and he requested that a letter be sent from the committee. KG has communicated this to team, and noted that Rec Director is also on top of follow through. NK agreed a letter would be wise given the recent changes in administrative staff at the Central Office, including Facilities/Operation Director JD Head. AN noted that Paul Sweden sent an update from Friends of Gardner Field to announce the delay is indeed related to engineering, specifically stormwater management, but because playground equipment has already been ordered/delivered, the completion should be able to happen in the spring unlike other playground renovations in the area due to supply chain delays up to 3 years

BA relayed that he had met with Adam Nolde, Chair of Finance Committee, and confirmed that Roland Bourdon is FinCom's CPC liaison. Both committees meet at same day/time, so attendance by FinCom liaison not possible, but review of meeting recordings can happen. BA presented an overview of past few years of financial challenges to FinCom at a recent meeting; requested financial vetting for large, complex projects as outlined in 2023 Community Preservation Plan; members were receptive and BA asked for feedback on a financial impact assessment for future Open Space purchases informed by Open Space Committee Chair Andy Magee's input to CPC 5YP survey.

WF disagrees with this approved vetting process as it is an abdication of CPC responsibilities, views the role of FinCom at the end of process, historically FinCom liaison has been a robust role, noted strong reservations of the direction of current leadership

VB noted that her objection was raised at August meeting as CPC is capable of financial vetting, and also noted that the 2023 Plan calls for a *possible* request only for FinCom support of vetting applications >\$300K

BA noted his interest is only to provide a level of financial stress testing, not to preempt CPC responsibilities, but to complement, hasn't seen a high level of this in his 6 years on committee

WF noted that the Chair must have the committee's backing to meet with and present to other committees as the perception is that s/he does

DC noted that he and BA will be meeting with Town Manager with regards to the 5YP, DC reviewed the Capital Improvement Plan for potential projects that would qualify for CPA funding, and Town Mgr would like to discuss additional projects not in CIP

NK noted that our goal is decide how to apportion funding, then go to Select Board, FinCom, and Citizen's [at Town Meeting] for support, a downside to requesting vetting is that FinCom opinions might impact our decision making process

BA offered to forward financial impact assessment document to committee for feedback; AN

noted that this should be included in a meeting packet per OML, and feedback should be provided in next meeting rather than via email

KG introduced new planning staff, Nora Masler, Assistant Town Planner

WF moved to adjourn the meeting, and AN seconded. The motion passed unanimously, and the meeting was adjourned at 9:07 PM.

Documents used at the meeting:

Draft meeting minutes dated 7/26/22 and 8/23/22

“Town of Acton, 2023 Community Preservation Plan, September 27, 2022”

Documents can be found here: <http://doc.acton-ma.gov/dsweb/View/Collection-15645>

**For more information about Community Preservation Committee contact
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