

Acton Conservation Commission
Meeting Minutes
October 16th, 2024
7:15 PM
Hybrid Meeting (Room 204 & Zoom)

Present: James Colman (Vice-Chair), Peter Hocknell, Kate Warwick, Amy Green,
Absent: Zywia Chadzynska, Terry Maitland (Chair), Jillian Peters,
Conservation Agent: Olivia Barksdale

6:30 Executive Session

There will be a need for an Executive Session under purpose 6 to discuss the Purchase Exchange Lease or Value of Real Property located at 19 and 35 Wetherbee Street as an open session may have a detrimental effect on the negotiating position of the public body

6:32

Vice Chair: I'll entertain a motion to enter executive session under purpose 6 to discuss the purchase, exchange, lease or value of real property located at 19 and 35 Wetherbee Street. Mr. Hocknell moved and Ms. Green seconded.

Vice Chair: Before the roll call vote to enter executive session, let me declare that, in the executive session, the Commission will discuss the purchase, exchange, lease or value of real property located at 19 and 35 Wetherbee Street under purpose 6 as an open meeting may have a detrimental effect of the negotiating position of the Select Board. Mr. Vice Chair called roll and all voted yes.

John Mangiaratti, Town Manager, David Martin, Select Board Member and Liaison, and Dean Charter, Select Board Member represented the town and presented to the Conservation Commission. The Wetherbee property is to be purchased and will hopefully include passive recreation, active recreation, and possibly be utilized for waste water treatment. They informed the Commission that the Town has received the Land Grant and has to meet the grants requirements in order to receive the funds. The requirements include having a Town Meeting in order to authorize purchase the land and accept the grant. Town Meeting will be the week of Thanksgiving. The purchase will be similar model to Piper Lane. They would like to know if the Commission is comfortable owning or managing the land, and comfortable with the proposed uses of the land.

Discussion:

The Town found out about the Land Grant in late summer. Mr. Mangiaratti is aware of the condition of the property which includes a house, radio towers, and cars. All of the materials will be removed before the acquisition. A Conservation Restriction (CR) will be placed on the property and CPC funds will be used to purchase it. A special area will be created for active recreation. The Commission is concerned that: the CR cannot be placed on land that contains water infiltration, CPA will not fund a project that contains

water infiltration and the Land Grant will not accept the change to include water infiltration. The grant includes the whole parcel, and if acres are removed the award price might come down. The Town is working on a new appraisal for the change in use. There is a possibility of removing two acres from the grant and CPA application. Active recitation could be funded by CPA and a CR could be placed on the land, but the water filtration project for a future septic field would have to be funded with general funds. When the Conservation Commission owns the land, it is now encumbered by Chapter 97. The family is aware of the Town's proposed use of the parcel. Other grants like MVP do not fit and the timing does not work. Parking would be included on the property. The Town representative would like to know if the Commission is comfortable accepting the grant, using CPA funds, drain the account and bond the rest. The can't use next year's funds due to the projected closing date. The Commission is hesitant having a CR or owning land that has active recreation. They would prefer to have a MOU with Parks and Recreation to maintain the park.

Motion:

Mr. Vice Chair called for a motion. Ms. Green moved to:

Approve purchase.

Approve/Support using CPA funds if eligible.

Approve/Support ownership or management by the Conservation Commission for conservation purposes and passive recreation. Provided that some portion of the property be used for active recreation the Town would oversee that that portion through a MOU or other appropriate mechanism.

7:03

Mr. Hocknell seconded, Mr. Vice Chair called roll and all voted yes

Mr. Vice Chair called for a motion to close the Executive Session. Ms. Green moved to close and Mr. Hocknell seconded. Mr. Vice Chair called roll and all voted yes

Vice Chair: At the conclusion of the executive session, the Board will reconvene in open session.