

Minutes
Town of Acton Community Preservation Committee
December 18, 2014
Acton Memorial Library

Members Present: Peter Ashton (Chair), Peter Berry (arrived 8:27 at start of Acton Woman's Club presentation), Tory Beyer, Jeff Clymer, Walter Foster, Amy Green (Vice Chair), Susan Mitchell-Hardt, Ken Sghia-Hughes, Joe Will (Clerk)

Others Present: Roland Bartl (Planning Director), Roland Bourdon (Finance Committee observer), Tom Tidman (Director of Natural Resources), Bettina Abe (Natural Resources), Cathy Fochtman (Recreation Director), Cathy Hatfield (President, Friends of the Acton Arboretum), Sue Whitcomb (Arboretum volunteer), Joy Ivanoff, (Acton Woman's Club (AWC) President), Janet Morgan (AWC Past President), Lori Lewis (AWC Head Trustee), Carolyn Kilpatrick (AWC Trustee), Tom Peterman (architect for AWC project)

Peter A opened the meeting at 7:35 PM.

I. Minutes of December 4, 2014

- It was moved, seconded, and voted unanimously (8-0) to approve the minutes as presented, but with one spelling correction.

II. Project Hearings

- Irrigation Wells at Acton Arboretum and Morrison Farm (MF)
(Town of Acton, Natural Resources (NR))

Bettina reviewed with slides what NR detailed in its application. Other points:

- Neither site would be subject to Town's summer watering restrictions, although MF would continue to follow them (per Cathy F).
- Acton Water District (AWD) will contribute \$6K to the project, but this won't change the requested amount because of project uncertainties. Any \$ left over will be given back, of course. AWD and Municipal Properties have strongly suggested that these sites get their own water (Bettina).
- If we had to do just one of the two, we would do Arboretum first (Tom T).
- The impact of the Arboretum system on wetlands should be negligible (Tom T).
- It might be worthwhile to consider using a douser at the Arboretum.

For MF:

- Bettina identified a possible well site.
- If watering system is not funded and current system fails, the Town would have to come up with an alternative system. We only see the demand growing (Cathy F).
- We've looked at possibly pumping water from Ice House Pond and determined that it would be too difficult, e.g., required filtering and maintenance (Tom T, Cathy F).

– Charlie Aronson sent out a request for support to community gardeners a month or so ago. A gardener donation could also come from their fees, so there is a fund. It could possibly be \$3K at this time.

– The Flannery estimate that was part of the project application packet is for costs related to tying MF irrigation into the Concord Road soccer field system and is not relevant. The current \$4K estimate for irrigation (spigots and water lines) is good.

– We’ve looked at the geology. Nothing stands out as exceptional (Tom T).

– Running electricity to the project will be no big deal.

- Acton Arboretum Fern Boardwalk and Tree Removal
(Town of Acton, Natural Resources (NR))

Bettina reviewed with slides what NR detailed in its application. Other points:

– NR returned \$ from the wildflower boardwalk project. Construction on the bog boardwalk begins in the next few months.

– The new fern boardwalk would follow the same path as the current boardwalk and be structurally like the wildflower boardwalk. It would have pressure-treated wooden decking, not more expensive plastic decking as planned for the bog boardwalk (for which there has been an anonymous \$30K donation). Current pressure-treated wood is much better than what we’ve used in the past and should have a 30-year life.

– The current fern boardwalk is dangerous to people not sure of their footing, so it’s a potential handicapped accessibility problem (Cathy H).

– Taking out 13 black walnut trees will not affect their presence in the Arboretum. We are not sure yet what to do with the lumber. Selling it would require Board of Selectmen permission. It would be a good idea to have an understory replanting plan.

– For construction access, some boulders will have to be moved. NR will move the boulders both before and after construction, as necessary.

- Remove Water Chestnuts - Two Ponds/Nashoba Brook
(Town of Acton, Natural Resources (NR))

Bettina reviewed with slides what NR detailed in its application. Other points:

– Lycott Environmental has us on their schedule for early July, doing both ponds in six days, once a year for 3 years (as it has done in other towns). Three years is critical for eradicating the water chestnuts. Lycott would be grateful to know it has the project for 3 years and would hold the price for us. If there would be a nominal increase, NR would cover it (Tom T).

– After the 3 years are over, Lycott says there should be clear water for 7 years. Is there a guarantee for 7 years? Don’t think so (Bettina). Would we do anything during the 7 years? We’ve never done this before, so we would learn a lot (Bettina). After clearing Ice House Pone in 1995, it took a while for water chestnuts to come back. We started there again in 2010.

– If we do nothing, a pond becomes covered. The machine that would be used has minimal impact on pond inhabitants, but there is no submergent life under significant water chestnut coverage.

- Preservation and Handicap Accessibility - Phase 2
(Acton Woman's Club (AWC))

Lori reviewed with slides what AWC detailed in its application. Other points:

- Town Counsel has okayed this project for CPA funding.
- The exterior-door “panic devices” (lever handles) are needed to facilitate exiting the building in case of fire. This is a life-safety issue, not a handicapped accessibility issues. The brass-plated hardware is 2/3 of the cost, and part of the reason why they are so expensive (\$8.5K) (Tom P).
- The CPC lauded the AWC for accomplishing what it set out to do with last year's appropriation, and with its excellent maintenance of this building in general (100 years in 2015). The AWC said that with this next project, it figures the building to be in “good shape for a couple of decades,” and expressed gratitude to the CPC for its support.

III. Administrative updates

- Roland provided an updated meeting calendar. It looks now like all presentation appointments are firm.
- Roland provided a notice of the Annual Report. He will provide Peter A and Amy with the previous year's Word document. Peter will take a stab at it, run it by Amy, try to run it by the whole Committee in advance of next meeting, and the whole Committee will look at it next meeting. Roland Bourdon offered to help.
- Re the Wright Hill land purchase: The Wright Hill Association is donating \$60K to the CPC. The Association is holding an additional \$15K (which it ultimately could donate to the CPC) to cover any remaining unforeseen expenses. These amounts are \$ received in excess of Plan and the \$ are being given to CPC as promised. This donation is a Consent item on the BOS agenda. Should these \$ go into the Open Space fund? Per Peter A, the original CPA application did not specify, but the CPC will be able to use the \$ any way it wants. Also, Peter will review the funding agreement to see what, if any, related documentation the Association is to provide the CPC.
- The Wright Hill Association's donation plus the turnback of \$69K from the Rec Department (School Street ball fields) gives the CPC \$130K+/- additional funds. Roland reached out again today re other unused funds and asked for, by 01/12, either a “yes” for turnback or good reasons for no turnback.
- The Open Space set-aside and the Historical Commission project still have to go to the BOS yet and the BOS will come back in January (01/12 meeting) with a reassessment of Town projects. We meet on 01/08, “Budget Saturday” is 01/10, the BOS meet 01/12, and we meet again on 01/15.

9:16 PM — It was moved, seconded, and voted unanimously (9-0) to adjourn.

Dates:

- 01/08/15 CPC Meeting (Library), Project Hearings
(7:35 ABRS, 7:55 AHC, 8:15 Discovery Museums)
- 01/15/15 CPC Meeting (Library), Project Hearings
(7:35 NARA Restroom, NARA Safety, Skate Plaza; order tbd by Rec Dept)
- 01/22/15 CPC Meeting (Library), 7:35 Administrative Support, then deliberations
- 02/12/15 CPC Meeting (Library), deliberations
- 02/26/15 CPC Meeting (Library), deliberations
- 03/12/15 CPC Meeting (Library), Town Meeting prep
- 03/26/15 CPC Meeting (Library), Town Meeting prep
- 04/06/15 Town Meeting (ABRHS)