

Minutes for CPC Meeting of 10/6/05, Acton Memorial Library

Attending:

Peter Berry, Catherine Coleman, Walter Foster, Andy Magee, Ken Sghia-Hughes, Nancy Tavernier, Ed Starzec, Roland Bartl

Guests: Tom Tidman, Linda McElroy, Mary Michelman, Belle Choate, Cheryl Lowe, Brewster Conant, Mary Donald, Hal Rosenstock

Ken Sghia-Hughes, acting-Chair, opened the meeting at 7:45pm.

MINUTES—The minutes of 9/22/05 were approved unanimously as revised.

UPDATES

1. Outreach

Catherine reported that she had submitted PR to the Beacon, Acton Weekly, Action Unlimited, Comcast calendar and the Beth Petr community website. The articles gave notice to the filing deadline for CPA fund requests and information on the 2006 Plan. Catherine will follow-up to be sure the information is being run in the various media.

2. Administrative Fee Discussion

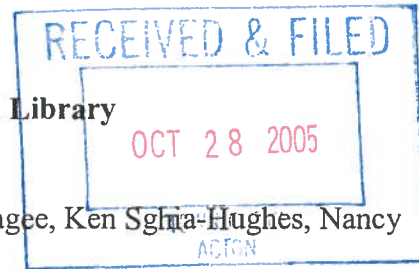
There was discussion about continuing the 2005 process for charging the CPA Fund 5% for administrative fees without requiring detailed reporting from the Town Staff. Members were reminded that these fees cover the cost of: staff in the Finance Dept. who handle abatement requests and assess the surcharge; Planning staff coverage of the meetings and supporting role for CPC; and Town Counsel review and advice.

A suggestion was made that John Murray or Don Johnson might be invited to attend the meeting to describe staff activities that were funded if the CPC thought that was necessary. After further discussion, it was determined that the CPC would request similar back-up material for the 5% request as was prepared in 2005 and that no visit was needed at this time.

There was a concern expressed about Town legal expenses in general and a desire to reduce the amount of legal input to CPC by encouraging private groups to get legal advice on their projects first.

3. Membership

The VCC is gathering names for the open associate position on the CPC for early resolution by the BOS who will interview all the candidates without their first going to VCC due to the delay over the summer. Walter was asked to contact Peter Grover at the Historical Commission to reiterate the need for a new appointee to the CPC from his committee.



OPEN SPACE DISCUSSION – 2006 Funding proposals

1. Tom Tidman introduced Land Stewardship committee member Linda McElroy who described in detail her proposal for restoring and rebuilding the Town's "potato cave" located at Nashoba Brook Conservation area. Linda described the stone structure as possibly a pre-historic chamber, not a food storage structure at all. The chamber has been deteriorating over time as erosion has caused the roof and walls to become unstable and unsafe. This has great historical value in the area and may have been used for astrological purposes but is now unsafe to enter. Because it is on public land, it is becoming a significant liability.

Linda proposes to collaborate with the New England Antiquities Research Association (NEARA) that specializes in the restoration and preservation of stone sites in New England. They will conduct the restoration, Linda would be the facilitator. She is an experienced researcher in the field of prehistoric structures. She estimates the total cost to be \$20,000. The project will also include the preparation of education material and there will be a formal report published in the NEARA Journal on the restoration.

2. Mary Michelman was present to encourage the CPC to continue to set-aside funds for Open Space preservation. She supports the past uses of Open Spaces funds such as for the bike trails and Morrison Farm.

3. Andy Magee, spoke in his dual capacity as Chairman of the Town's Open Space Committee and board member for Acton Conservation Trust. The OS Committee has been working with an Acton Center landowner for the purchase of a parcel in the Center for \$200,000. This may not be ready for Town Meeting action in 2006. An informal offer has been made to the owner. Acton Conservation Trust is in the process of purchasing 14 acres of primarily swamp land that is adjacent to town conservation land. They do not seek CPA funding for that.

4. Tom Tidman spoke about the 3 projects coming from the Natural Resources Department: the Chamber restoration, the Arboretum project presented at the 9/8/05 CPC meeting, and the Town Center Land purchase. He is not aware of any other open space projects.

RECREATION – 2006 Funding proposals

1. Hal Rosenstock brought forth a proposal to rehabilitate the Elm St. outdoor basketball courts. They are in very bad shape, they need to be demolished and repaved. The property is located on Douglas School land which is under the jurisdiction of the Acton Public Schools and the Town of Acton. The schools are very supportive of the idea. These are the only outdoor basketball courts in the whole town and they are regulation length and width. 2 full courts exist and would be kept in the same configuration.

The estimated cost would be \$25,000, but only \$10,000 would be requested from CPA Funds. The balance would be through fund raising. Hal will be checking more cost estimates to get a firm number.

Committee members urged Hal to meet with Roland as soon as possible to see if this project would be eligible for CPC funding.

NEW BUSINESS

Andy met with John Murray to continue the discussion about bonding options for CPC projects. John's concern continues to be the lack of revenue stream should the CPA fund go away. He also stated the BOS/SC/FC has a policy that no bonding should be allowed without a revenue source. The CPC continues to believe that the statute does allow for the continuation of CPA funding until such time as the bonds are paid off and the Coalition backs that interpretation. The Coalition would not object to an Acton Home Rule petition that would clarify the intent of the statute on this issue.

Walter opined that the BOS would most likely guarantee the revenue source as CPA funds even if the CPC chose not to recommend it in any given year.

NEXT MEETING

Next meeting is Oct. 27. Members should email agenda items to Matt prior to the meeting.

Meeting adjourned 9:20PM

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy Tavernier, Secretary pro temp