



TOWN OF ACTON

COMMUNITY PRESERVATION COMMITTEE (CPC) MEETING MINUTES

October 11, 2022 - 7:30 PM

Virtual

Present: Bill Alesbury - Chair (BA), Steve Trimble - Vice Chair (ST), Dean Charter - Select Board Liaison (DC), James Colman (JC), Nancy Kolb (NK), Alissa Nicol - Clerk (AN)

Absent: Ray Yacoub, Walter Foster, Victoria Beyer, Lori Cooney - Associate

Others Present: Kaila Sauer - Assistant Town Planner, Joe Will, Cheryl Kennedy-Perez

BA called the meeting to order at 7:30 PM and read the notice regarding virtual meetings, and attendance was taken via roll call vote.

I. Regular Business

1. Resident Concerns – none

2. Review and approve minutes from previous meetings

NK moved and ST seconded a motion to approve the minutes of 9/27/22. Minutes, with a minor edit, were approved unanimously by a vote of 6-0.

II. New/Special Business

3. Review Finance Committee presentation and Open Space Bonding Assessment

BA attended the 9/13/22 FinCom meeting to formalize what the CPC had agreed upon in August. The nature of the presentation was 1) the spending challenges of the past few years and recent discussion of a possible increase of the CPA surcharge to 3%, which, in part, led to 2) the best practices research, and 3) an appeal to FinCom for financial vetting of large project applications, including a

test case of Open Space funding scenarios - see “Acton CPC at FinCom Sept 13 2022.pdf” in meeting packet. BA broached the question, “Can we afford to make these large purchases?” CPC responsibilities include vetting projects fully, are they worthy, do they add value to the town, do they have a good chance of successful execution, are they well planned, etc. Open Space Set Aside ask is expected to be \$600K every year, OSSA goes from \$1.4 million to \$5.3 million in 5 years, paying only debt service (no new purchases), OSC Chair prefers to not zero out OSSA so that leverage with sellers can be maintained, would prefer to keep \$1 million balance; BA notes that 2 high cost parcel purchases could be bonded, although CP Coalition guidelines cap the percentage of total funds spent each year on debt service, and only from local surcharge, not the state match; ST notes that the CPC consistently committing an annual \$600K is a strong assumption at 1/3 the available funds, and advises public forums to get feedback; AN agrees with inviting public input; JC notes that one case (Gardner Field Playground) is very different from OS bonding case, and financial vetting is better answered by CPC than FinCom, also notes that “What are the financial implications?” Is a better question to ask than “Can we afford it?” (wrt OS purchases), value is to ask whether we want to set aside \$600K each year, and most important public input is gathered at Town Meeting; DC notes that this bonding discussion is valuable, as is the commitment to annual OSSA funding, skeptical of how to invite public input given strong voices of various interest groups focused on specific projects and not the entire landscape as the CPC is, CPC is well balanced and representative of various interests, skilled/experienced at decision making; NK is uneasy about the 5 year plan and expectation of committing a certain amount of money; JC notes that it is easy for the applicant to assume input to 5 year plan means a funding commitment; ST urges the committee to continue the rhetoric that the 5 year plan presumes no funding commitment; BA notes that the conversation with FinCom was bounded by the “possibility” of financial vetting.

4. Review of Draft CPC 5 Yr Plan

See “5YP Summary Oct 6 2022 - Draft.pdf” in meeting packet. BA notes that inputs from 4 domains plus admin are incorporated into table of expected asks. *Perhaps* to be included in 23 CPC Plan, or not. NK notes that \$500K Main St ask could go down with additional Town funding sources approved, and possible MassWorks grant, AN suggests a title change, not naming it the “CPC 5 Year Plan” as it’s not coming from the CPC, and instead “Expected Requests” or the like, JC asks if Natural Resources was asked, ST notes the new name of the department is Conservation, and this department was asked to provide input, but had none at this time.

III. Administrative Matters and Updates

7. Next meeting dates

October 25th - Project Status will be ready for review at this meeting
November 8th to be cancelled as this is Election Day and applications not due until 11/14
November 22nd

ST requests that committee consider shifting meeting day to allow FinCom Liaison to attend regularly, DC notes staff work Tuesday evenings, BA will add to next meeting's agenda

BA has discussed tax exemption program with Jim Snyder-Grant, impediments to education re: qualification requirements and application process exist, remedies will be to make application available online, and put into place a communication process to better inform public, annual reporting of participants will track level of these measures' success

ST moved to adjourn the meeting, and JC seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Documents used at the meeting:

CPC Meeting Minutes - 92722.docx

5YP Summary Oct 6 2022 - Draft.pdf

Acton CPC at FinCom Sept 13 2022.pdf

Acton CPC OS Purchase - Financial Options.pdf

Documents can be found here: <http://doc.acton-ma.gov/dsweb/View/Collection-15771>

**For more information about Community Preservation Committee contact
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