



**Town of Ayer**  
**Community Preservation Committee**  
Town Hall \* One Main Street \* Ayer, MA 01432  
Minutes for 5/6/2020

Location: Remote Meeting via Zoom, accessible to public, due to Pandemic State of Emergency

Members present on-line: Janet Providakes (JP) [Housing Authority]- Chair, Beth Suedmeyer (BAS) [At Large], Barry Schwarzel (BES) [Historical Commission], Jess Gugino (JG) [Conservation Commission]- Clerk, Julie Murray (JUM) [Planning Board], Colleen Krieser (CK)[At Large]

Not present: Jason Mayo (JAM) [Parks & Recreation]  
APAC Taped and Broadcast

**7:03 PM – Open Meeting**

- **Approval of Meeting Minutes**

- BAS moved to accept the minutes for 4/23/2020 as amended; CK 2<sup>nd</sup>.
  - Motion approved unanimously by Roll Call Vote 6-0.

- **Correspondence / Bills**

- JP approved payment of \$50.00 to the Harvard Alpaca Ranch for alpaca manure for the Community Garden.
  - This is not for maintenance but for the preparation of additional new raised beds built this year.
- In order to see if CPC can be of assistance, JP has solicited comments across a range of Town departments as to the impact of the pandemic in town.
  - Community & Economic Development is already working with local businesses and banks to get their feedback,
- JP also heard from Town Assessor Tom Hogan regarding the impact of a 3% CPA property tax surcharge, if the Town Election passes the ballot question.
  - As previously noted, Mr. Hogan estimated the impact on residential property owners would increase property taxes on average \$90/year.
  - He has now estimated the impact on businesses would increase their taxes approximately \$172/year.
- JP went to the Board of Selectmen meeting on 5/4.
  - They were supportive of the idea of a Housing Trust (see below).
  - The Town Election is still scheduled for June 2, and Spring Town Meeting for June 15.
    - Given the ongoing pandemic State of Emergency and related uncertainties, the BOS will revisit this scheduling at its next meeting on 5/19.

**OLD BUSINESS**

- **Sandy Pond School Association**



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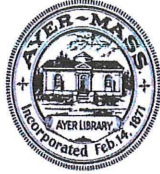
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- All JP knows at present is that Irv Rockwood, of the SPSA, will likely be coming before CPC seeking \$170,000 in grant money for the next phase in restoration funding, intended for Fall Town Meeting.

**NEW BUSINESS**

- **Informational Session, Annual Town Election, CPC Ballot Question #1**
  - JP began the session by asking if there were any questions or input from the public.
    - There were none.
  - Question 1 on the Town Election ballot is for residents to vote on whether to approve raising the CPA property tax surcharge from 1% to 3%.
    - This is a two-step process.
    - The first step was a Town Meeting vote, and this passed at Fall Town Meeting, 10/28/2019.
    - The question must also then be passed by ballot vote in order to go into effect.
      - Because the two-step process was initiated last fall, CPC cannot remove or delay the ballot question taking place this spring because of the unforeseen impact of the COVID 19 pandemic.
  - JP noted that CPC members are also torn on this question, given the pandemic and its economic impact on both residents and businesses.
    - At the same time, she noted that other towns with Housing Trusts have been able to use CPC funds for rental assistance during this difficult time.
  - The Affordable Housing Committee will be coming before CPC soon in order to propose the creation of a Housing Trust for Ayer and initially seed it with CPC grant money.
    - A Housing Trust, if approved by Town Meeting vote, would be run by a board of trustees comprised of local residents.
    - This would be aimed for Fall Town Meeting.
    - JP underscored that the surcharge increase to 3% could be an investment in Ayer's future by helping create a mechanism and means by which residents in need could be assisted.
      - She noted that in other towns with Housing Trusts, rental assistance is paid directly to the landlord on behalf of the tenant, preventing any chance of misuse of funds.
  - A private residents group is funding 18" x 24" signs to advertise support for "Question #1," and some edits were made to the wording.



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- The date of the Town Election will be removed from the sign, since it is unknown if the election will take place on the date currently planned, due to the pandemic.
- The phrase “And Ayer’s Future” was added after “Support Ayer Community Preservation.”
- Additional information is available via [www.supportayercpc.org](http://www.supportayercpc.org).
- Signs will be placed at the Transfer Station and the Rotary.
- CPC will hold an additional informational session for the public at a special Zoom meeting (via remote access) at 7:15 p.m. on Wednesday, May 20<sup>th</sup>.
- JP will talk to IT Director Cindy Knox about putting information on the ballot question onto the Town’s social media sites, as well as advertising the May 20<sup>th</sup> informational session.
- JP ended the session by again asking if there was any public input or queries and there was none.
- **Current CPC Balances**
  - Open Space \$1,072,044.86
  - Historical Preservation: \$33,931.07
  - Community Housing: \$41,004.
  - Budgetary Reserve Fund: \$307,380.
- **Committee Updates**
  - Historical Commission (BES)
    - Nothing to report.
  - Housing Authority & Affordable Housing Committee (JP)
    - Has not met since the shutdown.
  - Parks & Recreation (JAM)
    - No report.
  - Conservation Commission (JG)
    - Will be holding a remote access Zoom meeting next Thursday, May 14<sup>th</sup>.
  - Planning Board (JUM)
    - Will be holding a remote access Zoom meeting next week.
  - Open Space & Recreation Plan Update Committee (BAS)
    - JP said the Town Accountant was seeking to close the books on unused CPC funds.
      - There are left-over funds from CPC’s OSRP grant.
      - BAS will check the language of the Warrant Article.
        - If the language is specific only to preparing the new OSRP, then these funds can be closed out.



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- If the Article's language is broader, then perhaps these funds could be used for implementation of some of the OSRP goals.
- **7:51 PM – Adjourn Meeting**
  - CPC's Next Meeting: May 20, 7 p.m., with informational session at 7:15 p.m.
  - BES moved to adjourn; CK 2<sup>nd</sup>.
    - Motion approved unanimously.

**Minutes Recorded and Submitted by Jessica G. Gugino, Clerk**

**Date Minutes Approved by CPC:** 6/3/2020

**Signature Indicating Approval:** 