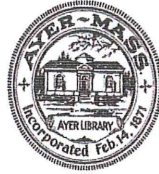


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MAR 14 2022



**Town of Ayer**

**Community Preservation Committee**

Town Hall \* One Main Street \* Ayer, MA 01432

Minutes for 2/2/2022

Location: Remote Meeting via Zoom, accessible to public, due to ongoing pandemic

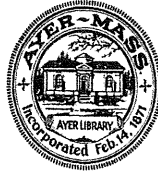
Members present: Janet Providakes (JP) [Housing Authority]- Chair, Julie Murray (JUM) [Planning Board] – Vice-Chair, Beth Suedmeyer (BAS) [At Large], Barry Schwarzel (BES) [Historical Commission], Jason Mayo (JAM) [Parks & Recreation], Jess Gugino (JG) [Conservation Commission]- Clerk, Colleen Krieser (CK)[At Large]  
APAC taped: YES

**7:00 PM – Open Meeting**

- **Approval of Agenda**
  - BES moved to approve the agenda as posted; CK 2<sup>nd</sup>.
    - Motion approved unanimously by Roll Call Vote 7-0.
- **Approval of Meeting Minutes**
  - BAS moved to accept the minutes for 1/5/2022 as written; CK 2<sup>nd</sup>.
    - Motion approved unanimously by Roll Call Vote 7-0.

**CURRENT BUSINESS**

- **Application for CPA Funding for Digitization of *The Public Spirit*, Ayer Public Library**
  - Samantha Benoit, Assistant Director of the Library, participated via Zoom.
  - The application seeks \$25,000 in CPA funding, under the category of Historical Preservation, to cover the multi-year project of digitizing *The Public Spirit* (now *Nashoba Valley Voice*) from 1875-2020.
    - This will convert records of the local publication from deteriorating microfilm into a lasting digital format that will be accessible to the public, whether from the Library or via a separately hosted website.
    - The website will provide a searchable database (using names, dates, events, keywords, etc.) and will be accessible to all members of the public, for free.
    - Once the digitization is complete, the Library will take over the continuing digitization of future issues of the newspaper.
    - There will also be an annual fee that the Library will cover for maintaining the website.
  - Ms. Benoit said the Library received two bids, one from New England Micrographics and the other from Advantage Preservation.

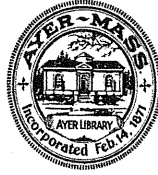


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- Because New England Micrographics cannot create a searchable database, the contract will go to Advantage Preservation once CPA funding is approved at Spring Town Meeting, if voters so choose.
  - New England Micrographics has agreed to loan access to original microfilm reels, if necessary, should the Library's aging reels have chunks of data missing or if they are too damaged to digitize.
- Multiple enthusiastic letters of support, including from *The Lowell Sun*, have been received.
  - Town Moderator James O'Connor, via Zoom, said this was an incredibly positive move for the Town and Library archives.
- CK made a motion to move this application forward to a CPC Public Hearing to be scheduled on March 30; BAS 2<sup>nd</sup>.
  - Motion approved unanimously by Roll Call Vote 7-0.
- **Application for CPA Funding for Pirone Park Remediation, Removal and Reconstruction Project**
  - JAM spoke on behalf of the Parks Department.
  - The application, prepared by Ayer Parks Director Jeff Thomas, seeks \$400,000 in CPA funding, under Recreation, for the project estimated to cost \$720,000 (including contingencies for rising costs and supply chain issues).
    - The remaining funding will be sought from the Capital Planning Committee (via Spring Town Meeting vote) while possible grants, state and federal funding, and private donations will also be sought.
  - The project seeks to cover the removal and replacement of the existing playground structure at Pirone Park (Kiddie Junction) which is in poor shape and contaminated with arsenic.
    - MassDEP ordered the playground closed at the end of 2021 until the site can be remediated.
    - The project will then install an ADA-compliant replacement playground that the Town can take pride in.
    - BETA Engineering, as a paid consultant, provided the \$720,000 estimate of the cost of both remediation and replacement of the current structure.
  - In response to a question from resident Fred Meshner, of 21 Prospect Street, decisions on materials to be used have yet to be made.
    - JAM said the Parks Department will want to use materials that are sustainable and safe.
  - In addition, work on designing the new playground has yet to be completed, and input will be sought via public forums.
    - BETA Engineering will then provide at least 3 designs, with the Park Commission making the final decision.



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- BAS, who is on the project committee, encouraged residents to submit emails, with ideas or concerns, to Parks Director Jeff Thomas, who would then share them with the rest of the committee.
  - JAM assured resident Pauline Conley that, while the project committee meets privately as a working group to provide guidance, the public forums will be well publicized.
  - In addition, he noted that the Park Commission's deliberations are public.
  - Ms. Conley indicated she knew a few individuals who have worked on similar projects and would be interested in participating on this one.
  - JAM also said they will be wanting members of the community to help in the building of the new playground.
- The goal is to have remediation completed by early fall 2022, and the new playground ready to open to the public by spring 2023.
- BES made a motion to move the Pirone Park application forward to a CPC Public Hearing on March 30; JAM 2<sup>nd</sup>.
  - Motion approved unanimously by Roll Call Vote 7-0.
- **Application for CPA Funding for Affordable Housing Trust**
  - CK spoke on behalf of the Affordable Housing Committee.
  - While the formal application won't be ready until the following week, it will be seeking \$60,000 in additional CPA funding to the Housing Trust that was created last year.
    - The 2021 CPA funding to the Trust was for \$30,000.
      - This has been used to provide rental assistance to five households, at \$500/month.
    - The Affordable Housing Committee wants to continue this Rental Assistance Program in the coming year, doubling the amount so that the Trust can assist up to 10 families.
  - The completed application will be reviewed at CPC's next meeting (March 2), likely then to be voted by CPC to move forward to a Public Hearing on March 30.
- **Correspondence / Bills**
  - **Community Preservation Plan (CPP) Update (\$21,000, FTM 2021)**
    - JP reported that a first invoice, for \$775.00, has been received from JM Goldson, the consultant firm hired to update the CPP.
      - The invoice covers Jenn Goldson's Zoom attendance at CPC's January meeting as well as follow-up emails with JP.
    - Ms. Goldson is also seeking to pin down dates for the individual focus group meetings for each CPA category (Open Space, Housing, Historic Preservation, and Recreation).



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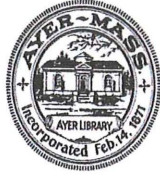
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- Currently, the dates of March 7 and 8 are being considered, with two forums scheduled for each night, one at 5:30-6:45 p.m. and the second at 7:15-8:30 p.m.
  - However, some CPC members have time conflicts and JP will seek to adjust, perhaps with the forums for Open Space and for Recreation on March 3, if JM Goldson can do this date, and the others to remain March 7, for Housing and Historic Preservation.
- The focus group meetings will be by invitation only.
- Later in the process, a forum open to the public will be held.
- Several CPC members (including JUM, JG, and JAM) voiced concerns about the time commitments necessary in the near future, when so many are already overstretched.
  - JP will keep this in mind.

**NEW BUSINESS**

- **Application for CPA Funding for Flannagan Pond Public Access Feasibility Study**
  - JG spoke on behalf of the Department of Public Works (DPW)'s application for \$25,000 in CPA funding for a feasibility study.
  - As detailed in the Tighe & Bond Scope of Work memo attached to the application, the project seeks to create public recreational access to Flannagan Pond, a long-term goal of the town.
    - Dock access for canoes and kayaks would be sought.
    - In addition, the access will need to be ADA-compliant and have nearby parking.
    - The study would review at least seven potential access sites, evaluating their pros and cons, eventually narrowing down the selection to 3 possible sites.
    - Public input would then be sought, with the feasibility study then producing a final recommendation and design concept.
    - If the feasibility study is successful, a separate construction phase project would then be pursued.
  - JP will check with the Community Preservation Coalition to confirm this is a valid use of CPA funds; if so, CPC will vote on whether to move this application forward to a Public Hearing (3/30/2022) at its next meeting on 3/2/2022.
- **Community Preservation Committee Annual Report**
  - JP's draft of the CPC Annual Report was reviewed and slightly edited.
  - BAS moved to approve the Annual Report as amended; CK 2<sup>nd</sup>.



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- Motion approved unanimously by Roll Call Vote 7-0
- **Committee Updates**
  - The meeting having gone over time, JP elected to succinctly summarize Committee Updates with “We’re all carrying on!”
    - Historical Commission (BES)
    - Housing Authority (JP)
    - Affordable Housing Committee (CK)
    - Parks & Recreation (JAM)
    - Conservation Commission (JG)
    - Planning Board (JUM)
    - Nashua River Wild and Scenic Stewardship Council (BAS)
- **8:33 PM – Adjourn Meeting**
  - CPC’s Next Meeting: March 2, 2022, 7 p.m.
  - CPC Public Hearings for all four Spring Town Meeting Funding Applications: March 30, 2022, to be scheduled at **6 p.m.**
  - BES moved to adjourn; JG 2<sup>nd</sup>.
    - Motion approved unanimously.

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

**Date / Signature Indicating Approval:**

3/2/2022 