

Town of Ayer
Community Preservation Committee

Town Hall * One Main Street * Ayer, MA 01432

Minutes for 2/1/2017 - Approved 3/1/2017

Location: Town Hall, 1st Floor

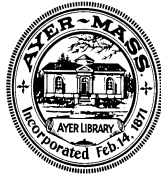
Members present: Janet Providakes (JP) [Housing Authority]- Chair, Beth Suedmeyer (BAS) [At Large], Barry Schwarzel (BES) [Historical Commission], Richard Durand (RD) [Parks & Recreation], Jess Gugino (JG) [Conservation Commission]- Clerk, Mark Fermanian (MF) [Planning Board]

Not present: Julie Murray (JM) [At Large]

APAC taped: NO

6:03 PM – Open Meeting

- **Approval of Meeting Minutes**
 - RD moved to accept the minutes for 1/4/2017 as written; JG 2nd.
 - Motion approved 3-0 (BES abstained, not having been present).
- **Correspondence/Bills**
 - Community Preservation Coalition: \$875.00, annual membership dues.
 - BES moved to approve payment of \$875.00; RD 2nd.
 - Motion approved unanimously.
- **Discussion: Generator purchase, Ayer Housing Authority, Pleasant Street School**
 - Judy Pinard, Treasurer for Ayer Housing Authority (AHA), presented the revised and completed application.
 - AHA is submitting the application on behalf of the Ayer Elderly Housing partnership.
 - The partnership controls the building, which houses 21 affordable senior apartments; AHA owns the land and is the managing agent.
 - It was noted that a second AHA generator project discussed at CPC's 1/4/2017 meeting, for Pond Street, will not proceed at this time.
 - The application for an emergency generator for the Pleasant Street School seeks \$120,000 in funding.
 - Renovation of the 4-story Pleasant Street School was completed in 2010, with part of the funding coming from CPC.
 - "Historic Preservation" and "Community Housing" are identified as the two CPA categories under which this application is justified.
 - Letters of support from the Ayer Fire Department, AHA, the Council on Aging, and the residents association at the Pleasant Street School were included with the application.

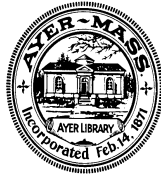


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- Ken Martin, Executive Director of AHA, is meeting with the Historic Commission next week and anticipates an additional letter of support from them.
- The goals for the application are twofold:
 - an emergency generator will aid in preserving the physical structure of the historic building, among other things preventing damage from frozen pipes in the event of a power outage;
 - an emergency generator also contributes to the safety of the elderly residents.
- JP spoke with Town Administrator Pontbriand about the application since CPC funds only partially funded the earlier renovation.
 - Mr. Pontbriand said that, given the historic preservation component, the use of CPA funds for the generator are legitimate.
- A breakdown of anticipated costs from Nangle Engineering Inc., of Danvers, dated 1/24/2017, was provided.
- CPC members felt this project qualified as an appropriate use of CPA funds.
- MF moved to forward the application to the next step, a Public Hearing, to be held at CPC's next meeting, 3/1/2017; RD 2nd.
 - Motion approved unanimously.
- **Discussion: Pirone Park Perimeter Path, Parks & Recreation Department**
 - Jason Mayo, Chair of the Parks Commission, and Jeff Thomas, Ayer Parks Director, were present.
 - A formal application has not yet been completed but will be submitted by 2/10/2017.
 - BAS asked that the application be submitted in electronic form as well so that CPC members can confirm its completion prior to scheduling a Public Hearing.
 - The application, initially for \$84,714.33 (as discussed at CPC's 1/4/2017 meeting), will be revised to seek \$72,000.
 - The project entails a main perimeter path that will complete a loop around a large portion of the park, as well as a 'dead-end' extension that runs between two additional playing fields.
 - At some future date, this extension may be added to in order to form its own loop, but this will be require coordination with the Housing Authority, which owns part of the land, and will be costly as it will involve engineering a retaining wall.
 - Mr. Mayo said that this 5 ft. wide paved perimeter path has been a long-term goal and was mentioned in Ayer's 1998 Master Plan.
 - He also said that the extension path only *appears* to be a 'bridge to nowhere'.

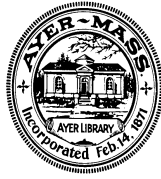


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- It will provide important access for handicapped residents to the playing fields and picnic area in that corner of the park.
 - A couple of areas along the planned path will require some grading changes in order to be ADA compliant (Americans with Disabilities Act).
 - These details are being worked out with the DPW and Town Engineer.
 - JP advised that the completed application include letters of support, and suggested these be sought from the DPW, Council on Aging, AHA, Conservation Commission, and Open Space & Recreation Plan Committee.
 - The CPA category applicable for this project is “Open Space.”
 - BAS advised that the application reference the Master Plan and other applicable Town documents.
 - MF moved to forward the application to the next step, a Public Hearing, to be held at CPC’s next meeting, 3/1/2017 – pending receipt of the completed application by 2/10/2017; RD 2nd.
 - Motion approved unanimously.
- **Discussion: Central Street Fire Station**
 - Alan Manoian , Director of Community and Economic Development, described a funding request he’d like to make for Spring Town Meeting.
 - As per the previous discussions, he understands he will have to submit a finalized CPC application by 2/10/2017 in order for CPC to move forward and schedule a Public Hearing for its 3/1/2017 meeting.
 - The fire station was built in 1934.
 - Its architect was George Ernest Robinson, known in his time as the ‘father of modern fire station design’.
 - The inspiration for the architecture of the Ayer fire station was taken from Massachusetts’ Old State House building.
 - Because two side wings were added to the building (in 1970 and 1996), it does not qualify for listing on the National Register.
 - Mr. Manoian described the building as one of the five most historically significant buildings in Ayer.
 - In many other cities, Mr. Robinson’s architectural work has been preserved and showcased; it would be shame if Ayer were to lose this opportunity.
 - Historic structures like this can be key catalysts in furthering a town’s economic development and renewal.
 - Once preserved and renovated, this building, because of its proximity to downtown Ayer and the train station, would be ideal for conversion into residential housing or mixed use (residential and retail).

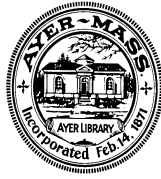


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- Preservation and restoration of historic structures is a key contributor to renewed economic vitality in downtown areas.
- The building is, however, deteriorating badly and is in need of urgent action, not only to preserve it as an historical site but also for public safety.
 - Mr. Manoian said he has been charged by the Board of Selectmen to do everything in his power to try to preserve the building.
 - The Town has previously issued two RFPs (Requests for Proposals) seeking buyers interested in both preserving and using the building, but this has not resulted in any satisfactory responses.
 - Mr. Manoian would like to move forward with work to repair and preserve the building now, on the assumption that this would attract future buyers.
 - Indeed, since closing out the last RFP, he has seen interest in the property from several new individuals.
- The most urgent work needed on the fire station would involve repair of the cupola, the slate roof, the stepped gables, and the building's fascia.
 - Without action soon, Mr. Manoian cited the risk to both pedestrians and parked cars were the historic cupola to structurally fail and slip off the roof.
 - Similar issues arise with the slate roof, and bricks also have begun to separate on the stepped gables.
- Mr. Manoian circulated a detailed estimate for the cost of restoration/repair/preservation prepared by Marc Monahan, of Ayer.
 - The estimate totals \$184,747.50.
 - Adding administrative costs, Mr. Manoian estimates the restoration project would cost approximately \$205,000.
- Mr. Manoian wants to pursue a Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) that can assist in dealing with "spot blight."
 - Mr. Manoian would like to turn in an application to CPC for \$25,000 in CPA funding, approximately 10% of the total restoration cost.
 - The application deadline for a CDBG from the Mass. Dept. of Housing and Community Development is 3/10.
 - It would be advantageous for the application to be able to cite Town interest/support and potential funding as well – pending Spring Town Meeting approval, in May.
- BAS wanted to be sure that restoration work would be done in accordance with the U. S. Dept. of Interior Standards for Rehabilitation, so that the historical integrity of the building was not in any way compromised.
 - Mr. Manoian agreed this was important to comply with.
 - He also noted that, with CDBG grants, historic features cannot be tampered with for 15 years from time of restoration completion.



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- For now, he wants to proceed with a restoration plan that integrates the two wing additions, leaving them where they are now.
 - A different decision could be made regarding the wings if, at some future point, pursuit of National Register status was desired.
- JP asked if, after the work was complete, the Town successfully sold the property and recouped costs: could CPC get its money back? Or have it dedicated to historic preservation in some capacity?
 - Mr. Manoian will look into this.
- CPC members agreed to consider this application for CPA funding.
 - BES moved to forward the application to the next step, a Public Hearing, to be held at CPC's next meeting, 3/1/2017 – pending receipt of the completed application by 2/10/2017; RD 2nd.
 - Motion approved unanimously.
- **Committee Updates**
 - Historical Commission (BES)
 - BES said the Commission is working on a new Hidden Treasures program that will take place in May.
 - Conservation Commission (JG)
 - ConCom is working on a revised wetland bylaw and will be holding Public Hearings on 2/13, 2/23, and 3/9 prior to putting it on the Warrant for Spring Town Meeting vote.
 - ConCom has received 2 bids in response to its RFP for weed treatment this coming spring in Sandy, Flannagan and Pine Meadow ponds.
 - It will be making a final decision at one of its February meetings.
 - JP noted that the recent budget summary provided by Town Accountant Lisa Gabree shows that CPC still retains \$15,003.78 in unexpended funds for weed control specifically on Flannagan's Pond.
- **7:45 PM – Adjourn Meeting**
 - CPC's Next Meeting: March 1, 2017, 6 p.m.
 - BES moved to adjourn; RD 2nd.
 - Motion approved unanimously.