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TOWN OF AYER

2017 OCT -4 PM 1:48

Maura E. O'Connell



Town of Ayer
Community Preservation Committee
Town Hall * One Main Street * Ayer, MA 01432
Minutes for 8/2/2017

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

6:05PM – Open Meeting

- **Approval of Meeting Minutes**

- MF moved to accept the minutes for 7/5/2017 as written; RD 2nd.
 - Motion approved unanimously.

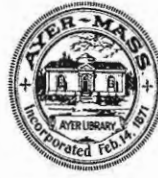
- **Correspondence / Bills**

- Sandy Pond School Association (SPSA) Conditions Assessment Project
 - Spencer & Vogt Group: \$858.25, final invoice, cyclical maintenance plan, final report, reimbursement expenses.
 - Invoice # 2017-3210
 - RD moved to approve payment of \$858.25; MF 2nd.
 - Motion approved unanimously.
 - Later in the meeting, JP said that SPSA, via Irv Rockwood, may be submitting a new application for CPC funding of critical restoration work as recommended by the now complete Conditions Assessment.
 - BAS reiterated that if the Town will be providing substantial funding this work, the Town should seek to get something for this in return, such as use of the SPSA grounds for a playground or pocket park.
- 2017 Treatment of Ayer Ponds
 - Solitude Lake Management: \$15,003.78, using the remainder of funds available for pond treatment from 2012 Town Meeting vote for partial payment of this invoice.
 - Invoice approved for payment by previous vote of Conservation Commission.
 - Invoice # PI-A00120193
 - Additional funds used to pay this invoice in full are not CPC-related funds.
 - MF moved to approve payment of \$15,003.78; JG 2nd.
 - Motion approved unanimously.



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- **Discussion: Town Accountant Lisa Gabree and CPC Account Details**
 - Ms. Gabree provided print-outs to CPC members as she clarified details regarding CPC's budget and accounts.
 - Ayer's Community Preservation Fund has several categories: Open Space (including conservation), Historic Resources, Community Housing, Budgetary Reserve, and Undesignated Fund Balance.
 - A source of confusion has been that CPC's Account Summary/Fund Balance sheet contains one line item "Reserved for Open Space" and a second one "Reserved for Conservation."
 - This came to light when the Master Plan Committee was researching whether Ayer had an official 'Conservation Fund.' (Note: It does not.)
 - Initially when Ayer became a CPC community in 2003, 'Open Space' and 'Conservation' were treated as separate categories.
 - Ms. Gabree provided copies of Warrant Articles 4, 5, 6, and 42 from Spring Town Meeting 2005 that referred, in part, to the designation or transfer of various sums to "the Open Space Reserve specifically for conservation purposes..." or "for future appropriations specifically for conservation purposes."
 - In 2006, changes were made when the State made clear there was to be no separate designation for conservation apart from Open Space.
 - 'Open Space', according to the legislative act, serves as the broader category under which 'conservation' is contained.
 - Ms. Gabree explained that this is really just an accounting technicality.
 - So while Ayer CPC's account summary may separate the two balances for accounting purposes, in reality, via the State, the two categories are really one.
 - It was therefore made clear that Ayer does not have an official 'Conservation Fund' at this point in time.
 - Conservation Fund
 - Establishing a Conservation Fund was discussed at CPC's 7/5/2017 meeting.
 - Such a fund holds the potential to allow the Town to move more quickly and flexibly on potential open space acquisitions.
 - It would have to be established by a Town Meeting vote.
 - Parameters could be approved that specify under what conditions the funds could be used and who would be the administering authority.
 - For example, the Conservation Commission could be designated as the administering authority that could make a decision to use the funds for a land purchase without having to wait for a Town Meeting vote.



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- And if, for example, CPC funds were used, in part or in whole, for the creation of such a Fund, the only Town Meeting vote required would be for the initial transfer of CPC funds to the Conservation Fund.
 - Ms. Gabree clarified also that any additional transfers from CPC would also have to be approved by Town Meeting vote, but once the funds are there, the Conservation Fund could be used by its administrative authority for quick action in between Town Meetings.
- JP will be meeting with Town Administrator Robert Pontbriand on Friday, 8/4, and this will be one of the topics of discussion.
- **Previous CPC Discussion Follow-up**
 - CPA Surcharge
 - In her upcoming meeting with Mr. Pontbriand, JP will also be discussing the possibility of asking Town Meeting to approve an increase in the CPA surcharge from 1% to 3%.
 - Under the 1% surcharge, the State match is 20.58%.
 - If the Town were to approve increasing to the 3% surcharge, the State match would rise to 33.14%.
 - Community Preservation 5-Year Plan
 - Also with Mr. Pontbriand, JP will ascertain whether CPC will need to issue an RFP for this project.
 - JP has already spoken with Courtney Starling, of the Community Opportunities Group (currently working with the Master Plan Committee).
 - She will be speaking to Jen Goldson who did the last Plan.
 - In addition, the Community Preservation Coalition has provided JP with some other names to contact for this work.
- **Committee Updates**
 - Historical Commission (BES)
 - BES passed around the plaque for the WCTU fountain, just received.
 - The DPW will be assisting in creating a structure to support the plaque.
 - Housing Authority (JP)
 - Housing met briefly to approve budget items.
 - Parks & Recreation (RD)
 - Summer recreation activities are continuing.
 - Conservation Commission (JG)
 - ConCom has begun its search for a new Administrator.
 - Planning Board



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- Nothing new to report.
- Open Space & Recreation Plan Update Committee (BAS)
 - The draft plan is undergoing final revisions.
 - The Committee hopes to be ready for public review and a Public Hearing for final comments in September.
- **Unscheduled Update from Town Administrator Robert Pontbriand**
 - Mr. Pontbriand arrived for a different meeting to follow CPC's and was able to provide a brief update on a few items:
 - The appraisal for the Ch. 61 property associated with Ayer Solar II is in process;
 - The Board of Selectmen will be having a discussion over whether to proceed on the property known as Emily's Way (off Groton-Harvard Road);
 - With summer winding down, Mr. Pontbriand will be looking to reconvene the Inventory Group that was formed to review Ch. 61 and Open Space lands.
 - He hopes the Group can provide a plan, establish a priority list for potential acquisitions (were they to become available), and identify funding strategies.
 - JP reiterated that she would be talking to Mr. Pontbriand about the viability of establishing an independent Conservation Fund that could help in this regard.
- **6:52 PM – Adjourn Meeting**
 - CPC's Next Meeting: September 6, 2017, 6 p.m.
 - MF moved to adjourn; JG 2nd.
 - Motion approved unanimously.

Minutes Recorded and Submitted by Jessica G. Gugino, Clerk

Date Minutes Approved by Community Preservation Committee:

9/5/2017

Signature Indicating Approval:

