

Town of Ayer
Community Preservation Committee

Town Hall * One Main Street * Ayer, MA01432
Minutes for 03/02/11 - Approved 4/6/2011

Location: Town Hall, 1st Floor

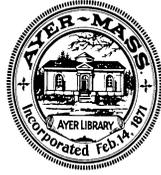
Members present: Alene Reich (AR) [Historical]- Chair, Mark Fermanian (MF) [Planning Board], Gary Luca (GL) [BOS], Janet Providakes (JP) [Housing], Jess Gugino (JG) [ConsCom]- Clerk

Not present: Scott Houde (SH) [FinCom], Beth Suedmeyer (BS) [At Large], Sarah Gibbons (SG) [Parks & Rec.], Vacancy [At Large]

APAC taped: NO

7:09 PM – Open Meeting

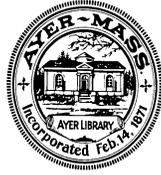
- **Public Hearing: Rehabilitation of the Fletcher Building (aka Nutting Building), 49 Main Street**
 - Rick Lefferts, Development Consultant, of Commonweal Collaborative; Robert France, building owner, of Bonnet Realty; Bill Hamel, of Senate Construction; and Laurie Crockett, Project Architect, appeared before the CPC.
 - Bonnet Realty is seeking approval to go before Spring Town Meeting with a request for CPA funds to use in the rehabilitation of the Fletcher Building.
 - Mr. Lefferts said that the project met CPA goals in two ways: 1) as affordable community housing; and 2) as historic preservation.
 - The proposed rehabilitation would restore the exterior façade of the building, install an ADA ramp for access from Pleasant Street, and rebuild the interior of the building for mixed use.
 - The first floor is planned for commercial/retail use; the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th floors would be converted into six affordable housing apartments, two per floor.
 - The ZBA has already approved the plan, as has the DPW and the Ayer Historical Commission.
 - The historic preservation will include replacement of all of the windows, including the bay windows, doing structural repair to restore the slate mansard roof, replacing the crumbling front awning with a hard canopy, and scraping, patching and painting of the exterior façade.
 - Additional windows will be added to the L-shaped extension on Pleasant Street and new and improved exits will be constructed out of the back of the building so that there is a second means of egress from each floor.
 - Mr. France said he intends to bring the building back to as close to its original state as possible. He views this project as the last phase of restoration along Ayer's Main Street.



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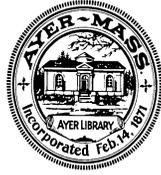
- For the record, Mr. France stated a previous contractual agreement with Jesse Reich, the husband of CPC chair Alene Reich.
 - Mary Spinner, from the audience, asked for clarification of this.
 - The work was in relation to Mr. Reich's biofuel company in North Andover and has been completed.
 - Neither the Chair nor the rest of the Committee had concerns over any conflict of interest.
- Mr. Lefferts said they are asking for \$250,000 in CPA funding, out of a total project cost of \$1,836,000.
- Another possible funding source is the Mass. Dept. of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) which recently accepted their application.
- Mr. France said if there was an opportunity to apply for state tax-credits, he would do so, but that the possibility of tax-credits was not driving the design.
- GL asked if the installation of an elevator was required.
 - Mr. France said the small number of housing units made the project exempt from this.
- George Bacon, from the audience and a member of the Historical Commission, asked that the CPC consider requiring a Preservation Restriction (PR) on the project in order to maintain the rehabilitated exterior in perpetuity.
 - Mr. Bacon suggested a PR would make the project more attractive at Town Meeting.
- Pauline Conley, from the audience, asked what the process would be for renting the affordable housing units – whether a lottery would be held and if Ayer residents would be given preference.
 - Mr. Lefferts said that if there were more applicants than units available, generally the process is to hold a lottery.
 - Mr. France said his intention was to restore this building for the local community and that if it was possible within the law to give preference to Ayer residents, he would do so.
- Mr. Bacon asked if there were any architecturally significant features inside the building.
 - Mr. France said there were not as the building has been badly neglected.
- Mary Arata, from the audience and representing *The Public Spirit*, asked if providing parking spaces for future residents of the building was a relevant issue.



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- Mr. France answered that the plan has already gone through Ayer's Planning Board and as the project is in downtown Ayer, no additional parking is required.
- GL moved to forward the request for CPA funding to Spring Town Meeting; JP 2nd.
 - GL noted that according to the Community Preservation Coalition handout provided, public funds may be used "to advance a public purpose," which in his view, this private project did.
 - JP, MF, and JG agreed.
 - Motion approved unanimously.
- GL will write a draft of the article that will go into the Town Warrant, for review at the 4/6/11 meeting of the CPC.
- GL and AR asked Mr. France and Mr. Lefferts if they could break down the request for CPA funding in terms of how much would go to community housing and how much to historical.
 - Mr. France said that both aspects of the project exceed \$250,000 in costs and he hoped to leave it to the CPC to decide which 'pot' to draw from and in what proportion.
 - Mr. Lefferts said that all of the potential CPA funding would go into direct construction regardless.
- JP suggested handouts describing the project be available at Town Meeting.
- The issue of who could present the project to Town Meeting was discussed as none of the applicants are registered Ayer voters.
- The CPC felt that Mr. France, as property owner and taxpayer for the building, might be granted permission by the Moderator to speak on behalf of the project.
- **Approval of Meeting Minutes**
 - JP moved to approve minutes for 1/5/11 as written; MF 2nd.
 - Motion approved unanimously.
- **Approval of Expenses**
 - GL moved to approve payment of \$750 to the Community Preservation Coalition for annual membership dues; MF 2nd.
 - Motion approved unanimously.
 - GL moved to approve payment of \$180 to Nashoba Publishing for publication of the Public Hearing notice for the Pleasant Street School pocket park; MF 2nd.



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- Motion approved unanimously.

- **Old Business/Other**
 - AR announced that the Community Preservation Coalition is holding a free conference on 4/2/11 at Bridgewater State University, from 8:30 am to 3 pm.
 - BS will be attending; JP expressed interest in doing so as well.

- **8:09 PM – Adjourn Meeting**
 - GL moved to adjourn; MF 2nd.
 - Motion approved unanimously.