



**Town of Ayer**  
**Community Preservation Committee**

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

Minutes for 1/3/2018

Location: Town Hall, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor

Members present: Janet Providakes (JP) [Housing Authority]- Chair, Barry Schwarzel (BES) [Historical Commission], Richard Durand (RD) [Parks & Recreation], Jess Gugino (JG) [Conservation Commission]- Clerk, Julie Murray (JM) [At Large]

Not present: Beth Suedmeyer (BAS) [At Large], Mark Fermanian (MF) [Planning Board]

APAC taped: NO

**6:10 PM – Open Meeting**

• **Approval of Meeting Minutes**

- RD moved to accept the minutes for 12/6/2017 as written; JM 2<sup>nd</sup>.
  - Motion approved unanimously.

**NEW BUSINESS**

• **Discussion: Sandy Pond School Association (SPSA)**

- Irv Rockwood, Vice President of SPSA, was present with an “Application for Determination of Eligibility for Community Preservation Funding.”
  - The second part of the application process, the “Application for Community Preservation Funding,” will be submitted for CPC’s 2/7/2018 meeting.
- The Eligibility Application previews the funding application for up to \$93,710 from Ayer CPC, under the CPA Category of “Historic Preservation.”
  - As previously discussed in detail by Mr. Rockwood at CPC’s 11/1/2017 meeting, SPSA now plans to move forward with the repairs and restorations recommended by the Conditions Assessment prepared last year by Spencer & Vogt (completed 5/2017) and funded by a CPC grant.
  - Phase I encompasses urgently-required emergency work to stabilize and preserve the 150+ year old historic schoolhouse.
    - Spencer & Vogt estimated that Phase I would cost \$110,886.
    - SPSA has now split Phase I work into Phases IA and IB.
      - The current funding application, for \$93,710, is only for Phase IA work.
- The scope of work under Phase IA encompasses 4 basic tasks:
  - 1) Foundation repair (the necessary step before all other repairs can be undertaken);
    - Special focus on repointing/rebuilding the SE corner, which has sunk more than the rest, and lower portion of East elevation;
  - 2) Masonry repair;
  - 3) Replacement of the classroom ceiling (with blueboard plaster ceiling, repainting);



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- It was noted that historic preservation regulations do not require that the ceiling be replaced with horsehair plaster like the original.
- 4) Selected structural repairs ('sistering' classroom ceiling joists with additional support; backer rod & caulk joint between school and ell).
- In describing the "two lives" of the building, Mr. Rockwood stressed the compatibility of this project with CPC goals.
  - The first life of the building was as a school, during the time period when public education was transitioning from single-room schoolhouses to broader community schooling.
  - The second life of the building was to serve as a kind of community center, hosting reunions, dinner dances, lectures, even an art auction or two.
    - This use of the schoolhouse began to drop off in the 1950s and 60s.
    - Importantly, these activities did not alter the interior of the building in any way so the building can easily be restored as the historic schoolhouse that began its life.
  - The goal of its restoration now is not only to preserve the historic building, but also to make it accessible for public/community use once again.
    - In this manner, Mr. Rockwood said, improvements to the privately-owned building will have a notable public benefit once all repairs, restorations, and improvements are complete.
    - The SPSA is also very amenable to the idea of enacting a Preservation Restriction (PR) on the building in return for CPA funding.
- If funding is approved, Mr. Rockwood said SPSA anticipated the Phase IA work to be completed within the next 12 months, with work commencing during summer and fall 2018.
- To complete the current application process, JP said CPC would review the Funding Application at its 2/7 meeting, then plan to hold a Public Hearing on the project at its 3/7 meeting.
  - If this time-table is kept, there will be no problem with getting a funding Article onto the Spring Town Meeting Warrant for a Town vote to approve/disapprove the funding request in May.
- Mr. Rockwood said the SPSA is also submitting funding applications for Phase IA to 1) the Community Foundation of North Central Massachusetts (CFNCM), and 2) the Bruce J. Anderson (The Boston Foundation).
  - If CPC approves the Warrant Article, its wording will request funding "up to" \$93,710.
  - Adjustments can then be made to actual allocations if either or both of those other funding applications are approved.



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- As for the question previously asked by CPC as to whether SPSA would consider putting the schoolhouse land into conservation, to expand its management, as well as share liability costs, with the Town and increase public accessibility.
  - Mr. Rockwood said this still needs further discussion within SPSA as there are differences of opinion on this topic.
  - To facilitate this ongoing discussion, Mr. Rockwood said they plan to seek feedback from other community groups as to what kinds of uses they might be interested in for the schoolhouse.
- Mr. Rockwood also briefly sketched future work once the emergency phase is over.
  - Phase IB will include priority earthwork to improve drainage, upgrading the electrical service, and installing a security system.
    - SPSA is looking for funding support for IB (\$31,068) from sources like the CFNCM and the Anderson Foundation.
  - Following completion of Phases IA and IB, Mr. Rockwood said the undertaking of “Future Phases,” costing up to an additional \$202,000, will be considered, per the Spencer & Vogt recommendations.
    - Work to be considered at this point could include:
      - repair of windows & doors;
      - exterior repair & maintenance (repair trim, replace flag pole, clean moss from roof);
      - exterior finish & painting;
      - insulation installation;
      - replacement of existing bathroom;
      - HVAC;
      - interior work;
      - exterior access (accessible ramp).
    - For this future work, SPSA would plan on seeking funding from the Massachusetts Preservation Project Fund (MPPF) as well as other additional sources, likely also including CPC.

**OLD BUSINESS**

- **Discussion: Historic Ayer Central Fire Station Roof and Cupola Project**
  - Fall Town Meeting voted to approve spending \$30,000 in CPC funds for roof/cupola portion of the restoration project.
    - The Town had signed a contract to sell the building to C. Donell Homes Inc., for the purpose of its historic restoration as well as re-purposing into a 7-9 unit apartment complex.
  - However, JP said that the financial conditions of the contract with the Town for the whole project were not met and the deadline has now expired.



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- This project has therefore now fallen through.
- The \$30,000 in CPC funds go back into CPC's Historic Preservation 'bucket'.
- It is possible the Town will put out a new RFP in an effort to sell and preserve the historic building.
- **Discussion: CPC "Success Stories"**
  - Members are continuing to work on their assignments (see 12/6 meeting), due for CPC's February 7 meeting.
  - BES said the Massachusetts Historical Commission has website research resources worth checking out.
- **Discussion: CPC 5 Year Plan – Scope of Work**
  - CPC members should review and provide feedback to JP on the draft scope of work she emailed on 12/29/2017.
- **Committee Updates**
  - Historical Commission (BES) & Housing Authority (JP)
    - The Preservation Restriction, for "99 years," for the Pleasant Street School has now been signed by the Housing Authority, and will be signed by the Historical Commission next week, bringing the PR to completion.
  - Parks & Recreation (RD)
    - Basketball season is underway!
  - Conservation Commission (JG)
    - ConCom plans to hold a public meeting to discuss Chapter 91 dock licenses on Great Ponds in February.
    - ConCom's Conservation Administrator, Jo-Anne Crystoff, is now working on the newly-created committee looking at vacant land in Ayer and developing a priority list.
      - This will contribute to planning for use of the Conservation Fund approved at Fall Town Meeting.
- **7:17 PM – Adjourn Meeting**
  - CPC's Next Meeting: February 7, 2018, 6 p.m.
  - BES moved to adjourn; JM 2<sup>nd</sup>.
    - Motion approved unanimously.

Minutes Recorded and Submitted by Jessica G. Gugino, Clerk

Date Minutes Approved by Community Preservation Committee: 3/14/2018

Signature Indicating Approval: \_\_\_\_\_

*Jessica G. Gugino*