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MAY 14 2019

TOWN OF AYER

*Amey Opland*



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

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

Minutes for 4/3/2019

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

Members present: Janet Providakes (JP) [Housing Authority]- Chair, Beth Suedmeyer (BAS) [At Large], Richard Durand (RD) [Parks & Recreation], Jess Gugino (JG) [Conservation Commission]- Clerk, Julie Murray (JM) [Planning Board], Colleen Krieser (CK)[At Large]

Not present: Barry Schwarzel (BES) [Historical Commission]

APAC taped: YES (through Public Hearing)

**7:00 PM – Open Meeting**

- **Approval of Meeting Minutes**

- CK moved to accept the Special Meeting minutes for 2/11/2019 as written; JM 2<sup>nd</sup>.
  - Motion approved unanimously.
- CK moved to accept the minutes for 3/6/2019 as amended; RD 2<sup>nd</sup>.
  - Motion approved unanimously.

**OLD BUSINESS**

- **Ayer Community Garden Update, Barnum Road**

- The lot area has now been cleared and they are working on arranging for grading.
- In response to some resident questions, JP said that new fresh loam would be used for all of the garden beds.
- JP also said that, assuming the project is approved at Spring Town Meeting (5/13/2019), funds can be used immediately for garden invoices dated after 5/13/2019 as CPC already has sufficient funds in the Open Space category to cover.
  - It will therefore not be necessary to wait for the start of the new Fiscal Year, which had been a concern for garden organizer Sheila Carman.

- **Public Hearing – Former Central Fire Station Renovation Project, 14 Washington Street (\$190,000, STM 2019)**

- JP read the legal notice, which ran in the Nashoba Valley Voice on 3/22 and 3/29.
- Calvin Moore, of Cowfield Station LLC, current owner of the former fire station, and Alan Manoian, Director of Community & Economic Development, were present.
- Mr. Moore's application for CPC funding is:
  - \$40,000, from the Historical Preservation category, to support the continued historical renovations to the fire station – slate roof, cupola, especially, and continuing masonry work;
  - \$150,000, from the Community Housing category, to support the creation of six affordable housing units by assisting with the two units to be built on the second floor.
- Mr. Manoian presented a brief overview of the significance of the fire station:
  - It was built in 1934.

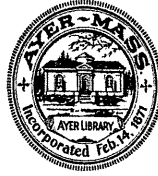


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- Its architect was George Ernest Robinson, known in his time as the ‘father of modern fire station design’.
  - The inspiration for the architecture of the Ayer fire station was taken from Massachusetts’ Old State House building and is best described as ‘colonial revival architecture’.
  - Mr. Manoian said that all of Mr. Robinson’s surviving buildings in Massachusetts have been restored with the exception of the Ayer fire station.
- Two side wings were added to the building in 1970 and 1996.
  - The addition of these disqualifies the building for consideration of listing on the National Register of Historic Places (but see further discussion below).
- The total cost of restoration of the exterior and redevelopment and repurposing of the interior is currently estimated at \$1,109,362.
  - If the CPC grants are approved, and if additional State assistance for affordable housing comes through next year (see below), Mr. Moore will still be contributing approximately 40% of his own funds toward completion of this project.
- Mr. Moore’s project aims to rehabilitate, restore and preserve the historically significant exterior of the building, in particular the cupola, stepped gables, masonry, and slate roof.
  - A previous CPA grant of \$30,000 was awarded by Fall Town Meeting 2017 for this purpose.
    - The CPA grant for this work transferred to Mr. Moore when he became the owner in 2018.
  - After the change in ownership of the building to Mr. Moore, this work began in 2018, however the actual costs of this preservation work far exceed previous estimates.
    - The initial grant money was therefore used primarily for work on the stepped gables and masonry, but much more work urgently needs to be done.
  - An additional CPA grant of \$40,000, per this application, will still not cover the full cost of historical preservation; Mr. Moore will be paying for the rest.
  - The historical slate roof will be replaced with a simulated slate roof that meets the Secretary of the Interior’s standards for historical preservations.
- The project also aims to restore and redevelop the interior of the building into six affordable housing units, four on the first floor, and two on the second.
  - The removal of lead paint and asbestos contaminants is already underway and Mr. Moore said he expected this to be complete in about four weeks.



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- In addition, the southern side wing, added in 1996, will be removed entirely to create off-street parking for the building residents.
  - Mr. Manoian said that the Massachusetts Historical Commission said this south wing was added on a scale that significantly altered the original architectural look of the building, whereas the north wing is set further back and was constructed with brick to match the building.
  - Once the south wing is removed, Mass. Historic possibly may be willing to reconsider whether the building might qualify for National Register listing even with the north wing still attached.
- As discussed at CPC's 3/6/2019 meeting, Mr. Moore and Mr. Manoian will be pursuing a \$500,000 DHCD (Dept. of Housing and Community Development) grant next year for assistance with the affordable housing component.
  - Their hope is that the demonstration of local support (via a CPA grant of \$150,000 for community housing, if approved) will give the application a better chance of State approval.
  - In the interim, much other work will continue: exterior historical preservation, removal of contaminants, removal of the south wing.
- The lifespan of an Affordable Housing Restriction, if this CPC application is approved at Town Meeting, was then discussed.
  - Mr. Moore said that while he did not mind a Preservation Restriction (on the historical exterior) for a 99-year span, he was reluctant to consider a long Housing Restriction.
    - Affordable rental rates are currently tied in to Boston rental rates, but if Ayer were to be removed from this market down the road and put into, say, the same rate system as Shirley, the change in rates could make the cost of salvaging this building no longer financially feasible.
  - Mr. Manoian said projects that receive Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) are required to implement a 30-year deed restriction.
  - BAS felt strongly that the Housing Restriction should be maintained in perpetuity – or at least as long as possible – for long-term benefit of the Town.
    - CK agreed with this, when Town money, in the form of CPC funding, is being used in the creation of these units.
  - The reason that the preservation of affordable units is an issue is because the State requires that communities offer at least 10% of their housing units as 'affordable' in order to qualify for a number of other State grants.
    - Ayer's affordable housing percentage is currently at 8.7%.
    - The affordable housing requirement (e.g. deeded Restrictions) is due to expire on nearly a quarter of the current units, after which these units can be offered at regular market rates.



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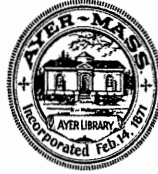
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- Mr. Manoian said that Housing Restrictions 'in perpetuity' create legal subordination complications, which is why '99-year Restrictions' are suggested instead.
  - This had been a factor with the Pleasant Street School historical preservation and conversion into elderly housing.
- After further discussion, Mr. Moore dropped his objection to a 99-year Housing Restriction.
- All were in agreement that this is a fine project for CPC funding as it meets several CPA interests, i.e. preservation of a significant historical structure along with provision of affordable community housing.
- BAS moved to support the application for \$40,000 in Historical Preservation funding and \$150,000 in Community Housing funding, and to bring the application to Spring Town Meeting for final vote; RD 2<sup>nd</sup>.
  - Motion approved unanimously.
- JM moved to close the Public Hearing; RD 2<sup>nd</sup>.
  - Motion approved unanimously.

**NEW BUSINESS**

- **2019 Spring Town Meeting Warrant Articles**

- Current CPC Balances
  - Open Space \$939,010
  - Historical Preservation \$51,776
  - Community Housing \$168,849
  - General Fund/Reserve \$257,886
- Ayer Community Garden Project
  - The Warrant Article seeks \$41,000 from the Open Space category for the Barnum Road project.
    - The draft Article was amended to remove reference to FY2020.
    - This removes any restriction on payment of invoices for this project prior to FY2020, starting July 1<sup>st</sup>.
      - Sufficient funds for this project already exist and there will be invoices needing payment prior to July 1<sup>st</sup> as this project is actively underway.
  - BAS moved to approve the wording of the Warrant Article as amended; CK 2<sup>nd</sup>.
    - Motion approved unanimously.
- Former Central Fire Station Historical and Affordable Housing Project



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- The draft Warrant Article requests funds “not-to-exceed \$40,000” to continue the restoration of the fire station, and funds “not-to-exceed \$150,000 to support the creation of affordable apartments.”
  - The Article text was amended to read “to support the creation of six affordable apartments.”
  - The justification section was amended to include a sentence indicating that the affordable housing units will be deed-restricted for 99 years, and that the historical preservation work will be done in accordance with the Secretary of the Interior’s standards.
- Given that Mr. Moore’s application requested CPC funding for the two second floor units, JG asked if the 99-year Affordable Housing Restriction was to be required for all six units.
  - The majority consensus was that if Town Meeting approves this Article, the CPC Grant Agreement would be written to require a 99-year Housing Restriction on all six units.
- CK moved to approve the wording of the Warrant Article as amended; JM 2<sup>nd</sup>.
  - Motion approved unanimously.
- JP said there was the possibility that Town Counsel might split this Article into two separate Articles, one for the historical preservation component, the other for the affordable housing component.
- Transfer of Funds
  - The draft requests the transfer of annual revenues “not-to-exceed \$12,000” and their reserve for general open space purposes (i.e. due diligence, appraisals, inspections).
    - The reference to FY2020 was deleted.
  - JM moved to approve the Warrant Article wording as amended; BAS 2<sup>nd</sup>.
    - Motion approved unanimously.
- CPA FY2020 Annual Revenue Disbursements
  - This year’s estimated total amount for fund disbursement re the FY2020 1% surcharge is currently estimated at \$221,548.
    - Actual tax revenues received may change this number.
  - The State requires a minimum 10% disbursement of annual revenues to each of the historical preservation, open space, and community housing categories.
    - JP configured this Article to disburse 10% to historical preservation and 10% to community housing.
    - The amount disbursed to open space was revised slightly downward, with more going into the General Fund/Undesignated Funds.



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- Taking into account the \$12,000 for due diligence taken from the annual revenues by the previous Warrant Article, the final disbursement amounts for this Article were:
  - \$110,774 to Open Space;
  - \$22,155 (10%) to Historical Preservation;
  - \$22,155 (10%) to Community Housing;
  - Remainder (\$49,464) to Undesignated Fund Balance/General Fund.
- JG moved to approve the wording of this Warrant Article as amended; CK 2<sup>nd</sup>.
  - Motion approved unanimously.
- **Committee Updates**
  - Historical Commission (BES)
    - No report.
  - Housing Authority (JP)
    - The new emergency generator at the Pleasant Street School housing works, as demonstrated during a recent power outage.
  - Parks & Recreation (RD)
    - Offers are out to potential lifeguards for the Town Beach swimming season.
  - Conservation Commission (JG)
    - ConCom is working on its Bylaw.
  - Planning Board (JM)
    - The Board is currently doing a site plan review for the installation of solar panels near the landfill at the Ayer Transfer Station.
  - Open Space & Recreation Plan Update Committee (BAS)
    - JG said a copy of the State-approved OSRP is available at the Public Library.
- **8:40 PM – Adjourn Meeting**
  - CPC's Next Meeting: May 1, 7 p.m.
  - JM moved to adjourn; RD 2<sup>nd</sup>.
    - Motion approved unanimously.

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

**Date Minutes Approved by Community Preservation Committee:**

5/1/2019

**Signature Indicating Approval:**

Jessica G. Gugino