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OCT 29 2021

TOWN OF AYER
TOWN CLERK



Town of Ayer
Community Preservation Committee
Town Hall * One Main Street * Ayer, MA 01432
Minutes for 6/2/2021

Location: Remote Meeting via Zoom, accessible to public, due to Pandemic State of Emergency

Members present: Janet Providakes (JP) [Housing Authority]- Chair, Julie Murray (JUM) [Planning Board] – Vice-Chair, Beth Suedmeyer (BAS) [At Large], Barry Schwarzel (BES) [Historical Commission], Jason Mayo (JAM) [Parks & Recreation], Colleen Krieser (CK)[At Large], Jess Gugino (JG) [Conservation Commission]- Clerk

APAC Taped and Broadcast Live

7:02 PM – Open Meeting

- Throughout the meeting, JP periodically invited input (questions or comments) from members of the public viewing the meeting remotely (via Zoom or live broadcast), and calling in to participate either by Zoom or telephone connection.
- **Approval of Meeting Minutes**
 - JUM moved to accept the minutes for 5/5/2021 as written; BES 2nd.
 - Motion approved unanimously by Roll Call Vote 6-0 (CK not yet present).

CURRENT BUSINESS

- **Updating the 5-Year Community Preservation Plan (CPP)**
 - JP received two bid proposals in response to the CPP Scope of Work (SOW):
 - J. M. Goldson: \$20,100
 - Community Opportunities Group, Inc. (COG): \$15,000
 - CPC members wanted more time to compare the two proposals, as well as more information to account for the difference in price bids and some services offered.
 - The Goldson proposal includes a GIS component not mentioned in SOW.
 - Members want to compare details such as the number of meetings offered.
 - Both bidders have comparable familiarity with the Town, Goldson having done the previous CPP, and COG having done the recent Master Plan.
 - BAS raised the possibility of interviewing both bidders and JP will contact Town Manager Robert Pontbriand to see if this would be appropriate for a contract of this size.
 - JP will also put discussing this further on CPC's July agenda, re clarifications or additional information to be asked of both bidders.
 - There is no urgent rush to proceed right now (see below).
 - Funding for this project
 - Town Planner Mark Archambault sent JP information on a possible grant opportunity for funding to support the CPP.



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- On a second note, Town Accountant Lisa Gabree told JP that, in her view, funding for this project needs to be through a Warrant Article at Fall Town Meeting.
 - CPC sets aside \$5000 for administrative expenses each year, but this amount will not cover either of the two bids.
 - Ms. Gabree indicated that the \$12,000 set aside annually for “due diligence” could not be used for the purpose of funding a CPP update.
 - JP is going to confirm this with Mr. Pontbriand as well.
- **Update: Sandy Pond Schoolhouse Phase II Restoration and Preservation Work, Grant (FTM 2020, \$187,340)**
 - BES will continue to work with SPSA President Irv Rockwood regarding developing the Preservation Restriction (PR) to be put in place on this project.
 - Both have agreed that the Falmouth PR is a good model to follow.
 - BES is also going to get cost quotes from Erie Landmarks for the SPSA.
 - This would be for a plaque denoting CPA funding for this project in a style similar to the schoolhouse’s National Registry plaque.
- **Update: Ayer Community Garden (\$41,000, STM 2019)**
 - JP reiterated that the community garden is now operating under the nonprofit auspices of Growing Pains.

OLD BUSINESS

- **Historic Ayer Central Fire Station, 14 Washington Street**
 - 2017, Fall Town Meeting, \$30,000 CPC grant for restoration work on the roof and cupola.
 - 2019, Spring Town Meeting, \$190,000 CPC grant (\$40,000 Historic Preservation; \$150,000 Community Housing).
 - JP updated CPC on the status of this project.
 - Calvin Moore, the current owner, is very ill and will be putting the fire station up for sale.
 - While this project has received two CPC grants, only the \$30,000 for historic preservation from the 2017 grant has been spent thus far.
- **Committee Updates**
 - Conservation Commission (JG)
 - **Pond access**
 - JG asked if CPC grant money could be used for something like a public boardwalk out onto Flannagan Pond.

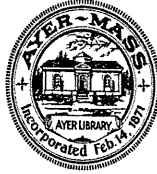


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- The Town, through the Conservation Commission, owns a small piece of land off Old Sandy Pond Road that abuts Flannagan Pond and whose property line extends out into the water.
 - If this was feasible and fundable, the Commission thinks this might be a way to improve public access to Flannagan Pond.
 - JP thought this was fundable by CPC money.
- On a related matter, JG asked JAM if the Parks Commission had thought further on the possibility of creating a canoe and kayak boat launch off a corridor of land at the edge of the Town Beach.
 - This was discussed prior to the pandemic, as there is another non-buildable small property lot that the Town might be able to acquire, nearby on the other side of Snake Hill Road, and which could be used perhaps for parking for boaters.
 - JAM said if that land could be acquired, the Parks Commission could reopen that discussion.
- **ConCom responsibilities**
 - Regarding the ConCom, JG said the Commission and especially its agent, Jo-Anne Crystoff, have been overstressed.
 - The Commission has statutory responsibilities (upholding the Wetlands Protection Act, and now its local wetlands bylaw) that have to be its first priority, but at the same time it also provides other services, or potential services to the town – such as open space acquisition through its Conservation Fund – some of which are suffering as a result of no staff time.
 - The town's continued growth is, however, also overtaxing other departments in Town Hall, especially those dealing with land use (Conservation, Planning, Building).
 - Burn-out is a real thing, and Conservation does not want to lose its excellent agent.
 - At the same time, as resident Dennis Curran's remarks at a Select Board meeting last month brought to light, zoning enforcement is not getting the attention it needs because the Building Inspector is also just one person.
 - The Town, and Town Meeting, need to be aware of the need for changes to accommodate the growing actual needs of the Town.

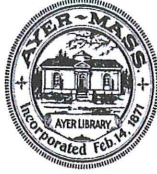


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- BAS noted the possibility of CPC funds being used for the implementation of some of the Open Space & Recreation Plan goals that involve ConCom, perhaps via consultants, as one possible means of assistance.
 - She added she completely understands the reality of staff burnout, something that has also been accentuated by the pressures of the pandemic state of emergency.
- Planning Board (JUM)
 - The Planning Board just concluded its permitting of improvements and redesign to the McDonald's located on the rotary.
 - They are still working on the 0 Washington Street subdivision, currently called "Panther Place."
 - Another subdivision project, 'Stratton Hill', off Wright Road, won't be on the Planning Board agenda until later this month or next.
 - JUM also concurred with the current over-stressing of land-use related committees/departments.
- Historical Commission (BES)
 - Member Maggie Durand is moving forward with contacting Carole Goldstein, of U.Mass, for Ayer to participate in the "Massachusetts Memories Road Show." (see CPC minutes, 5/5/2021).
 - Regarding the \$12,500 grant received from the Mass. Historical Commission for its Historic Resources Inventory, BES said the Commission has been meeting on this and has a tight schedule it must comply with.
 - They need to submit a Scope of Work by the end of June, put it out for bidding in July, and have a consultant hired in place by sometime in September.
 - The entire project needs to be completed by September 2022.
- Housing Authority & Affordable Housing Committee (JP)
 - The Housing Authority will probably meet in June, but hasn't met recently.
 - The Affordable Housing Committee is planning a joint meeting with its new Board of Trustees on June 30.
 - In addition, a two-day training workshop, the '12th Annual Housing Institute,' will be held at Devens June 6-7, with topics covering affordable housing, legislative and policy updates, and more.
 - CK hopes to be able to attend parts of it.
 - This year's workshop should allow for virtual/remote participation.



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- JP also said the Affordable Housing Committee is going to let its new Board of Trustees take over certain aspects, and that the Board of Trustees may therefore be coming to CPC with new funding requests for the Affordable Housing Trust.
- Parks & Recreation (JAM)
 - The Town Beach is now open – **this year, to Ayer residents only.**
 - It will be open on weekends, and then daily once school is out later this month.
 - Display of an Ayer transfer station sticker counts as proof of residency for those parking at the beach.
 - For those who don't have a transfer station sticker, a free parking pass can be obtained from the Town Clerk's office.
 - Those walking to the beach will need to show ID proving Ayer residency when they arrive.
 - The Parks Commission will probably launch a feasibility study next year to consider the remediation and replacement of the Pirone Park playground.
- Nashua River Wild & Scenic Stewardship Council, Open Space & Recreation Plan Committee (BAS)
 - Related to above discussions of pond access, the Nashua River Wild & Scenic Stewardship Council is pursuing discussion of a potential boat launch onto the Nashua River – perhaps off McPherson Road.
 - They are also talking with the Wildlife Refuge regarding open space planning, including the feasibility of developing a walking and biking path along the Nashua River, parallel to McPherson Road.
 - These efforts would require contributing partnerships with Ayer and Devens, especially as much of the land along the river off McPherson is owned by Devens.
- **7:59 PM – Adjourn Meeting**
 - CPC's Next Meeting: July 7, 2021, 7 p.m.
 - With the State's lifting of the pandemic state of emergency, it is likely possible CPC's next meeting will be in person rather than remote.
 - BES moved to adjourn; BAS 2nd.
 - Motion approved unanimously.

Minutes Recorded and Submitted by Jessica G. Gugino, Clerk

Date / Signature Indicating Approval: _____

7/7/2021 