

Town of Ayer
Community Preservation Committee
Town Hall * One Main Street * Ayer, MA 01432
Minutes for 9/8/2021

Location: Town Hall, 1st Floor

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

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

APAC taped: NO

5:30 PM – Open Meeting

- **Approval of Meeting Minutes**

- CK moved to accept the minutes for 7/7/2021 as amended; JUM 2nd.
 - Motion approved unanimously.

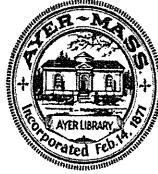
- **Correspondence / Bills**

- JP responded to resident Carolyn McCreary about her concerns regarding the proposed Stratton Hill subdivision.
 - For the moment, Ms. McCreary will direct her efforts toward working with the developer.
- Ms. McCreary also asked for CPC's current balances which are, as of 6/30/2021:
 - Open Space \$1,188,079.25
 - Historic Preservation \$106,785.07
 - Housing \$78,988.00
 - Budgetary Reserve \$578,925.00
 - Undesignated Fund Balance \$162,387.79

CURRENT BUSINESS

- **Application for CPA Funding: Ayer Shirley Regional School District (ASRSD) – Athletic Field Project**

- Dan Gleason, a former member of the School Committee and now a member of an advisory committee for ASRSD, presented the application for CPA funding of the Athletic Field Project, on behalf of Dr. Mary Malone, Project Manager and former Superintendent of ASRSD.
- The application seeks \$200,000 in CPC funding, but after discussion, and given the wider public benefits, CPC members decided to increase the funding amount to \$300,000.
 - When Town Meeting votes on such funding applications, amounts can be revised downward but not upward.



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- JP confirmed with Town Manager Robert Pontbriand that CPC can hold its required Public Hearing for this application on October 6, even though the Fall Town Meeting Warrant closes on October 1.
- The application was reviewed and suggestions were made to Mr. Gleason for a short presentation at the 10/6 CPC Public Hearing.
 - The Powerpoint presentation should be updated to show Ayer's numbers and tax impact for its cost share of the project (56%), rather than Shirley's numbers (44%).
 - The presentation should stress how the Town as a whole benefits from the project, or at least the CPA-funded portion of the project.
 - Letters of support were suggested to be sought from the Parks & Recreation Commission, Town Manager Pontbriand, and representative(s) from ASRSD, such as the Superintendent, Principal, or Athletic Director.
 - Mr. Gleason said he could also provide documentation of FinCom and the Select Board's supporting votes.
 - A very brief overview of the whole project should be provided, but then the focus should be directed on the portion that CPA funds can be used for.
 - JUM also suggested that Mr. Gleason refer to the Town's updated Master Plan, where "quality schools" was identified as a priority, along with a specific recommendation to support an athletic fields improvement project.
- In terms of the use of a CPA grant, if approved at Fall Town Meeting, CPC members agreed that the optimal use would be to contribute funding toward the construction of a new running track.
 - As BAS said, the track would be the best focus because it would also be available for public recreational use.
- Following discussion, JP has two things to confirm with Stuart Saginor, Executive Director of the Community Preservation Coalition:
 - 1) That track construction is a legitimate use of CPA funds;
 - (It was noted elsewhere that CPA funds cannot be used for anything involving synthetic turf).
 - 2) And which category/ies (i.e. Open Space, Budgetary Reserve, Undesignated Fund) can be used to fund this project.
 - CPC would prefer to use the Open Space category at this time.
- It was noted that if track construction was not a viable use of CPA funds, then sports lighting and/or landscape improvements would become the new focus.
 - A 7/27/21 email from Dr. Malone to Mr. Gleason indicated that the lighting would be compliant with "Dark Skies" standards.
- Mr. Gleason said there is a continuing effort to solicit donations from local businesses, etc. to reduce the cost to Ayer and Shirley taxpayers.



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- Aside from a \$500,000 grant from the Norton Family Foundation, they have not had success.
 - JP will draft the Warrant Article and circulate to CPC members.
 - The Warrant Article will be kept generic.
 - CK moved to accept the amended application, seeking \$300,000 in CPA funding, moving the application forward to a Public Hearing to take place at CPC's 10/6 meeting, and drafting an Article to be included in the Fall Town Meeting Warrant; JUM 2nd.
 - Motion approved unanimously.
- **Sandy Pond Schoolhouse Phase II Restoration and Preservation Work Grant (FTM 2020, \$187,340)**
 - Irv Rockwood, President of the Sandy Pond School Association (SPSA), was present along with retired Judge Robert Gardner, to provide an update.
 - The project is moving forward with two grants in hand, the CPC grant as well as a \$50,000 grant from the Massachusetts Preservation Projects Fund (MPPF).
 - The two grants should allow them to complete the project.
 - Mr. Rockwood said this will now have to include redoing the roof, which can no longer wait.
 - He also noted that the Mass. Historical Society wants the roof done with historically appropriate materials (wood, cedar) rather than asphalt, and that this will increase the price.
 - The MPPF grant has strict conditions and time-table requirements, including that the project must be completed by June 22, 2022.
 - In providing the more detailed documentation needed for the MPPF grant application, Mr. Rockwood said a glitch was discovered that must be fixed.
 - The Sandy Pond School Association acquired the historic school building 113 years ago, following its closing in 1906.
 - In 1956, the SPSA reorganized itself as a corporation, not just a volunteer group, now the Sandy Pond School Association, Inc.
 - The signatories remained the same, between the SPSA of 1908, and the SPSA Inc. of 1956.
 - However, the title was never formally transferred from the volunteer group to the corporation entity.
 - Although no problems are anticipated, it will likely take 8-12 months to clear up the matter.
 - Attorney Tom Gibbons has been consulted.
 - Mr. Rockwood will be meeting with MPPF next week as well, along with talking to Town Manager Pontbriand and possibly Ayer Town Counsel.



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- In the meantime, they would like to proceed with the project according to the MPPF schedule.
- CPC supporting proceeding forward and JP asked Mr. Rockwood to let her know if SPSA needed CPC to provide supporting documentation.
- **Update of 5-Year Community Preservation Plan (CPP)**
 - The use of CPA funds to pay for updating the CPP will be on the Warrant for Fall Town Meeting, Oct. 25, 2021.
 - The required Public Hearing will take place at CPC's Oct. 6 meeting.
- **Public Comment**
 - Resident Sara Withee, of Groton-Shirley Road, asked to speak to CPC.
 - Walking in her neighborhood, she was come upon old footpaths.
 - With all the new development taking place in Ayer, she expressed the hope that the Town would be cognizant of these pathways and seek to protect them. She also offered to mark the ones she is familiar with on a map for CPC.
 - BAS and JP also noted that there are several areas in town where paths are important to maintain as they help provide connectivity between neighborhoods, etc.
- **Committee Updates**
 - Historical Commission (BES)
 - No report.
 - Housing Authority (JP)
 - No new report.
 - Affordable Housing Committee(CK)
 - No new report.
 - Parks & Recreation (JAM)
 - No report.
 - Planning Board (JUM)
 - The Board is proceeding with its development of stormwater regulations.
 - They are nearly finished with the permitting process for the Panther Place Open Space Residential Development (OSRD).
 - Site Plan Review is taking place for 60 Central Avenue.
 - The Planning Board may also be addressing a rezoning issue for a parcel on Harvard Road.
 - Conservation Commission (JG)
 - ConCom is holding a Public Hearing for a new Fertilizer Use Bylaw at its 9/23 meeting.
 - This will be on the Warrant for Fall Town Meeting later in October.



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- ConCom has also begun its review process for Panther Place.
- Open Space & Recreation Plan Update Committee (BAS)
 - No report.
- **7:10 PM – Adjourn Meeting**
 - CPC's Next Meeting: October 6, 7 p.m.
 - JUM moved to adjourn; CK 2nd.
 - Motion approved unanimously.

Minutes Recorded and Submitted by Jessica G. Gugino, Clerk

Date / Signature Indicating CPC Approval:

10/6/2021

Jessica G. Gugino