



RECEIVED
APR 07 2022
TOWN OF AYER
TOWN CLERK

Town of Ayer
Community Preservation Committee
Town Hall * One Main Street * Ayer, MA 01432
Minutes for 3/2/2022

Location: Remote Meeting via Zoom, accessible to public, due to ongoing pandemic

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], Jess Gugino (JG) [Conservation Commission]- Clerk, Colleen Krieser (CK)[At Large]
APAC taped: Yes

7:00 PM – Open Meeting

- **Confirmation of Agenda**
 - JP added discussion of the Housing Trust funding application to the agenda.
 - BES moved to confirm the agenda as amended; JUM 2nd.
 - Motion approved unanimously by Roll Call Vote 6-0 (BAS not present).
- **Approval of Meeting Minutes**
 - CK moved to approve the minutes for 2/2/2022 as amended; BES 2nd.
 - Motion approved unanimously by Roll Call Vote 6-0 (BAS not present).
- **Correspondence / Bills**
 - JP received the *estimated* FY2023 CPA revenue figures from the Town Assessor:
 - Total revenue is \$1,103,697
 - \$680,695 from 3% tax surcharge;
 - \$423,000 from state matching funds.
 - JP will draft the Warrant Articles for Spring Town Meeting, to allocate these funds, and distribute them to CPC members for review.
 - This year's allocation and distribution of revenue will be:
 - \$12,000 set aside for due diligence usage;
 - \$10,000 set aside for administrative usage;
 - 10% distribution to each of the 3 CPA categories (Housing, Historical, Open Space/Recreation);
 - The remainder to the Reserve Fund (aka Undesignated Fund).

CURRENT BUSINESS

- **Updating the Community Preservation Plan (CPP) (\$21,000, FTM 2021)**
 - Delaney Almond, of JM Goldson (the consultant firm hired to update the CPP), was present via Zoom.
 - The next step in this project will be the 4 individual focus group meetings, to be held on March 3rd (Open Space; Recreation) and March 7th (Community Housing; Historical Preservation).



Town of Ayer
Community Preservation Committee

Town Hall * One Main Street * Ayer, MA 01432

Minutes for 3/2/2022

- CPC gave Ms. Almond some overall review comments of the draft CPA Profiles.
 - The Profiles will be used for the forums, handouts, etc., as well as in the final CPP.
- JG raised the question as to whether Devens should still be included in the Profiles since the portion that originally came from Ayer is no longer considered part of Ayer.
 - JP said her preference would be to not include Devens since Ayer does not have any control over the Devens references.
 - After some discussion, focusing on both the importance of recognizing the historical connection of Devens to Ayer as well as the current accessibility of Devens to Ayer residents (e.g. the playing fields), it was decided to:
 - Not include Devens references in the specific CPA category profiles;
 - But to add a Devens profile, separate from the categories, that underscores the historical connections and resources.
 - On the associated maps, it was decided that Devens should be shaded differently from Ayer.
 - In support of these changes, resident Pauline Conley commented that the property taxes paid in Devens go to the Commonwealth, not to Ayer, nor can Ayer CPA funds be used on any property within Devens.
- BAS said the draft should include somewhere a detailed reference to Ayer's recent change in the property tax surcharge from 1% to 3%.
 - This could be done in a "snapshot" item.
 - JP also suggested the graph showing Ayer's CPA funding over the years should be extended to include the current fiscal year (which will be complete by the time this CPP update is finished).
 - This way readers can clearly and visually see the impact the change to a 3% surcharge has made to the town in terms of tax revenue raised, but also especially in terms of increased state matching funds due to the town now qualifying for additional funding rounds.
- As for specific comments/edits on the Profiles draft, feedback should be given to Ms. Almond by 4/1.
- Regarding the public survey, Ms. Almond said this would be launched in the middle to late part of March.
 - She will provide CPC members with a link to the survey for review.
 - Comments or suggestions should be given to Ms. Almond by 3/15.
 - CPC will need to designate someone to transcribe handwritten surveys into a digital version (not all residents have access to computers).



Town of Ayer
Community Preservation Committee

Town Hall * One Main Street * Ayer, MA 01432

Minutes for 3/2/2022

- Finally, Ms. Almond talked about the preparation/countdown to the public forum that will take place virtually on May 4.
 - Leading up to this, there should be announcements on social media as well as other forms of public outreach.
- It was noted that May 4 is also when CPC has its regular meeting, but CPC will plan to hold its 'business' meeting earlier than usual, at 6 p.m., so that the public forum can begin at 7 p.m.
- Regarding the focus groups, resident Pauline Conley expressed her wish to be able to participate in all 4 of the categories, not just the one on Housing.
 - JP will check but also noted that these focus groups were intentionally limited to 7 people for each, and specific invitations had been sent out, along with worksheets for those planning to participate.
- **Application for \$25,000 CPA Funding for Flannagan Pond Public Access Feasibility Study**
 - JP spoke to Stuart Saginor, of the Community Preservation Coalition, to confirm that CPA funds could legally be used for this kind of study.
 - Mr. Saginor said yes, especially if CPA funds might also be used for constructing such access (preparation for which is the goal of the feasibility study).
 - JG gave a brief summary of the project, which had been discussed in more detail at the previous CPC meeting.
 - Resident Pauline Conley said she was having difficulty finding this application, or any of the current CPC funding applications, on the town website.
 - The applications are on the CPC webpage, under "Funding Request Applications."
 - JUM moved to approve forwarding this application to a Public Hearing, to be held March 30; BES 2nd.
 - Motion approved unanimously by Roll Call Vote 7-0.
- **Application for \$60,000 CPA Funding for Housing Trust**
 - Jake Driscoll, Chair of the Housing Trust, was present via Zoom.
 - Last year, the Housing Trust received \$30,000 in CPA funds, via Town Meeting vote, and these funds have been used to provide rental assistance to several Ayer residents in need.
 - Five families were helped, with \$500 in assistance paid monthly directly to landlords.
 - This year, the Housing Trust is seeking \$60,000 in CPA funds to continue and expand the rental assistance program over the next year at the same rate.



Town of Ayer
Community Preservation Committee

Town Hall * One Main Street * Ayer, MA 01432

Minutes for 3/2/2022

- This would enable the Trust to provide rental assistance to up to 10 families.
- JP noted that the use of the funds in the current year has demonstrated that, especially with the impact of the pandemic, there is a real need for assistance on the part of some Ayer residents, and that this program is helping.
- Those who have received assistance during the current fiscal year would have to reapply for the upcoming year.
 - CK said if any of the families are accepted into other aid programs, they would no longer be eligible for this rental assistance from Ayer, opening a spot up to another family in need.
 - Alicia Hersey, of the Office of Community and Economic Development, is involved with helping residents find other opportunities for support where available.
- CPC members were in agreement that this Housing Trust/rental assistance program is a great benefit of Ayer, and enables the Town to help retain people within our community.
- BAS moved to approve forwarding this application to a Public Hearing, to be held March 30; JG 2nd.
 - Motion approved unanimously by Roll Call Vote 7-0.

NEW BUSINESS

- **Public Hearings, March 30, 2022, 6 p.m.**
 - The March 30 meeting will entail 4 Public Hearings to consider 4 separate applications for CPA funding.
 - As is always the case, CPC votes following each Hearing on whether to move the application forward to Town Meeting for a final vote to approve or deny such funding.
 - Spring Town Meeting this year will be held on April 25.
 - CPC members discussed the order of the 4 Public Hearings and agreed to:
 - Pirone Park/Kiddie Junction
 - Flannagan Pond Access Feasibility Study
 - Ayer Library newspaper digitization project
 - Housing Trust funding.
 - JP will circulate drafts of the Warrant Articles for CPC member review prior to the 3/30 meeting, given that any approved articles will need to be submitted to the Town the following day, 3/31.
- **Committee Updates**
 - Historical Commission (BES)



Town of Ayer
Community Preservation Committee

Town Hall * One Main Street * Ayer, MA 01432

Minutes for 3/2/2022

- The historical inventory project proceeds and will be completed by May.
- Housing Authority (JP)
 - Will hold a Public Hearing in April to discuss their yearly annual plan.
- Affordable Housing Committee (CK)
 - Some issues have come up with the “Ayer Commons” Ch. 40B housing project that has been in the works for Fitchburg Road.
 - Nonprofit NOAH (Neighborhood of Affordable Housing) may seek input from CPC regarding the possibility of CPA funding to help this project.
- Parks & Recreation (JAM)
 - Holding a big public event on Saturday, 3/5, at Pirone Park for the Kiddie Junction project.
 - Along with a site tour, public input will be sought for design ideas.
- Conservation Commission (JG)
 - Nothing new to report.
- Planning Board (JUM)
 - Nothing to report.
- Nashua River Wild and Scenic Stewardship Council (BAS)
 - PACE (People of Ayer Concerned about the Environment) was just awarded a grant from the Stewardship Council for the testing of contaminated sediment, water, and plant material around an invasive water chestnut patch on Grove Pond, near to the rotary and Community Garden.
 - The testing is to ascertain the safety risks for volunteers to handpull the invasives, and make recommendations for how best to dispose of pulled material.
 - Another grant was awarded to the Devens Enterprise Commission, in conjunction with Ayer and with the Oxbow Wildlife Refuge, for construction of a half-mile trail and interpretive signage along the Nashua River on McPherson Road.
- **8:35 PM – Adjourn Meeting**
 - CPC’s Next Meeting: March 30, 6 p.m. (Public Hearings for Applications)
 - CPC’s Next Regular Meeting: April 6, 2022, 7 p.m.
 - BAS moved to adjourn; CK 2nd.
 - Motion approved unanimously.

Minutes Recorded and Submitted by Jessica G. Gugino, Clerk

Date / Signature Indicating Approval: 4/6/2022 