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TOWN OF AYER  
TOWN CLERK

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**Town of Ayer**  
**Community Preservation Committee**  
Town Hall \* One Main Street \* Ayer, MA 01432  
Minutes for 8/2/2023

Location: Remote meeting via Zoom, accessible to the public

Members present: Janet Providakes, Chair (Housing Authority); Julie Murray, Vice-Chair (Planning Board); Jason Mayo (Parks & Recreation); Jess Gugino, Clerk (Conservation Commission); Colleen Krieser (At Large, Affordable Housing Trust)

Not present: Beth Suedmeyer (At Large); Barry Schwarzel (Historical Commission);  
APAC taped: Yes

**7:05 PM – Open Meeting**

• **Confirmation of Agenda**

- **VOTE:** C. Krieser moved to confirm the agenda as posted; J. Gugino 2<sup>nd</sup>.
  - Motion approved unanimously by Roll Call Vote 5-0.

• **Approval of Meeting Minutes**

- **VOTE:** J. Murray moved to accept minutes for 6/28/2023 as written; C. Kreiser 2<sup>nd</sup>.
  - Motion approved by Roll Call Vote 4-0, with J. Mayo abstaining.

• **Correspondence / Bills**

○ CPC Balances as of 7/18/2023:

|                      |                       |
|----------------------|-----------------------|
| • Open Space:        | \$1,089,974.02        |
| • Community Housing: | \$389,658.00          |
| • Historical:        | \$185,850.39          |
| • Budgetary Reserve: | \$604,536.84          |
| • Undesignated:      | \$716,964.71          |
| ○ <b>TOTAL:</b>      | <b>\$2,986,983.96</b> |

- The amounts in each category line item are available funds and do not include funds already committed to current open projects.
- J. Providakes said there are 7 currently open CPC-funded projects for which she is requesting status updates to see if they can be closed out:
  - Digitization of *The Public Spirit* archives by the Ayer Library;
  - Sandy Pond School Association
  - Flannagan Pond Feasibility Study
  - Historical Commission Inventory Project
  - Howitzer Cannon Restoration Project
  - Open Space Recreation Plan
  - Pirone Park Perimeter Path
- Regarding the current Pirone Park Playground Remediation/Rebuild Project:



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- J. Providakes had not seen any invoices for this project which CPC has partially funded in two phases.
  - This includes any invoices for the removal of the original Kiddie Junction as well as the environmental remediation of the playground area, both of which are now complete.
- J. Providakes learned that because this is also funded through Capital Planning, the CPC funds were moved into the Capital Planning project bucket for Pirone Park.
  - That is why CPC has not been seeing any invoices.
- Approximately \$216,000 of the CPC allotment has been spent thus far on the remediation work.
- J. Providakes has now made clear that CPC needs to be copied as additional invoices come in; and she has signed off on the quote of \$404,378.90 for use of CPC funding for new playground equipment.
- J. Providakes asked J. Mayo to have the Parks Department update their website as to progress on the playground.
- **Public Participation**
  - The only public participation was from resident Pauline Conley asking where she could view invoices for the Pirone Park playground project on the CPC website.
    - J. Providakes said that when they are posted, they would be under the “planning documents” menu.

**CURRENT BUSINESS**

- **Grant Agreements**
- After consultation with Town Manager Robert Pontbriand, J. Providakes will be finalizing the Grant Agreements for several current CPC projects.

**NEW BUSINESS**

- **Application for \$200,000 in CPA funding: Ayer Affordable Housing Trust**
  - Geof Tillotson, Chair of the Ayer Affordable Housing Trust, and Alicia Hersey, from the Ayer Office of Community & Economic Department (AOCED), were present via Zoom.
  - The application submitted includes 2 funding requests for a total of \$200,000:
    - \$72,000, to continue yearly support to the Housing Trust for the Ayer Rental Assistance Program;
    - \$128,000, to create a fast-response fund that could be used for property acquisition to increase permanent affordable housing stock in Ayer.



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- The Rental Assistance Program, at an annual funding level of \$72,000, will support up to 12 qualifying families, which Mr. Tillotson said is about as much as Ms. Hersey, who has taken on oversight of this program, can manage.
  - Administration of this program is paid for from the AOCED budget so does not use CPA funding.
  - Qualifying candidates can receive \$6000 a year in assistance for up to 3 years.
- Regarding the \$128,000 in seed money to start a Housing Fund, this would be modelled after the Conservation Fund created a number of years ago to enable the Conservation Commission to react quickly on potential open space acquisitions without having to delay for a Town Meeting vote and thus miss a purchase opportunity.
  - Mr. Tillotson said the Trust is not only focusing on what it can do right now (i.e. rental assistance), but also on planning ahead for the future.
    - Having such seed money available can also be used as leverage for additional funding sources.
- J. Gugino asked if use of such a Housing Fund would require the holding of a Public Hearing before al purchase, as does the Conservation Fund.
  - While not having to wait for one of two annual Town Meetings, Public Hearings still allow the public to learn of acquisitions being considered and to provide input.
  - Mr. Tillotson assumed this would be the case but did not know for sure; J. Providakes said that when the Housing Trust itself was created, Public Hearings were to be required for any type of purchase.
    - Ms. Hersey also thought this was in the Bylaw and added that having it as a stipulation would be no problem.
  - J. Gugino said that that should be included as a stipulation for this CPA funding request.
- Mr. Tillotson said if the seed money request was well received by Town Meeting voters in the fall, the Trust would likely apply for additional funding in the future.
- J. Providakes took the opportunity to announce that there are also plans to hold a Public Forum on October 19 (time and place to be determined) to create an opportunity to discuss the future of housing in Ayer.
- Resident Pauline Conley asked for clarification on the use of CPA funding for affordable housing acquisition, noting that the Town has previously made it clear it would not take on the responsibility of being a 'landlord'.
  - Ms. Hersey said there were a couple of ways for the Town to participate.
    - One way would be for the Town or the Trust to buy land for affordable housing, hold it temporarily, then put out an RFP (Request for Proposals) and then transfer the land to a nonprofit builder.



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- Thus the Town/Trust/CPC could potentially hold land on a temporary basis, but it could not build or own permanently.
    - J. Providakes used Habitat for Humanity as an example of where the Town has, in the past, transferred ownership to a nonprofit that takes over building and management.
  - Regarding the Trust's current funding application, Ms. Conley asked if there would be a Public Hearing?
    - J. Gugino said yes, at CPC's next meeting, if voted on.
  - Accordingly, C. Krieser moved to approve the Trust's CPA-funding application to appear before a Public Hearing at CPC's next meeting on September 6; J. Gugino 2<sup>nd</sup>.
    - Motion approved unanimously by Roll Call vote 5-0.
  - Mr. Tillotson took the opportunity to commend Ms. Hersey for the amazing job she does through AOCED to assist the Affordable Housing Trust.
- **8 P.M. Adjournment from Open Session to enter into Executive Session**
- **VOTE:** J. Gugino moved that the CPC enter into Executive Session pursuant to MGL Chapter 20A, Section 21A, Exemption # 6 for the purposes of the CPC to discuss the potential purchase of real property as to discuss in Open Session would be detrimental to the Town's negotiating position and for the CPC to adjourn for the evening at the conclusion of the Executive Session; C. Krieser seconded.
    - Motion approved unanimously 5-0 by Roll Call Vote (J. Murray, Aye; C. Krieser, Aye; J. Mayo, Aye; J. Gugino, Aye; J. Providakes, Aye).

**Note: CPC later adjourned from Executive Session at 8:24 P.M.**

**Executive Session recorded in a separate set of minutes to be made public at a later time when appropriate.**

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

**Date / Signature Indicating CPC Approval:** 9/6/2023 *Jermain P. Gugino*