



Town of Ayer
Community Preservation Committee
Town Hall * One Main Street * Ayer, MA 01432
Minutes for 10/4/2023

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TOWN OF AYER
TOWN CLERK
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Location: Remote meeting via Zoom, accessible to the public

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

APAC taped: Yes

7:03 PM – Open Meeting

- **Confirmation of Agenda**

- **VOTE:** C. Krieser moved to confirm the agenda as posted; B. Schwarzel 2nd.
 - Motion approved unanimously by Roll Call Vote 7-0.

- **Approval of Meeting Minutes**

- **VOTE:** B. Schwarzel moved to accept the minutes for 9/6/2023 as written; J. Murray 2nd.
 - Motion approved by Roll Call Vote 7-0.

- **Correspondence / Invoices**

- Sandy Pond Schoolhouse Association (SPSA) Phase II Restoration and Preservation Work, Grant (FTM 2020, \$187,340)
 - J. Providakes received an email from Irv Rockwood, President of SPSA, notifying her of a 'change of order'.
 - Because of price increases, the general contractor for the project, Gerald O'Doherty, notified SPSA that the cost for electrical service upgrades (labor and materials) had risen to \$6670.
 - J. Providakes will okay payment of the invoice.
- Community Preservation Coalition
 - An email was received from Stuart Saginor, Executive Director of the Coalition, informing CPA communities that surplus funding will likely decrease this year, by up to 33%.
 - One reason has to do with rising interest rates and declining home sales.
 - Another factor, however, is that the wording for handling 'surpluses' was dropped from the State budget this year.
 - Unless things can be worked out, this change in wording will affect CPA funding.

OLD BUSINESS



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- B. Schwarzel heard that a temporary fix may be in place within a week, and B. Suedmeyer heard that DCR (Mass. Department of Conservation & Recreation), which holds jurisdiction over the Rail Trail, plans a permanent fix in the next year or so.
 - First, however, DCR wants to do a longer term hydrology study, given the wash-out, before going forward with a permanent repair.
- Affordable Housing Trust (C. Krieser)
 - Nothing new to report.
- Parks & Recreation/ Parks Commission (J. Mayo)
 - The Parks Department put out its bid for construction of the Kiddie Junction playground last week, with bids due by Oct. 12.
 - An informational meeting was held by Parks earlier in the day (10/4) and several companies sent representatives to learn about the project.
 - Parks therefore is confident they will receive some bids next week.
 - Otherwise, once a contractor has been engaged, the playground project is at the mercy of suppliers.
 - Parks is hoping to break ground over the winter or, at latest, next spring.
 - In addition, Brad Spinney's local company, Lighthouse Treeworks, has been taking the downed trees from Pirone Park and creating benches, platforms, etc. that will be used in the nature play area.
 - On a separate matter, J. Gugino mentioned that the Parks Department should be aware that a number of residents at the Flannagan Pond Access forum, while she was still there, had brought up the issue of the need to create a public boat launch area on Sandy Pond.
 - Was the Parks Commission considering anything near the Town Beach?
 - J. Mayo said he would bring this up at the Commission's next meeting.
 - One of the concerns, however, has been parking as the Parks Department does not want the limited parking for use of the Town beach in the summer to be taken up by parking for boat launches.
 - B. Suedmeyer said a concern of hers is the use of winter fencing to block off access to the water itself at the Town Beach.
 - While J. Mayo said this was to discourage swimming off-season, B. Suedmeyer said there are other things to experience at the shore besides swimming and the fence discourages that.

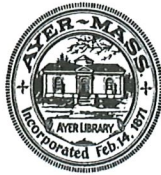


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- J. Mayo said he would bring that up at the Commission's next meeting as well.
- Planning Board (J. Murray)
 - The Board is still working on Site Plan Review for the West Main Street apartment project.
 - Stratton Hill (off Wright Road) is scheduled to be back before the Board on 10/10 with a Definitive Subdivision Plan.
- Open Space (B. Suedmeyer)
 - Ayer, Devens Enterprise Commission, and Oxbow National Wildlife Refuge received a 2022 community grant from the Nashua River Stewardship Council to improve Ayer's access to the Nashua River at the junction of MacPherson and Bishop roads.
 - A short trail with interpretive signs, the "Nashua River Trail," will provide access to the nearby river.
 - A 'Grand Opening' will take place in the next month or so, after mosquito season has passed.
- Housing Authority (J. Providakes)
 - A resident picnic was held the previous Wednesday.
 - The Affordable Housing Committee is holding a public information forum to inform residents and solicit feedback on the future of affordable housing in Ayer, including issues such as density and design.
 - The forum will take place in the Great Hall at 6 p.m. on Thursday, October 19, with pizza and refreshments provided.
 - B. Schwarzel suggested J. Providakes contact APAC to have the forum recorded.
 - B. Suedmeyer asked if anyone would be speaking about the States MBTA Communities Zoning Law, adopted in 2021, and J. Providakes said Alan Manoian, Director of Ayer Community & Economic Development, would be addressing that.
 - B. Suedmeyer also asked if there was any update on the Historic Firehouse on Washington Street which had received some CPA funding for historical preservation work.
 - J. Providakes said the firehouse is now owned by a private entity, Seal Harbor.
 - They are aware of the historical preservation work already done on the gables by the previous owner, and are also aware that if they were to destroy the gables, they would owe CPC back the grant money used for their preservation.
 - Not much more is known other than that.



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- **7:44 P.M. Adjourn Meeting**
 - CPC's next meeting: Wednesday, November 1, 2023, 7 p.m.
 - **VOTE:** B. Schwarzel moved to adjourn; J. Gugino 2nd.
 - Motion approved unanimously 7-0.

Minutes Recorded and Submitted by Jessica G. Gugino, Clerk

Date / Signature Indicating CPC Approval:

11/1/2023 *Jessica G. Gugino*