

**Town of Ayer**  
**Community Preservation Committee**

Town Hall \* One Main Street \* Ayer, MA 01432

Minutes for 3/2/2016 - Approved 4/6/2016

Location: Town Hall, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor

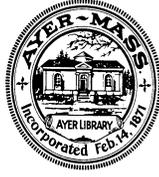
Members present: Janet Providakes (JP) [Housing Authority]- Chair, Beth Suedmeyer (BAS) [At Large], Barry Schwarzel (BES) [Historical Commission], Richard Durand (RD) [Parks & Recreation], Jess Gugino (JG) [Conservation Commission]- Clerk

Not present: Vacancy [Planning Board], Vacancy [At Large]

APAC taped: YES

**6:07 PM – Open Meeting**

- **Planning Board Representation on CPC**
  - JP received an email from Planning Board Chair Jeremy Callahan saying they hoped to settle their representation on CPC soon.
    - CPA communities are required by State law to have a representative from the Planning Board on the local CPC, along with representatives from Housing, Historical, Parks & Rec, and Conservation.
- **Approval of Meeting Minutes**
  - RD moved to accept the minutes for 2/3/2016 as corrected; BES 2<sup>nd</sup>.
    - Motion approved unanimously.
- **Public Hearing: Sandy Pond School Association (SPSA) application for funding**
  - Randall Boutelle, SPSA President; Irving Rockwood, SPSA Vice President; and Stacy Spies, Historical Preservation Consultant, were present.
    - Ms. Spies has been assisting the SPSA, most recently preparing SPSA's application for placing the Sandy Pond School on the National Register of Historic Sites.
      - The Ayer Library will be provided with hard-copy records of this once complete.
  - Mr. Rockwood summed up their application for \$16,750 in CPA funding:
    - \$1,750, historical research and report, Stacy Spies;
    - \$13,500, Conditions Assessment, Spencer & Vogt Group (SVG);
    - \$1,500, preparation of site plan, SVG.
  - The Conditions Assessment will:
    - perform an architectural, structural, and engineering analysis;
    - identify and prioritize necessary repairs as well as recommended restoration and preservation work, with cost estimates;
    - develop a recommended maintenance schedule, with cost estimates and specific criteria of things to watch for.

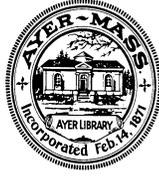


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- Mr. Rockwood said the long-term goal is both to preserve the schoolhouse and make it more accessible to the public.
- SVG has indicated that once started, their portion of the project should take approximately 3 months.
  - SVG has not only done numerous Conditions Assessments but is also expert at managing and supervising restoration work on many historical sites.
  - They are currently supervising the restoration of Groton's First Parish Church.
- With the Conditions Assessment in hand by the end of the year, if CPA funding is approved, SPSA can then begin long-term planning and identifying funding resources.
  - The Conditions Assessment will be invaluable in applying for grant funding down the line.
  - The Conditions Assessment will also be recommending repairs and restorations based on Massachusetts Historical Commission restoration standards.
- Ms. Spies provided some historical background on the one-room schoolhouse.
  - She noted the impact of 5 railroad lines converging at 'Groton Junction' from the 1830s on.
  - The resultant increase in population created the need for a locally accessible schoolhouse in this portion of Groton.
  - Even though reformers in the common school movement, which started in the 1830s, supported larger district schools rather than one-room schoolhouses, the Sandy Pond School was built in 1868.
  - The tension between Groton proper and the Groton Junction area, including over education needs, culminated in the secession of a portion of Groton in 1868 – resulting in the creation of the separate township of Ayer.
    - In this sense, the one-room schoolhouse is an integral part of the history of Ayer, from its inception.
  - The Sandy Pond Schoolhouse closed in 1906; the SPSA, formed in 1908, acquired stewardship of the schoolhouse.
  - Ms. Spies noted that SPSA has done an excellent job of stewardship in preserving the schoolhouse in the condition it was in at the time of its closing.
    - The schoolhouse is in exceptionally pristine condition, making it a valuable local historical resource.
- Letters of support have been received from:
  - The Ayer Historical Commission
  - The Board of Selectmen
- There were no comments or questions from members of the public present for the Hearing.

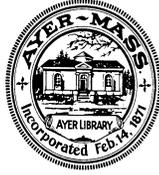


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- CPC members were strongly in favor of moving this project forward to Spring Town Meeting vote in May.
- Mr. Rockwood asked about raising the funding request amount to \$20,000 to allow a cushion for unforeseen expenses.
  - JP indicated she had already drafted the Warrant Article to request funding “not to exceed \$20,000.”
- BES moved to approve the application for submission to Town Meeting vote; RD 2<sup>nd</sup>.
  - Motion approved unanimously.
- JG moved to close the Public Hearing; BAS 2<sup>nd</sup>.
  - Motion approved unanimously.
- **New Business**
  - Warrant development
    - Spring Town Meeting commences on 5/9/2016.
    - CPC will have 3 Articles on the Warrant:
      - 1) Distribution of annual set-asides from the local surcharge and State matching funds:
        - \$5000 for administrative costs;
        - \$180,307 to the CPA category of Open Space;
        - \$23,164 to the CPA category of Community Housing (10% required minimum);
        - \$23,164 to the CPA category of Historic Preservation (10% required minimum).
      - 2) Transfer of \$12,000 from Community Preservation Fund for general Open Space purposes, including due diligence.
      - 3) Approval of up to \$20,000 funding for the Sandy Pond School Association’s Conditions Assessment funding project.
  - Administrative Coordinator
    - The Town has created and filled the new full-time position of Administrative Coordinator.
      - Sandra Bean will assist a number of Ayer’s land-use committees/boards, including Planning, Zoning and Conservation.
      - Ms. Bean’s office is located on the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor but she will report directly to Town Administrator Robert Pontbriand and the Board of Selectmen.
    - BAS has put in a request for support services from this position for the Open Space & Recreation Plan Update Committee.
    - JP will do likewise on behalf of CPC.
      - An upcoming project for CPC that this position could potentially assist with is updating of the Town’s Community Preservation Plan.



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- **Old Business**

- Open Space consideration of Sifakis property

- Steve Sifakis was present.
    - He and his family have offered the Town the opportunity to purchase 5 undeveloped lots behind 27 High Street, and partially abutting another undeveloped Town-owned parcel, 'Nonacoicus park'.
      - The lots are wooded and steep with a lot of exposed ledge.
    - The Conservation Commission walked the property on 12/12/2015 but is not interested in pursuing purchase for conservation because of the small size of the parcels in question.
    - Jason Mayo, from the Parks & Recreation Commission, said the 5 parcels would be more attractive if some additional abutting undeveloped lots, not owned by the Sifakis family, were added into the mix.
      - Parks & Rec thinks, however, that it would be very costly (upwards of \$100,000) to develop these lots for recreation use (eg. pocket park, exercise station trail, playground).
        - Creating a parking area would be a challenge as well.
      - Nevertheless, Parks & Rec will be talking about this further at their next meeting on 3/17.
    - If the Town were to pursue this, JP said initial steps would include a survey of the bounds, an appraisal, and a Phase I environmental review.
    - Mr. Sifakis said the family would likely be holding onto the property for a couple of years, allowing time for the Town to consider this in more depth.
    - BAS will send Mr. Sifakis information on tax incentives that could be derived from a below-market sale of open space for conservation.

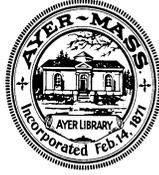
- CPC Annual Report

- JP is updating the CPC's portion of the Town's 2015 Annual Report.
      - The 2015 CPC projects – the Fire Station Photo Restoration and the Habitat for Humanity duplex construction – will be noted in the report.
    - JP will circulate a draft of this report, along with the 3 draft Warrant Articles described above, to CPC members for review prior to final submission.

- **Committee Updates**

- Historical Commission

- BES said the Historical Commission has now signed a Preservation Restriction for the Old Fire Station.
      - The PR will require the new owner to maintain the historical condition of the façade and cupola.



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- The Historical Commission is continuing its preparation for the Hidden Treasures program on Dr. James Cook Ayer, on 5/14/2016.
- Housing Authority
  - Karin Swanfeldt has resigned from the Housing Board and they are looking for replacement candidates to run on the Town's ballot.
- Parks & Recreation
  - RD said Parks & Rec is now preparing for the upcoming Town Beach season.
  - Work is also continuing on planning for the construction of a perimeter path around Pirone Park.
- Conservation Commission
  - ConCom is continuing to work on the final draft of the comprehensive pond survey report prepared by Geosyntec.
- Planning Board
  - No representative, no report.
- Open Space & Recreation Plan Update Committee
  - BAS said the committee has been having quorum issues interfere with meeting dates.
  - BAS reiterated a request has been made to the Town for Administrative Coordinator support.
  - The Board of Selectmen, having approved a complete streets policy, will be working next on developing an implementation plan which will make the Town eligible for State funding.
- **7:50 PM – Adjourn Meeting**
  - CPC's next meeting: April 6, 6 p.m.
  - BES moved to adjourn; RD 2<sup>nd</sup>.
    - Motion approved unanimously.