

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

Town Hall \* One Main Street \* Ayer, MA01432  
Minutes for 4/6/2011 - Approved 8/3/11

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

Members present: Alene Reich (AR) [Historical]- Chair, Gary Luca (GL) [BOS], Scott Houde (SH) [FinCom], Janet Providakes (JP) [Housing], Beth Suedmeyer (BS) [At Large], Sarah Gibbons (SG) [Parks & Rec.], Jess Gugino (JG) [ConsCom]- Clerk

Not present: Mark Fermanian (MF) [Planning Board], Vacancy [At Large]

APAC taped: NO

**7:04 PM – Open Meeting**

• **Meeting Minutes Approval**

- JP moved to approve minutes for 3/2/11 as written; SG 2<sup>nd</sup>.
  - Motion approved unanimously.

• **New Business: Sandy Pond Schoolhouse**

- Jim Clish, President of the Sandy Pond School Association (SPSA), approached the Committee about the feasibility of applying for CPC funding to perform renovations on the old schoolhouse, built in the early 1820s.
- Kim Prehl, SPSA Treasurer, and Cathy Breest, SPSA Clerk, were also present.
- Mr. Clish said the schoolhouse needs interior renovation as the ceiling is deteriorating badly, and asked for details on the application process for CPA funds.
- AR said the schoolhouse renovation is eligible for CPA funding in the category of historic preservation and encouraged SPSA to make a broader application to include exterior renovations that might also be necessary.
  - There are no immediate safety concerns so a decision on CPA funding can wait until Fall Town Meeting.
- SPSA hopes to make the historic one-room schoolhouse available to the public, including field trips for school groups interested in seeing a re-creation of a one-room schoolhouse.
  - SPSA also contributes to the public good by presenting a small ‘character award’ grant each year to an 8<sup>th</sup> grade student.
- A national society of one-room schoolhouses has described the Sandy Pond Schoolhouse as one of the most pristine in New England, if not nationally.
- BS said an interpretive panel accessible to the public on the grounds outside the schoolhouse would be a good addition.
- AR said the schoolhouse should be eligible for the Historic Register.
  - Mr. Clish said this is being worked on; also obtaining non-profit 501c3 status.
- AR will email Mr. Clish the CPA application, which is also available online, and suggested SPSA obtain a supportive letter from the national society of one-room schoolhouses to accompany their application.
  - GL said SPSA should also include photographs of the schoolhouse.

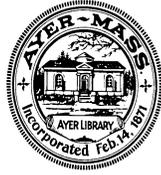


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- AR suggested other funding sources for SPSA to explore would be the Massachusetts Preservation Projects Fund, through the Massachusetts Historical Commission, as well as Preservation Massachusetts.
- **Approval of Expenses**
  - GL moved to approve payment of \$90.00 to Nashoba Publishing for the Public Hearing notice for the Fletcher (aka Nutting) Building; JP 2<sup>nd</sup>.
    - Motion approved unanimously.
- **Discussion: Public Hearings**
  - AR described how other towns often offer two pre-set Public Hearings a year and asked if the CPC wanted to consider following suit.
  - More than one applicant could then be scheduled for a Public Hearing night as a means of minimizing the advertising costs of Public Hearing notices, and the Public Hearing could continue to a second night if need be.
  - The two pre-set Public Hearing nights should be scheduled to allow for positive outcomes to have time to be placed on the Warrants for Spring or Fall Town Meeting.
  - CPC decided that February and August would be best in this regard.
  - GL moved to have CPC host two Public Hearings a year, at a minimum; JP 2<sup>nd</sup>.
    - Motion approved unanimously.
- **New Business: Review of Warrant Articles for Spring Town Meeting**
  - Appropriations from Community Preservation Fund FY 2012
    - BS referred to the 2009 purchase of the Tooker property through the Conservation Commission.
      - Due diligence for this purchase was done in advance using CPC administrative funds and cost approximately \$12,000.
      - The CPC is interested in having funding available to help with future purchases that also require due diligence in advance.
    - GL moved to submit an additional article to the Town Warrant asking for \$12,000 to be set aside for due diligence type expenses; AR 2<sup>nd</sup>.
      - Motion approved unanimously.
    - The CPC discussed the 10% minimum set-asides for Community Housing, Historic Resources, and Open Space.
    - The Town Warrant always refers to specific amounts rather than percentages.
    - The Reserve Balances as of 3/31/10 for each category are as follows:

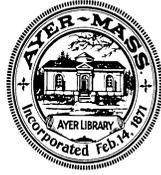
• “Conservation” (part of Open Space)	\$499,153.88
• Open Space	\$43,889.34
• Historic Resources	\$71,696.32
• Community Housing	\$65,614.00



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- Budgetary Reserve \$87,399.00
- AR said CPC should bring the balance for Open Space up to the level of the other designations.
  - Open Space acquisitions are complex, infrequent and expensive, so there is a need to have money in the budget under this designation.
  - GL recommended simply adding \$100,000 to Open Space, bringing its balance up to \$143,000+.
- After discussion, the CPC decided on the following allocations:
  - Open Space \$89,355
  - Historic Resources \$17,871
  - Community Housing \$17,871
  - Budgetary Reserve \$36,614
  - Administrative Expenses \$5,000
  - Due Diligence Expenses \$12,000
- Warrant Article: Pleasant Street School Pocket Park Warrant Article
  - CPC is recommending for Town approval the use of \$100,000 in CPC funds for construction of a pocket park for passive recreation on Pleasant Street adjacent to senior housing in the renovated Pleasant Street School
  - Ayer Housing Authority owns the land on which the pocket park is to be constructed.
  - The Conservation Restriction (CR) that is required will be held by the Board of Selectmen, the Housing Authority, and the Historical Commission.
    - Town Administrator Robert Pontbriand, in the audience, said the CR is in the process of being shepherded through signings by the above three groups and will be ready by Spring Town Meeting.
  - JP clarified that Ayer Housing Authority has final say, with public input, over what constitutes passive recreation on this lot.
- Warrant Article: Fletcher (aka Nutting) Building Restoration
  - CPC is recommending for Town approval the use of \$250,000 in CPC funds for restoration of the Fletcher Building at 51 Main Street.
    - CPC funds would be used not only for historic preservation but for community housing as the completed building will have 6 affordable housing units.
  - Owner Bob France has agreed to establish a Preservation Restriction (PR) on two sides of the building.
    - SH said if public money is to be used to restore a private building, then the PR ought to apply to all 4 sides of the building.
    - It was noted that a PR doesn't prohibit change but requires that any changes be done in consultation with the holder/s of the PR.

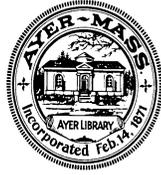


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- The wording of the draft Warrant was changed from requiring a “historic restriction” to requiring a “Preservation Restriction to the exterior of the building.”
  - The draft Warrant was amended to read that the PR will be held by the Board of Selectman and the Historical Commission.
  - The Affordable Housing Restriction will be held by Ayer Housing Authority.
  - Confidence was expressed that Bob France will do a good job with the Fletcher Building renovation, but AR asked CPC to think about how it can change its process to establish clearer control over quality of work with new projects down the road.
  - AR said should ask that preservation projects be required to adhere to National Park Service/Secretary of the Interior standards.
  - BS suggested CPC do a kind of Grant Agreement that outlines conditions for CPC funding, including oversight over design plans.
  - Town Counsel would need to review this.
  - JP said that if specific terms were set for a project, then money could be set aside for all the phases of a project; CPC could then control doling these funds out, thus not requiring an applicant having to appear before Town Meeting more than once.
  - GL suggested having consultant Jennifer Goldson come to a future CPC meeting to offer suggestions in this regard.
- **New Discussion: Town Hall Energy Efficiency Projects**
    - Town Administrator Pontbriand spoke to CPC about several projects being planned to increase energy efficiency in Town Hall, asking how CPC funds might be used to help with this work.
    - Mr. Pontbriand is a member of the Town Hall Energy Commission appointed by the Board of Selectmen last summer.
    - The Energy Committee’s goals are to increase energy efficiency for the environment, and to reduce energy expenses for both residents and businesses.
    - Three projects are proposed:
      - Automated HVAC controls
        - Town Hall currently has 27 independent thermostats which individuals can set in ways that run counter to energy efficiency and the best interests of the Town Hall building.
        - An automated HVAC system, costing \$59,175, would control heating, cooling and lighting, and in the future could be expanded to include an automated security system that ties directly into the police department.
        - This project is part of Question 4, a capital exclusion article up for Town vote on 4/25/11.

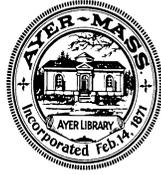


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- If Question 4 is turned down by voters, Mr. Pontbriand asked CPC to consider how it might make this project fit criteria for CPA funding.
- New generator for Town Hall
  - Funding for a new generator is the second part of Question 4, also a capital exclusion article, with a cost of approximately \$69,430.
  - The current generator is over 30 years old and on its last legs; a new generator is needed to run an automated HVAC system as well.
- Window replacement in Town Hall
  - Mr. Pontbriand said the windows in Town Hall, especially on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> floors, contribute to an enormous energy drain.
    - The windows are original to the Town Hall building.
  - Mr. Pontbriand said the Energy Committee would like to replace the original windows with state-of-the art energy efficient windows, and hopes to ask CPC for \$250,000 of the \$300,000-400,000 cost.
    - The Energy Committee feels this is a great opportunity to invest public money into Ayer's most public building, Mr. Pontbriand said.
  - AR said replacing windows, part of the original "historic fabric" of the building, contradicts the spirit of CPA criteria for historic preservation.
    - AR described is an ongoing conflict between preservationists and those interested in energy efficiency.
    - You cannot take out historic windows in the name of historic preservation.
  - Ayer Town Hall is a masonry building and, historically, masonry buildings were never designed with energy efficiency in mind.
    - CPC could consider, instead, funding interior storm windows and other tightening of the building envelope.
  - In addition, Town Hall was renovated several years ago, and it was thought that there must now be a PR in effect for the outside of the building, windows included.
    - Mr. Pontbriand was told to contact Mass. Historical to find out who holds the PR.
  - Mr. Pontbriand asked why the Fletcher Building fit CPA criteria for historic preservation, as windows will be replaced in that project.
    - AR said the windows to be replaced in this building are already failed replacement windows and not part of the historic fabric of the original building.
    - Resident Pauline Conley, in the audience, said she thought that 'repair' can be more loosely interpreted by the CPC and said



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- she thought other towns have repaired their historic town halls, replacing windows as well, with CPA funds.
- Summing up the meeting and planning for the future, Mr. Pontbriand asked for a determination of the eligibility of window replacement for CPC funding.
    - BS reminded Mr. Pontbriand of the need to confirm and view the Town Hall PR.
  - Mr. Pontbriand asked if the repair and improvement of defects, rather than replacement, would be eligible.
    - AR said yes.
  - CPC would need a scope of work and estimates as part of a future application.
  - Mr. Pontbriand asked if CPC could help with funding the HVAC system and new generator if Question 4 does not pass.
    - In terms of the generator, GL said this would be part of preserving an historic resource and thus could fall within CPC funding guidelines; the rest of the CPC agreed.
    - As for HVAC controls, GL said he thought they would be eligible for CPA funding; AR said maybe, the key being bringing the building up to federal standards for historic resources.
  - Mr. Pontbriand meets with the Energy Committee next at 10 a.m. on 4/14/11; AR plans to attend.
  - For the CPC's next meeting on 5/4/11, Mr. Pontbriand said he would look at the historic deed and PR, prepare a proposal for a repair scenario, and, if necessary, prepare a proposal for HVAC and generator funding.
  - Ms. Conley, from the audience, said she would look into what other communities have done with historic town halls and window replacement using CPA funds.
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- **9:28 PM – Adjourn Meeting**
    - GL moved to adjourn; everyone 2<sup>nd</sup>.
      - Motion approved unanimously.