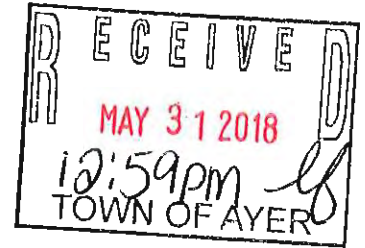




Town of Ayer
Community Preservation Committee
Town Hall * One Main Street * Ayer, MA 01432
Minutes for 4/4/2018



Location: Town Hall, 1st Floor

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

Not present: Mark Fermanian (MF) [Planning Board]

APAC taped: YES

6:10 PM – Open Meeting

- **Approval of Meeting Minutes**
 - BES moved to accept the minutes for 3/14/2018 as written; JM 2nd.
 - Motion approved 5-0 (BAS abstained).
- **Correspondence/Announcements**
 - Per an email notification from Stuart Saginor, Executive Director of the Community Preservation Coalition:
 - The Department of Revenue issued its annual budget memo to municipalities that states an 11.5% estimate for the November 2018 first round of CPA Trust Fund distribution.
 - This estimate for matching funds applies to all CPA communities with a local surcharge of less than 3%.
 - The Town of Ayer's CPA surcharge began in 2001 at 3% but was reduced by ballot vote to 1% in 2003.
 - Mr. Saginor alerted CPA communities to H.3662, which is a bill pending before the State Legislature.
 - "An Act to Sustain Community Preservation Revenue" would adjust recording fees to provide a higher match to all 172 CPA communities.
- **Public Hearing: Sandy Pond School Restoration and Preservation Project Phase I**
 - JP read the Legal Notice for the Public Hearing which appeared in the Nashoba Valley Voice on 3/23 and 3/30/2018.
 - Irv Rockwood, Vice President of the Sandy Pond School Association (SPSA), presented the Application for CPC Funding, in the amount of \$108,000.
 - Also present was Lynne Spencer, of Spencer, Sullivan & Vogt (formerly Spencer & Vogt), a firm specializing in Architecture and Preservation.
 - Spencer & Vogt previously prepared the Conditions Assessment upon which the proposed Phase I work is based.
 - This application was previously discussed at CPC's 3/14/2018 meeting; the Application for Determination of Eligibility was reviewed at the 1/3/2018 meeting.



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- The project seeks funds for emergency work to stabilize, restore, and preserve the structural integrity of the nearly 150-year old historic one-room schoolhouse located at the junction of Sandy Pond, Willow, and Westford roads.
- Mr. Rockwood gave a brief history of the schoolhouse, the oldest public building in Ayer, constructed in 1869 by the Town of Groton 2 years before the Town of Ayer became a separate entity.
 - The building functioned as a one-room schoolhouse from 1869-1906 after which transformations to the public education system rendered it obsolete.
 - After watching the building sit idle for two years, the SPSA was formed in 1908 and negotiated a deal with the Town to purchase the building for \$1.00.
 - The building was thence funded and maintained by the SPSA, which put in a new floor (still there) in 1908.
 - From 1908-1950s, the building was used as a kind of community center, hosting reunions, dinner dances, an art auction, public lectures, and so forth.
 - The building then fell into disuse until 6 or 7 years ago, when the SPSA began to open it occasionally for open houses.
 - Three open houses were held in 2017.
 - It also became clear that, while remarkably well-preserved, the building now needed much work to restore and maintain its structure.
 - An uneven, sinking foundation, falling ceiling, masonry cracks, and more were found.
- In 2014, SPSA received a favorable response from the Massachusetts Historical Commission (MHC) to its query regarding eligibility for National Historic Status.
 - An application for this was submitted to MHC in 2016.
 - As of May 2017, the schoolhouse is now listed by the National Park Service as an Historic Landmark on the National Register.
- At the same time, the SPSA began the effort to determine what work was needed to preserve the historic building.
 - Funded by Ayer CPC, a “Conditions Assessment & Treatment Plan” was completed in April 2017 by Spencer & Vogt.
- The Assessment detailed the “Emergency Repair Work” urgently needed (Phase I), as well as future work (Phase II) suggested by Spencer & Vogt to improve the buildings usability (eg. lighting, washroom plumbing, more).
 - The estimated total cost for Phase I restoration and repairs, comprising six identified areas of work, is \$146,000.
- This application seeks CPC funding of \$108,000, from the CPA Historical Preservation category, covering four of the six areas of Phase I work:
 - Foundation repair and stabilization (first step before other work can begin);
 - Masonry repair;



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- Replacement of the classroom ceiling and joist repair;
 - Selected priority structural repairs.
- SPSA is seeking funding for the two other Phase I areas identified by the Conditions Assessment (landscape/drainage work, and electrical work) from the North Central Massachusetts Community Foundation and from the Bruce J. Anderson Foundation.
- Mr. Rockwood said the goal was to restore the building so that it can again be open to more public use.
 - One such use could be for student visitation programs for elementary students.
 - This could be used to meet one of the Massachusetts history requirements for third graders.
- BAS asked about the estimate listed for architectural and engineering costs.
 - Ms. Spencer said that Spencer, Sullivan & Vogt would provide support for prepping the plans and specifications to be put out to competitive bidding, would provide recommendations to SPSA, and would provide weekly oversight review of the project.
- In response to BES's question about working with MHC, Ms. Spencer said they would be adhering to the "Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties."
 - BAS asked that this be a formal requirement in CPC's Grant Agreement, if the project's funding is approved by Town Meeting.
- A contingency allowance has been incorporated into the project cost estimate and the funding application request.
 - Ms. Spencer said that if the estimates were on the high side and actual work cost less, then there might be "add-ons," such as additional re-pointing of masonry, that would reduce future costs.
 - BAS asked about seeing a list of such potential add-ons.
 - Ms. Spencer said this work would be under the general rubric of masonry/structural repairs, and couldn't be more specific until restoration work opens things up to reveal their true state.
 - Potential add-ons would not materially change the nature or scope of work for Phase I.
- JP asked about SPSA's plans for future fundraising to support the building.
 - Mr. Rockwood said SPSA is addressing new organizational challenges.
 - The three open houses held last summer, which 200-250 people attended, has expanded their list of people who may be contacted for future support.
- Resident Mark Phillips, of Mountain Laurel, asked about the foundation work.
 - Ms. Spencer said they would not be building a new foundation, but rather digging down, re-pointing, and leveling the existing granite foundation.



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- There is no need to underpin the current foundation, and the addition of a drainage system will help in maintaining its future stability.
- Mr. Phillips also asked about the old non-connecting street behind the building and if that could be used for creating parking.
 - Mr. Rockwood said that does not belong to SPSA, probably instead the Town.
 - BAS said that the Open Space & Recreation Plan Committee would support working with the Town and SPSA to use that space, and the grounds in general, for more public open space purposes, such as a mini-park area.
 - In such a partnership, the Town might be able to take up some of the liability costs for ground use.
 - Mr. Rockwood again stressed that the goal of the SPSA is to restore the schoolhouse and open the property up again to functioning as a kind of community center rather than sit idle.
- There being no further questions or comments:
 - RD moved that CPC support the project and advance it to Spring Town Meeting (5/14/2018) for vote to approve the use of \$108,000 in CPC funds for the Phase I work identified above; BAS 2nd.
 - Motion approved unanimously.
 - JG moved to close the Public Hearing; RD 2nd.
 - Motion approved unanimously.

NEW BUSINESS

- **Discussion: CPC Warrant Articles for Spring Town Meeting (STM) (5/14/2018)**
 - Community Preservation Act, distribution of Community Preservation Fund FY 2019 estimated annual revenue:
 - The exact amount of money to be distributed was not available from Accounting, but CPC agreed to vote on the percentages from which exact amounts will be calculated once the total number is available.
 - The Warrant for STM will be closed by time CPC next meets.
 - JP will circulate final wordage for warrant articles to CPC members.
 - As follows:
 - \$5000, to meet administrative expenses and all other necessary and proper expenses of the CPC for FY 2019;
 - 10%, for acquisition, creation, preservation, restoration, rehabilitation and support of **community housing**;
 - 10%, for acquisition, preservation, restoration and rehabilitation of **historic resources**;
 - 20%, for the **Undesignated Fund Balance**;



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- 60%, for acquisition, creation, preservation, restoration and rehabilitation of **open space**.
 - JG moved to accept the distribution figures as described above; BES 2nd.
 - Motion approved unanimously.
- Transfer of Funds, for due diligence, from Community Preservation Fund FY2019
 - \$12,000 for future appropriation by the CPC for general open space purposes.
 - JG moved to accept the description of this Warrant Article; RD 2nd.
 - Motion approved unanimously.
- Sandy Pond School Restoration and Preservation Project Phase I
 - Prior to voting, Ruth Rhonemus, a member of the Historical Commission, asked if CPC had enough money in its funds under the category of historic preservation to cover the requested amount for SPSA.
 - JP was confident the funds were there, but said if there were insufficient funds, then money could be transferred into the historical resource category from the Undesignated Fund.
 - JG moved that CPC support the application of the Sandy Pond School Association for \$108,000, and forward the application to Town Meeting for final vote, for the project whose purpose is emergency repairs to restore and preserve the structural integrity of the Sandy Pond Schoolhouse, a National Historic Landmark; BES 2nd.
 - Motion approved unanimously.
- **Discussion: CPC Five-Year Plan**
 - JP asked BAS to review the scope of work.
 - JP also raised the question of adding an additional Article to the STM Warrant, approving the use of up to \$20,000 for the professional preparation of an updated Five-Year Plan.
 - With the Open Space & Recreation Plan having recently been updated, and about to go to the State for comments/approval, JG asked what the Town would gain from renewing the Five-Year Plan at this time.
 - JP wondered if the Five-Year Plan could be configured so as to address the needs and suggestions of the Open Space & Recreation Plan.
 - JP then suggested deferring consideration of this until Fall, when hopefully the OSRP has been approved and next steps can be considered.
- **Committee Updates**
 - Historical Commission (BES)
 - BES said a Hidden Treasures program in Ayer will take place on May 5, from 1-2:30 p.m.



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- Alan Manoian, Director of Ayer Community & Economic Development, will present a program on the historical relationship between the Town of Ayer and Camp/Fort Devens.
 - The program will begin at Town Hall.
- Conservation Commission (JG)
 - JG said ConCom is planning to discuss a draft of Policies & Procedures for the Conservation Fund at its 4/26/2018 meeting.
 - CPC members interested are welcome to attend.
- Open Space & Recreation Plan Update Committee (BAS)
 - As mentioned earlier, the OSRP will shortly be submitted to the State DCR (Dept. of Conservation & Recreation) for comments/approval.
 - BAS also noted that an additional article on the STM Warrant this year will be for the Town to vote to accept the locally developed River Stewardship Plan drafted by the Nashua River Wild and Scenic Study Committee.
 - BAS is on this Committee.
 - A total of 11 riverfront communities in NH and MA will be voting this spring on the designation of portions of the Nashua, Squannacook, and Nissitissit rivers as national Wild and Scenic Rivers.
 - A Public Meeting will be held on May 3 in Town Hall to introduce the topic to Ayer residents and answer questions.
 - In addition, BAS noted that a Devens Restoration Advisory Board (RAB) meeting will be held at Ayer Town Hall on Thursday, April 12, at 7 p.m.
 - Among the topics, the Army will provide an update on the latest drinking water PFAS test results from the Ayer and Devens water supply wells and system.
 - PFAS – Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances – are a category of man-made chemicals.
 - Ayer's Grove Pond and MacPherson wells have been shut down because of PFAS contamination, with the suspicion that the contaminants are coming from Devens.
- **7:45 PM – Adjourn Meeting**
 - CPC's Next Meeting: May 2, 6 p.m.
 - JG moved to adjourn; BES 2nd.
 - Motion approved unanimously.

Minutes Recorded and Submitted by Jessica G. Gugino, Clerk

Date Minutes Approved by Community Preservation Committee: 5/2/2018

Signature Indicating Approval: Jessica G. Gugino