



RECEIVED

NOV 22 2019

TOWN OF AYER

11:45am  
Darius Copeland

**Town of Ayer**  
**Community Preservation Committee**  
Town Hall \* One Main Street \* Ayer, MA 01432  
Minutes for 10/2/2019

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], Jess Gugino (JG) [Conservation Commission]- Clerk, Julie Murray (JM) [Planning Board], Colleen Krieser (CK)[At Large]

Not present: Richard Durand (RD) [Parks & Recreation]

APAC taped: YES (through Public Hearing)

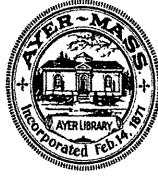
**7:03 PM – Open Meeting**

- **Approval of Meeting Minutes**
  - BAS moved to accept the minutes for 9/4/2019 as amended; JM 2<sup>nd</sup>.
    - Motion approved unanimously.
  
- **Correspondence / Bills**
  - Sandy Pond School Restoration and Preservation Project Phase I (\$108,000 funding, Spring Town Meeting 2018)
    - \$18,030.00 – Gerard O’Doherty, contractor, for continuing work on construction, structural work, etc.
      - There being no objection, JP will forward the bill on to Town Manager Robert Pontbriand for approval of payment of \$18,030 from the CPC grant.
    - Additional news was that the 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration of the SPSA, held on Sept. 14, went well.
      - Both State Senator Jamie Eldridge and State Representative Sheila Harrington were in attendance at the festivities that included the presentation of a citation from the State House and a bronze plaque from the Ayer Historical Commission commemorating its new National Register status.
  - Ayer Affordable Housing Committee
    - JP attended a ‘Housing Trust 101’ training session, run by Shelly Goering, that was well attended by folks from Ayer and surrounding committees.
  - Ayer Community Garden (\$41,000, STM 2019)
    - BAS reported that the Open House for the Community Garden, held on Sept. 7, was well attended as well.
      - Sheila Carman, who led the organizing effort for the garden, was given recognition by the State for her achievement through State Senator Jamie Eldridge.
    - Meanwhile, students at Nashoba Tech have begun working on construction of a permanent shed for the garden.



**Town of Ayer**  
**Community Preservation Committee**  
Town Hall \* One Main Street \* Ayer, MA 01432  
Minutes for 10/2/2019

- **Public Hearing: Community Preservation Act (CPA) Surcharge Increase**
  - JP read the newspaper legal notice which ran in the Nashoba Valley Voice on Sept. 20 and 27.
  - The purpose of the Hearing is to discuss the Warrant Article for Fall Town Meeting (Oct. 28) that will ask voters to consider raising the CPA property tax surcharge from 1% to 3%.
  - As background:
    - The CPA was passed in 2000.
    - Ayer became a CPA committee in 2001.
    - CPA communities raise funds through the property tax surcharge, with additional matching funds then provided yearly by the State.
    - The goal is to set aside local monies to fund projects that preserve the local community and fit into at least one of the 4 CPA-approved categories:
      - Housing
      - Historical Preservation
      - Open Space
      - Recreation
    - CPC acts as a gatekeeper to review the eligibility of projects to meet CPA criteria, make recommendations to Town Meeting, and to administer the terms and distribution of awarded grants.
    - **At all times, the final decision to fund projects is made by Town Meeting vote.**
  - For the first two years, Ayer's surcharge was at the maximum, 3%.
    - It was then reduced to 1% by Town Meeting vote.
    - CPC is now seeking to raise the surcharge back to 3%.
  - CPA communities at 1% surcharge receive matching funds once a year.
    - However, CPA communities at the 3% surcharge participate in **two additional rounds** for State matching funds.
    - Out of 175 CPC communities in Massachusetts, 70 are at the 3% surcharge.
  - JP provided a short PowerPoint presentation covering the background of CPA/CPC.
    - Since 2001:
      - Ayer CPC has raised \$2,890,805 from the local surcharge.
      - State matching funds have contributed an additional \$1,387,442.
      - The combined total of local and State funds is \$4,278,247.
      - Of this, CPC has awarded \$2,712,691 to approximately 30 projects meeting the criteria of the 4 CPA categories.
      - Partial or complete funding has been awarded to projects such as:



**Town of Ayer**  
**Community Preservation Committee**  
Town Hall \* One Main Street \* Ayer, MA 01432  
Minutes for 10/2/2019

- Habitat for Humanity constructions, Pleasant Street School elderly housing;
- Historic preservation work on the Town Hall roof, the Nutting/Fletcher building, the former Central Ayer Fire House on Washington Street;
- The Pirone Park perimeter path, the new Community Garden, and the recent Community Dog Park;
- Expansion of the Pine Meadow Conservation Land through purchase of the Tooker property, and creation of a Conservation Fund to facilitate future open space purchases.
- To illustrate the increased benefit of the 3% surcharge, JP presented a comparison slide based on FY 2016 revenue.
  - 1% (actual):
    - Property tax surcharge revenue in FY 2016 was \$171,876.
    - At the 1% rate, Ayer qualified for just the first State match round and received an additional \$35,367.
    - The total CPA revenue that year, combining local and State, was therefore \$207,243.
    - The percentage contributed by the State match was 20.58% of the total.
  - 3% (hypothetical and approximate, had 3% been in effect that year):
    - Local tax revenue would have been \$515,628.
    - Ayer would have qualified for not 1 but 3 State match rounds, totaling \$170,900.
    - This would have amounted to 33.14% contributed from the State out of a combined local-State revenue of \$686,528.
- Now is also an especially good time for the Town to consider this surcharge increase.
  - This past year the State created a bigger trust fund from which to distribute matching funds to local CPA communities.
- In terms of impact to property owners, the rise to a 3% surcharge would amount to an average annual increase of \$95.00
  - It was also noted that low-income residents and low-to-moderate income seniors (60+) can yearly apply to the Town Assessor for a waiver from the surcharge.
    - Not all CPA communities offer this option but Ayer does.
- JP also demonstrated the links on CPC's Town website, connecting to the 'success stories' for the many local CPA projects funded by CPC and the Town thus far.
- Four residents were in attendance for the Public Hearing and were given the opportunity to ask questions.



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

Town Hall \* One Main Street \* Ayer, MA 01432  
Minutes for 10/2/2019

- Ruth Maxant asked if local CPA money could be used to fund a soup kitchen at a local church.
  - JP said there were other things already in the works, including through the Affordable Housing Committee, to seek to meet this need.
  - BAS said running a soup kitchen itself would not fit into the legally allowable uses of funding under the CPA.
  - In addition, there have been legal challenges mounted in other towns against the use of CPA money for religious organizations, given the need for the separation of religion and state.
- Ruth Rhonemus asked that CPC provide a handout of the PowerPoint presentation for Fall Town Meeting, with Ken Diskin adding that the font-size be increased for readability.
- BAS offered to review and make edits to the PowerPoint presentation for use at Town Meeting.
- There being no further discussion, JG moved to close the Public Hearing; CK 2<sup>nd</sup>.
  - Motion approved unanimously.
- **Committee Updates**
  - Historical Commission (BES)
    - Nothing new to report.
  - Housing Authority (JP)
    - See above detail regarding the affordable housing training session.
    - A get-together/barbeque was held for Pond Street residents recently.
  - Parks & Recreation (RD)
    - Nothing to report.
    - JP sent a card to RD wishing him well on behalf of CPC.
  - Conservation Commission (JG)
    - ConCom's updated wetland bylaw will be voted on at Fall Town Meeting, Oct. 28.
    - Commissioner Bonnie Tillotson is retiring from ConCom in November, so the Commission has begun advertising the vacancy for a new commissioner.
  - Planning Board (JM)
    - The Planning Board continues to review several subdivision proposals and recently accepted the subdivision for 54-56 Littleton Road.
    - Zoning Bylaw amendments continue to be reviewed.
    - Work updating the subdivision regulations continues.
  - Open Space & Recreation Plan Update Committee (BAS)
    - Nothing to report.



**Town of Ayer**  
**Community Preservation Committee**  
Town Hall \* One Main Street \* Ayer, MA 01432  
Minutes for 10/2/2019

- **8:25 PM – Adjourn Meeting**
  - CPC's Next Meeting: November 6, 7 p.m.
  - BES moved to adjourn; JM 2<sup>nd</sup>.
    - Motion approved unanimously.

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

**Date Minutes Approved by Community Preservation Committee:** 11-7-2019

**Signature Indicating Approval:** Jessica S. Gugino