

RECEIVED  
JUL 24 2023



2:22 pm

TOWN OF AYER  
TOWN CLERK

(C)

**Town of Ayer**  
**Senior Center/Community Center Building Committee Meeting**  
**Ayer Town Hall - 1 Main Street**  
**First Floor Meeting Room**  
**Ayer, MA**

**Wednesday July 26, 2023**  
**4:15 PM**

**Meeting Agenda**

*This meeting will be held in-person at the location provided on this notice. Members of the public are welcome to attend this in-person meeting. Please note that while an option for remote attendance and/or participation via Zoom is being provided as a courtesy to the public, the meeting/hearing will not be suspended or terminated if technological problems interrupt the virtual broadcast, unless otherwise required by law. Members of the public with particular interest in a specific item on this agenda should make plans for in-person vs. virtual attendance accordingly. This meeting will be live on Zoom and Channel 8. The public may access the proceedings by joining Zoom (**Meeting ID# 852 5823 2163**) or by calling (**929-205-6099**). For additional information about remote participation, please contact Carly Antonellis, Assistant Town Manager at [atm@ayer.ma.us](mailto:atm@ayer.ma.us) or 978-772-8220 ext. 100 prior to the meeting.*

1. **Call to Order**
2. **Public Input**
3. **Review and Approval of Meeting Minutes**  
June 15, 2023; July 12, 2023
4. **Update and Plan for Project Funding**
5. **Update of the Article 97 Process for the Pirone Park Site Location**
6. **Discussion and Approval of Survey/FAQ Document for Public Outreach**
7. **Discussion on the Public Information Session**
8. **Scheduling of Next Meeting**
9. **Adjournment**

[Former Senior/Community Center Building Committee Public Document - Committee Dissolved 9-6-2023]



**Town of Ayer**  
**Senior Center/Community Center Building Committee**  
**Ayer Town Hall - 1 Main Street**  
**Ayer, MA**  
**First Floor Meeting Room**

**Thursday, June 15, 2023, 2pm**  
**Open Session Meeting Minutes**

Board Present: Carly Antonellis, Assistant Town Manager; Katie Petrossi, COA Director; Jeff Thomas, Parks and Recreation Director; Dan Van Schalkwyk, DPW Director; Kevin Malantic, Parks and Recreation Representative; Dennis Curran, COA Representative; Christine Logan; Ken Diskin; Ellen FitzPatrick; Marge Withee

Absent: Robert Pontbriand, Town Manager

**Call to Order/Welcome/Introductions:** C. Antonellis called the meeting to order at 2:00 PM on Thursday June 15, 2023. All board members introduced themselves.

**Organization of Committee:** C. Antonellis stated that all boards/commission/committees typically have a Chair, Vice-Chair, Clerk. She explained the different roles and their respective responsibilities. Board members agreed to defer the organization of the committee until the next meeting.

**Review of the Open Meeting Law and Public Records Law Requirements of the Building**

**Committee:** C. Antonellis explained the tenets of the Open Meeting Law and the Public Records Law to the Board, noting that all meetings must be posted at least 48 hours in advance, not counting weekends and holidays and that all Board materials are public records. C. Antonellis showed the Board the Town's website, specifically their committee page and where all minutes and agendas are stored. She also showed the Board where the Town Bylaws and Regulations are on the Town's website.

**Review of the Official Charge of the Building Committee:** C. Antonellis reviewed the official Charge of the Building Committee which is: *The Ayer Select Board has formed a public building committee charged with the development of a proposed Senior/Community center to be located on a portion of Pirone Park. The building committee is charged with the oversight and further development of the Pirone Park site location for the project; oversight of the conceptual plan development to include extensive public outreach and participation in the conceptual design; identify and secure funding for the design of the project to include town meeting approval; oversee the final design of the project; develop and administer the construction budget for the project to include town meeting approval; oversee the construction of the project; and provide periodic public updates to the select board. The building committee will be subject to all provisions of the open meeting law (hold publicly posted meetings) and in accordance with the provisions of the public records law (maintain and issue meeting minutes).*

Board Member C. Logan asked why Pirone Park was chosen and thinks that other sites should have been considered. C. Antonellis referenced a report done by the Senior Center Site Selection Working Group that was convened by the Town Manager, which is on the Town's website, showing that 14 other potential sites were looked at and found not to be suitable for the proposed project.

**Update/Overview of the Article 97 Process for the Pirone Park Site Location:** C. Antonellis stated that because Pirone Park is a public park the State's Article 97 (Public Lands Preservation Act) would likely be at play. The process is quite complex requiring notification to the state, an alternatives analysis, replacing open space land, appraisals, a Town Meeting approval to send a Home Rule Petition to the

Legislature. C. Antonellis was in contact with Town Counsel and submitted an inquiry to the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs over a week ago and has yet to hear back. She will keep the Committee updated as more information becomes available.

**Update and Plan for Project Funding:** C. Antonellis explained that Alan Manoian, Director of Community and Economic Development had applied for a \$300,000 Housing Choice Grant through the State. The Town should hear back by mid-fall on whether they receive funding. C. Antonellis stated she is also presenting a plan to the Select Board for \$300,000 in ARPA funding. C. Antonellis has been informed by the Town Manager that the request would be reduced to \$150,000 based on initial feedback from the Board. All funding would go towards due diligence and schematic design for a future combined building. A. Manoian stated that Step 2 of the funding would be to apply for a \$1.3 million CDBG grant that is earmarked for Senior Centers.

**Discussion/Plan for Public Outreach and Information:** K. Petrossi went over the past timeline for the project, explaining the Town did a site feasibility study with Abacus Architects and the work of the working group. (See Attached) K. Petrossi stated that she has been putting information in the senior bulletin and that she updates groups regularly at the Senior Center. C. Antonellis stated that we are really in a "chicken and egg" scenario. The Committee needs funding to progress with the conceptual plans to show the public for additional public input; but funding is not yet available. The site of Pirone Park is not final, until a Town Meeting vote is held. J. Thomas noted that there are wetlands at the rear of the site. Dennis Curran stated that everything is on the table at this point. C. Antonellis said the plan was flexible, depending on due diligence. C. Antonellis and R. Pontbriand will be making the ask for ARPA funding at the next SB meeting being held on June 20, 2023.

**Public Input:** Pauline Conley, 40 Cambridge Street asked whether or not APAC would be filming these meetings moving forward. C. Antonellis stated she was under the impression that staffing for that would be an issue but would ask and advise back.

Laurie Sabol, 1 Winthrop Ave, asked if any public input would be considered before money was spent. C. Antonellis stated that yes, public input has been taken on the project, as far as programming needs. The Board needs to spend funding to be able to do proper due diligence and to advance conceptual designs to present to the public at large. E. Fitz Patrick agreed and stated that it made sense, there has to be something to show the public. K. Diskin stated that the potential funding is not coming from local taxpayer funding, but rather from the State and Federal governments.

Beth Suedmeyer, 16 Nashua Street stated that she is a former co-Chair of the Open Space and Recreation Plan and a current CPC member and a municipal planner. She has significant concerns about the site selection process not being open to the public. She also stated that she has concerns relating to the Article 97 process that will have to be undertaken if the Pirone Park site was to move forward. She noted that the Open Space & Recreation Plan does not include the erection of any building at Pirone Park. She is also requesting that a recreational use plan be done at Pirone Park and that the Town consider the reuse of Page Hilltop School, once a new elementary school is completed.

Committee members urged that the Town Manager speak with the Superintendent of Schools about using the Shirley Middle School field to replace games that are currently being held on Field 6 at Pirone Park.

**Scheduling of Building Committee Meetings:** The Committee decided that the next meeting will be held on Wednesday July 12, 2023 at 4:00 PM and would look to schedule on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesdays of the month moving forward.

**Adjournment:**

**Motion:** A motion was made by M. Withee and seconded by D. Curran to adjourn at 3:30 PM. **Motion passed unanimously.**

Minutes taken and submitted by Carly M. Antonellis, Assistant Town Manager

Signature Indicating Approval: \_\_\_\_\_

Date Approved by Committee: \_\_\_\_\_

*[Former Senior/Community Center Building Committee Public Document - Committee Dissolved 9-6-2023]*

**DRAFT**

## Center for Active Living Timeline

Date	Action	Description
Late 2019	Feasibility Study	Abacus Architects uses community input to shape feasibility study to identify needs, concept, and potential properties
Oct-20	Oct '22 Town Meeting	West Main St site tabled
Feb-22	Site Selection Committee convened	18-month search, including RFP, yields no viable options
3/1/2023	COA/PR partnership	COA and Parks & Rec Boards vote to support a partnership at Pirone Park
03/27/23	Select Board Vote	Accept recommendation of the Site Selection Committee to pursue a combined-use project at Pirone Park
4/4/23	Select Board Vote	Building Committee created
5/16/23	Select Board Vote	Building Committee appointed
6/2/2023	Grant Submitted	AOECD applies for The \$300,000 MA Housing Choice Capital Grant Application for (schematic design/preliminary engineering/construction-cost estimation
6/13/2023	Building Committee Meets	
TBD	Select Board Vote	Select Board approves use of \$300,00 in ARPA funds to fund schematic design & preliminary engineering

[Former Senior/Community Center Building Committee Public Document - Committee Dissolved 9-6-2023]



**Town of Ayer**  
**Senior Center/Community Center Building Committee**  
**Ayer Town Hall - 1 Main Street**  
**Ayer, MA**  
**First Floor Meeting Room**

**Wednesday, July 12, 2023, 4pm In-Person and Zoom Meeting**  
**Open Session Meeting Minutes**

**Committee Present:** Carly Antonellis, Assistant Town Manager; Katie Petrossi, COA Director; Jeff Thomas, Parks and Recreation Director; Dan Van Schalkwyk, DPW Director; Kevin Malantic, Parks and Recreation Representative; Dennis Curran, COA Representative; Ellen FitzPatrick [Arrived 4:25pm]; Marge Withee

**Absent:** Christine Logan

**Call to Order/Welcome/Introductions:** C. Antonellis called the meeting to order at 4:00 PM on Wednesday, July 12, 2023.

C. Antonellis asked for an amendment to the Agenda to add the approval of the previous meeting minutes from the June 15, 2023 meeting.

**Motion:** A motion was made by K. Malantic and seconded by D. Curran to amend the agenda to include the approval of the meeting minutes from June 15, 2023. **Motion Passed 5-0**

**Public Input:**

Pauline Conley (Resident) stated that she had input regarding the previous meeting minutes for June 15, 2023 and would wait to address when the approval of the minutes comes up.

Nelle Anderson (Resident): We need a proper Senior Center for Seniors to meet. The proposed location at Pirone Park would only be on a field that is only used ten days out of the year as a ballfield. There are other fields at Pirone Park and in Town where baseball can be played. The Senior Center would be used year-round, at least 240 days a year as opposed to a ball field that is used 10 days a year. Thank you.

Beth Suedemeyer (Resident): I would like to follow up on my comments from the last meeting regarding the Article 97 process which will be required for this project. I support the concept of the project, but I do not support the loss of Open Space to build it. The current use of the field as a ballfield is not relevant as there are other potential uses/needs for this open space. Keep the continuity of the park and the open space. More public input is needed and in terms of finding a suitable space for this project.

Cynthia Lefaye: I love the concept of a community center in Town. I do not support taking away open space. Please consider a different location.

Jim Pinard: I agree with the two previous speakers. My concern is about open space. This is not the best location. I do not have any land in Town for this project, but I am against putting it on Pirone Park.

Carolyn McCreary (Resident): This group has worked very hard over the last two years to find a location. The concept of a Senior/community Center is a great idea. There are no viable locations for this project as the group has worked on this for over two years. If someone has land and a location, please let them know. This is what we have to work with, and we should proceed with this location. I am in support of the project.

David Grubb (Resident): I am in favor of this project and its location on a portion of Pirone Park. Having both inside and outside recreation opportunities centrally located is a great benefit for the community. I encourage the project to move forward, and I am in support.

[E. FitzPatrick arrives at 4:25pm]

**Organization of the Committee:**

C. Antonellis stated that at the last meeting the Committee had discussed this and wanted to wait until this meeting. The Committee should nominate individuals for the positions of Chair, Vice Chair, and Clerk and if the nominations are seconded then a simple majority vote of the Committee would be in order.

D. Curran nominated Katie Petrossi as Chair. K. Diskin seconded the nomination.

K. Petrossi stated that she would accept if K. Diskin were Vice Chair.

D. Curran seconded K. Petrossi's nomination for K. Diskin to be Vice Chair. K. Diskin stated that he would accept.

C. Antonellis asked if anyone was interested in being Clerk.

D. Curran offered to be the Clerk. K. Malantic seconded.

The proposed slate of officers for the Committee was: K. Petrossi, Chair; K. Diskin, Vice Chair; D. Curran Clerk.

**Motion:** A motion was made by K. Malantic and seconded by M. Withee to approve the slate of officers as follows: K. Petrossi, Chair; K. Diskin, Vice Chair; D. Curran Clerk. **Motion passed 6-0.**

Update on Article 97 Process for the Pirone Park Site Location:

C. Antonellis provided a brief update. She submitted the initial information to the State on June 6, 2023 and frustratingly to date has not heard back from the State. She also contacted Senator Eldridge's Office to assist. She will continue to follow up and hopefully will have an update by the next meeting. We will keep Article 97 as a standing item on the meeting agenda.

D. Curran asked if there is anything the Committee can do to facilitate a response from the State?

C. Antonellis stated that you could also reach out to Senator Eldridge but he is aware and working on it. It is very frustrating that this is taking so long for a response.

B. Suedemeyer (Resident) stated that the Committee should confirm where it was sent and encourage you to contact DSC regarding the process. It is a more rigorous process now and you may have to buy land to make up for the land used for the project. No town has been through the new process. Perhaps contact Melissa Cryan at DSC.

**Update on Plan for Project Funding:**

Antonellis acknowledged, Alan Manoian, the Town's Director of Community and Economic Development.

Alan Manoian stated that his Office has applied for a \$300,000 competitive grant from the State Department of Housing and Community Development for grant funding for the development of this project. To date he has not heard anything from them, which is generally a positive sign. We will not know until September.

C. Antonellis stated that this funding would be toward the development of the conceptual design and project due diligence for the project for consideration by Town Meeting.

C. Antonellis further advised that she and K. Petrossi had met on site with an Architect for the purposes of developing a cost estimate for the next level of design and due diligence for consideration by Town Meeting. We are also open to other viable locations but we remain in a "chicken and egg scenario" in which we do not have a definitive site, yet we need some level of project design and due diligence in order for Town Meeting to make an informed decision. The Committee discussed last meeting about requesting up to \$150,000 in ARPA Funds from the Select Board which was also presented to the Select Board at their meeting, and they asked this Committee to develop a funding request and come to the July 18, 2023 Select Board Meeting.

D. Curran stated that we should ask for \$500,000 instead of \$150,000 in ARPA Funds for this project. The ARPA Funds would benefit Seniors who were hit very hard by the COVID-19 Pandemic and to date no ARPA Funds have been authorized by the Select Board to benefit Seniors.

K. Diskin stated that he disagreed with asking for \$500,000. At their last meeting, the Select Board seemed uncomfortable with a \$500,000 request. If we go for \$500,000 and they do not approve, then we get nothing. We need up to \$150,000 for the project design and due diligence to be in a position to make a presentation to the Town Meeting and for Town Meeting to have the information to make an informed decision.

D. Curran stated that a project of this scale is going to require even more than \$500,000.

C. Antonellis stated that the Select Board pushed back at the \$300,000 amount for this project at this phase. They are looking at an amount to get to Town Meeting.

K. Petrossi stated that with the \$150,000 and if we get the \$300,000 grant from the State we should be in a strong position.

D. Curran stated that we need the financial resources to move forward. We are still not talking about anything concrete. We should ask for \$500,000 and if the Select Board says no then we ask for less. Senior should not be shy.



C. Antonellis stated that ARPA Funds are federal funds under the authority of the Select Board and they must be designated by December 31, 2024 and spent by December 31, 2026. I feel that \$150,000 is appropriate.

K. Diskin stated that he also feels the \$150,000 is appropriate. This will get us to Town Meeting with a proposal that Town Meeting can make an informed decision. If Town Meeting approves, we still have to go through a public funding process which will also involve Town Meeting and the voters.

E. FitzPatrick stated that she felt that \$150,000 was appropriate at this time.

K. Petrossi agreed.

**Motion:** A motion was made by K. Petrossi and seconded by E. Fitz Patrick to formally request up to \$150,000 in ARPA Funds from the Select Board for the purposes of project design and due diligence for the Senior/Community Center Project. **Motion passed 6-0.**

K. Diskin stated that he would draft the request letter for the Select Board Meeting on July 18, 2023.

**Discussion/Plan for Public Outreach and Information:**

K. Petrossi stated that the Committee should consider having a public information session on the proposed project and all of the information to date. We should also consider doing a survey of the public asking what amenities and components the public would like in the project. She passed a DRAFT survey for review by the Committee.

The Committee reviewed and discussed the survey and stated that they would like to further review and offer comments with the goal of approving the survey at the next meeting.

Mike Hamel (Resident) stated the survey should only go to registered voters.

J. Thomas stated that he found a lot of value in the survey he recently did on the Pirone Park Playground Project.

C. Antonellis stated that members should review the DRAFT survey and send any comments to K. Petrossi directly. She also presented the FAQ Sheet developed by K. Malantic for the Committee to review and hopefully approve at the next meeting.

**Approval of Meeting Minutes from June 15, 2023:**

C. Antonellis recognized Pauline Conley (Resident).

Pauline Conley (Resident) stated that on Page 2 of the DRAFT Meeting Minutes from June 15, 2023 it states that Beth Sudemeyer is a former CPC Member, she is actually a current Member.

C. Antonellis stated that we will correct. She also stated that we will add Ken Diskin as being in attendance as he was inadvertently omitted from the DRAFT minutes and the correction of E. FitzPatrick's name.

Pauline Conley (Resident) stated that the June 15, 2023 meeting was not recorded and she wanted to make sure the following points that were made at the June 15, 2023 meeting are reflected in the meeting minutes / record:

- The site location at Pirone Park is not final.
- Jeff Thomas commented about the wetlands located at the back of Pirone Park.
- The proposed plan is flexible.
- Dennis Curran stated that everything is on the table at this point

C. Antonellis stated that these points will be reflected in the July 12, 2023 meeting minutes (the minutes of this meeting) as stated.

**Scheduling of Next Meeting:**

The Committee scheduled the next meeting for Wednesday, July 26, 2023 at 4:15pm.

**Adjournment:**

**Motion:** A motion was made by K. Malantic and seconded by D. Curran to adjourn the meeting at 5:16pm. Motion passed 6-0.

The meeting adjourned at 5:16pm.

Minutes recorded and submitted by Robert A. Pomfiani, Town Manager

Signature Indicating Approval: \_\_\_\_\_

Date Approved by Committee: \_\_\_\_\_

[Former Senior Community Center Building Committee Public Document - Committee Dissolved 9-6-2023]

## Senior Center/Community Center Survey

DRAFT 07.12.23

The Town of Ayer is conducting this survey to get a better understanding of our community's social and recreational needs. The information gathered will help us develop plans for a multi-use community center that will include a senior center, as well as space for community recreation programs.

Thank you for participating, your feedback is important!

### About You

1. Name: \_\_\_\_\_
2. Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_
3. Gender
  - a. Male
  - b. Female
  - c. Non-binary
4. Age
  - a. 17 or younger
  - b. 18-24
  - c. 25-34
  - d. 35-44
  - e. 45-54
  - f. 55-64
  - g. 65-74
  - h. 75-84
  - i. 85+
5. Are you an Ayer resident?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No

DRAFT

[Former Senior/Community Center Building Committee Public Document - Committee Dissolved 9-6-2023]

## Community Needs

6. What are the most important social and recreational needs in the Town of Ayer, for children, older adults, and family caregivers, that could be addressed by building an intergenerational community center? (select all that apply)

- a. Aerobic Group Fitness
- b. Arts and Crafts
- c. Basketball (outdoor)
- d. Basketball (indoor)
- e. Café/Meals program
- f. Climbing Wall
- g. Companionship & informal social interactions
- h. Continuing Education/Self-Improvement Courses
- i. Cross-country Skiing
- j. Cycling
- k. Dance Classes
- l. Fishing
- m. Gardening
- n. Hiking Trails
- o. Ice Sports / Skating (indoor)
- p. Ice Sports / Skating (outdoor)
- q. Intergenerational Programs for kids and seniors
- r. Martial Arts
- s. Medicare Counseling (SHINE program)
- t. Music/Instrument Lessons
- u. Pickleball (indoor)
- v. Pickleball (outdoor)
- w. Playground Equipment
- x. Skateboarding
- y. Soccer (indoor)
- z. Splash Pads
- aa. Sport Fields (outdoor e.g. baseball, soccer, etc.)
- bb. Summer camps or programs for children
- cc. Swimming
- dd. Tai Chi or Qigong
- ee. Tax Preparation Assistance through AARP for seniors and low-income individuals
- ff. Technology Assistance
- gg. Tennis
- hh. Theatre/Drama
- ii. Walking Paths
- jj. Water Sports (e.g. canoeing, kayaking, etc.)
- kk. Volleyball
- ll. Yoga

7. What types of facilities or amenities would you like to see included in a Community Center?

[Former Senior/Community Center Building Committee Public Document - Committee Dissolved 9-6-2023]

DRAFT

- a. Gym
- b. Indoor walking track
- c. Fitness Equipment
- d. Group Fitness Room (Yoga, Tai Chi, etc)
- e. Café / Senior Meals Progra,
- f. Instructional/Classroom space
- g. Large meeting areas
- h. Small meeting areas
- i. Golf/mini putt
- j. Indoor pool
- k. Outdoor pool
- l. Splash Pad
- m. Outdoor entertainment venue (stage, movie screen, etc)
- n. Skateboard Park
- o. Pickleball
- p. Climbing Wall
- q. Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

8. What are the most important factors when it comes to recreation amenities (choose up to 3)?
- a. Accessibility and inclusivity
  - b. Affordability
  - c. Environmental Stewardship
  - d. Modern facilities
  - e. Multi-use facilities
  - f. Sustainability
  - g. Other (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_

9. From the list below, please select what you feel are the most important factors when considering improvements needed to serve Ayer. (choose up to three):
- a. Acquire more land for future parks
  - b. Concentrate on maintaining existing parks and facilities only
  - c. Investment in indoor, year-round facilities
  - d. Investment in outdoor, seasonal facilities
  - e. Provide new recreation opportunities for older adults
  - f. Provide new recreation opportunities for youth
  - g. Provide swimming opportunities
  - h. Upgrade existing parks, recreation facilities, paths and open spaces
  - i. Other (please specify)

10. What are the barriers that prevent you from participating in recreation activities? Select the primary reason:
- a. Lack of Time
  - b. Lack of Town facilities
  - c. Don't know what's available

[Former Senior/Community Center Building Committee Public Document - Committee Dissolved 9-6-2023]

DRAFT

- d. Cost
- e. Health issues
- f. Transportation
- g. Not interested
- h. Proximity to home
- i. No barriers to participation
- j. Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

11. Do you believe that users of a Town-owned community center should have to pay user fees?

- a. Yes
- b. No

12. Do you have other suggestions/ideas that you would like to share? \_\_\_\_\_

Thank you for participating in the survey. To hear the results and learn more about the project, please attend our public forum on DAY, DATE, TIME, LOCATION.

Sources:

[FileStream.ashx \(escribemeetings.com\)](#)

[Planning - Sharing Our Space](#)

[Intergenerational Contact Zones: A Compendium of Applications — Extension and Outreach — Department of Agricultural Economics, Sociology, and Education \(psu.edu\)](#)

[Former Senior/Community Center Building Committee Public Document - Committee Dissolved 9-6-2023]

# Frequently Asked Questions

## Ayer Senior Center/Community Center at Pirone Park

Updated July 14, 2023

### **What is the Town proposing to build?**

The Senior Center/Community Center Building Committee (SCCCBC) has been charged with overseeing the design, funding, public outreach, and eventual building (if approved) of a Community Center at Pirone Park. Design work is just beginning, but the idea is that it would be approximately 25,000 sq ft and include approximately 10,000 sq ft of Senior Center operating in the morning and early afternoon, which would then transition over to community space in the after-school & evening hours to host structured programs for children and adults. In addition, the space will include a full-sized gym with a suspended walking track for programs such as basketball, volleyball, pickleball, indoor soccer, walking club, group fitness and more.

### **Why Pirone Park? Has the committee looked at any other viable sites in Ayer and the surrounding areas?**

Following a Senior Center feasibility study in 2019, the West Main St site was brought to Town Meeting in October 2020 and subsequently tabled due to a variety of concerns. In an effort to keep the initiative moving forward, the Town Manager convened a Senior Center Site Selection Working Group in early 2020, to investigate previously identified and new sites for a Senior Center. This working group examined and eventually eliminated 14 sites over the course of 18 months. These sites were comprehensively investigated, the results of which can be found [here](#). The site at Pirone Park is a perfect location due to its central location and proximity to existing Senior Housing, among many other reasons (see page 6 of the [report](#)).

### **What about the limited supply of green space in Ayer? Will this take it all away?**

The SCCCBC is committed to limiting the footprint of the building, while still providing a building that provides indoor recreation that enhances the existing outdoor recreation space at Pirone Park. Based on the floorplans developed for a stand-alone senior center plus the square footage needed for a gym, we anticipate the building will cover only the baseball diamond area of Field 6 (with priority on preserving the viewshed from School St) and the park support structures west of the baseball field, out to the lower parking lot. We will be working with architects and civil engineers to ensure that the wetlands, flood zones, and the outfield area are minimally impacted. **Are we ready to commit to this statement??**

### **I love the view of Grove Pond from the street. Will the building block the view?**

The SCCCBC members live and/or work in Ayer and understand that the view is extremely important to all residents. As such, we will work with the architect to prioritize the preservation of the view. How this will be accomplished – by digging the building into the landscape, placing the building to the west of School Street, or creating architecture that enhances the view – is not yet determined.

### **What will happen to the baseball games that are played on Field Six? Is that field the only one of its size in town?**

Parks and Rec indicates that Field Six is underutilized and would be a trade worth making, to obtain indoor recreation space including a full-size basketball court. There are other fields in the area that can host Babe Ruth youth baseball games. The committee will investigate these other options to ensure that the games can continue here in Ayer and the surrounding towns. Please be assured that we will do our best to find suitable and agreeable alternatives.

### **What's Article 97 and how does it affect a Community Center at Pirone Park?**

Article 97 is a legislative process put in place to protect conservation/open space land and ensure that it's not disposed of, or it's use changed substantively. It means that if residents of Ayer are interested in building a Community Center at Pirone Park, there will be a few extra steps. At Town Meeting, the vote to approve the building will require a 2/3 vote of support rather than a simple majority. This vote, along with the building plans, must be sent to the MA Legislature review and approval as well. In some instances the Legislature may require the Town to replace the open space lost by deeding other Town land into conservation. This will likely add additional time to the process. The Town Manager's office has contacted the State to inquire more.

**Who is going to pay for the Community Center? Where is the money going to come from?**

The Town and SCCCBC has applied for a State Housing Choice Grant and requested ARPA funds for preliminary conceptual design and engineering work. This means the SCCCBC will not be spending local taxpayer money to draw up the plans needed for residents to decide whether the project should move forward.

**When will the building be built, if approved by the taxpayers?**

The SCCCBC is in the very beginning stages of planning the building. The process includes working with an architect and engineers to determine if Pirone Park can support a building, and what that building could look like. The Committee needs time to seek public input about the proposed building and make the needed changes. Then more specific construction drawings are needed, and then the building is built. This process requires Town Meeting approval to expend local funds for each of these steps. The process will take several years to complete.

Former Senior Community Center Building Committee Public Document - Committee Dissolved 9-6-2023