

Town of Ayer
Community Preservation Committee

Town Hall * One Main Street * Ayer, MA 01432

Minutes for 8/6/2014 - Approved 9/10/2014

Location: Town Hall, 1st Floor until 7 p.m.; 2nd Floor until adjournment

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

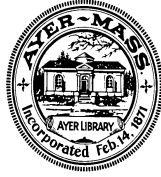
Not present: Vacancy [Planning Board], Vacancy [At Large]

APAC taped: NO

6:10 PM – Open Meeting

• **Discussion: Kohler Place Update**

- Selectman Gary Luca presented on behalf of Town Administrator Robert Pontbriand.
- The formal appraisal was recently completed, and the results will be ready 8/11/14.
- Mr. Luca now asked CPC for funding approval to proceed with the 21E Phase I Environmental Review, at a cost of \$3100.
 - Mr. Luca said precedent was established with the purchase of the Tooker property for the Town to take on this expense.
 - The environmental review will take 3 weeks to complete.
 - If moved on immediately, the results will be ready by CPC's Public Hearing in September.
 - Mr. Luca also said a Purchase & Sale agreement will be ready as of 9/10/14.
- BAS raised the possibility of making CPC approval of the \$3100 expense contingent on the appraisal amount being acceptable.
 - JG suggested that time was now short, with a Public Hearing necessary in September, if an article was to be ready for Fall Town Meeting.
 - The property owners also seem committed to coming to an agreeable price in order to sell to the Town.
- JP asked when the Board of Selectmen (BOS) would begin price negotiations, since it had previously been indicated that a CPC representative would be included in those discussions.
 - Mr. Luca said he expected that to take place soon.
- CPC members agreed to changing their September meeting date from 9/3/14 to 9/10/14 because of the impact the Labor Day holiday might have on public attendance.
 - CPC would then schedule its Public Hearing for Kohler Place on 9/10/14.
- JG moved to approve the expenditure of \$3100 in CPC funds for the 21E environmental review; BES 2nd.
 - Motion approved 3-0 (BAS abstained).
- JP will prepare the legal notice to advertise the Public Hearing.

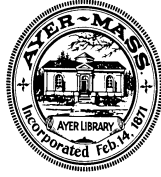


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- **Discussion: Habitat for Humanity Funding Request**
 - Present were: Maggie Monroe-Cassel, Executive Director for Habitat for Humanity (HFH), North Central Massachusetts; local Planning Committee members Pauline Conley, Curt Loge, and Dan Hillier.
 - Ms. Conley said the BOS had voted to convey a piece of property on Central Avenue to HFH a year ago.
 - The property was acquired by the Town via a tax-taking, and the previous house on the lot has been razed.
 - Only recently was it learned that the property has not been finally conveyed yet because, with a municipality involved, a formal appraisal must be done first.
 - HFH and the Planning Committee are in the process of seeking funding for this, including as an in-kind donation.
 - Ms. Monroe-Cassel described the project application, distributed previously to CPC members.
 - She said that HFH has built previously in Ayer, and has found the community to be very supportive and welcoming.
 - The project, at a total cost of \$310,000, seeks \$100,000 in CPC funding for the construction of a duplex on Central Avenue.
 - HFH will be using the same floor plan as a duplex just being finished in Fitchburg.
 - As a result, costs and expectations for this kind of project are already clearly understood.
 - A common driveway will enter the property but lead to separate parking areas.
 - Each house in the duplex will be separately owned, but the property and driveway will be jointly owned.
 - A condo agreement will be drawn up for driveway and property issues and expenses.
 - The duplex will have a crawlspace rather than a basement.
 - Ledge issues in the area are not so severe as to require blasting for utility lines.
 - HFH will be working with the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) to develop its marketing plan for applicants.
 - DHCD has specific guidelines to ensure fair housing practices, including the requirement that the affordable housing be publicized for 2 months.
 - A selection committee, including one representative from the local Planning Committee, will review applications.
 - Three criterion must be met by applicants:
 - demonstration of need;

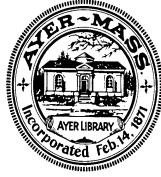


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- ability to pay a mortgage;
- willingness to partner with HFH (“sweat equity”).
- Ms. Monroe-Cassel also said:
 - CPC funding would help give the project official credibility and encouragement that would help HFH raise the rest of the funding;
 - The project would help Ayer get closer to the State’s goal of 10% affordable housing availability.
 - An HFH project adds ownership potential (versus rental) to this 10% goal.
 - The project location is attractive for applicants because of its proximity to the train, Town Hall, the library, grocery store and other amenities.
- In response to a question from BAS, Ms. Monroe-Cassel said the city of Fitchburg was able to pay for half of its HFH project with HUD funds, an option not available to small towns like Ayer.
- JP will check with the Ayer Housing Authority to get their input and perhaps a letter of support.
- JG made a motion to move the project forward in the CPC process by holding a Public Hearing on 9/10, and to approve expenditure of CPC funds to advertise the Public Hearing; BAS 2nd.
 - Motion approved unanimously.
- JP will prepare the legal notice to advertise the Public Hearing.
- BAS said that this project was an opportunity for CPC to carefully scrutinize its contract procedures so as to ensure CPC receives regular input and retains approval authority before CPC funds are disbursed.
- **Unscheduled Discussion: Upcoming Ayer development projects**
 - JP temporarily adjourned the meeting to move to the 2nd floor.
 - More than a dozen Ayer residents were present to make CPC aware of two upcoming housing developments, both planned by the Moore family.
 - One would extend Nashua Street and the other is at the end of Pleasant Street.
 - Ruth Maxant said the properties have been taxed under Chapter 61, the forestry exemption, and that the Town should have “right of first refusal” if the properties are taken out of Ch. 61, whether for development or sale.
 - The residents worried about the impact of the housing developments on wildlife habitat, on stormwater drainage, and on their neighborhoods.
 - They expressed the hope that CPC funds could be used to retain these lands as Open Space.
 - JP clarified that CPC cannot initiate such a purchase, and that Open Space acquisitions have to be sponsored before CPC by another entity.



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- BAS offered to work with residents to contact land trusts in the area that might be able to move faster than a municipality to facilitate an acquisition, if that were to be a possibility.
 - Such a land trust would then be later reimbursed.
- JG suggested the residents appear in person before both the Planning Board and BOS to voice their concerns.
- **Discussion: Town Hall Window Replacement**
 - CPC members have seen recent Town Hall correspondence seeking the replacement of Town Hall windows.
 - While CPC has not been approached for funding, BES noted that he has informed the Town Administrator that any such work has to be approved first by the Massachusetts Historical Association.
- **Meeting Minutes Approval**
 - BAS moved to approve the minutes for 4/2/14 as written; BES 2nd.
 - Motion approved unanimously.
 - BAS moved to approve the minutes for 6/4/14 as amended (to note JP as Acting Clerk); BES 2nd.
 - Motion approved unanimously.
- **7:45 PM – Adjourn Meeting**
 - BES moved to adjourn; BAS 2nd.
 - Motion approved unanimously.