

RECEIVED
JUL 28 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 2nd 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: July 26, 2023

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