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AUG 06 2015

**TOWN OF SOMERS
CAMP AYAPO STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE
INITIAL MEETING AGENDA
Monday, August 10, 2015
7:00pm
Lower Level Conference Room
Town Hall**

1. Call to Order
2. Members Present
3. Introductions and Welcome
4. Review of Charge from Board of Selectmen
5. Review of Time Lines
6. Elections of Officers:
 - 6.1. Chairman
 - 6.2. Vice Chairman
 - 6.3. Secretary
7. General Discussion and Schedule for Future Meetings
8. Adjournment

AUG 12 2015

Camp Aya - Po Strategic Planning Committee
Minutes
Monday, August 10, 2015

Call to Order: Selectman Kathy Devlin called the meeting to order at 7:03 P.M.

Members Present: Tom Van Tassel, David Arnold, Timothy Welch, Barbara Capuano, Michelle Young, Paul Rasic, Rob Hartman, Lucas Cherry, Patricia Loftus, Christopher Boucher, Timothy Kradas, and Town Liaisons Jeff Bord and Bruce Urbon.

Review of Charges from the Board of Selectman:

Kathy Devlin asked members to introduce themselves and then read the entire list of confirmed Committee Members listed below. She explained that the term expiration was 12/22/2016, at which time the Selectmen may decide to extend the committee based on interest and availability of members.

Voting Committee Members include: Tom VanTassel, David Arnold, Timothy Welch, Bradley Pellissier, Barbara Capuano, Michelle Young, Paul Rasid, Rob Hartman, Lucas Cherry, Patricia Loftus, Christopher Boucher, and Timothy Kradas. Town Liaisons are Jeff Bord and Bruce Urbon. Mrs. Devlin told the group she has volunteered to lead the first meeting and be available as the BOS liaison.

The charges were read:

1. To analyze, assess and determine a usage plan for the Camp Aya-Po property.
2. 2.Recommend a preservation and usage plan for the buildings and structures located at Camp Ayapo.
3. Recommend a fundraising program to support the usage and preservation plan.

Election of Officers:

Motion: B. Capuano. **Second:** David Arnold to Nominate Bradley Pellissier as Chairman. No further nominations. Passed unanimously

Motion: T. Kradas. **Second:** M. Young: Nomination for Barbara Capuano as Vice Chairman. Passed unanimously.

Motion: Tom Van Tassel. **Second:** Rob Hartman: To Nominate Michelle Young as secretary. Passed unanimously

Open Discussion:

Members of the group asked the current status of the property. Jeff Bord gave a brief overview of the buildings within the Town owned property: Hilltop, the restrooms in the middle of the property, Avery Hall (where shows, the kitchen, stage and walkout overseeing the lake, and some buildings that might need to be taken down such as the area where the counselors, nurses station, and showers and baths existed. He also suggested that may need to put in restrooms closer to the caretaker's cottage to comply with the new handicap accessibility regulations.

The committee would like more information about the history, as well as maps and drawings, footprint for existing buildings that can be viewed or even sent ahead of the next meeting. Paul Rasid will work with Jeff Bord who will gather the maps and get them ready for the members. Barbara Capuano will communicate with Brad Pellissier and inform him that he is chair and ask him to bring the maps he had for discussion at the next meeting.

Kathy Devlin suggested that everyone read the Camp Aya-Po Ad Hoc Committee report prepared and handed to each member. She felt many of the questions and concerns are addressed in the study, explanations and recommendations made in this document. Further there was discussion about clarifying the charges as to the limitations of the charge- does it include all the acreage or just the footprint dedicated as Town Property. Additionally, what are the restrictions of the grant, current security measures, insurance cover and parking? Additional comments were made about the interest Scouts would have to work on the property, how to liaison with the OSTC, at which time Chris Boucher identified himself as a member of the Open Space and Trails Committee. He will get updates to the group on the work and trails for the committee. It would be a desirable outcome to invite the Chair Ann Moses to a future meeting to develop synergy for grants, fund raising and to see where the groups may work together. Further discussion included a desire to preserve the bell, a review of current signage and potential need for more/updated signs, involving the state to provide water quality testing, use of the facility for State Police K-9 training and potential Indian heritage on the site. Lastly, to understand if the name of the camp must remain as is.

Meeting Dates:

For at least the next meeting, they would like to try for once a month. The committee realizes the great amount of work to be done and will migrate to twice a month once the chair and committee meets to assess what they have, and surges forward to determine what they recommend is done with the property. The group agreed that for the first month or more they will meet on the second Wednesday. Then, they may be able to migrate to the second and fourth Wednesday of the month. **Motion:** B. Capuano. **Second:** T. Kradas meetings to occur second Wednesday, September 9th. For the first meeting the committee will meet at 6 to tour the property and then convene at 7 P.M. at the Town Hall for the business meeting.

Adjournment: 8:06 P.M. Motion: Tim Kradas. **Second:** Tim Welch. Passed unanimously.

**Camp Aya - Po Strategic Planning Committee
Agenda September 9, 2015
6:00 PM Aya-Po**

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SEP 08 2015

7:00 PM (Approximate based upon time at the camp) Town Hall

1. Call to order (camp)
2. Tour
3. Adjourn to Town Hall
4. Call to order (Town Hall)
5. Discuss observations from site visit
6. Establish next steps
7. Review Minutes
8. Adjourn

**Camp Aya - Po Strategic Planning Committee
Minutes
Wednesday, September 9, 2015
Somers Town Hall Lower Level Conference Room
7:00 pm**

Call to Order: Chairman Brad Pellissier called the meeting to order at 6:48 P.M.

Members Present: David Arnold, Timothy Welch, Barbara Capuano, Michelle Young, Paul Rasic, Patricia Loftus, Christopher Boucher, and Town Liaisons Jeff Bord and Bruce Urbon.

(The meeting was preceded by a walk through at 6:00 pm at Camp Aya Po by members present above as well as Tom Van Tassel. No business was discussed.)

Brad Pellissier asked members of the committee to share their observations from the site visit.

Tim Welch opened the discussion reiterating the committee's first charge to determine suggested usage for the site, and suggested that usage be based on what appeals to the residents and potential users. He shared that the public's desires should lead to how to attract visitors to Camp Aya Po and funding ideas would ultimately be derived from the same. The committee related Tim's comments to "build it and they will come" from Field of Dreams.

Barbara Capuano suggested we take a step backwards and determine first what the basic safety requirements would be to make the property viable for any formal use. She cited fire, police, public safety and restrooms as concerns. It was indicated the committee should balance desired uses against the actual safety needs.

Brad Pellissier asked the committee members to read the previous Camp Aya Po Ad Hoc Committee report to the Selectmen as a point of reference for continuing discussion.

Chris Boucher asked the committee to consider a survey to establish the community needs, which could result in a more documented, evidential proposal. The Recreation Department recently purchased survey software which the committee could use to develop a survey, reaching out to local civic, service and volunteer organizations for email addresses and assistance in survey participation. This approach was universally applauded by the committee.

Brad Pellissier suggested a small sub-committee work together to develop a draft survey for review by all. Chris Boucher, Dave Arnold and Michelle Young will work on a draft to present at the next meeting. Pat Loftus suggested the survey include the respondents' zip code so results can be filtered accordingly and know where the suggestions are coming from. Tim Welch wondered if we could hand out surveys during the November

election and we believe we cannot. Tim volunteered to work with Chris Boucher and the Economic Development Committee to garner a list of organizations who might have email lists and/or assist in getting the survey out. Discussion continued regarding the survey as a good first step, where hard copies could be placed for input by those without computer access, and other vehicles to insure robust survey results.

A number of committee members raised questions regarding the difference between the +/- 3 acres comprised of Camp Aya Po and the +/-187 acres of open space surrounding. Brad Pellissier will get clarification from the Board of Selectmen. General consensus is that regardless of "jurisdiction" the experience should be seamless for all visitors.

Barbara Capuano reiterated concern for fire safety and insuring the towns' protection from liability potential. She also asked the committee to consider which remaining buildings could potentially become pavilions.

Committee discussed maintaining a meeting schedule of the second Wednesday of each month with the next meeting on Wednesday, October 14, 2015 at 7:00 pm.

Paul Rasic shared the recognition reaction he receives when wearing his Camp Aya Po tee shirt – and that the name has positive recognition and a long heritage. He also brought up that the name is not trademarked or registered in any way and asked if we need to do so. Michelle Young had researched and the name has been in use since 1927 and that the YWCA had no problem with Somers maintaining the name.

Minutes of August 10, 2015 Meeting:

Motion: B. Capuano. **Second:** D. Arnold to approve minutes. Passed unanimously with Brad Pellissier abstaining.

Adjournment: 7:44 P.M. **Motion:** J. Bord. **Second:** P. Rasic. Passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Michelle Young
Camp Aya Po Strategic Planning Committee
Secretary

Camp Aya - Po Strategic Planning Committee
Minutes
Wednesday, October 21, 2015
Somers Town Hall Auditorium
7:00 pm

Call to Order: Chairman Brad Pellissier called the meeting to order at 7:01 P.M.

Members Present: David Arnold, Timothy Welch, Barbara Capuano, Michelle Young, Paul Rasic, Patricia Loftus, Lucas Cherry, Brad Pellissier, Rob Hartman and Town Liaison Bruce Urbon.

Brad Pellissier opened the discussion regarding the draft survey created by Dave Arnold, Chris Boucher and Michelle Young asking members for their input.

Tim Welch expressed concern that he believes there's still some ambiguity surrounding the difference between the 3.1 acres designated as town open space and the remaining 178+ acres. He pointed out that the committees charge states "Camp Aya Po property" but still doesn't clarify whether that means only the 3.1 acres surrounding the existing buildings or the whole parcel. Brad Pellissier explained that the land was purchased using different monies and that the 178+ acres was primarily purchased using state grant money and that acreage does not fall into our charge. Tim requested more formal clarification and Brad agreed to provide it at the next meeting.

During a lively discussion regarding the survey, the committee overall suggested:

- Clarity and additions to the opening statement to include: indication that no tax monies would be spent on the property, no town monies are available to be spent, just because we're asking what the public wants to see doesn't mean we're promising, and mention that the buildings are in extreme disrepair.
- Additional question to Part 1 asking if the respondent uses current open space facilities and/or trails.
- Deletion of any reference to the pavilion as it is not included in the 3.1 acres
- Deletion of any reference to overnight camping
- Changes to the Funding section to be more specific.
- Conclusion with a section for narrative from respondent.

Michelle Young will schedule time with Dave Arnold and Chris Boucher to revise and present a second draft to the committee prior to the next meeting.

Paul Rasic introduced a memo created by Public Works (6/19/15) with a list of approved uses at Camp Aya Po. There was discussion that the list is vague but will be looked into to insure a good definition of passive recreation for the survey.

Tim Welch shared that he did send a note to Economic Development asking if they would be willing to share email addresses, etc for distribution of the survey but did not receive a response.

Dave Arnold expressed concern that many elderly citizens may not have access to email, or a computer and we should bear that in mind when we get ready to present the survey.

Barbara Capuano suggested we consider an "open house" at the camp property to coincide with the survey so people will have the opportunity the better understand what they're responding to. Also to encourage their use of the property. It was suggested that we might be better served to hold an "open house" as a meeting with pictures/slide show, etc rather than have persons at the Camp. Brad Pellissier suggested we should partner with the Open Space Trails committee for an event like this.

Pat Loftus mentioned that she knows a reporter for the Hartford Courant who writes about little known parks, open spaces, etc in CT and volunteered to contact him for a potential piece about the entire property. She will reach out to Patrice Carson on the Open Space Trails committee to include them.

Lucas Cherry received an email from Tom VanTassel sharing that there's a Camp Aya Po Facebook pages of prior campers who share camp information and would be willing to volunteer if we need for clean up, etc. It was determined that we might have our own Facebook page to share photographs, a link to meetings and to the survey. Michelle Young will talk with Chris Boucher to determine feasibility, etc.

Brad Pellissier asked that we plan the next 3 meetings. Dates determined were Wednesday, November 18th, Wednesday, December 16th and Wednesday, January 20th all at 7pm. Michelle Young will reach out to Ann Logan to reserve meeting space.

Minutes of September 9, 2015 Meeting:

Motion: D. Arnold. **Second:** P. Loftus to approve minutes. Passed unanimously.

Adjournment: 8:13 P.M. Motion: B. Capuano. **Second:** L. Cherry. Passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Michelle Young
Camp Aya Po Strategic Planning Committee
Secretary

Camp Aya - Po Strategic Planning Committee

Agenda

October 21, 2015

7:00 PM Call to order

1. Call to order
2. Discussion of Survey
3. Establish next steps
4. Review Minutes
5. Adjourn

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OCT 19 2015

**Camp Aya - Po Strategic Planning Committee
Minutes
Wednesday, November 18, 2015
Somers Town Hall Lower Level Conference Room
7:00 pm**

Call to Order: Chairman Brad Pellissier called the meeting to order at 7:02 P.M.

Members Present: David Arnold, Timothy Welch, Barbara Capuano, Michelle Young, Paul Rasic, Patricia Loftus, Brad Pellissier, Rob Hartman, Chris Boucher, Tom Van Tassel and Town Liaisons Bruce Urbon and Jeff Bord.

Brad Pellissier opened the discussion regarding the revised draft survey created by Dave Arnold, Chris Boucher and Michelle Young asking members for their input. Committee members reviewed the requested changes and suggested additional language clarifying the actual description of the Camp, the passive recreation statement and a better visual map.

Motion to Approve the Survey:

Motion: D. Arnold **Second:** Pat Loftus Passed unanimously.

Survey distribution discussion:

Chris Boucher suggested a link to the survey should be available via the town website, the town Facebook page, the recreation department website and Facebook page. He explained the survey would only be available by a link, not a direct website of the survey. Members suggested notice should be placed on the sign in front of Town Hall with hard copies available at Town Hall, the Library, Senior Center, Somers Pharmacy and Ace Hardware store. Chris Boucher will ask the PTO if they would be willing to send the survey to their email lists, Pat Loftus will ask the Somers Fire Department, Dave Arnold will ask the American Legion, Brad Pellissier will ask the DTC and RTC, Paul Rasic will ask the Lions. An opening paragraph to accompany the email will be drafted by Dave Arnold, Chris Boucher and Michelle Young. Jeff Bord suggested asking Ann Logan about the email list used for dog licenses – Michelle Young will check with Ann. Pat Loftus suggested when the survey is ready the committee should take it first as a trial run. Brad asked if Chris thought that would be possible for the December 16th meeting. Chris will try. (We cannot use the dog license email list but the Tax Collector would be happy to include an insert to January tax bills that would reach about 1,200 residents and Somers Pharmacy will be happy to place hard copy surveys in their location).

Motion to Amend the Agenda to Include Additional Business:

Motion: T. Van Tassel **Second:** P. Rasic Passed unanimously.

Brad Pellissier asked if anyone had additional business. Pat Loftus updated the committee on her communication with a journalist from the Hartford Courant where she had invited him to go up to the Camp and perhaps make suggestions as to usage given he writes often about parks, open space, trails, etc and has seen a lot of what other towns do. He did visit the Camp and suggested he would be available to talk with the group at the December 16th meeting. General consensus was that was too early especially if we want to include the Trails Committee so Pat will write and suggest a visit after the first of the year.

The committee determined the following additional meeting dates:

Wednesday, February 17, 2016

Wednesday, March 16, 2016

Wednesday, April 20, 2016

Wednesday, May 18, 2016

Wednesday, June 15, 2016

Minutes of October 21, 2015 Meeting:

Motion: T. Welch. **Second:** D. Arnold to approve minutes. Passed unanimously.

Adjournment: 8:03 P.M. Motion: B. Upton. **Second:** B. Capuano. Passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Michelle Young
Camp Aya Po Strategic Planning Committee
Secretary

Camp Aya - Po Strategic Planning Committee

Agenda

November 18, 2015

7:00 PM Call to order

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NOV 16 2015

1. Call to order
2. Discussion of Survey
3. Survey Distribution Plan
4. Review Minutes
5. Adjourn