

**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