

Notes from Community Preservation Act (CPA) Committee Meeting – June 7, 2017 @5:30P.M.
Ackerman Room

CPA Committee Members Present:

Kevin Foster (Resident)
Ellen Shachter (Resident)
Thatcher Tiffany (Planning Board)
Chandra Harrington (Historical Commission)
Gerard Clark (Cambridge Housing Authority)
Lisa Peterson (Deputy City Manager/Chair CPAC)
David Kale (Assistant City Manager for Fiscal Affairs)

Staff Attendees:

Angela Pierre (Senior Budget Analyst- Budget Office)
Jen Letourneau, (Conservation Commission Director Senior Engineer- Public Works)
Karen Preval (Senior Management Analyst-Executive Office)
John Nardone (Deputy Commissioner for Operations- Department of Public Works)
Charles Sullivan (Executive Director-Historical Commission)
Chris Cotter (Director of Housing Division-CDD)
Taha Jennings (Assistant to the City Manager-Executive Office)

- The meeting convened at 5:38 p.m., Deputy City Manager (Committee Chair) Lisa Peterson asked all committee members and staff to introduce themselves.
- Chair, Peterson, stated that this is a working meeting and the role of the Community Preservation Act Committee (CPAC) is to hear project ideas, staff priorities and the needs of the public and make recommendations to City Council. The CPA schedule was reviewed. The public hearing for projects will be held on June 22, 2017 at 6:00 in City Hall, the public hearing on allocation is scheduled for July 27, 2017 at 6:00 in the Lombardi Building and the final CPAC committee meeting will be held on September 12, 2017. Recommendations from the City Manager to the City Council will be discussed on September 18, 2017.
- Assistant City Manager for Fiscal Affairs, David Kale, provided information regarding CPA finances, including last year's financial information, the current financial position and anticipated CPA funding for FY18. A summary of CPA fund allocations and appropriations of all sources were distributed to members. In FY17, the City received a state match of 19% and an anticipated state match of 15% for FY18. It could go up to 30% in FY19 if legislation is passed to increase fees for deeds. Although state funds are down, the increase in the property tax levy has provided additional resources. The total CPA allocation for FY18 will be \$12.5M compared to last year's allocation of \$12.3M, which is around a 2% increase. With Boston and Springfield adopting CPA, the state match get smaller as more communities join.
- Chair Peterson asked staff to provide brief updates on the status of FY17 projects.
- Executive Director of the Historical Commission, Charles Sullivan, stated that half of the historic preservation funds are allocated to preservation grants and currently there is a balance of \$17K from FY17 funds. He anticipates several grant requests this fiscal year.
- Mr. Sullivan provided an update on past projects:

- The sidewalk on Brattle Street is moving forward. Masonry work on Craigie Street is under way with the replacement of blue slabs
 - Lowell park landscape plan (DCR) was unable to match the City's appropriation and will reapply to restart the project. Most likely the funds on the books will be used for future planning in the fall.
 - The Powerhouse at Magazine Beach planning is underway and signage is tied into the landscape
 - Old burying ground restoration continues.
 - City directories are ongoing.
 - Construction of the City clerk's vault has been delayed while a space planning session is being conducted.
- Chair Peterson mentioned there are sufficient funds for the Clerk's vault and no additional requests will be submitted.
 - Assistant to the City Manager, Mr. Jennings discussed the following open space projects:
 - Sennot park was partially funded and will need additional funds. Construction will start in 2019 with the focus on updating the condition of the park without losing more than one summer of use during construction
 - Graham and Parks School playground, which will include renovation and construction on playground, will begin summer 2018
 - Fresh Pond community garden is underway and is part of a larger drainage project and garden will be open next spring.
 - Mr. Jennings stated that the City of Cambridge is always looking at open space needs around the City; departments meet to discuss maintenance needs and priorities when preparing funding requests and ways of leveraging other sources of funding.
 - East Cambridge is undergoing a large open space process on Roger Street where 2 acres of land will be designed and constructed for public open space and will be funded by developers for approximately \$11M
 - CPAC member Ms. Shachter asked for the timeline.
 - Mr. Jennings stated design is underway for 2 sites and construction will begin in 2019.
 - CPAC member Foster asked if the allocation will be held and used in outer years.
 - Mr. Jennings said it would take a few years to complete the community process, funding and bidding of the project.
 - Sacramento Street and Clarendon playground are in design; the Morse playground will be bid next summer and the Amigos playground process is beginning.
 - Mr. Foster asked if funds appropriated are used within the same fiscal year or future years.
 - Sr. Management Analyst, Karen Preval stated that she will provide an updated status of all projects.

- Conservation Commission Director Senior Engineer, Jennifer Letourneau provided an update on Lowell Park collaborative project and mentioned that Hells' half Acre is completed and the plant and garden club are doing a count of all plants in the area.
- CPAC member Mr. Tiffany stated that he appreciates the work on parks and wanted to know how the City funds maintenance at the parks? He asked what the City does to encourage targeted improvements for example dying trees.
- Deputy Commissioner for Operations – Department of Public Works, John Nardone mentioned that CPA funds cannot be used for maintenance. Operating funds are used to cover park maintenance and a tree grate or smaller items are paid through the Department of Public Works. He also mentioned that play structures come from overseas and sometimes take longer to fix. The City currently maintains 136 parks and residents are asked to use Commonwealth Connect App. to notify the City of areas that need improvements need to be fixed.
- Director of the Housing Division in the Community Development Department, Chris Cotter explained that affordable housing development and preservation efforts are funded by the Cambridge Affordable Housing Trust, and that CPA funds for affordable housing have been the most significant source for affordable housing. He discussed the following completed and ongoing projects: Port Landing project which created 20 affordable units near Kendal Square; Briston Arms where rehab was completed after affordability commitments were extended at this expiring use property with 15 rental units; Jefferson Park is approaching completion with re-occupancy targeted for the fall with 104 new rental units expected to be complete by early next year.
- Mr. Cotter also listed the following new projects: 675 Concord Ave was purchased by HRI, using CPA Funds and will be developed as mixed-income affordable rental housing with a large ration of 2 and 3 bedroom units; a property in Porter Square where a new affordable housing development is being proposed with the community and permitting process to begin shortly
- Chair Peterson mentioned that Vail Court was purchased through free cash and not with CPA funds, demolition will begin shortly and the City Council will be asked to transfer the lease to the Affordable Housing Trust.
- Ms. Shachter was interested in the affordability breakdown for Concord Ave, how it is determined, designed to match the resources and if it is better to look at a more mixed income community. How does the breakdown get decided?
- Mr. Cotter stated that when funding is secured and the design is finalized, the unit mix will be set. There will be an additional funding request of the Trust. As the development, has been proposed, the affordability mix is roughly 60%/20%/20% split amount long-, moderate-, and middle-income units.
- Mr. Foster asked if there has been a dent in back log for housing?
- Mr. Cotter stated that housing with expiring use issues is half way done, 8 of 10 properties that were most at-risk have now been preserved, however demand for affordable housing remains huge, with several thousand applicants who have applied for affordable housing in recent months, and uncertainty about federal funds remains a significant concern as the City has seen

cuts of approximately 40% in CDBG and 50% HOME funds in recent years and there is talk of eliminating both programs in the next Federal budget.

- Ms. Schachter stated that there are problems with vouchers as it is very difficult to use them in the private market. People need to keep in mind given the way the market works, the ratio of affordable housing, and what we do in regards to housing, will determine the type of community we want to be in regards to housing, income, socioeconomics.
- Chair Peterson mentioned that policy wise, incentive zoning ordinance and the Inclusionary are important gains and still not addressing all the needs.
- Chair Peterson discussed the date, time and purpose for the upcoming meeting on June 22, 2017, and that the hearing would be open to the public to propose projects to be considered for CPA funding in FY18. Another public hearing is scheduled for July 27, 2017 on allocations. A CPA Committee meeting is scheduled for September 12, 2017, for the committee to vote on recommended projects and funding allocations for FY18.
- Meeting adjourned at 6:20 P.M.