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COMMUNITY PRESERVATION ACT (CPA) COMMITTEE MEETING

Public Hearing on FY 22 Funding Allocation Percentages

Wednesday, July 14, 2021, 5:30 P.M. – 6:45 P.M.

Committee members present: David Kale, Kaki Martin, Chandra Harrington, Ellen Shachter, Owen O’Riordan, Mary Flynn, Victoria Bergland

Committee members absent: Susan Schlesinger, Kevin Foster

City staff present: Jennifer Mathews, Taha Jennings, Charlie Sullivan, Chris Cotter, Jen Letourneau, Adam Corbeil

I. Chair David Kale (DK) opens meeting:

- Meeting held remotely in accordance with Section 20 of Chapter 20 of the Acts of 2021, which was signed into law on June 16, 2021. Ask all Committee members and members of the public state their name before speaking. All votes will be taken by roll call.
- Purpose of tonight’s hearing is to receive public comment on the funding allocation percentages for the CPA funding categories of affordable housing, open space/recreation, and historic preservation. Each of these categories must receive at least 10% of the total FY22 CPA funding available to Cambridge. The remaining funding can be allocated between the three funding categories.
- DK takes attendance by roll call.
 - Member Kaki Martin (KM) is absent at meeting start but joins just after.

II. Summary of Committee Process

- Committee had an organizing meeting on May 12, 2021 and voted to transfer unexpended project balances to the Open Space and Historical Preservation Reserve Funds.
- On June 9, 2021, the Committee had its hearing on project requests for FY22 funding.
- Between June 9 and tonight, July 14, the Committee held public comment open to receive additional project ideas and online comments. Later in the meeting, staff will summarize project ideas and comments received since June 9 for the record.
- Tonight’s hearing is on allocation percentages.
- Tuesday, September 14, 2021 meeting – Committee will vote to recommend funding allocation percentages and on projects for funding. Plan to hold that meeting virtually through zoom, but will let the Committee and public know in advance if that changes.

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- Anticipated FY22 funding is \$17,510,000.

III. Review & Adopt June 9, 2021 Minutes

- Ellen Shachter (ES) makes motion to approve minutes. Owen O’Riordan (OO) seconds. Motion passes 7-0-2 absent.
- Two reminders before meeting opens for public comment:
 - Comment period on projects closes tonight.
 - Comment period on allocation percentages will remain open until the September 14, 2021 meeting.
- Members of the public can submit comments on allocation percentages through the online comment form available on CPA website. Can also email comments and any related materials to Jennifer Mathews – jmathews@cambridgema.gov – her contact information is also available on the CPA website.
- Anything received electronically after tonight’s meeting will be read into the record on September.

IV. Public Comment

- **Tina Alu, Executive Director, CEOC.** In support of maintaining 80% funding for affordable housing. CEOC has seen the positive impact of CPA funding firsthand. It doesn’t just preserve buildings, it preserves homes, particularly for diverse families. There is always a need for affordable housing and the pandemic has made that need even greater. Maintain the 80/10/10 split so we have resources to preserve and create more affordable housing.
- **Peter Daly, Executive Director, Homeowners Rehab.** Thanks committee for past funding, and encourages members to come to HRI sites to see impact first hand. Supports 80/10/10 with 80% to affordable housing. Recent reports have put a face on the issue of affordable housing and what people are going through, particularly with the impact of the pandemic and people running out of resources. There are also huge increases in construction costs, which is a challenge. Hopefully those costs will go back down. But the pipeline of projects and opportunities HRI currently has will only work with continued funding.
- **Cathie Zusy, Magazine Beach Partners.** Supports a 70/15/15 funding for affordable housing, open space, and historic preservation respectively. Affordable housing is always important and many people want to live in Cambridge. But open space and historic preservation are important too and for everyone.

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- **Carl Nagy-Koechlin, Executive Director, Just-A-Start.** Supports 80% for affordable housing. Reiterates the challenges Peter Daly spoke to re building costs. Developers can only do it because of the 80% CPA funding. Relatively new to Just-A-Start and comes from a community where they really don't spend CPA money on housing, so for a community to actually value it is huge. JAS has about 220 units on deck. Living in Cambridge is life-changing for many, and the pandemic has brought this into focus because many other communities JAS works in don't have the same resources as Cambridge and you see it. Appreciate the 80%; it's key.
- **Cathleen Higgins.** Life-long renter in Cambridge and supports the 80% affordable housing allocation. The CHA's recent *Stories of the Can't Wait List* shows there are over 5,000 people living or working in Cambridge who need housing.
- **Margaret Moran, Cambridge Housing Authority.** Submitted 30 statements today in support of the 80/10/10 for affordable housing. Those include a number of statements from residents regarding disabilities, health or other issues and the importance of housing stability for them. As others have mentioned, the CHA's *Stories of the Can't Wait List* shows the challenges. CHA has 400 units in the pipeline for renovation or addition and funding is critical.
- **Joanne Parker.** Single mom who raised her children in affordable housing developed by Just-A-Start. Thankful her sons grew up in affordable housing and hopes the committee will keep up funding for housing. Housing gave her support and help when she had nothing, and it's something we really need to keep doing.
- **R. Duyonne (sp).** Single mom, and affordable housing let her stay home until she had childcare. Without that 80% funding for affordable housing, people can't do it.
- **Ingrid Lasalle.** Affordable housing is critical for supporting diversity. Cambridge is a beautiful place to live but lower income people are being pushed out, and it is sad that people with decent jobs cannot afford homes here. Affordable housing is the number one priority now more than ever. Supports the 80% for housing.
- **James Williamson.** Referencing the CHA's *Stories of the Can't Wait List*, 15,000 on the list of 50,000 have no connection to Cambridge. Thinks this can be done better. There is public money without public accountability; specifically, there isn't a tenant on the Affordable Housing Trust. Thinks CPA is losing the preservation aspect and losing the perspective of residents. New project at Russell Apartments will block sunlight and take down trees. Wants better control of how money is being spent. Supports 60/20/20 for affordable housing, historic preservation, and open space respectively.
- **Pam Lingel.** Very aware that we need affordable housing in the City, but believes we need more open, green space for health and environmental benefits. Supports 70/15/15 for affordable housing, historic preservation, and open space respectively.
- In-person comments conclude. DK notes there have been a number of comments emailed or submitted online since June 9. Staff will summarize those comments for the record.
- JM provides overview:

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- 3 additional historic preservation project proposals, which CHC Exec. Director Charlie Sullivan (CS) will summarize momentarily.
- Petitions from Cambridge Housing Authority supporting the 80% allocation to affordable housing.
- Number of comments submitted online.
- CS summarizes 3 new proposals for historic preservation projects, which came in since June 9:
 - Lombardi Municipal Building. Building is a contributing structure in Central Square Historic District, and houses City Departments including the Historical Commission, which in turn have many important historic resources. The building's roof is failing, leading to leaks and interior damage. Detailed application to follow.
 - Olmsted-Eliot Memorial Marker for Riverbend Park. Project idea has been submitted by the People for Riverbend Park Trust, to install marker celebrating historical sycamores and park design by Frederick Law Olmsted and Charles Eliot. Project is on DCR property, so requires DCR support. Staff will continue working with applicants, but will also want to approve any marker language.
 - Winthrop Street Wall/historical wall in Harvard Square. Private owners are responsible for a portion of the wall, which has fallen into disrepair for variety of reasons. Staff will continue discussions with the owners. Property is very historically significant, but there are many questions to review and answer before CPA committee considers funding.
- JM summarizes petitions received from CHA on behalf of 16 residents at 237 Franklin Street and 14 residents at the LBJ Apartments at 150 Erie Street, supporting 80% of CPA funds for affordable housing.
- JM summarizes online comments submitted by Debra Fox, Daniel Schutzberg, Kathy Brenner, Chris Maher, Louise E. Weed, James Williamson, and Cathleen Higgins, the full content of which will be sent to the Committee and posted on the CPA website.
- JM confirms no additional members of the public have joined the meeting to provide public comment.
- Ellen Shachter (ES) makes motion to close in-meeting public comment. Owen O'Riordan (OO) seconds. Motion passes 7-0-2 absent.
- DK reiterates that the comment period on funding allocation percentages will remain open after tonight's meeting and until the September 14th meeting.

V. Committee Discussion

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- ES would like to ensure Committee is looking at funding through an equity lens. Individuals, particularly in immigrant communities, are really in need. So let's think about how we can fund affordable housing in a way that provides more opportunity. Would like to have a joint meeting between the CPA Committee and Affordable Housing Trust to continue working on this.
- Victoria Bergland (VB) thanks ES for raising this and agrees joint meeting would be beneficial.
- Mary Flynn (MF), Chandra Harrington, and Kaki Martin agree and support joint meeting.

Adjourn

- MF makes motion to adjourn, VB seconds. Motion passes 7-0-2 absent. Meeting adjourns.