

Meeting Notes from CPA Committee Public Meeting – 6/21/11 @ 6:00 PM – Senior Center

CPA Committee Members Present: (8 of 8)

Ellen Shachter (Resident)

Louis DePasquale (Assistant City Manager – Director of Finance)

Richard C. Rossi (Deputy City Manager/Chair CPAC)

William Tibbs (Planning Board)

Bill Bibbins (Historical Commission)

Gerald J. Clark (CHA)

Susan Schlesinger (Cambridge Resident)

Albe Simenas (Conservation Cmsn)

Staff/Attendees:

Chris Cotter (Housing Director, Community Development Department (CDD))

Cassie Arnaud (Housing Planner -CDD)

Charles Sullivan (Executive Director - Historic Commission)

Jennifer Wright (Executive Director - Conservation Commission)

Karen Preval (Management Analyst – Executive Department)

Nancy Schlacter (Assistant to City Manager)

The hearing convened at 6:05 PM. Deputy City Manager (and CPAC Chair) Richard C. Rossi explained that the meeting was to allow the CPAC to hear what sorts of Open Space, Historic Preservation and Affordable Housing projects people are interested in or specific projects they recommend. Mr. Rossi asked the CPA members to introduce themselves and explain their affiliations, consistent with CPA legislation requirements for representatives from various City agencies or boards. Mr. Rossi noted that citizen interest in prior years led to an allocation of historic funds to preserve a park in an historic district and that a Community Garden on Watson Street was preserved with Open Space funds. He briefly explained the CPA allocation minimum requirement of 10% to each of the preservation categories.

Assistant City Manager/Finance Director (and CPAC member) Louis DePasquale provided a brief overview of anticipated available CPA funds for FY12. Mr. DePasquale explained that, with City raised funds and the state match, Cambridge anticipates having \$9,600,000 in CPA funding for affordable housing, open space and historic preservation projects. He stated that this would be \$50,000 more than was available from CPA funding in FY11. He noted that the anticipated state match of ??% in FY12, although lower than the 100% state matches in the first years after adoption of the CPA, reflected the changes in the State's financial picture. He noted that there are currently \$2.4 million in Open Space reserve funds.

CPAC Chair Rossi noted the upcoming dates in the CPA process: On August 31, 2011 @ 6:00 PM in the Sullivan Council Chamber there would be an opportunity to hear from people about their percentage allocation preferences and that the record would be left open over the summer to accept additional CPA project suggestions. He then gave a

brief presentation on the progress of HB 765- *An Act to Sustain Community Preservation*, noting that it had been favorably reported out of the Joint Committee on Economic Development earlier in June, and was currently pending before the House Ways and Means Committee. He said that, if passed, HB765 would lead to more predictability in the state match and that proposed changes in the statute regarding usage of Open Space funds, which are of key significance to Cambridge, would allow for greater flexibility for use of the first 10% of CPA Open Space funds. He noted that the City Manager, Mayor and CPAC Chair had sent letters in support of the bill to the Cambridge Legislative Delegation.

The meeting was opened to public comment. Twenty-nine people spoke. A brief summary of the comments follows:

Heather Hoffman, resident of Hurley St., spoke on behalf of preserving the Silver Maple Forest, to preserve the watershed and provide stormwater runoff benefits, and also spoke in support of Whittemore Gardens.

Nathan Mozzer, resident of Waterhouse St., spoke in support of CPA Historic Preservation funds used to preserve the First Church of Christ Scientist, adjacent to the Cambridge Common. He expressed his gratitude to the CPAC for funds used to repair the flat roof and the masonry façade. He requested support for an upcoming request for historic preservation funds to repair the church's dome.

Jay Shetterly, resident of Magazine St. and Director of the Cambridgeport Neighborhood Assn. (CNA), spoke in favor of preserving the Magazine Beach Powderhouse, a former munitions cache storage building circa 1818, which is in desperate need of repair. He noted that DCR has expressed an interest in participating in the project. He provided a handout from CNA requesting \$38,000 for: emergency repairs (\$15,000) and a structural report (\$23,000). He said Rob Johnson would provide a more detailed summary of the request.

Rob Johnson, resident of Fairmont Ave. and also a member of the CNA, spoke in favor of preserving the Magazine Beach Powderhouse, an effort spearheaded by Cathy Zusy (sp?), who was unable to attend tonight's meeting. He said they were looking for CPA historic preservation funds to help them develop a comprehensive assessment of the building's potential. They hope to get a historic structural report funded for @ \$23,000 and are also looking for \$15,000 in emergency funds to stabilize the roof. He said DCR had indicated that it would provide 2 for 1 grant support - i.e.: if the City provided \$15,000, DCR would fund \$30,000. He provided copies of a CNA proposal for the historic structural report.

Elaine DeRosa, resident of Pleasant Place and Director of CEOC, spoke in favor of CPA housing funds being used to preserve Craigie Arms, to preserve limited affordable housing in Harvard Square. She said she believed there was potential for a CPA historic preservation component for funding, too.

Quinton Zondervan, resident of Cardinal Medeiros Ave. and President of Green Decade Cambridge and Co-coordinator of the Climate Protection Action Committee (CPAC), spoke on behalf of preserving the Silver Maple Forest, for ecological and wildlife preservation as well as for an educational opportunity. He provided an email with additional detail.

David Torrey, resident of Pearl St., spoke on behalf of preserving the Magazine Beach Powderhouse, and in support of the proposal to seek an historic structural report of that building.

Liz Rassweiler, resident of Fainwood Circle, spoke in support of preserving the Silver Maple Forest as Cambridge's "Central Park." She compared NYC's decision to create Central Park as a brave choice in another era and that Cambridge should make a similar brave choice to retain the last of its urban wild land.

Peter Daly, President of HRI, spoke in support of funding for expiring use housing in Cambridge, mentioned recent efforts to retain expiring use rental units on Inman Street and at CAST, and spoke in favor of preserving affordability for Craigie Arms.

Bob Costa, Senior Project Manager of Cambridge Neighborhood Apartment Housing Services, Inc. (CNAHS), spoke in favor of ongoing use of CPA housing funds to support CNAHS' work to assist private property owners' efforts to preserve affordable housing within private property. He provided a handout further explaining their work and his request.

Ralph Yoder, resident of Rindge Ave., spoke in favor of preserving the Silver Maple Forest. He described having lead many nature walks there, and the benefits of preserving the habitat for wildlife. He also spoke in support of retaining community gardens.

Charles Marquardt, resident of Roger St., spoke in favor of retaining affordability for Craigie Arms and preserving the Silver Maple Forest, even though both are complicated propositions; preserving a park at Hancock and Center Sts; preserving affordable housing in expiring use projects; purchasing the Whittemore Community Garden; and converting a slice of land at Binney and Galileo Galilei Way for a dog run.

David Duhalde (no address given) described himself as a community organizer on behalf of the Mass. Senior Action Cmte. He spoke in favor of preserving existing and building more single room occupancy residences (SROs), which provide safer shelter for people in transition from homelessness and incarceration. He noted that there are only 570 SRO units in Cambridge but that the need is much greater.

Michael Haran, CEO of CASCAP and a member of the Affordable Housing Trust (AHT), spoke of his concern about the loss of expiring use affordable housing units and in favor of retaining affordability of those that remain.

Carmen Phillips, resident of Madison Ave., spoke in favor of preserving the Whittemore Community Garden.

Peter Conlon, resident of the YMCA on Mass. Ave., spoke in favor of retaining existing SRO housing and building more. He said that for persons in recovery, SROs are a great way to rebuild their lives in a supportive community setting.

Toni LaRosa, Project Manager at Central House at the YMCA, spoke about the hundreds of formerly homeless people who had turned their lives around during their residency in the SRO units at the YMCA. She described Central House as the starting point for people in recovery. She said that there are currently 128 residents and that Central House is looking for CPA housing funds for upcoming rehabilitation needs.

James Williamson, resident of Jackson Place, spoke in favor of: the Magazine Beach Powderhouse proposal, noting that well-conceived, plausible and viable proposals seem most likely to be approved; the preservation of affordability at Craigie Arms, which he believed Harvard University should support; asked CDD to look into an apparently vacant structure on Bishop Allen Dr. (Vail Court), which he thinks has been vacant for 4 years and which resembles the YWCA in aspects of its architecture and stucco facade, wondering whether there is an historic preservation aspect that can be linked to reviving this site; the Whittemore Community Garden; and the Silver Maple Forest (which he noted he thought was unrealistic).

Minka vanBeuzekom, member of the Mystic River Watershed Assn., spoke in favor of: preserving the Whittemore Community Garden; setting aside CPA Open Space funds to purchase the Silver Maple Forest if/when it becomes available; the Magazine Beach Powderhouse project; and using CPA Historic Preservation funds to fund a study exploring the link between F.L. Olmstead and the Alewife Reservation.

Terry Dumas, Director of Planning and Development for the CHA, thanked the CPAC for funding affordable housing so generously in prior years. She noted that CHA has been able to preserve around 350 affordable housing and nursing home beds in the last 10 years with CPA housing funds, but that 13,000 people are currently on the CHA waitlist for affordable housing. She spoke in favor of the effort to preserve Craigie Arms. She noted that Jackson Park and other projects on CHA's rehab list had benefited from Federal stimulus funding provided through the AHT, whereby \$7 million in CPA funds were leveraged to obtain an additional \$42 million from other sources. She said that the state-owned part of Jefferson Park needs rehab and that CHA is looking for CPA funds to leverage with the state, for necessary work to retain those units as habitable.

Rhonda Massie, resident of Charles St., spoke in favor of : a public market at Lechmere; using CPA historic preservation funds to preserve a boathouse behind the Museum of Science; building a playground as part of the Kendall Square redevelopment effort; and preserving the Silver Maple Forest.

CPAC Chair Rossi noted that the Alexandria development would be providing the City with a large new park and playground at no cost to the City; that the North Point development special permit had required the developers to develop the open space in the first phase of the project; and that the Waterhouse development had provided a delightful walkway along the Broad Canal as an amenity to the neighborhood.

Nancy Brothers, resident of Lancaster St., spoke in favor of providing more open space for seniors who live in large public housing buildings, or encouraging CHA to provide more community space within the buildings.

John Hixson, resident of Norris St., spoke of his concern with the loss of expiring use units and in favor of preserving affordability at Craigie Arms.

Sherri Tucker, resident of Mass. Ave., spoke in favor of: preserving affordable housing, particularly Craigie Arms; the YMCA SRO rehab project; and preserving the Silver Maple Forest.

Jose Mateo, resident of Harvard St., spoke about the potential for creative partnerships among the three CPA funding categories to support various projects that had characteristics in more than one funding opportunity.

Peggy Potter-Smith (no address given) spoke in favor of preserving and creating more affordable housing. She described her personal financial decline after her husband died, she developed medical problems and had to leave work and go on disability.

Peter Graham of JAS spoke of his appreciation for CPA funding of JAS' projects to create and maintain affordable housing in Cambridge, noting that CPA funds enabled leverage for obtaining funds from other sources.

Peter McIsaac, a resident of the YMCA on Mass Ave., spoke of his appreciation for SRO housing, which had enabled him to get his life together during recovery.

Hasan Rashid, resident of the YMCA on Mass. Ave. and a member of the Alliance of Cambridge Tenants, spoke in favor of retaining and maintaining SRO units in Cambridge. He also asked that low-income tenants/residents of Cambridge be considered for jobs that arise from rehab and development projects.

After public comment, Mr. Rossi noted receipt of emails and letters forwarded by folks unable to attend, or unwilling to speak, and noted that these would be a part of the meeting record for consideration by the CPA Committee during its deliberations in September. They included the following:

Larissa Brown, resident of Madison Ave., wrote in favor of using CPA funds to purchase the Whittemore Community Garden.

Jeb Mays, resident of Harvey St., wrote in favor of using CPA funds to purchase the Whittemore Community Garden.

Mike Nakagawa, resident of Madison Ave., wrote in favor of using CPA funds to purchase the Whittemore Community Garden.

Joel Nogic, resident of Clifton St., wrote in favor of using CPA funds to purchase the Whittemore Community Garden.

Sue Donaldson, resident of Harvey St., wrote in favor of using CPA funds to purchase the Whittemore Community Garden.

Vicki Paret, resident of Montgomery St., wrote in favor of using CPA funds to purchase the Whittemore Community Garden.

Janice Snow, Chair of the Fresh Pond Advisory Board, wrote in favor of continuing to support ecological restoration projects at Fresh Pond, including the Black's Nook Restoration and other projects to control erosion on slopes adjacent to Fresh Pond. She also wrote in favor of purchasing additional land in the upcountry watershed, in Lincoln, to preserve watershed lands from development.

The Town of Lincoln wrote to encourage the City to participate in the purchase of 75 acres of upcountry watershed land in Lincoln, to protect the Cambridge Watershed and to preserve the land from future development. The purchase would also result in a gain of an additional 39 acres of high priority Zone A surface water supply protection. The parcels purchased would protect 2800 linear feet of water supply streams and create an opportunity to improve highway runoff to Class A ambient water quality standards.

John E. Paul of Spring St. wrote in favor of using open space funds to create a pedestrian and bicycle boardwalk link from the Lechmere Canal, along the Charles River front side of the Museum of Science, to the museum's riverside park and over to the Esplanade.

Daniel Malis of Second St. wrote in favor of using CPA funds to create a farmer's market on the site of the Lechmere T station.

Debra Fox of Blake St. wrote in favor of allocating the maximum amount of CPA funds (80%) to affordable housing.

Roberta Rubin of Day St. wrote in favor of allocating the maximum amount of CPA funds (80%) to affordable housing.

Emily Raymond, resident of the Print Shop, a CPA funded affordable housing rehab building on Harvard St., wrote in favor of funding affordable housing with CPA funds.

Richard Bosel of Tremont St. wrote that he believes too great a share of CPA funds are spent on Affordable Housing in densely populated neighborhoods and in favor of spending more CPA money on open space.

Elena Sapporta wrote in favor of a “more equitable division of CPA funds” among the three allocation categories, suggesting a third to each.

Barbara Broussard wrote in favor of reconsidering the city policy of CPA fund allocation and her belief that the current policy results in warehousing people in areas where they do not have opportunities to congregate and socialize with neighbors.

Susan Redlich of Sacramento St. wrote in support of purchasing the Silver Maple Forest.

Helen Snively of Fayette St. wrote in support of purchasing the Silver Maple Forest. She stated that she would contribute \$100 toward the purchase.

Steve Wineman of McTernan St. wrote in support of purchasing the Silver Maple Forest.

John and Marilyn McDougall of Richdale Ave. wrote in support of purchasing the Silver Maple Forest. They stated that they would contribute \$100 toward the purchase.

Jules Kobek, Cambridge resident, wrote in support of purchasing the Silver Maple Forest.

Quinton Zondervan, resident of Cardinal Medeiros Ave., wrote in support of purchasing the Silver Maple Forest (he also spoke – see above).

Liz Rass wrote in support of purchasing the Silver Maple Forest.

David Wunsch of Belmont wrote in support of purchasing the Silver Maple Forest.

Beverly Williams of Arlington wrote in support of purchasing the Silver Maple Forest.

Bryan Becker, resident of the YMCA (Y), wrote in support of the work done by the Carey Program at Central House at the Y and in support of future funding for renovations to the Y.

Thomas Curran wrote in support of the work done by the Carey Program at Central House at the Y and in support of future funding for renovations to the Y.

Nelson Vega, resident of the Y, wrote in support of the work done by the Carey Program at Central House at the Y and in support of future funding for renovations to the Y.

Fred Marazzo, resident of the Y, wrote in support of the work done by the Carey Program at Central House at the Y and in support of future funding for renovations to the Y.

Richard Berman, a low-income senior resident of the Y, wrote in support of future funding for renovations to the Y.

Raymond Anderson, resident of the Y, wrote in support of the work done by the Carey Program at Central House at the Y and in support of future funding for renovations to the Y.

Emmanuel Jean-Baptiste, resident of the Y, wrote in support of the work done by the Carey Program at Central House at the Y and in support of future funding for renovations to the Y.

Ericka Prochnow, Case Manager for Heading Home, a program that assists individuals struggling with homelessness, wrote in support of the work done by the Carey Program at Central House at the Y and in support of future funding for renovations to the Y.

Stephen Johnson, Program Coordinator for the Carey Program at the Y, wrote in favor of preserving SROs in Cambridge, about the important work done by the Carey Program at Central House at the Y, and in support of future funding for renovations to the Y. He provided a handout with General Program Information and Guidelines for the Carey Program.

Sambath Pho, resident of Central House, wrote in support of: continued funding for affordable housing in Cambridge; the work done by the Carey Program at Central House at the Y; and future funding for renovations to the Y.

Mr. Rossi reiterated that the next meeting would be on August 31, 2011 at 6PM in the Sullivan Chamber, at which public input for allocations of CPA funds would be heard. He further noted that on September 7th the CPAC would meet to deliberate on testimony previously heard and to vote on CPA percentage allocations and specific projects.

The hearing adjourned at 7:35 PM.