

Meeting Notes from CPA Committee Public Meeting – 6/26/12 @ 6:00 PM – 344
Broadway – 2nd flr

CPA Committee Members Present: (8 of 9)

Bill Bibbins (Historical Commission)

Louis DePasquale (Assistant City Manager – Director of Finance)

Kevin Foster (Resident)

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

Susan Schlesinger (Resident)

Ellen Shachter (Resident)

Albe Simenas (Conservation Cmsn)

William Tibbs (Planning Board)

Staff/Attendees:

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

Brian Murphy (Assistant City Manager – Director of CDD)

Karen Preval (Senior Management Analyst – Executive Department)

Katherine Rawlins (Historic Commission)

Nancy Schlacter (Assistant to City Manager)

Charles Sullivan (Executive Director - Historic Commission)

Jennifer Wright (Executive Director - Conservation Commission)

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.

Mr. Rossi noted that citizen interest in prior years led to an allocation of historic preservation funds to preserve the Magazine Beach Powder house; that the purchase of Chapman/Craigie Arms came about after the issue was raised at CPA meetings; that the YMCA was rehabilitated with CPA Historic preservation funds, following a great outpouring of public interest; and that CPA Historic Preservation funds were used to obtain the Historic Preservation restriction placed on Shady Hill Square park, when its potential loss to development was raised during the CPA process. 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 FY13. Mr. DePasquale explained that, with City raised funds and the state match, Cambridge anticipates having \$9,650,000 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 FY12. He noted that the anticipated state match of 22% in FY13, 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.

CPAC Chair Rossi noted the upcoming dates in the CPA process: On August 28, 2012 @ 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 noted that the CPA Committee would meet on September 4th at 5:30 PM to discuss proposed projects and allocation percentages, after which they would vote on their recommendations to the City Manager. He then spoke briefly about the status of pending CPA legislation, which is in a joint House/Senate Committee, to resolve differences between two proposed versions of the bill. He said that, if passed, the amendments 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.

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

Terry Byrne, spoke on behalf of the Cambridge Center for Adult Education (CCAIE) on Brattle Street, where she is Program Director. She said the CPA Historic Preservation grants had been transformative for their organization. The funding for repairs to the roof, windows, building façade and other structural repairs was stimulated by the receipt of CPA Historic Preservation funds, which were leveraged to obtain other grants for the \$1.5 million in needed repairs. [She provided photos of the damaged and repaired conditions.]

Jim Wallace, Chair of the Building Committee for the Old Cambridge Baptist Church on Mass. Ave., spoke in favor of the Historic Preservation Grant funds they had received, which were used to repair a Tiffany glass window and to perform repairs to the entryway to make it accessible. He noted that during the course of repairing the entry stairs, they discovered a trove of original stone, which had been used to underpin the old stairs, which they removed and used to create a retaining wall as a backdrop to a garden. He spoke of the many community uses of the building, including the Jose Mateo Dance Theatre, its dance classes and performances. [He also provided written testimony.]

John Woods, Deputy Director of Planning & Development for the Cambridge Housing Authority (CHA), spoke appreciatively of the use of CPA Affordable Housing funds for rehab of existing housing stock. He noted that the CHA currently has over 13,000 people on its wait list for housing in Cambridge. He asked that the Affordable Housing Trust consider funding a 109 unit section of Jefferson Park that is owned by the State, but is in desperate need of rehabilitation, as many units are beyond general repair and uninhabitable, and need new rehabilitative construction.

Reverend Christian Brocato, Rector of St. Peter's Church on Mass. Ave., noted that their church had benefited from CPA Historic Preservation funds in the past, which were used to provide an accessible lift and to repair their Annex in 2011. He noted that they have further needs, to repair deferred maintenance on windows, including a large window over the altar. He noted that a number of non-profits use their facilities for a range of social

service programming, seven days a week, and that the CPA funds truly help to preserve the community.

Peter Daly, Executive Director of Homeowner's Rehab, Inc. (HRI), spoke in support of funding for expiring use housing in Cambridge, and mentioned HRI's recent efforts to preserve affordability for Chapman/Craigie Arms, with use of CPA Affordable Housing funds. He said HRI was always looking for opportunities to purchase housing to create or maintain affordability and mentioned that CPA Historic funds also help to preserve historic housing and maintain its affordability.

John Dunn, a homeowner in Cambridge, spoke in support of CPA funds for affordable housing. He said that with help from Just-A-Start (JAS) he was able to rehab his home and stay in it.

Diane Ghartley of Windsor Street spoke in favor of JAS's assistance with rehab of her older historic home, which was funded through CPA historic preservation funds. She also spoke about the need to create affordable housing for the children of Cambridge residents, who cannot afford to live in the City they grew up in, unless there is more affordable housing opportunity.

Jose Mateo of Harvard Street spoke of his gratitude for the rehabilitation of the Old Cambridge Baptist Church, which houses his dance Theater, enabling him to provide dance classes and programming for over 60 local dance groups who participate in his "Dance The World" festival. He was appreciative of the CPA Historic Preservation funds that had been provided to improve the building, a great community asset.

Cathy Zusy of Hamilton Street spoke in favor of the \$25,000 the Cambridge Neighborhood Assn (CNA) had received in Historic Preservation grant funds that had enabled the structural study of the Magazine Beach Powder house. She noted that receipt of the local grant funds had enabled CNA to receive a grant in the double the amount from the DCR and that work and fundraising is ongoing. [She also provided written testimony.]

John Hixson of Norris Street, who said he works in Affordable Housing, but wanted to speak in favor of the CPA Historic Preservation grant funds received by St. James' Church.

Hatch Sterrit of Boardman Street spoke in favor of 80% allocation to Affordable Housing, to retain the diversity of Cambridge. He said the City was under duress from developers.

Quinton Zondervan, resident of Cardinal Medeiros Ave. and President of Green Decade Cambridge, spoke on behalf of setting Open Space Reserve funds aside for preserving the Silver Maple Forest, for ecological and wildlife preservation as well as for an educational opportunity, if and when it becomes available for purchase in the future. He provided an email with additional detail.

Susan Noonan Forster of Appleton Street, Co-Chair of the Board of Trustees for the Women's Center, noted that the Women's Center had been recipient of an Historic Preservation grant and that the repairs to their building had real impacts on the lives of the homeless women who use their facility, which provides a safe place for them to spend their days as they endeavor to pull their lives together.

Robert MacArthur of JAS spoke in favor of an 80% allocation to Affordable Housing and noted that this spring JAS had purchased an expiring use building, retaining its affordability, with assistance of CPA funds, for which they were most appreciative.

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:

Jonathan Wright, Director of RE Development for Caritas Communities, wrote in support of the Historic Commission's Institutional Preservations grants, funded by the CPA. He noted that receipt of these grant funds were instrumental in their ability to leverage the funds needed for the \$1,250,000 needed for façade repairs to the YMCA building on Mass. Ave., which included extensive masonry repair, stone and terra cotta replacement, pointing, cleaning, waterproofing, new windows and a new roof.

Benjamin Haavik, Team Leader for Property Care for Historic New England, wrote in thanks for a \$25,000 historic preservation grant they had received to support roof replacement at the Cooper-Frost-Austin House at 21 Linnaean St., the oldest dwelling still standing in Cambridge, dating from 1681. The CPA funds enabled them to leverage additional grant funds for the work, for which they were most appreciative.

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

Maria Mossaides, Executive Director of Cambridge Family & Children's Services (CFCS), wrote in support of CPA Historic Preservation funding and in thanks for an Institutional Preservation Grant they had received from the CHC, which enabled them to repair their leaking roof and install an accessible ramp for their many social services clients and those of three other non-profit agencies that rent space in their building.

Claire Ullram, Property Manager at 402 Rindge Avenue Apartments, which has 273 units of affordable housing and no vacancies, wrote in support of ongoing funding for affordable housing and, in particular, for construction of more first time homebuyer condominium units, so that folks could move on from rental housing and free up rental units for others in need.

Devon Wesley, Assistant Property Manager at 402 Rindge Avenue Apartments, wrote in favor of using CPA affordable Housing funds to create more first time homebuyer opportunities.

Alexandra Salvi, Administrative Assistant at 402 Rindge Avenue Apartments, wrote in favor of more first time homebuyer programs and opportunities.

Eva M. Blythe, Executive Director of the YWCA on Temple Street, wrote in thanks for the \$3 million in funds received from the CPA Affordable Housing Trust and Institutional Preservation Grants for renovations to their two buildings, which enabled them to leverage an additional \$8 million in state and other funding and to obtain historic preservation tax credits. The extensive renovations they will be undertaking this summer include: repair and preservation of their facades, installation of an elevator in the Main Building, significant design improvements and energy efficiency upgrades; all of which will enable them to provide safe, affordable housing for women in Cambridge who would otherwise be homeless.

Bob Costa, who has worked for HRI and Cambridge Neighborhood Apartment Housing Service (CNAHS) for 23 years, wrote in support of CPA Historic Preservation funds which they have been able to use to preserve affordable historic housing throughout Cambridge. He also spoke in support of the technical services provided by the CHC to property owners hoping to preserve the historic character of their buildings.

Louise Elving of Cottage Street wrote in support of allocating the greatest possible percentage of CPA funds to Affordable Housing and in support of the use of historic preservation funds to preserve affordable housing with historic relevance.

Deb Eskie, Activities Director at the 402 Rindge Avenue Apartments, wrote in support of funding affordable housing for low income residents of Cambridge.

James Williamson wrote in support of setting Open Space funds aside for the protection and preservation of the roof garden in Kendall Square.

Mr. Rossi reiterated that the next meeting would be on August 28, 2012 at 6PM in the Sullivan Chamber, at which public input for allocations of CPA funds would be heard. He further noted that on September 4th the CPAC would meet to deliberate on testimony previously heard and to vote on CPA percentage allocations and specific projects.

The hearing adjourned at 7:05 PM.