

Meeting Notes from CPA Committee Public Meeting – 8/31/11 @ 6:00 PM – Sullivan Chamber

CPA Committee Members Present: (7 of 8)

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 Commission)

Absent:

Ellen Shachter (Cambridge Resident)

Staff Attendees:

Brian Murphy (ACM/Community Development Dept.)

Chris Cotter (Housing Director/CDD)

Cassie Arnaud (Housing Planner -CDD)

Charles Sullivan (Executive Director - Historic Commission)

Jennifer Wright (Executive Director - Conservation Commission)

Karen Preval (Management Analyst – Executive Department)

David Kale (Budget Director)

Nancy Schlacter (Assistant to City Manager)

The hearing convened at 6:05 PM. Deputy City Manager (and CPAC Chair) Richard C. Rossi introduced the CPAC members and explained that the hearing was to allow the CPAC to hear public testimony regarding allocation preferences people have for the three CPA statutory categories of Open Space, Historic Preservation and Affordable Housing. He explained the CPA process to date and going forward and that on September 7, 2011 the CPAC would hold a working meeting at which they would review all prior testimony and vote on their recommendations to the City Council for particular projects and category funding allocations. He explained the CPA statutory requirement for an allocation minimum of 10% to each of the preservation categories. He noted that City staff would make brief presentations regarding proposed projects in the three categories.

Assistant City Manager/Finance Director (and CPAC member) Louis DePasquale provided a brief overview of anticipated available CPA funds for FY12, referring to relevant pages (5-11) of the presentation booklet. 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 in FY12 of 28%, although lower than in the first years after local CPA adoption, was reflective of how many cities and towns have now adopted the CPA. He briefly reviewed the pages of the presentation booklet regarding

CPA finances and prior project expenditures and noted the CPA reserves in the funding categories.

Jennifer Wright, Executive Director of the Conservation Commission, referring to relevant pages of the presentation booklet (45-56), provided an overview of the CPA governing statute regarding use of Open Space funds, described the City's open space project recommendation process, noted pages identifying projects proposed at recent public meetings, briefly described recent CPA Open Space projects underway or completed, and spoke about open space projects throughout the city that have been funded with resources other than CPA funds. Finally, she noted the proposed projects under consideration for CPA Open Space funding in FY12.

Chris Cotter, Housing Director for the Community Development Department, presented information regarding affordable housing efforts using CPA funds. He reviewed the materials in the presentation booklet on pages 13 through 23. He described the types of projects CPA Affordable Housing funds support; explained that expiring use buildings are the current priority of funding efforts, due to the significant numbers of affordable housing units at stake; described eligibility criteria for affordable housing and the significant ongoing needs; noted the number of units that have been created throughout the City, leveraging CPA resources, since adoption of the CPA; and briefly described recently completed projects and projects currently underway; then noted the anticipated uses of FY12 CPA housing funds.

Charles Sullivan, Executive Director of the Cambridge Historic Commission, described the types of projects that could be funded with CPA historic preservation funds. Referring to the presentation booklet (pages 24-44), he described the use of CPA historic funds since FY02 and through FY11, for preservation grants to non-profit institutions; for preservation of affordable housing in historic structures; restoration of public buildings and landscapes; and for preservation of municipal archives. He noted pages of the presentation booklet where lists of the CPA Historic Preservation projects could be found and identified recently completed projects and work underway. He briefly described the current requests for CPA historic funding, totaling over \$2.4 million. He noted that a project proposed at recent public meetings, the emergency repairs and structural studies in support of restoration of the Magazine Beach Powder house, was a project request under consideration for FY12 CPA funding.

Following Mr. Sullivan's remarks, Mr. Rossi opened the floor for public comment.

Don Summerfield of Franklin St., a member of the Board of the Alliance of Cambridge Tenants (ACT), noted that he lives in CHA housing and spoke in support of an 80% allocation to Affordable Housing.

Gordon Gottsche of Cambridge Street, and a director at Just-A-Start (JAS), a non-profit housing developer and public service provider in Cambridge, spoke in support of all affordable housing developers in Cambridge, which includes non-profits, the CHA and

small private home-owners, all of whom receive CPA Affordable Housing (or Historic Preservation) funding for the housing they create. He noted that affordable housing supports maintaining a diverse workforce and community, including larger families with lower incomes. He noted that some families spend 40-60% of their household income on housing. He voiced continued support of an 80% allocation to Affordable Housing. He also provided a letter reiterating his testimony.

Walter McDonald of Magazine Street spoke in support of providing CPA Historic Preservation funds for the Powder house on Magazine Beach. He noted that North Bennett Street School students had been approved by the DCR to work on the project, enabling them to learn about historic preservation and lowering the costs of the work to be performed, if funded.

Devon Wesley of Rindge Avenue noted that she is an Assistant Property Manager and employee of JAS at the Rindge Avenue apartments. She spoke in favor of an 80% allocation to Affordable Housing. Ms. Wesley provided a written copy of her testimony and **a petition with 34 names**, which stated: I, the undersigned, would like to express my support for affordable housing in the Cambridge, MA community. I believe that there is a great need for affordable housing in this area, and that every step that we, as a community, can take to meet that need is absolutely necessary.”

Catherine Zusy of Hamilton Street spoke in support of Historic Preservation funding for the Magazine Beach Powder house. She noted that the DCR would provide a 2 for 1 match for any money provided by the City for this effort.

Following Ms. Zusy’s remarks, Mr. Rossi read into the record the following written testimony received since the June 21, 2011 public meeting.

Quinton Zondervan wrote, requesting that 10% of Open Space funds be put into Open Space Reserves for eventual purchase of the Silver Maple Forest

Alla Karasov wrote requesting that Open Space funds be allocated for purchase of the Whittemore Community Garden.

Jan Childs wrote in support of funding purchase of the Whittemore Garden with CPA funds.

Jane Eisenstark wrote in support of support of funding purchase the Whittemore Garden with CPA funds.

Susanna Black wrote in support of purchase of the Silver Maple Forest with CPA funds.

Matthew Smith wrote in support of purchase of the Silver Maple Forest with CPA funds.

Susan Hartnett, Executive Director for the Cambridge Center for Adult Education (CCAЕ), wrote in thanks regarding a CPA institutional preservation grant which CCAЕ

used to preserve its two buildings on Brattle Street, the Brattle House and the Blacksmith House. She noted that roof damage from heavy rainstorms necessitated repairs to address those problems so that CCAE could perform its core mission of providing courses and spaces for adult learning. She said the CPA funds were matched by funds raised by CCAE students, noting that without the CPA grant the project would not have been possible.

Peter Daly, Executive Director of Homeowner's Rehab, Inc. (HRI), wrote in support of an 80% allocation of CPA funds for affordable housing, noting that the need for affordable housing has never been greater. He described the challenge presented by the expiring use of the affordable housing restrictions on Craigie Arms (aka Chapman Arms), which would result in 25 units of affordable rental housing being lost. He noted that an opportunity to acquire the property and retain the restrictions could be supported with CPA funds.

Tom Flynn wrote in opposition to funding the purchase of Whittemore Gardens, citing the cost, the condition of the site, concerns about the use of CPA Open Space funds from the first 10% of the allocation, and the ongoing maintenance costs.

Mary Duggan wrote in support of use of CPA funds for affordable housing, noting that she was a beneficiary of affordable housing programs and her ability to purchase a home had been enabled by CPA-funded affordable housing projects and programs.

Elizabeth Rassweiler wrote in support of setting aside 10% of FY12 CPA funds for the eventual purchase of the Silver Maple Forest.

Charles Marquardt wrote in support of the following allocation: 70% for Affordable Housing, 10% for Historic Preservation and 20% for Open Space. Mr. Marquardt noted that the needs are great for housing, but that having funds available in reserve for Open Space purposes, such as the possible purchase of the Silver Maple Forest, would serve the needs of the citizens.

Mr. Rossi also noted that 55 postcards had been received from members of the Mass Senior Action Council (MSAC) in support of building and maintaining affordable SRO housing in Cambridge. After reading the written testimony in to the record, Mr. Rossi re-opened the floor to public comment.

Sadie A., who stated that her family has lived in Cambridge for 83 years, spoke in favor of the 80% allocation to affordable housing, noting that she resides in affordable housing, which enables her to pay a fair amount of her limited income for rent.

Gina Foote of Dana Street noted that she works with the Charles River Conservancy and advocates for Open Space and Historic Preservation. She stated that green spaces support community building. She spoke in support of the Magazine Beach Powder house request and asked that the CPA funds be equally distributed among all three allocation categories.

Marilyn Wellons of Green Street spoke in support of the Magazine Beach Powder house and referred to a petition she had seen, signed by 300 people (not provided). She noted the historic significance of the site and that its preservation would enhance the adjacent green space.

Tom Flynn of Madison Avenue spoke against the purchase of the Whittemore Garden for the reasons articulated in his previously provided letter (see above). He also provided six signatures in support of the letter, including his own.

Mr. Rossi noted that the City is seeking clarification from the DOR regarding the proposed purchase of the Whittemore Garden with the initial 10% of Open Space funds, and would act in accordance with the advice provided, if the CPAC recommends this purchase.

Kevin Thomas of Mass Ave. spoke in support of the YMCA Central House and the housing it provides to people who are really in need. He spoke in support of an 80% allocation to Affordable Housing.

Heather O’Leary of Temple Street noted that she is a Property Manager at the YWCA’s Tanner Residence for Women. She said affordable housing provides supports for women with problems and challenges, enabling them to have a clean and safe place to live. She said that Tanner House has 108 units, with few vacancies and a long waiting list. She spoke in support of an 80% allocation to Affordable Housing.

Eva Martin-Blythe, Executive Director of the YWCA at Temple Street, spoke in support of the 80% allocation to affordable housing. She noted that this year is the 100th anniversary of the YWCA in Cambridge and that historic preservation of its building is a concern, too. She noted that the YWCA also operates a 10 unit women’s shelter in Cambridge, which currently houses 10 women and 13 children. She noted the revolving door that housing insecurity causes for women and families at risk and the need to provide stable long-term housing options. She provided a written copy of testimony and a **petition** captioned: “I Support Affordable Housing for Women and Children in the City of Cambridge,” which further noted: that the signatories “support [] more funding for affordable housing options in the City of Cambridge,” **with 98 signatures**.

Lillian Greeley of University Road spoke in support of an 80% allocation to Affordable Housing.

Sarah Thomas of Prospect Street noted that she was a first time homebuyer who had benefited from a CDD Affordable Housing program funded through CPA. She noted that she could not have afforded to purchase a home without the assistance of the program. She spoke in favor of an 80% allocation to Affordable Housing.

James Williamson of Jackson Place noted that he is president of the Tenant’s Council at Jackson Place. He stated his belief that the outcome of the allocation process is a foregone conclusion, describing the process as a “soviet style” democracy. He stated,

nonetheless, that he favors an 80% allocation to affordable housing. He said that he wanted a person who lives in Affordable Housing to become a member of the CPA Committee.

Jane Carbone of Franklin Street noted that she works for HRI and is concerned about the loss of expiring use affordable units and the potential for displacement of residents. She spoke in favor of an 80% allocation to affordable housing. Ms. Carbone provided a written copy of her testimony.

Toni LaRosa, a property manager at YMCA's Central House, spoke in support of an 80% allocation to affordable housing. She said that Central House in an SRO for 128 men and provides a safe and secure home for this 'family' of residents. She noted that the building is in need of rehab. She provided **a petition with 33 names** in support of the 80% housing allocation which stated: "As residents of Central House, we truly appreciate the City of Cambridge's commitment to affordable housing. We hope that future uses of Community Preservation Act funds will continue to include significant commitment to affordable housing. Thank you for helping us and others who need affordable housing to remain in Cambridge."

Trudi Goodman of Cambridge Street noted that she is a recipient of a Section 8 voucher and that her family has lived in the Cambridge area for 60 years. She spoke in favor of an 80% allocation to affordable housing. She stated that it is difficult to find landlords willing to take Section 8 tenants. She said that her current building had lost its expiring use restrictions this year, but that a deal was struck to retain the affordable units. She noted the importance of retaining a balance in the community and that people on Section 8 do work. She noted her desire to purchase a home in Cambridge one day.

Cheryl-Ann Pizza-Zeoli of Cambridge Street noted that she is a member of ACT and lives in the Inman Square Apartments. She provided **a petition with 90 names** in support of the 80% allocation to affordable housing, which stated: "We live at Inman Sq Apartments located at 1221 Cambridge Street. We live in an expiring use building and we were in great danger of losing our homes. Through the use of affordable housing funding from the Community Preservation Act, we were able to have our homes preserved. We believe that there is a great need for affordable housing in Cambridge and urge you to allocate 80% of CPA funds to affordable housing. Through this allocation, the City can help ensure that other residents across the City will not lose their homes to expiring use."

Ann Allosso, a tenant at Chapman Arms since 1986, spoke in favor of affordable housing needs before open space or historic preservation. She supports retaining the 80% allocation to affordable housing. She provided a written copy of her testimony.

Joseph Modica of University Road noted that he is an 87 year old widower who resides at Chapman Arms and would find it very difficult to move. He supports an 80% allocation for affordable housing.

Lynda Jordan of University Drive noted that she is an ordained minister with multiple degrees, who moved to Cambridge to go to Harvard Divinity School but became ill with cancer. Affordable Housing programs have enabled her to stay in Cambridge and she supports an 80% allocation to housing.

Maria Mossaides of Gore Street noted that she is the Executive Director of Cambridge Family and Children's Services (CFCS). She spoke in favor of Historic Preservation grant funds used by non-profits to enable them to make their historic buildings accessible and weather tight, noting that CFCS had been able to install a ramp and replace its roof using CPA historic preservation funds, freeing up its resources to provide programs and services.

Elaine DeRosa of Pleasant Place, and Executive Director of CEOC, spoke in support of an 80% allocation to affordable housing, noting that preserving expiring use buildings helps to preserve the lives of the tenants within. She provided a **petition from 12 residents** of Chapman Arms, which stated: "We the tenants of Chapman Arms thank the Committee for supporting the current formula all these years. It has made a difference in terms of people's lives by allowing them to stay in Cambridge. Now the funding can directly support the stability and affordability of our building which provides homes for some of us with disabilities, elderly and limited incomes. We strongly urge you to keep the 80-10-10 formula." Ms. DeRosa provided a written copy of her testimony.

Peter Munkenbeck of Sparks Street and a member of the board of JAS, spoke in favor of an 80% allocation to affordable housing. He noted that the loss of Affordable Housing is a detriment to the community and spoke about the importance of retaining affordable housing stock in perpetuity. He provided a letter further articulating his position.

Gavin Kleespies of McTernan Street, Executive Director of the Cambridge Historical Society (CHS), spoke requesting that the historic preservation allocation be increased to 20% for FY12, with 70% for housing and 10% for Open Space.

Susan Noonan-Forster of Appleton Street noted that she is on the Board of Trustees for the Women's Center on Pleasant Street. She spoke in support of Historic Preservation Grants to non-profits (including the Women's Center), which enable building preservation while freeing up limited funds for necessary programs and services. She asked that the CPAC consider the following allocation for FY12: 75% for Affordable Housing; 15% for Historic Preservation and 10% for Open Space. She noted that Historic Preservation grants help the people served by non-profits.

Quinton Zondervan requested clarification about Community Garden funding from the initial 10% Open Space allocation. Mr. Rossi responded that the DOR was considering the City's request for a determination regarding its possible use of the funds for that purpose, if the CPAC recommends the purchase. The speaker then stated that he wanted a 20% allocation for Open Space so that 10% could be used for recreational uses, as the uses currently permitted from the initial 10% OS allocation do not address recreational needs.

Terry Dumas from the CHA spoke of the decade's worth of support from CPA funds for affordable housing, noting that the cost of producing affordable housing in Cambridge is prohibitive and requires a significant contribution of local funds if leveraging is to be possible. She spoke in support of the 14,642 people currently on the CHA's wait list and for an 80% allocation to affordable housing.

Bob Costa noted that he has been working for Cambridge Neighborhood Apartment Housing Services (CNAHS) for 22 years. He spoke of his concern that the speakers are competing for scarce resources, but that their interests complement each other to improve the lives of residents. Although he believed all of the needs expressed were important, none was more so than affordable housing and he supports an 80% allocation to affordable housing. Mr. Costa provided a written version of his testimony.

Ellen Mass of Adams Street noted that she is a member of the Friends of Alewife Reservation. She noted that Alewife Reservation is a community resource that needs preservation. She advocated for a 15% - 20% allocation to Open Space, to be used to preserve Alewife Reservation.

Olga Kurland of Memorial Drive noted that she is a member of the 808 Memorial Drive Tenant's Assn. and stated her strong support for an 80% allocation to affordable housing. She provided a **petition signed by 180 people** which states: "We, the following residents of Cambridge, MA, live in a mixed income expiring use building in Cambridge. We were able to preserve our homes as affordable housing with the support of City funding. It is highly likely that none of us would still be living here if not for this funding. We need to preserve the affordable housing that currently exists in Cambridge and build more to keep Cambridge accessible to those of all income levels. We therefore ask the Community Preservation Act Committee to maintain the 80% allocation of funding for affordable housing."

Esther Hanig of Pine Street noted that she is on the CNAHS board and spoke in favor of an 80% allocation to affordable housing. She spoke of the humanitarian need and the benefits from the diversity provided. Ms. Hanig provided a written version of her testimony.

Sherri Tucker of Mass. Ave. noted that she has been a tenant in Cambridge since 1970 and that she is a tenant activist and member of the Old Baptist Church, which has benefited from CPA Historic Preservation funds. She spoke in favor of an 80% allocation to affordable housing and in particular support of projects to preserve Chapman Arms and the YMCA/YWCA properties.

Tasha Davis of Broadway noted that she is a Property Manager for JAS. She spoke in support of families which benefit through Affordable Housing programs. She provided a petition, signed by 52 people which states: "I support the full 80% allocation of the FY12 CPA funds to be allocated to affordable housing."

Rev. Maurice Greaves of Hampshire Street, pastor at Mass. Ave Baptist Church, noted that his church has received CPA Historic Preservation grant funds and that he is in favor of an 80% allocation for Affordable Housing.

Anne-Marie Lambert of Chilton St. in Belmont spoke of her interest in preserving the Silver Maple Forest, noting that 2011 may provide the only opportunity left to preserve this site from development. She noted that Belmont would be encouraged to see Cambridge supporting this project and she asked that the City consider tipping the allocation toward Open Space for FY12, suggesting a 20% allocation to Open Space for this year.

Lisa Fagerstrom of Mass. Ave noted that she is a minister at Harvard Epworth United Methodist Church. She spoke in favor of a 70% allocation to affordable housing and 15% each to Open Space and Historic Preservation. She noted that her church has a ministry for homeless families and provides many programs to serve their needs. She noted that Open Space is key for community health and that she is in favor of supporting diversity through housing opportunity.

Benadette Manning of Rindge Avenue noted that she moved to Cambridge from TX in 1994 with her 4 children, following a divorce, to attend graduate school. She noted that she is a Math teacher and found her home through a JAS program in 2000. She stated that she is so appreciative of affordable housing opportunities in Cambridge and wants them to continue. She supports an 80% allocation to affordable housing.

Kathy Watkins of Franklin Street noted that she lives in CHA Section 8 supported housing. She noted that she had a job at Harvard U, but got sick and needed housing support. She said that low-income tenants are the backbone of the City and sated her support for an 80% allocation to affordable housing.

Chandra Banks of Mullens Court noted that she is a 5th generation Cantabridgian. She noted that she started in rental housing but has moved up to home ownership though a program for low income residents. She noted that she has worked in many jobs in Cambridge over the years and has an MA from Harvard, but needed the housing support to be able to stay in Cambridge. She fully supports the 80% allocation to housing, which helps keep Cambridge-born folks in Cambridge.

Hassan Rashid of Mass. Ave noted that he lives in an SRO at the YMCA. He noted that he had sought a transcript of the June 21 CPA meeting, but hadn't been able to get one. Mr. Rossi sated that that was an error and that he could come by and pick one up during business hours. Mr. Rashid said he hoped that low income tenants could have a more significant role in establishing funding priorities for CPA expenditures and Mr. Rossi directed him to contact Chris Cotter at CDD about the role of tenants in housing processes.

Two additional letters were provided, as follows:

Sandra Rosa, from Chapman Arms wrote in support of an 80% allocation to affordable housing.

Yousuf A. Munye of Mass. Ave. wrote in support of public funding for affordable housing, noting that he now resides in transitional housing at the YMCA Carey Program, after becoming homeless following loss of a job.

At 8:00 PM public comment was concluded. Mr. Rossi thanked the participants for their testimony and noted that the CPA Committee would consider all of the testimony provided throughout the process during its deliberations on September 7th, noting that the CPAC would vote on CPA percentage allocations and specific projects at that time.

The hearing adjourned at 8:05 PM.