

Notes from Community Preservation Act (CPA) Committee Meeting –May 19, 2016 @5:30P.M.-
Ackerman Room

CPA Committee Members Present:

Kevin Foster (Resident)
Susan Schlesinger (Resident)
Ellen Shachter (Resident)
Chandra Harrington (Historical Commission)
Albe Simenas (Conservation Commission)
Gerard Clark (Cambridge Housing Authority)
Lisa Peterson (Deputy City Manager/Chair CPAC)
Louis DePasquale (Assistant City Manager for Fiscal Affairs)

Staff Attendees:

Angela Pierre (Senior Budget Analyst- Budget Office)
Karen Preval (Senior Management Analyst-City Managers' Office)
John Nardone (Deputy Commissioner for Operations- Department of Public Works)
Jeana Franconi (Budget Director-Budget Office)
Sandra Clark (Deputy City Manager- Community Development Department (CDD))
Charles Sullivan (Executive Director-Historical Commission)
Chris Cotter (Director of Housing Division-CDD)
Taha Jennings (Assistant to the City Manager-City Manager's Office)

- The meeting convened at 5:35 p.m., Deputy City Manager (Committee Chair) Lisa Peterson asked all committee members and staff to introduce themselves.
- Committee Chair, Ms. Peterson, stated that this was a working meeting and was not open for public comment. She discussed the history of CPA from FY02 and that the City is required to provide a minimum allocation of 10% to each CPA category, Open Space, Historic Preservation or Affordable Housing. She stated that the CPA funding allocation would be higher than last year. A spreadsheet was provided to the committee showing the summary of FY16 funds and projected FY17 funds. A list of past funded projects were distributed.
- Ms. Shachter, a CPAC member, asked what the membership dollars were used for.
- Ms. Peterson stated that \$10,000 is paid to the Community Preservation Coalition. This organization works with the state and cities in helping to advocate and preserve CPA funding.
- Assistant City Manager for Fiscal Affairs, Louis DePasquale, provided information regarding CPA finances, including last year's financial information, the current financial position and anticipated CPA funding for FY17. He stated that \$155.4M has been allocated through CPA funds to date, with \$124.4M going toward housing, \$15.5M for historic preservation projects and \$15.5M for open space projects. He stated that in FY16, the City received a state match of 18% and the anticipated state match for FY17 is 19%. This overall increase would provide a 5% increase in total allocated CPA funds since last year. The FY17 projections reflect \$8.6M from local funds, (an increase of \$400K from last fiscal year), \$1.6M from the State which reflects a

19% match, (and an increase of \$125K from last fiscal year), and \$2.1M from the CPA fund balance.

- Ms. Peterson stated that the staff would discuss projects that were funded in FY16.
- Assistant to the City Manager, Taha Jennings stated that the Open Space Committee meets monthly to coordinate on open space needs, issues, and priorities citywide and is made up of staff from every department that deals with parks and open space on a regular basis including the Department of Public Works, Community Development Department, Recreation Division, Conservation Commission, Water Department, Arts Council, and the Disabilities Commission.
- Staff consider things such as age and condition of the facility, the type of use, general trends, demographics, other planning considerations, and citywide policies and goals. Staff also work closely with the Cambridge Public School community to understand school playground needs based on current and projected school populations and the types of demands on open space and recreational facilities adjacent to school buildings.
- An inventory of public open space was recently conducted, including site visits to each location, and a random telephone survey regarding open space was conducted in January 2016.
- Mr. Jennings added that, in general, the City is starting to think of open space as more than just tot lots for children or playing fields. The City looks at open space as important resources that are multi-generational, foster community interaction, physical activity, highlight healthy play principles, are aesthetically pleasing and allow for more connections to nature, such as community gardens, multi-use paths, natural areas, street and sidewalks, public spaces and plazas, and off leash areas.
- The committee continues to look at open space funding needs in terms of balancing different considerations and CPA funding has been critical in supporting these initiatives.
- Ms. Peterson mentioned that the City also used other sources of funding to fund open space projects. For example, there was a recent appropriation of \$1.6M for construction costs for the Clarendon Avenue playground and the Morse School playground.
- Ms. Peterson mentioned that the Greenough Blvd. pathway project had a short fall of \$190K in FY16. CPA funding and City funds were allocated in addition to funding from the Solomon Foundation to complete the project.
- Mr. Foster, a CPAC member, asked if the telephone survey included a summary that could be reviewed by the CPAC to see if it was consistent with open space requested projects. He also asked if the detailed project summary could be subtotaled by project.
- Mr. Jennings stated that a copy of the survey results could be provided at the next meeting.
- Executive Director of Historical Commission, Charles Sullivan, stated that FY16 CPA historic preservation funds were used for several non-profit organizations. This included four churches which used the funding for needed repairs. There is also a waiting list of applicants. \$570,000 was also used for private historic preservation grants. The remaining historic preservation funds were used for public buildings and facilities: the new Clerk's vault, which stores the City's historic records; restorations at Kingsley Park; Cemetery headstones; Old Burying Ground; and

the Lowell Park landscape plan and wall restoration. The public library has also started digitizing archives.

- Mr. Foster, a CPAC member, inquired how much of the \$600K that is allocated for historic preservation grants, goes toward affordable housing projects.
- Mr. Sullivan stated that funding is provided to non- profit organizations which included churches and the center for adult education. He mentioned that many of these organizations have been given repeat grants. He noted that churches have a lot of deferred maintenance and use the funds to kick off restoration projects. Some have come back as many as four times.
- Director of the Housing Division in the Community Development Department (CDD), Chris Cotter explained that affordable housing programs receive a large source of funding from the Cambridge Affordable Housing Trust, where CPA funds for affordable housing are allocated. He discussed the following active projects: Renovations at Putnam Square Apartments; renovations at Bishop Allen apartments; Briston Arms acquisition and renovation; Temple Place, which was completed this year; and new construction on Howard Street. Affordable housing funds are also used to provide financial assistance and offer classes for the First Time Homebuyers Program.
- Mr. Foster, a CPAC member, mentioned that there were more than 16,000 applicants on the waiting list for housing.
- Ms. Shachter, a CPAC member, stated that there are a large number of buildings that are sold to new owners and measures need to be taken to help Section 8 holders. She also mentioned that other cities and towns use CPA funds as incentives to landlords and are allowed to use vouchers through the use of CPA funds.
- Ms. Peterson discussed the date, time and purpose for the upcoming meeting on June 15, 2016, and that the hearing would be open to the public to propose projects to be considered for CPA funding in FY17. Another public hearing is scheduled for July 28, 2016 on allocations. A CPA Committee meeting is scheduled for September 13, 2016, for the committee to vote on recommended projects and funding allocations for FY17.

The meeting adjourned at 6:09pm.