



JOSEPH A. CURTATONE
MAYOR



**CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS
COMMUNITY PRESERVATION COMMITTEE
MINUTES
JANUARY 12, 2016**

MEMBERS
Dick Bauer, Chair
Michael Fager, Vice Chair
Michael A. Capuano
Elizabeth Duclos-Orsello
Arn Franzen
Ezra Glenn
Courtney Koslow
Uma Murugan

STAFF
Emily Monea

The Community Preservation Committee (CPC) held a community hearing at 6:30pm in the third floor community room at the Visiting Nurse Association, 259 Lowell Street, Somerville, MA 02144. An audio recording of the meeting is available upon request.

- Members Present** Chair Dick Bauer, Vice Chair Michael Fager, Michael Capuano, Elizabeth Duclos-Orsello, Arn Franzen, Ezra Glenn and Courtney Koslow
- Members Absent** Uma Murugan
- Staff Present** Emily Monea
- Others Present** 17 members of the public, including FY16 applicants

Ms. Monea opened the hearing with an overview presentation on the Community Preservation Act, the Somerville Community Preservation Committee and the FY15 and FY16 budgets and application processes.

The following FY16 historic resources applicants presented five minute presentations on their proposals followed by questions from the CPC members:

- TJ DiFeo, 31 Union Square
- Kevin O’Kelly, Historic Document Mold Remediation at Somerville Central Library
- Sarah White, Historic Property Owner Restoration Fund
- Brandon Wilson, Milk Row Cemetery
- Barbara Mangum, Somerville Museum Access for All
- Stephen Vitello & Ben Youtz, West Branch Library Renovation

All presentations are available online at: <http://www.somervillema.gov/cpa/projects/2016>

CPC Member Questions and Discussion

31 Union Square

Ms. Duclos-Orsello asked about the funding for the project. Mr. DiFeo said he believes that other funding will be available for the project and that some soft costs were not included in the CPA

application. She asked Ms. Monea to verify the amount requested for the project because two different numbers are included in the application.

Mr. Capuano shared that he has seen this presentation on the Planning Board and the proposed design for the CPC is a new design to respond to community concern about the original design, which was very modern. He also asked which aspects of the storefront are historical and which are not. Mr. DiFeo said that they have not been able to find any historic photos of the storefront. The oldest record of the storefront is 30 years ago. Mr. Capuano then asked if this made the project eligible for CPA historic resources funds. Mr. DiFeo shared that he has received feedback that it's a historic storefront and location and their goal is to do what they can to improve the quality. Ms. Monea confirmed with Mr. Bauer that the Historic Preservation Commission has determined that the storefront is of historical significance. Mr. Bauer said that it has been but clarified that they declared the building to be historically significant, but did not focus specifically on the storefront.

Mr. Franzen asked if there are any structural issues and if they are being addressed as part of the project. Mr. DiFeo responded that there are, which requires the addition of reinforcing. The columns are fairly sound but they need to be repaired. The biggest concern is the horizontal band, which is currently only being supported by the plate glass.

Mr. Glenn asked about the statement that the project would make ADA improvements but it would not be fully ADA compliant. Mr. DiFeo said that they would work with local representatives and the Architectural Access Board to bring the building into as high of compliance as they can. Because of the current distance between the door and the curb, a ramp is not possible, so changes would need to be made to the granite stoop. Mr. Glenn asked if the design firm had approached the storefront improvement program. Mr. DiFeo responded he didn't think so.

Ms. Koslow noted that the narrative portion of the application is missing which makes it hard to assess the application.

Mr. Capuano asked if US2, as a tenant, had been approached for funding. Mr. DiFeo responded that he was not aware if the owners have had this conversation with their tenant and what the tenant's long term plans are.

Historic Document Mold Remediation at Somerville Central Library

Ms. Koslow shared her concern about the sustainability of the proposed work so the Library doesn't have to do this work in the future and asked what the Library's plans are. Mr. O'Kelly shared they are seeking grant funds from other sources to install an HVAC system for the closed stacks. They are also talking with the contractors about other options for controlling the mold.

Mr. Glenn asked if the Library has considered other alternatives for storing the materials. Mr. O'Kelly responded that to be accessible, it would be best if they were stored on site and there is no other space available in the building for these materials.

Historic Property Owner Restoration Fund

Mr. Fager asked if the fund will be for homeowners only. Ms. White responded that it could be for any local historical district, so municipal buildings or commercial buildings could apply, but the primary purpose is to fund private homeowners. The majority of LHDs are private homeowners. Mr. Fager asked

what would happen with unspent funds. Ms. White responded that they would request that the funds be rolled over into the next year. The CPC and the Board of Alderman would need to approve it.

Mr. Capuano stated that the purpose of the CPA funds is public benefit and that the CPC has required public access for historic resources. He asked what public value and access there would be with the funds. Ms. White responded that the funds would only be eligible for the exterior visible from a public way.

Ms. Duclos-Orsello asked about the eligibility requirements for applying to the fund. Ms. White responded that only designated local historic district properties are eligible, not those that have only been surveyed. Ms. Duclos-Orsello raised the concern that the money is going to private homeowners that will improve their home values that are centralized in higher income areas of the City. She asked how the City has thought about this also because the homeowner would need to be reimbursed, so the fund would privilege those homeowners who have the funds available for this. Ms. White responded that they have been considering these issues, including what the inclusion criteria would be. She said they determined it would be most manageable to start with LHD properties and then may expand to properties over 50 years of age or those designated as historic. The idea is that over time the program would be expanded to cover the majority of Somerville properties.

Mr. Fager asked if the fund would report back to the CPC. Ms. White expects that projects will be rated on their success every quarter. This report would be given to the CPC. Mr. Fager then asked if grantees would be required to state that the work is funded by the CPC. Ms. White responded that she thinks it would be worthwhile. There will be a requirement for a plaque to be put on the house and it would be determined if there would be a note on the plaque that the project was funded by the CPC or on a sign in the front of the house during construction.

Mr. Glenn said that the CPC and the City would need to work together to make sure the fund works well. He asked Ms. White to share the guidelines from other cities that have similar programs. Ms. White said that she would as well as the checklist for the HPC for rating the project and that she is working on materials for the process.

Mr. Fager asked how much would be too little funding if the CPC did not fund the full amount. Ms. White said that under \$50,000 would be too little funding.

Ms. Koslow asked if \$5-10,000 would cover the costs of the projects proposed. Ms. White said it will depend on the project, but believes even a small grant will be useful to homeowners and the preservation of historic resources in the City.

Milk Row Cemetery

Ms. Duclos-Orsello asked what additional work is envisioned in the Cemetery's master plan. Ms. Wilson responded that additional signage, opening the cemetery more and continuing to maintain the Civil War monument. Ms. Duclos-Orsello asked if there were operating funds. Ms. Wilson said that there is not a dedicated source of funding but DPW maintains the grounds.

Ms. Koslow asked what is involved in restoring the grave markers. Ms. Wilson each has unique needs- some need to be cleaned, some are cracked.

Mr. Glenn asked if there were funds set aside for its maintenance when the cemetery was started. Ms. Wilson responded that the cemetery was originally a private cemetery for the Tufts family but an endowment was not left. They turned the cemetery over to the City in the 1890's but it was not

maintained. Mr. Glenn asked if the two aspects could be contracted together. Ms. Wilson said it would not be possible because different specialties are needed.

Somerville Museum Access for All

Mr. Franzen asked if the proposed plans have been approved by the Historic Commission. Ms. Mangum responded they have been reviewed by a sub-set that has given the go-ahead to present the design to the Historical Preservation Commission, but it has not yet been approved. The last time they went before the Commission they were not approved, so these plans are revised, but they could change. Mr. Franzen asked about the need for the Palladian window and if the restriction is still relevant today. Ms. Mangum said that if they do not have enough money, they do not have to install the window. So, it's a very specific restriction that says when you do the elevator, then you should put the window on the rear of the building.

Ms. Duclos-Orsello asked what the Museum would prioritize if they did not receive the full request. Ms. Mangum said the piece that could most easily not be done is the Palladian window. There may be some savings to install the window while they are already working on the façade. Ms. Duclos-Orsello then asked if the funds already raised by the Museum were earmarked for specific parts of the capital plan. Ms. Mangum said that all of the funds are designated for ADA compliance.

Mr. Glenn asked if the Museum wants the funding for the Palladian window and Ms. Mangum responded that the Museum would like to install the window. Mr. Glenn asked if the previously unspent funds needed an additional approval process and Ms. Monea responded that the Board of Alderman had already improved the conversion of the funds for the new project.

Mr. Fager asked how much the request would be reduced if it didn't include the window. Ms. Mangum responded that it would be \$44,625. Mr. Fager then asked how much the elevator will cost and she said the cost of the elevator is \$419,000.

Ms. Monea asked what the funding gap for the elevator would be since other funds were available. Ms. Mangum responded that she would have to look at the budget again to be able to answer.

West Branch Library Renovation

Mr. Franzen asked if the construction would happen in one season or if it would be over multiple years, and therefore making it possible to fund the project over multiple years. Mr. Vitello said the plan is for the construction to be done in one continuous sequence with construction starting next fall and would continue for one year after but the funds do not have to be available all at the same time. Mr. Youtz added that the construction is planned to take 14 months so the Library will reopen two years from now.

Ms. Duclos-Orsello asked what funds have already been secured. Mr. Vitello responded that funds have been secured for design through the construction administration fees for the project manager but not yet for construction. He said they would go to the Board of Alderman to bond for the remaining funds. Ms. Duclos-Orsello then asked if the project would be possible without the addition. Mr. Vitello responded that the funds for the addition are not included in the CPC application. He added that if funds are not secured from the City the project would need to be redesigned. Rob King, the Director of Capital Projects, added that the Mayor has been clear that the design should be based on community need. The addition responds to a need for community space in the neighborhood surrounding the Library.

Mr. Capuano asked for numbers on the current use of the Library and if it serves only the Davis Square area or if it serves the larger community. Mr. Glenn Ferdman, Director of Libraries for the City of Somerville, responded that in FY15: 67,000 items were circulated; 76,000 people visited the Library; 6,000 questions were asked by residents; more than 1,300 children and their parents and guardians attended a program; and close to 8,600 visitors used a computer for close to 4,300 hours.

Mr. Fager asked if the CPC money would be used to leverage the Board of Alderman funds. Mr. Vitello responded that the CPC funds would allow the City to leverage funds that would not be otherwise available. The Board of Alderman will be asked to fund the remainder of the balance. He predicts the Board will be supportive of making funds available for the project. Approximately \$1,000,000 of City funds have been committed to the project to date.

Ms. Koslow stated that the Board of Alderman will need to approve both requests for bonding from the CPA and from Capital Projects for the Library project. She then asked who the project would be serving and asked if the 76,000 visitors is unique visitors or number of visits. Ms. Karen Kramer, West Branch Library Manager, said that 76,000 is a door count as the Library doesn't have a way of counting which people come in multiple times. She said 76,000 represents almost everyone in Somerville coming to the small West Branch Library.

Mr. Bauer asked if there was data on the number of library card holders and Ms. Kramer said she would have to get back to the Committee. Mr. Glenn said the argument for the CPC to support this project is that the Library is a key historic resource. Mr. Vitello said it also meets the criteria for passive recreation. Mr. Glenn asked about the soft costs, as they seem high. Mr. Vitello responded that this is a result of the furniture and amenities being added and the relocation costs unique to this project. Mr. King said that 25-30% is almost always carried in soft costs. Mr. Glenn said the CPC could make the CPC funding contingent on the Board of Alderman approving the remaining portion.

Mr. Bauer asked if all of the request for the Library project to the CPC includes all of the CPA eligible costs. Mr. Vitello responded that all of the CPA eligible costs from the project are included in the request, including ADA compliance. Mr. Bauer asked if there are other sources of funds that could cover CPA eligible aspects of the project. Mr. Vitello responded they are looking at CPA and City funding for the project. Renovations for libraries in the future will request funding from the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissions construction grants, but the deadline for the letter of intent for this year has already passed.

Mr. Franzen asked if the City has put major funding into the libraries in the last 12 years. Mr. King responded that a plan had been designed for the Central Library but funding was not allocated for construction. Ms. Kramer added that some renovation done in 2004, but there have been no projects of this scale. A feasibility study for ADA accessibility was done. The City has maintained the building at a level that it felt was possible.

Mr. Glenn asked what the strategy for the City is to ask for CPA funding for capital projects in the future. Mr. King responded that there is a capital improvements plan for the next ten years which is updated every year. The Board of Alderman is voting to approve the plan later in January.

Public Comments

General Comments

Abby Freedman, Vice-Chair of the Somerville Historic Preservation Commission, urged all historic resources applicants to make arrangements to present before the Historic Preservation Commission, which provides funding recommendations for projects they support.

31 Union Square

Abby Freedman recognized that there are questions about how historic the storefront is and said that the Commission staff should be able to answer them before the CPC makes its funding recommendation.

Jeff Myers asked if the building is designated and if they would consider designating it as a condition of receiving CPA funds. **Mr. DiFeo** responded that the building has been found to be historically significant but he cannot answer the question about designating the building, as he is not the owner of the building. **Ms. White** clarified that it has been found to be historically significant but the property has not yet been designated a local historic district. **Ms. Freedman** added that survey work has been done on the property and it has been added to a list of recommended properties for a Union Square historic district. **Mr. Glenn** added that the CPC has not typically required historic designation, but it has required preservation restrictions so that whatever the CPC funds is preserved.

Historic Document Mold Remediation at Somerville Central Library

A community member appreciated the focus on preserving the collections of the City rather than just the structures. Preserving objects is an important aspect of preservation that should be considered by the CPC. He asked if there was a plan to be able to respond to HVAC system failures more quickly in the future.

Barbara Mangum expressed her support for the project and asked if possible, additional funds be granted from the CPC for the Library to purchase a back-up humidifier.

Historic Property Owner Restoration Fund

Brandon Wilson expressed her support for the project and shared that this fund has been an idea for a long time. The fund will respond to a need to provide homeowners with an incentive to be designated, because it is often seen as a burden. Resources previously have been available to survey areas in Community Development Block Grant areas so this would help residents in those areas improve their homes.

Abby Freedman shared that in Somerville neighborhoods are being threatened by new development that is out of scale with existing homes. The Preservation Commission only has control over whether a building is demolished if it is designated as a local historic district. Designation preserves the human scale character of neighborhoods. She hopes this fund will help to preserve this character in Somerville beyond the historic benefits.

Milk Row Cemetery

Larry Willworth shared that he became involved in the cemetery five to six years ago. He spoke of the programs the cemetery runs and the great need for restoration of the grave makers. He said they are starting to make the cemetery more open to the public. He strongly supports any efforts in the cemetery.

Dyan Blewett is a gardener at the cemetery. When she is working there people stop and want to know more about the cemetery. She feels it is a great resource and hopes the CPC will continue to support it.

Somerville Museum Access for All

Larry Willworth shared his commitment to the history of the City of Somerville, starting with his involvement in the First Flag event. He spoke of the value of the Somerville Museum for the City and the importance of ADA access.

Tamara Friedler expressed her support for the Somerville Museum. She is a volunteer there and has seen the need for the elevator not just for the older residents and visitors but also for those who are immobile for a limited time.

Dyan Blewett, Somerville Museum Treasurer, thanked the CPC for the support it has given the Museum. She spoke of the success of its recent events. She hopes the CPC will continue to support the Museum.

Jeff Myers is a volunteer at the Museum and thanked the CPC for the funds dedicated last year. He shared the Museums hope to become ADA accessible and the elevator project is what the Museum needs to do so.

Brandon Wilson shared that the Somerville Historical Preservation Commission and Historic Somerville previously had events at the Museum but are no longer able to because it is not ADA accessible. Now they have to rent space in other buildings that is expensive and doesn't work well. She said that the building is an important resource for the City as an events space.

Gene Brune started his involvement with the Museum in the 1980's when he was mayor. They worked to raise funds and do work to improve the Museum. He feels that 30 years later the Museum is still not where it should be. It is a shame that the building is not accessible and the Bullfinch staircase needs improvements for people to be able to walk on it. The Museum needs the help of the CPC so that people can use the Museum who have not yet been able to.

Abby Freedman complemented the volunteers and volunteer staff at the Museum for their success in raising funds for the Museum. They are good example for any applicant applying for CPA funds.

West Branch Library Renovation

Brandon Wilson shared it is a worthy project and a worthy building. She urged the CPC to dedicate funds to the historic features of the Library. CPA funding could be valuable as a match for a possible Massachusetts Historical Society grant.

Gene Brune was the Ward 6 Alderman where the Library is located. In the 1980's there were not resources to make the necessary improvements in the City, but they were able to at least make it safe. The Library is a precious resource and any improvements would be much appreciated by the community.

Jeff Myers thinks that bonding should be explored because bonding through the CPA would limit the CPC's grantmaking ability in the future. Limiting the flexibility of the CPA funds in the future may be riskier than approving a larger bond through the general accounting of the City.

Ms. Monea reminded attendees that the public comment period on the FY16 proposals is open through 5:00pm on March 17.

Somerville CPA



JOSEPH A. CURTATONE
MAYOR



Join the Conversation

The City will distribute Community Preservation Act (CPA) funds for the second time in the spring of 2016. Come hear about the project proposals before the Community Preservation Committee and tell us which you think deserve to be funded.

	January 12 th , 2015 @ 6:30 p.m. Community Room, VNA 259 Lowell Street	January 27 th , 2015 @ 6:30 p.m. Community Room, VNA 259 Lowell Street
	Introduction	Introduction
6:30-6:40	Project: 31 Union Square	Project: Allen Street Mixed Use Renovation
6:40-6:55	Applicant: Maru Realty Trust	Applicant: Stephanie Hirsch & City of Somerville, OSPCD, T&I
6:55-7:10	Project: Historic Document Mold Remediation at Somerville Central Library	Project: Hoyt Sullivan Playground
	Applicant: City of Somerville, Public Library	Applicant: City of Somerville, OSPCD, T&I
7:10-7:25	Project: Historic Property Owner Restoration Fund	Project: Open Space & Recreational Land Acquisition Fund
	Applicant: City of Somerville, OSPCD, Planning Division	Applicant: City of Somerville, OSPCD, T&I
7:25-7:40	Project: Milk Row Cemetery - Civil War Monument & Grave Markers Restoration	Project: Preservation, Rehabilitation, Restoration, and Improvements to the Somerville Community Path
	Applicant: City of Somerville, OSPCD, Planning Division	Applicant: Friends of the Community Path
7:40-7:55	Project: Somerville Museum Access for All	Project: Remnant, Right-of-Way, and Unclaimed Space Inventory, with Corbett McKenna Path Pilot
	Applicant: Somerville Historical Society	Applicant: Stephanie Hirsch & City of Somerville, OSPCD, T&I
7:55-8:10	Project: West Branch Library Renovation	Project: South Street Farm
	Applicant: City of Somerville, Capital Projects and Planning	Applicant: Groundwork Somerville
8:10 ON	PUBLIC COMMENT	PUBLIC COMMENT

Somerville Community Preservation Committee

Chair Dick Bauer, Vice Chair Michael Fager, Michael A. Capuano, Elizabeth Duclos-Orsello, Arn Franzen, Ezra Glenn, Courtney Koslow, and Uma Murugan

www.somervillema.gov/CPA

Questions? Contact Emily Monea at emonea@somervillema.gov or 617-625-6600 x2118.

FY16 CPA Funding Applications				
	Project name	Applicant	Request	Project Summary
Open Space & Recreational Land	Allen Street Mixed Use Renovation	Stephanie Hirsch & City of Somerville	\$20,000	Landscape architect will create schematic design to rebuild the Allen Street Open Space as an innovative shared space that maintains or expands garden plots, preserve benches for neighbors, and provides outdoor play space for Head Start students and neighborhood children.
	Hoyt Sullivan Playground	City of Somerville (Parks & Open Space)	\$600,000	Renovation, and possible expansion of 22,000 square foot city playground and open space. Improvements: ADA access, tree canopy, sustainable elements, lighting, active and passive recreation, artwork, waterplay, and connections to community path.
	Open Space & Recreational Land Acquisition Fund	City of Somerville (Parks & Open Space)	\$300,000	The City proposes to establish a dedicated Open Space Land Acquisition Fund that would permit the City to take advantage of time-sensitive and exceptional opportunities to secure new public open space Citywide.
	Remnant, Right-of-Way, and Unclaimed Space Inventory, with Corbett McKenna Path Pilot	Stephanie Hirsch & City of Somerville	\$45,000	Inventory of remnant spaces, their possible uses, and legal mechanisms to increase use of public or private spaces, plus pilot development of design for remnant Corbett-McKenna woods into walking trail.
	South Street Farm	Groundwork Somerville	\$60,160.12	Sustainable and public amenity improvements to Somerville's only urban farm.
	Total Open Space & Recreational Land Requests			\$1,025,160
Blended Historic Resources & Open Space/ Rec Land	Preservation, Rehabilitation, Restoration, and Improvements to the Somerville Community Path	Friends of the Community Path	\$301,000	Repaving of the Path Surface, regrading and rain gardens to improve drainage, expansion of the Bikeway Community garden, and installation of preserved railroad artifacts as an interpretive exhibit.
	West Branch Library Renovation	City of Somerville (Capital Projects)	\$5,394,328	Restore and preserve existing library interior, exterior, systems, and site; achieve ADA accessibility compliance; construct a meeting room addition.
	Total Blended Requests			\$5,695,328
Historic Resources	31 Union Square	Maru Realty Trust	\$478,065	Restoration of existing historical storefront for public safety.
	Historic Document Mold Remediation at Somerville Central Library	City of Somerville (Somerville Public Library)	\$20,367.80	Conservation work on historic books and documents affected by mold and work on the closed stacks room to make the environment less conducive to the formation of mold.
	Historic Property Owner Restoration Fund	City of Somerville (Planning & Zoning Division)	\$150,000	Establish a historic property owner Preservation Fund to assist owners of local historic district-designated properties with preserving and restoring these buildings in accordance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation.
	Milk Row Cemetery - Civil War Monument & Grave Markers Restoration	City of Somerville (Planning & Zoning Division)	\$26,808	Rehabilitate and conserve 48 grave markers & the Civil War Monument, executing the next phase of the 2002 Preservation Master Plan.
	Somerville Museum Access for All	Somerville Historical Society	\$423,480	Complete Phase 5 of the Museum's capital improvement plan including the addition of an elevator for the ADA project, protection of collections, designing Capital Improvements Phase 6, and reinstalling a Palladian window per MHC request.
	Total Historic Resources Requests			\$1,098,721
Total Requests			\$7,819,209	