



JOSEPH A. CURTATONE
MAYOR



**CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS
COMMUNITY PRESERVATION COMMITTEE
MINUTES
JANUARY 31, 2017**

MEMBERS
Dick Bauer, Chair
Michael Fager, Vice Chair
Michael A. Capuano
Elizabeth Duclos-Orsello
Arn Franzen
Ezra Glenn
James McCallum
Uma Murugan
Jessica Palacios Yamakawa

STAFF
Kristen Stelljes

The Community Preservation Committee (CPC) held a meeting at 7:00pm 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, Uma Murugan, and Jessica Palacios Yamakawa

Members Absent James McCallum

Staff Present Kristen Stelljes

Others Present 23 project applicants and members of the public

The chair opened the meeting around 7:00p.m.

Agenda item 1: Introduction to CPA and the CPC

The members of the Community Preservation Committee introduced themselves. Ms. Stelljes provided an overview of Somerville’s CPA program and funding available for FY17.

Agenda item 2: Project Presentations by FY17 CPA Applicants

Six of the eleven applicants for FY17 CPA funding presented their projects.

Blessing of the Bay Boathouse Park Design, Mystic River Watershed Association, Amber Christoffersen
Mystic River Watershed Association in partnership with Groundwork Somerville and with the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) as a co-applicant, is requesting CPA funds to complete a 25% design of the Blessing of the Bay Boathouse Park.

Mr. Fager recused himself from the discussion of this project as a member of the Board of Directors of the Mystic River Watershed Association.

Mr. Capuano asked if DCR is contributing funds to the project. Ms. Christoffersen said that DCR is not contributing any funding to the project but MyWRA has found that an effective way to engage DCR is to

secure funds to start a project that DCR can leverage. DCR has acknowledged they have not invested as much in Mystic River as they have in the Charles River. MyWRA hopes through their participation in this project DCR will see the potential of this space and they will be able to contribute financially in the future.

Ms. Murugan asked which areas of Somerville would be included in the community outreach. Ms. Christoffersen said that through the project they will develop a community engagement plan and will seek to involve the same demographics that make up the surrounding neighborhoods.

Ms. Duclos-Orsello asked if DCR has committed to move the project forward, especially since two master plans have already been completed. Ms. Christoffersen said that the Mystic River Master Plan is ten years old. MyWRA has seen DCR invest in another project further upriver in Medford after MyWRA initiated the work.

Renovation of Henry Hansen Park, City of Somerville Veteran's Services, Bryan Bishop

The City of Somerville is seeking design funds to rehabilitate Henry Hansen Park, dedicated to the memory of a Somerville World War II veteran who raised the first American flag at Iwo Jima.

Ms. Duclos-Orsello asked about the statement in the budget that the construction of the project would be paid for with a CPA grant. Mr. Bishop responded that was an assumption made by the landscape architect. The City is not making this assumption but the City does plan to request additional construction funds from the City next year and will also seek to raise funds from other sources.

Mr. Fager asked why Mr. Bishop is planning to change the park beyond the current memorials. Mr. Bishop responded that he would like to expand the park and make sure it is accessible to everyone.

Mr. Capuano asked how much land would be excavated. Mr. Bishop responded that existing hill goes about 12 feet back. He would like to maintain the hill because it adds texture and depth. Mr. Capuano expressed his support for the project and the need to ensure the park is accessible, especially because it honors veterans.

Somerville Community Growing Center Rehabilitation and Renovation, Friends of the Community Growing Center, Olivia Kefauver, Haley Nesmith, Sara Rostampour

The Friends of the Community Growing Center originally applied for construction funds to implement the design completed with FY15 CPA funds. When they realized the value of having more detailed construction drawings stamped by a licensed professional, the Friends decided to change their request to ask for funds this year to pay for only the necessary construction documents to go through a public bid process. The Friends are required by the CPA legislation to go through a public procurement process because the Growing Center is on City land. Their new budget is \$33,176.

Mr. Fager asked if the Friends plan to request CPA funds for the construction next year. Ms. Nesmith responded that they are seeking additional funds from multiple grant sources and doing some fundraising, but they will likely ask for additional funds in FY18.

Mr. Glenn asked for further detail on the reason for the change in the project. Ms. Nesmith responded that the Friends realized they needed to have more detailed drawings in order to ensure the construction was done as they hoped because they have to go through a public procurement process. Mr. Glenn added that this may mean the Friends will save money later because they are fully specifying what is needed for the construction.

Community Path Survey, City of Somerville Parks and Open Space, Luisa Oliveira

The City is requesting funds to complete a survey of the Community Path from the Cambridge line to Cedar St. The City has not been able to locate the final surveys of these sections of the Path and are continuing to seek them out while they continue in the CPA application process.

Mr. Fager asked if the survey would specify the boundary lines of the Path. Ms. Oliveira said that surveys do typically include boundary lines. Mr. Fager then asked if the City finds that abutters have been encroaching on the Path if the City would take legal action. Ms. Oliveira responded that she was not sure.

Mr. Fager asked if the City was working with the Friends of the Community Path and if the Friends would be asking for additional funds for the implementation of the design. Ms. Oliveira said that the City is working with the Friends and the City would need to be the entity that applied for any further CPA funds because the City holds the lease for the Path with the MBTA.

Ms. Duclos-Orsello asked if the survey was necessary for the design that received CPA funds in FY16. Ms. Oliveira responded that the survey would provide the necessary information about the topography on the Path and provide more detailed information about the project to the MBTA.

Mr. Glenn asked if the CPC could require that the survey documents be stored so they could be found again. Ms. Oliveira said should the City locate survey documents, they will withdraw their proposal.

Mr. Bauer added that CPA funds will be used to repave the Community Path from Davis Square to Cedar Street in the Spring. The City will also be repaving the section of the Path from Davis Square to the Cambridge line following the completion of a drainage project.

Winter Hill Community Schoolyard, City of Somerville Parks and Open Space

The City is requesting funds for the construction of a new schoolyard at the Winter Hill Community Innovation School. The City is funding the design for the schoolyard and has funded the design and construction of an artificial turf field on the school grounds, which are being completed in phase one of the project. The City received Community Development Block Grant funds for this project so they are able to reduce their request in CPA funds to \$450,000.

Mr. Capuano asked if they are planning to keep the tiered structure of the playground. Ms. Oliveira responded that this area has been identified as a dangerous play space in the community meetings. The landscape architects are looking at ways to incorporate the slope into the schoolyard project that is safer or seating.

Mr. Capuano asked if \$450,000 would be sufficient for the whole project. Ms. Oliveira responded that the \$450,000 plus the CDBG funds will be sufficient. The City will not need to request further CPA funding.

Ms. Duclos-Orsello asked how the City is planning to ensure the schoolyard serves all residents. Ms. Oliveira responded that because open space in Somerville is so limited, all of our open spaces need to be flexible and accommodate multiple uses. There have been three community meetings regarding the project, including the field. Ms. Duclos-Orsello stated the importance of CPA funded projects meet the needs of all residents.

ArtFarm, City of Somerville Arts Council, Greg Jenkins and Luisa Oliveira (City of Somerville); Will Martin, GroundView

The City is requesting funds for the site improvements to the ArtFarm space to open it as a passive recreation and urban agricultural space, activating the former waste transfer site. The Arts Council is also seeking funds to build an 'ArtBarn' performance space. Grants from ArtPlace America, MassDevelopment, and the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources have already been secured. The City also secured Community Development Block Grant funds to support the project so the CPA request has been lowered to \$638,017.

Mr. Fager requested a more detailed budget. Mr. Jenkins said he would provide that information.

Mr. Franzen asked for more detail on the landscaping component. Mr. Martin responded that the improvements to the sites fall into three categories: accessibility, including sidewalks, entryways, drive and parking; a looping walk that can be used for fitness, portions of this walk will use existing slab and the remainder will be new asphalt; and community gardens, which will be raised beds and plantings that will create a green gateway to the site. The site could also contain a tree lab that would be used to test urban trees to respond to climate change.

Mr. Glenn said it is exciting that there is a possibility of new open space in Somerville. He asked if most of the site would be open to people. Mr. Jenkins said yes- some of the fencing will be kept up along the Herb Chambers side, but most of the fence will be taken down. A lot of the site will be open. Ms. Oliveira added that the City is working with partners to make the agricultural space useable to many and those sites will be open to the community.

Mr. Bauer asked about the long term plans for the site. Mr. Jenkins said that the long term plans are still undecided. His goal is to activate the site and demonstrate to the community the utility of the site as open space so the value of the space will be recognized and it will be maintained. Brad Rawson, City of

Somerville Transportation and Infrastructure Director added that there are many moving parts because of planned changes to McGrath and changes to the sewer and stormwater infrastructure. The site will be designed so that it will be flexible to respond as the site changes. Mr. Martin added that the design is thrifty in recognition of the potential changes in the future to the site and the design has left space open for a new potential road and to make space available for a pump station.

Mr. Frazen asked for more details on the performance space. Mr. Martin responded that the Arts Council is currently using the most level part of the space, so the plan is to keep this space as, it but making it flexible. The architects are designing a building that could be opened for larger performances, so they are considering indoor/outdoor use. The performance space is being designed with dance uses in mind.

Agenda item 3: Public Comment Period

Barbara Mangum, Somerville Historical Society: Ms. Mangum expressed her support for the Henry Hansen project. She is a conservator and can see the park could use upgrading. She is also very much in favor of Veteran's Services taking on this park and the memorials around the City. Memorials need to be well-thought out so they can serve as places of reflection.

Chris Mancini, Groundwork Somerville: Groundwork is a partner on the Blessing of the Bay Park project. The park is not currently being accessed as open space which means there are a lot of opportunities for improvement. People do not feel there is safety because of the way the park is open to the street and there is nothing to do when you get there. Groundwork is already working on invasive species removal in the park.

Matthew Collins, Winter Hill School teacher: Mr. Collins is advocating for his kids that are desperate need of play space. The playground provides a safe space for the kids and when it is improved, even more kids will take advantage of the space.

Alderman Mark Niedergang, Ward 5: Alderman Niedergang encouraged the CPC to fund them all, particularly the ones with smaller budgets that can be fully funded and fund larger ones at least partially. He expressed his support for the Henry Hansen Park and the Winter Hill Schoolyard. Henry Hansen Park provides green space where there is limited existing space. It is a little quiet area and a neglected memorial with tremendous potential. The Winter Hill playground is an abomination. The kids in the school are among the poorest in the city and it is incumbent upon us to improve it as a justice issue.

Agenda item 4: Other Business

Ms. Stelljes announced that all committee members are required to take a conflict of interest online course and submit their certificate of completion as well as the form acknowledging receipt of the summary of the conflict of interest law to Ms. Stelljes at the February 22 meeting.

Next meeting: A regular CPC meeting will be held at 6:30pm on February 22, 2017 at the Visiting Nurse Association.

Meeting Adjournment

Upon motion from Ms. Murugan, seconded by Mr. Franzen, the Committee voted 8-0 to adjourn at approximately 8:35.

Documents and Exhibits

1. Agenda
2. FY17 application financial analysis
3. Presentations (available at: www.somervillema.gov, CPA Projects tab- FY17)
4. Memo from Friends of the Community Growing Center (available at: www.somervillema.gov, CPA Projects tab- FY17)

CPA FY17 Applications

	Open space/Recreation	Historic Preservation	Undesignated	
Community Path Survey	\$20,000			
Butterfly Garden Pocket Park	\$13,000			
Community Growing Center	\$33,176			
Healey Schoolyard Design	\$80,000			
Art Farm	\$638,017			
Henry Hansen Park	\$49,200			
Blessing of the Bay Park	\$41,863			
Winter Hill Schoolyard	\$450,000			
Milk Row Cemetery			\$19,300	
Historic Grace Baptist Church Restoration		\$478,890		
Somerville Museum		\$235,296		
Total Requested	\$1,325,256	\$714,186	\$19,300	\$2,058,742
Total Available	\$293,472	\$339,758	\$1,337,492	\$1,970,722
Difference	(\$1,031,784)	(\$374,428)	\$1,318,192	(\$88,020)