



JOSEPH A. CURTATONE
MAYOR



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS
COMMUNITY PRESERVATION COMMITTEE
MINUTES
JANUARY 27, 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, Arn Franzen, and Uma Murugan

Members Absent Elizabeth Duclos-Orsello, Ezra Glenn, and Courtney Koslow

Staff Present Emily Monea

Others Present 16 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 open space/recreational land applicants presented five minute presentations on their proposals followed by questions from the CPC members:

- Stephanie Hirsch, Allen Street Mixed Use Renovation
- Arn Franzen, Hoyt Sullivan Playground
- Brad Rawson, Open Space & Recreational Land Acquisition Fund
- Alan Moore, Preservation, Rehabilitation, Restoration and Improvements to the Somerville Community Path
- Stephanie Hirsch, Remnant, Right-of-Way, and Unclaimed Space Inventory
- Chris Mancini, South Street Farm

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

CPC Member Questions and Discussion

Allen Street Mixed Use

Mr. Fager asked about the requirement for recreational space for a Head Start to be licensed. Mr. Gibbs from CAAS responded that there is a minimum square foot per child and the space has to be fully fenced

in. The center can use a park or encourage gross motor skills in the classroom. When construction started on the Allen Street Head Start Center, the open space area was planned to be a playground. The community wanted to see the space used for their benefit so the plan was changed and the space was turned into a community garden.

Mr. Capuano asked clarification about which parts of the property will be included. Mr. Franzen responded that the plan is to integrate the garden space into the front of the property. Mr. Capuano then asked for an estimate of how much funding would be required to implement the plan. Mr. Franzen said that he would be hesitant to mention a number without more information, but estimated a range of \$250,000 to \$450,000.

Ms. Murugan asked how many children could fit within the available space. Mr. Gibbs stated he believed that the space could fit one classroom.

Mr. Fager asked if there is sufficient space for a playground on this parcel. Mr. Franzen said he believes there is sufficient room for the need. Mr. Gibbs stated that the Head Start could bring materials to encourage play so does not require play structures. But, the current concrete floor is not conducive to children's play.

Hoyt Sullivan Playground

Mr. Franzen announced that the City of Somerville received a PARC grant for the Hoyt Sullivan Playground, which allows them to reduce their funding request from \$600,000 to \$400,000.

Mr. Capuano asked about the safety of the train observation deck because people could throw things onto the tracks. Mr. Franzen said that the landscape architect will consider this.

Mr. Fager asked if the RFP for the park has already been put out and about fencing in the park. Mr. Franzen said it had and they have received applications from five firms. Regarding the fence, Mr. Franzen suggested having lower, open fences to put the focus in the park. Mr. Rawson from the City of Somerville said the City would talk with the MBTA and other stakeholders to get their input into the interface between the park and the trains.

Open Space & Recreational Land Acquisition Fund

Mr. Fager asked if the City's request is a single request, or if the City will be seeking additional funds in the future. Mr. Rawson responded that a conversation about the frequency with which the City would ask for additional funding would be useful and the City is hoping to have reliable funding for the fund. Mr. Capuano pointed out that the CPC can consider applications out of cycle. Having an existing fund could be beneficial, but he expressed a concern about the community process, for example concerns about properties being acquired by eminent domain. Mr. Capuano asked how the City would prioritize between the different requests from the City given that the CPC has limited funding. Mr. Rawson responded that the City has fewer options for land acquisition.

Preservation, Rehabilitation, Restoration and Improvements to the Somerville Community Path

Mr. Fager asked about the possibility of improved stormwater management for the Path because of limited availability of stormwater permits for the City. Mr. Moore responded that he was not aware that an increase in Somerville would not be possible. He said that options such as rain gardens would be used

if stormwater could not be directed to storm drains. Mr. Rawson added that the City is working on several capital projects that will increase stormwater retention capacity.

Mr. Fager commented that he thinks that community gardens on the Path would be problematic because of the quality of the soils along the Path. Mr. Moore responded that there are funds in the budget to create useable gardens. Mr. Fager then asked about the feasibility of other sources of funding for this project. Mr. Rawson responded that two options came to mind- the City General Fund and the Water and Sewerage Enterprise Funds. Mr. Rawson responded that the City was interested in discussing how to best address the drainage issues on the Path.

Remnant, Right-of-Way, and Unclaimed Space

Ms. Hirsch announced that the plan for the pilot at the Corbett-McKenna Park is being withdrawn from the application because that space is currently under archeological study. Prospect Hill was the site of the Revolutionary War battle.

Mr. Bauer shared that when he was working for the passage of CPA in Somerville, he imagined projects such as converting the WaterWorks building to affordable housing and the work on the Community Path, but he hadn't thought about these smaller pieces, so he thought this was an interesting project.

South Street Farm

Mr. Fager asked about Groundwork Somerville's mission and ownership of the land where the farm is located. Mr. Mancini responded Groundwork is a 501c3 and that their mission is environmental improvement and social justice. He said that the owner of the property is the Somerville Redevelopment Authority and Groundwork is leasing the property from them. Groundwork is using the whole plot, with the exception of the triangle on the eastern side where debris is stored and they would like to do more phytoremediation in this area. Mr. Franzen shared that Groundwork has completely revitalized this space and it is now transformed.

Mr. Capuano asked about Groundwork's progress on their FY15 CPA project at the community schools and asked Mr. Mancini to come and give a presentation at a future CPC meeting. Mr. Mancini said that some of the school gardens have been completely transformed.

Public Comment

Hoyt Sullivan Playground

Mark Niedergang, Ward 5 Alderman expressed his appreciation for the applicants for their presentations. He shared his support for all of the projects and his hope that the CPC would support the West Branch Library project with seed funding. His opinion is that the City should bond for a project of this magnitude. He wanted to share his support for the Hoyt Sullivan playground project as an underutilized space that serves a low-income neighborhood without many physical amenities. The community values the park and would like to see it improved.

A **community member** expressed interest in maintaining the grassy area in the Hoyt Sullivan Park.

Open Space & Recreational Land Acquisition Fund

A **community member** noted there is no mention of green space in the proposal, only open space. She hopes there could be some added provisions to keep any existing green space as green space, especially in the spirit of preservation.

Another **community member** asked Mr. Rawson if this would be a new funding mechanism or if this fund already exists. Mr. Rawson responded that it will be a new funding mechanism.

Preservation, Rehabilitation, Restoration and Improvements to the Somerville Community Path

Jen Haefeli, a member of the Somerville Garden Club noted the work that the Club has put on the Path from Willow to Cedar, including planting trees. She shared that they know that the soil is toxic and they have tried to reclaim the soil through efforts such as planting bamboo in the area near the playground. She asked about the grading and rain gardens. She asked what could be done that would not further harm the soil as putting gravel or wood chips would, and preserve the grassy areas. Mr. Moore responded that directly adjacent to the paved path will be stone dust to formalize the running area that already exists. Adjacent to this in the sunny areas it would make sense to seed and replant, but he would need to speak with the landscape architects about what would be best. Topsoil could possibly be brought in as part of the regrading. She also asked if there was any way to collect rain in the rain gardens for use because the land gets parched. Mr. Moore responded this could be considered as part of the community engagement process.

Ron Newman, member of the Somerville Bicycle Committee shared that it is very noticeable how much the quality of the Path has declined and strongly urged the CPC to fund this proposal. He also urged the City to work with Jen and the Somerville Garden Club on this project.

Bill Noll, Assistant Volunteer Coordinator at the Bikeway Community Garden stated the value of the Path as an asset to the City. Thousands of people, of all walks of life, walk on the Path. He noted there is a feeling, correct or not, that the City is only investing in basic maintenance in the Path. He appreciated the Friends of the Community Path, the Garden Club and residents for the work they are doing on the Path. He also encouraged the CPC to fund the Path project and supported the expansion of community gardens.

A **community member** expressed his concern about the proposal to put a dog park on the Path near Cedar Street and the problems off-leash dogs cause on the Path. He is supportive of the idea of the Somerville Garden Club to turn the area proposed as a dog park into a New England meadow.

Brandon Wilson, Executive Director of the Somerville Historic Preservation Commission expressed her support for the Community Path project and the proposed interpretive display to give a sense of what the Path was before. Though it's a small part of the project, it's an integral one.

Mark Niedergang, Ward 5 Alderman shared that he hears about the community's concern about the pavement and drainage issues on the Path. He supports the proposals plans to mitigate these issues and

the improvements it will make such as rain gardens and bioswales which will hopefully be an example for the rest of the City. The project will provide for a broad range of Somerville residents.

Remnant, Right-of-Way, and Unclaimed Space Inventory

Ron Newman shared that he previously put together a Google Map that showed various cut-throughs that possibly inspired this project. He is very supportive of this project. There are little places here and there that a little path would enhance the City.

Chris Mancini, Groundwork Somerville shared that Groundwork proposed a field project for Tufts University students this year for a similar project and would like to work collaboratively to make headway on the project.

General Comments

Jeffery Morrow that the City could consider using Depave, a volunteer organization, to address concrete circle area in the Allen Street Open Space Area.

A community member asked whose responsibility it would be to analyze what the impacts of bonding will be and how it would be disseminated to the public. Mr. Bauer shared that the CPC staff would work on that analysis with the City Treasurer. The CPC will then vote in public meetings about which projects to fund and at what amount and terms, including issues of bonding. These recommendations are approved by the Alderman, also through a public process. Bonding requires a two-thirds vote of approval from the Alderman. The community member followed up with a question about the City's bonding rating and noted that interest rates are low, suggesting this would be a good time to bond. Mr. Bauer responded that the City's bonding rating is very good at this time.

Stephanie Hirsch shared that she thought all the proposals were great and is especially supportive of the land acquisition fund. The flexibility of the funding mechanism will be very helpful.

Meeting Adjournment

Upon a motion from Mr. Bauer, seconded by Mr. Capuano, the Committee voted 5-0 to adjourn at approximately 8:15.

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	