



JOSEPH A. CURTATONE  
MAYOR

## CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS COMMUNITY PRESERVATION COMMITTEE



### MINUTES

SEPTEMBER 22, 2021

The Community Preservation Committee (CPC) virtually held its monthly meeting at 6:30 pm on the GoToMeeting platform in compliance with Chapter 20 of the Acts of 2021 regarding the Open Meeting Law during the COVID-19 crisis.

#### MEMBERS

Laura Beretsky, Chair  
Heather Heimarck, V/Chair  
Tatiana Shannon  
Cristina Kennedy  
Eleanor Rances  
Alan Bingham  
Jahan Habib  
Rose White

#### STAFF

Roberta Cameron

**Members Present** Chair Laura Beretsky, Vice Chair Heather Heimarck, Cristina Kennedy, Jahan Habib, Tatiana Shannon, Eleanor Rances

**Members Absent** Rose White, Alan Bingham

**Staff Present** Roberta Cameron, Arn Franzen, Luisa Oliviera

**Others Present** Nadia Dixson

#### **Agenda Item 1: Roll Call and Approval of the Minutes from July 28 and August 31**

Chair Beretsky opened the meeting at 6:33 and welcomed everyone on the call. She reminded everyone the meeting was being held virtually and being recorded in accordance with Chapter 20 of the Acts of 2021 and the order of Mayor Curtatone. Ms. Beretsky proceeded to take roll call and establish quorum. CPA Manager Cameron pointed out that Andrew Louw was no longer on the committee as he had left his position on City Staff. (The agenda incorrectly listed him as a member.) Arn Franzen from PSUF is temporarily taking his place, however Arn is not a voting member of the Committee. Beretsky then asked if any members of the public were present to comment, of which there were none. After some corrections were made on the minutes from Vice-Chair Heimarck and Chair Beretsky, a motion to approve the July 28 Minutes as amended was made by Heimarck and seconded by member Kennedy. The motion was unanimously approved. A motion was then made by Heimarck to accept the August 31 Minutes, seconded by Kennedy, and unanimously approved.

#### **Agenda item 2: Eligibility Determination Forms**

Cameron explained that the purpose of the evening's discussion was for the Committee to have a preliminary review of the full applications and to see if there is further information that the Committee is looking for. Based on the Committee's discussion this evening Cameron will communicate with each of the applicants to ensure that they are prepared to answer the Committee's questions at the presentation next month.

- a. Land Acquisition Fund: Heimarck noted that the committee previously asked whether there were other sources of funds available to be combined with CPA funds for this purpose. Kennedy pointed out that the CPA funds will provide a ready match that the City can use to leverage other funding sources. On behalf of the Conservation Commission she is happy to see the amount of funds she is asking for and would support this. Heimarck said that she would like to see applicants address questions that the Committee raises. Shannon asked whether other

fundraising efforts have been considered. PSUF staff member Luisa Oliveira joined the discussion to answer these questions. She stated that another source of funding for this purpose is through Payments-in-lieu, which allow developers to contribute funds in place of creating required open space. She also described state grants that the City applies for to support open space acquisition, and suggested that the City could benefit from having someone whose role would be to proactively identify real estate opportunities for open space.

b. Glen Street Community Garden: PSUF staff participant Arn Franzen described the aim of the application to expand a community garden at a park which was previously acquired with CPA funds. Cameron asked for input about how the application review process has been handled in the past and there was discussion about methods for obtaining public input via a remote public meeting. Heimarck requested that the application be supplemented with more site photos, clarification of the draft concept, to obtain letters of community support, and to clarify that the City is providing in-kind services along with the design services by a consultant. Heimarck also pointed out a discrepancy in the amount of funding listed in the budget versus the cover form, which Franzen said would be corrected.

c. Junction Park: Franzen described the history and status of the project to improve the existing Junction Park and its connection to the Community Path. Director Oliveira joined to announce that the City was just awarded a PARC Grant for \$400,000 for construction. Beretsky noted that the park would be geared toward older kids. Heimarck expressed that she would like to see community testimonials in the application, or photos of community planning events to show a record of community involvement that has taken place in the process of preparing the application. Member Habib had a question about the budget provided in the application, and clarification was given by PSUF Director Oliveira.

Member Kennedy commented that the City has had an advantage over other applicants in that they have been present to answer the questions that came up in this review, while the other applicants have not. PSUF Director Oliveira questioned whether the CPC has had meetings like this in the past to provide a preliminary review of projects before the public presentations, recalling that CPA Managers have typically met with applicants individually to ensure that the applications were complete. Cameron reflected that she is not familiar yet with Somerville's customary process, and that she will review minutes from prior years and work with the Chair and Vice-Chair and City staff off-line to organize the process moving forward to make sure that she is correctly following procedures. She will also be communicating with all of the applicants to pass on the questions and feedback that were raised by the Committee in this meeting.

d. Somerville Museum: Vice-chair Heimarck questioned how much funding the organization has received to date and how many times this has been diverted for other uses. Member Shannon noted that funds were only repurposed one time and she gave some description of the organization's fundraising efforts. Kennedy asked whether the organization has staff or is all volunteer run. Shannon explained that there are some part-time paid staff including a director and someone focused on fundraising and development. Franzen pointed out that a list of CPA funding requests was provided in the application. Franzen then asked whether CPA funds were being requested for a salaried position for collections management. Cameron stated that she would review the application closely to ensure that the elements of the scope requested for CPA funds are all eligible.

e. Somerville Hispanic Association for Community Development/Grace Baptist Church: Heimarck pointed out that the budget includes reimbursement for a roof project that they completed where

the budget had to be expanded to cover unanticipated costs. The CPC is not able to provide funds to reimburse for work that has already been completed or for which funds have already been committed. She also questioned whether the door and canopy listed in the application have been or need to be approved by the Historical Commission, and she asked Cameron whether she had learned whether there was any precedent for the portion of the project that would be lifting the level of the floor. Cameron reported that the applicant returned to the Historical Commission last month to review the CPA eligibility, the applicability of these accessibility/ functionality projects to historic preservation under the CPC's definition for eligibility. It was agreed that this project could qualify as handicapped accessibility to make the historic building functional for its intended use. Cameron had some question about whether the door and canopy had been reviewed by the HPC and might need additional review. Heimarck asked that the applicant specify in their budget which services the architect and engineering which service phase that is – for example, whether it is construction documents or observation. She noted that it is helpful to have the budget defined as a series of discreet projects (including contingency for each element) that could be funded separately if there aren't sufficient CPA funds available to pay for all this round. Heimarck wondered what was an appropriate contingency on CPA projects. Cameron responded that the amount of contingency varies on different projects, citing that it is important to ask for enough funding to complete the project, and that unused funds will be returned to the account from which they were committed.

- f. 1783 Adams Magoun House: Cameron explained that she is working with the applicant to obtain services of a preservation consultant to obtain an assessment of the work that is needed and to obtain proper estimates to be able to include in the application. Heimarck questioned whether all of the windows would be eligible for CPA funding or only the ones that are facing the street. Franzen asked whether the windows that are proposed are agreeable to the HPC. Cameron explained that the estimate included in the application currently is a sample – the only one out of three previously obtained by the applicant that might be able to be approved by the HPC, but that the applicant will need to obtain new estimates with the information to be provided by a preservation consultant. Heimarck asked whether the house being listed on the National Register would affect how much of the building envelope could be eligible for CPA funds. Cameron said that she will obtain input from different sources to determine how much of the project will be eligible, considering the NR designation and the fact that the CPC funds would come with a condition that a Preservation Restriction will be placed on the entire house. Franzen suggested that the price provided in the application looks very low for the amount of work that is likely to be required to replace this number of windows, and that a more detailed cost estimate will be needed to determine a budget for this project.

Committee members discussed whether there have been similar meetings in past application cycles to advise applicants about how to limit or prioritize their projects in response to having more requests than funding available. There was further discussion about how it is important to ensure that applications are complete before the Committee approves them and that having the projects be able to be divided into smaller components allows the funds to be distributed fairly among more applicants.

### **Agenda Item 3: Off-Cycle Funding Request for Elections Records**

City Archivist Nadia Dixon appeared to provide an update on the Elections Records Digitization/ Preservation project. Dixon had submitted a memorandum requesting additional funds to pay for a final invoice which exceeded the funds available for the digitization. Dixon explained that after submitting the

memorandum she learned that there were in fact funds still available for the project as another element of the scope had come in under budget. She also updated the Committee about the timeline of the project which is nearing completion.

**Agenda item 4: Coordinator’s Report**

Cameron updated the Committee that two Preservation Restrictions have been signed by grantees and have been submitted to City Council for signing. These are the first two PRs that have been initiated as a result of projects that the CPC has funded so far that have reached the signing stage of the process. A few more applications are close behind in the process. She has been continuing with public outreach and is considering ways that CPA procedures can be simplified and improved going forward. She is interested in hearing feedback from committee members and grantees for where there are areas for improvement. She has also been working on reporting to the state about CPA activities in Somerville and looking back at the status of projects that have been completed in Somerville to date. She reminds Committee members that the state’s Department of Revenue and the Community Preservation Coalition both maintain databases of information that can be useful to learn about Somerville and all CPA communities.

**Agenda Item 5: Community Engagement**

Cameron reported that she and some CPC members have tabled at several community events over the past few weeks. She observed how members of the public interacted with the elements provided at the table, and described results of the voting tallies from each of the tables. Heimarck, Shannon, and Beretsky shared their experiences and successes with tabling at the events they staffed. Cameron reminded committee members to let her know if anyone would be available to sign up for any additional events this fall. Heimarck asked for an update on other public outreach activities. Cameron responded that she is working on obtaining permission to create a facebook page for the CPC. She will begin to undertake direct outreach to stakeholders after the community event season is over. She offers to reach out to language liaisons in conjunction with stakeholder outreach. Signs are already a condition of grants that the CPC has given in the past, and Cameron will be looking to see that signs have been posted at each location. She will look into curb markers at a later time.

**Agenda Item 6: Other Business**

Cameron announced that the Community Preservation Coalition would be conducting a remote training session on Tuesday 9/28, which committee members, staff, and community partners would be encouraged to attend. A ribbon cutting is also scheduled on 9/28 at 2:00 PM for the Healey School Playground.

Cameron reminded committee members to review the draft evaluation criteria and provide her with written feedback so that she can prepare final criteria in time for the Committee to use them as they deliberate about the applications currently in the pipeline. Heimarck asked whether it is fair to include in the evaluation form whether projects align with Somervision if this question is not asked in the application. Cameron suggested that the criteria may be tailored to be appropriate for internal use this year, and can be edited to be provided in the application instructions for future rounds going forward. Next year the application form may be aligned with the criteria.

Cameron also noted that she included in the meeting packet a new template for reports from the Affordable Housing Trust, reorganizing the bi-annual reports to have different content reflecting where the AHT is in its annual application timeline. They issue RFPs in October and award grants in March. Heimarck moved that the AHT be invited to use this template to provide a Fall report, and then for the

CPC to take time to review and refine the template for the Spring report. The motion was seconded by Kennedy and approved unanimously.

Kennedy announced that this was her last meeting as she is moving out of Somerville. The Conservation Commission will be identifying a new member to take her place on the CPC.

Beretsky announced that the next meeting will be on October 27 at 6:30, and will be held virtually.

Kennedy moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Shannon. The motion passed unanimously and the meeting was adjourned at 8:27.

### **Documents and Exhibits**

1. Agenda
2. Draft Minutes 7/28/21 and 8/31/21
3. Full Applications
  - a. Land Acquisition Fund
  - b. Junction Park
  - c. Glen Street Community Garden
  - d. Somerville Hispanic Church
  - e. 1783 Adams Magoun House
  - f. Somerville Museum
4. Memorandum from City Archivist: Supplemental Funding Request Elections Records FY2018
5. Outreach materials, including response tally, upcoming events calendar, and photos of recent events
6. Draft CPC Evaluation Chart
7. AHTF CPA Reporting Template 2021