



JOSEPH A. CURTATONE  
MAYOR

## CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS COMMUNITY PRESERVATION COMMITTEE



MINUTES  
AUGUST 31, 2021

### MEMBERS

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

### STAFF

Roberta Cameron

The Community Preservation Committee (CPC) virtually held a special 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 Present** Chair Laura Beretsky, Vice Chair Heather Heimarck, Jahan Habib, Tatiana Shannon, Alan Bingham, Rose White, Eleanor Rances

**Members Absent** Cristina Kennedy

**Staff Present** Roberta Cameron

**Others Present**

### Roll Call

Ms. Beretsky opened the meeting at 6:32 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.

### Agenda item 1: Eligibility Determination Forms

Cameron explained that the reason for calling a special meeting was because there were two Eligibility Determination forms that had been submitted prior to the deadline but for different reasons had not made it onto the previous meeting agenda when the other EDFs were reviewed.

- a. Elizabeth Peabody House Reinforcing Theater Space Floor: CPA Manager Cameron shared screen and explained that the building conditions assessment identified an issue that the second floor of the building is not structurally sound to be used by more than a handful of people at a time. The EPH is requesting funds to install steel plates to stabilize the floor. Member Bingham reported that the applicant came to the Historic Preservation Commission to discuss how the proposed improvement will support the continued use and preservation of the structure, and the HPC unanimously supported the eligibility of this application. Member White asked if there is an associated cost. Cameron stated that the applicant is still trying to identify potential contractors and does not yet have a cost estimate. Member Shannon asked whether there is a way that the eligibility determination process going forward have HPC input be incorporated, as this has been very helpful in this process, and it was agreed that this can be formalized. Vice-chair Heimarck moved to approve the EDF. The motion was seconded by Bingham, and was unanimously passed.
- b. Somerville Public Library Preservation of the Somerville Journal: Cameron explained that the Library had originally submitted the application for digitization of the newspaper and she advised them that this on its own would not be an eligible activity because CPA is required to preserve physical assets, and not information. The Library added to the project the preservation of the

newspapers themselves, so that digitization will be an incidental part of the project. Member Bingham pointed out that the CPC has funded a digitization project in the past, namely the City's Elections records. Cameron explained that in the interim since that project was funded the Department of Revenue has issued guidance that digitization by itself is not an eligible activity. Bingham asked whether there was also a similar project outstanding for the Somerville Museum's collections, and Shannon pointed out that the project he is referring to would be to protect physical objects and not digitization. There was discussion about the requirement to obtain HPC acknowledgement that the newspapers are historically significant, and Cameron stated that she would advise the applicant to meet with HPC before the full application is reviewed by the Committee. Member Raices asked that the Library clarify whether there would be a charge for the public to access the digitized newspapers. Heimarck moved to approve the EDF, seconded by Bingham, on condition that it is recognized by the HPC. The motion was unanimously approved.

Member White thanked Cameron for providing feedback to applicants to help them adjust their projects so that they would be eligible. She asked whether there have been more opportunities to help applicants devise projects that are more likely to be deemed eligible.

### **Agenda Item 2: Other Business**

Cameron provided an update of upcoming events for public outreach and invited committee members to provide dates that they would be available to staff tables at these events. Several members offered dates when they can attend, which Cameron recorded on the outreach calendar.

There was discussion about effective methods for drawing people in to participate at the table and to provide input. Beretsky offered feedback from the farmer's market that she and Cameron had attended.

### **Agenda Item 3: Next Meeting**

Beretsky announced that the next meeting will be on September 22, and will be held virtually.

Bingham moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by White. The motion passed unanimously and the meeting was adjourned at 7:13.

### **Documents and Exhibits**

1. Agenda
2. Eligibility Determination Forms
  - a. Elizabeth Peabody House Reinforcing Theater Space Floor
  - b. Somerville Public Library Preservation of the Somerville Journal
3. Upcoming Somerville Events