



JOSEPH A. CURTATONE  
MAYOR

# CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS COMMUNITY PRESERVATION COMMITTEE



## MINUTES JULY 24, 2019

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

**Members Present** Vice Chair Uma Murugan, Dick Bauer, Laura Beretsky, Jane Carbone, Rebecca Lyn Cooper, Luisa Oliveira, Eleanor Rances, Tatiana Shannon, Amelia Aboff

**Members Absent** Chair Michael Fager

**Staff Present** Kristen Stelljes

**Others Present** Kevin Su

**MEMBERS**  
Michael Fager, Chair  
Uma Murugan, Vice Chair  
Amelia Aboff  
Dick Bauer  
Laura Beretsky  
Jane Carbone  
Luisa Oliveira  
Eleanor Rances  
Tatiana Shannon

**STAFF**  
Kristen Stelljes

The chair opened the meeting at 6:30p.m.

### **Agenda item 1: Public comment period**

Kevin Su shared that he is a green realtor and is interested in getting involved in the community. He came to the Community Preservation Committee to learn more about its work.

### **Agenda item 2: Welcome Amelia**

Amelia Aboff joined the Committee as the representative from the Planning Board, replacing Rebecca Lyn Cooper.

### **Agenda item 3: Approve minutes from June 26 meeting**

Upon a motion by Mr. Bauer, seconded by Ms. Beretsky, the Committee approved the minutes from the June 26 meeting by a vote of 6-0 with Ms. Aboff abstaining.

### **Agenda item 4: Project updates**

*Elizabeth Peabody House Building Master Plan:* The Elizabeth Peabody House Association completed the master plan and submitted their final report. The results of the plan were used to inform the eligibility determination form submitted for FY20 funding.

*35 Richardson:* SCC is meeting with City staff on Monday to plan for how to move the project forward and seek necessary approvals. [Jane Carbone arrives] The results of this conversation will inform how the conservation restriction will be structured.

*Brown/West Somerville Neighborhood Schools Design:* The City of Somerville is in the process of selecting the design firm for the project.

*Prospect Hill Park Construction:* Construction is underway and traffic calming measures have been completed. The staircases and walkways are being repaired. Plants will be installed in the fall.

*CPA State Trust Fund Legislation:* The permanent increase to the recording fees passed the State Legislature and is now before the Governor for his signature. An additional \$20 million was allocated for the FY20 state match disbursement if there is a budget surplus.

**Agenda item 5: South Street Farm public access**

Ms. Rutkin requested that this item be tabled until the Committee's September meeting, as their new Farm Coordinator would be in place. That person will be managing South Street Farm and could help develop the public access plan for the farm.

**Agenda item 6: Planning for CPC general public member recruitment**

Ms. Murugan will be reaching her term limit on December 31. Ms. Stelljes is in the process of convening the review committee that will recommend an individual for appointment to the Mayor. Mr. Bauer and Mr. Fager are also reaching their term limits on December 31 and they will be replaced by other representatives from the Historic Preservation Commission and Conservation Commission respectively.

Ms. Stelljes asked if there were any skills or expertise that the Committee would like the review committee to prioritize when they are reviewing applications. Mr. Bauer asked Ms. Oliveira if she thought it would be useful to have additional open space expertise. Ms. Oliveira said it would if the person had a holistic view of the needs of open space in the city. Ms. Aboff noted that many applications proposed that they were worth funding because of their public health benefits, so it may be useful to have a member who was public health expertise. Ms. Carbone suggested that it would be useful for the new member to have expertise in construction and in how to assess capital improvement needs for historic buildings. Ms. Oliveira noted that the Committee would benefit from more diversity.

Ms. Carbone suggested posting flyers in places like Aeronaut to reach a younger audience. Ms. Shannon suggested reaching out to local graduate programs.

By a motion by Mr. Bauer, seconded by Ms. Oliveira, the Committee voted 7-0 with Ms. Carbone abstaining, for Ms. Carbone to represent the Committee on the CPC general public member review committee.

**Agenda item 7: FY20 Eligibility Determination Form review**

*City of Somerville's Land Acquisition Fund:*

Ms. Stelljes shared that the City of Somerville has created a stabilization fund that is dedicated to acquiring open space. The City is seeking CPA funding to seed this account.

Ms. Beretsky asked if it was a conflict of interest for Luisa to submit an application for funding to the Committee as she sits on the Committee. Mr. Bauer responded that per the state statute the ex-officio members can vote on projects related to why they were appointed.

Ms. Aboff asked if designating the acquisition fund as recreational land on the eligibility determination form affects the types of land that could be purchased with the funds. Ms. Stelljes responded that the CPA fund combines both open space and recreational land so funds in this category could go towards the purchase of land that would meet the CPA enabling legislation definition of open space. Ms. Stelljes noted that it can be confusing when speaking about open space in the CPA context because the average Somerville resident would refer to all of Somerville's parks as open space; however, the CPA enabling legislation has a narrow definition of open space that does not apply to the types of land that would be available for the City of Somerville to buy.

Upon a motion by Ms. Carbone, seconded by Mr. Bauer, the Committee voted 8-0 to determine the City of Somerville's Land Acquisition Fund project eligible for CPA funding.

*Central Hill Campus Phase I, City of Somerville*

Mr. Bauer asked if any part of the Central Hill Campus project was in a local historic district. Ms. Stelljes responded that the local historic districts on Central Hill are the buildings of City Hall and Central Library, but none of the grounds or monuments.

Upon a motion by Mr. Bauer, seconded by Ms. Carbone, the Committee voted 8-0 to determine the City of Somerville's Central Hill Campus Phase I project eligible for CPA funding.

*VNA Community Healing Garden, Visiting Nurse Assisted Living Community*

Mr. Bauer asked if the current garden is publicly accessible. Ms. Stelljes responded that it is but it is not formally designated as public space. She added that when talking with the applicant she shared that it is common that the Committee would require public access. The applicant said that community members are currently utilizing the space and that she would think about how to expand public access responsibly given that the VNA residents are part of a vulnerable population. Ms. Oliveira asked who owns the land. Ms. Stelljes responded that it is owned by the Visiting Nurse Association, a non-profit. Committee members requested that details be provided in the application for plans for public access.

Upon a motion by Ms. Beretsky, seconded by Ms. Carbone, the Committee voted 8-0 to determine the VNA Community Healing Garden project eligible for CPA funding.

*Blessing of the Bay Boathouse Phase 3, Mystic River Watershed Association*

Ms. Murugan asked for an update on the previous phases. Ms. Stelljes responded that MyRWA completed the first phase, which brought the project to 25% conceptual design. The second phase is ongoing and is intended to bring the project to construction documents.

Ms. Stelljes noted that it has not yet been clarified who will be implementing the project, as the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) owns the land but MyRWA has submitted the application under their name. DCR has submitted a letter of support. Members of the Committee asked that MyRWA clarify in the application who will be implementing the project and how it would be structured with DCR, including if MyRWA has a license to make improvements to the land. The Committee requested that the organization that will be receiving the funds be present at the meeting in October.

Upon a motion by Mr. Bauer, seconded by Ms. Oliveira, the Committee voted 8-0 to determine the Blessing of the Bay Boathouse Phase 3 project eligible for CPA funding.

*Mission Church Tower Repair, Mission Church of Our Lord Jesus Christ, Inc.*

Ms. Stelljes noted that the roof repairs funded in FY19 were underway. Ms. Shannon asked for details about the bells being created in the Paul Revere Foundry. The Committee asked for details about the bells to be included in the application. Ms. Oliveira asked if there are any special considerations that should be made for this project in light of the Acton case. Ms. Stelljes responded that last year the Committee's legal counsel advised that the roof repair project is eligible because it is a repair to an exterior feature that is not explicitly religious in nature on a historic building and secular public services are offered in the building through the food pantry that operates there. Ms. Aboff asked that the applicant consider a comprehensive approach to repairs to the building.

Upon a motion by Ms. Carbone, seconded by Ms. Oliveira, the Committee voted 8-0 to determine the Mission Church Tower Repair project eligible for CPA funding.

*Fire Alarm System, The Elizabeth Peabody House*

Ms. Carbone shared that the proposed project is coming directly from the building master plan that the Committee suggested the Elizabeth Peabody House Association develop and funded to support a more comprehensive approach to rehabilitating their historic building.

Upon a motion by Ms. Murugan, seconded by Mr. Bauer, the Committee voted 8-0 to determine the Elizabeth Peabody House Fire Alarm System project eligible for CPA funding.

*Somerville Museum: Collection Preservation (Part 2)*

Mr. Bauer noted that the title of the project provided on the eligibility determination form does not match the work described in the project description. Ms. Stelljes said she would ask the applicant to provide clarification on the actual project request. Ms. Carbone asked that the application also discuss how the scope of the elevator project was reduced as was discussed when the Museum requested emergency funds from the CPC.

Ms. Oliveira asked if it would be appropriate for CPC members to visit the sites applying for funds. Ms. Stelljes said the past practice was for individual members to make their own site visits because a visit by the group would need to be an open meeting and would likely require arranging for a bus tour. Ms. Beretsky asked Ms. Stelljes to email the Committee with details about when the applicant locations are open.

Ms. Aboff asked about public access to the Somerville Museum. Ms. Stelljes responded that the Museum will be required to offer free admittance one day a month as part of the preservation restriction that is in progress. Ms. Aboff asked about the purpose of supporting ADA access in the building. Ms. Stelljes noted that the Museum's collections have been determined to be historically significant and the CPA enabling legislation allows for funds to be used to bring a building up to code. The Museum is required by the Massachusetts Architectural Access Board to become fully accessible.

Upon a motion by Mr. Bauer, seconded by Ms. Shannon, the Committee voted 8-0 to determine the Somerville Museum project eligible for CPA funding.

*Restoration of the George M. Stevens Tower Clock in Union Square, Somerville Arts Council*

Ms. Stelljes noted that the SCAT building has not yet been determined to be historically significant. Mr. Bauer explained that it has been the practice of the Committee of determining projects that have a pending historic significance determination to be potentially eligible pending the determination that the building is historically significant by the Historic Preservation Commission.

Ms. Aboff said that she thought that the project should take place after the major construction projects in Union Square. Ms. Stelljes said that the clock mechanism is located on the interior of the tower and she will request that the applicant provide information on how they will protect the clock from ongoing construction in Union Square.

Upon a motion by Ms. Carbone, seconded by Ms. Oliveira, the Committee voted 8-0 to determine the City of Somerville's Restoration of the George M. Stevens Tower Clock project potentially eligible for CPA funding.

**Agenda item 8: Other business**

Ms. Stelljes asked which members wanted to work at the SomerStreets events on August 4, as three people have signed up. Ms. Murugan and Ms. Shannon volunteered to split the tabling at the event.

Ms. Stelljes noted that it is likely that the October project presentations could be held in one evening during the regularly scheduled meeting date.

Ms. Stelljes reminded the Committee that they will not be meeting in August.

Ms. Beretsky asked if it would be possible to consider moving the time of the meeting later. The other Committee members said that a later time would not work for them.

**Next meeting: The next meeting of the CPC will be held at 6:30pm on September 25.**

### **Meeting Adjournment**

Upon motion from Mr. Bauer, seconded by Ms. Carbone, the Committee voted 8-0 to adjourn at 8:20pm.

### **Documents and Exhibits**

1. Agenda
2. Minutes from June 26 meeting
3. FY20 CPA Project Funding spreadsheet
4. FY20 Eligibility Determination Forms
  - a. City of Somerville's Land Acquisition Fund
  - b. Central Hill Campus Phase I, City of Somerville
  - c. Blessing of the Bay Boathouse Phase 3, Mystic River Watershed Association
  - d. VNA Community Healing Garden, Visiting Nurse Assisted Living Community
  - e. Mission Church Tower Repair, Mission Church of Our Lord Jesus Christ, Inc.
  - f. Fire Alarm System, The Elizabeth Peabody House
  - g. Somerville Museum: Collection Preservation (Part 2)
  - h. Restoration of the George M. Stevens Tower Clock in Union Square, Somerville Arts Council