

Notes from CPA Committee Meeting – 6/6/11 @ 5:30 PM – Ackermann Room

CPA Committee Members Present: (8 of 8)

Bill Bibbins (Historical Commission)

Louis DePasquale (Assistant City Manager – Director of Finance)

Richard C. Rossi (Deputy City Manager/Chair CPAC)

Susan Schlesinger (Cambridge Resident)

William Tibbs (Planning Board)

Albe Simenas (Conservation Cmsn)

Gerald J. Clark (CHA)

Ellen Shachter (Resident)

Attendees:

Brian Murphy (Assistant City Manager - Community Development Department (CDD))

Chris Cotter (CDD- Housing Director)

Cassie Arnaud (CDD- Housing Planner)

Jennifer Wright (Executive Director - Conservation Commission)

Charles Sullivan (Executive Director – Historical Commission)

Karen Preval (Management Analyst – Executive Department)

David Kale (Budget Director)

Nancy Schlacter (Assistant to City Manager)

The hearing convened at 5:40 PM. Deputy City Manager (and CPAC Chair) Richard C. Rossi outlined the agenda for the meeting: an update on CPA financials; anticipated CPA funds for FY12; updates on CPA projects and the CPA process for FY12. He introduced the new CDD Director, Brian Murphy.

Historical Commission Executive Director Charles Sullivan provided an update on the status of projects for which the CPA had recently provided Historic Preservation funding. He described the completion of the gutter replacement and slate roofing for City Hall; the ongoing work at the Cambridge Cemetery and the Old Burying Ground, repairing monuments and granite steps; the design work underway for the Old Police Station at 1 Western Avenue; and ongoing window replacement and cupola repairs at Engines 1 and 6. He noted that eleven projects had been completed using Preservation Grants, including roof replacement at Christ the King Presbyterian Church and the construction of a handicap ramp at Cambridge Family & Children's Services. He noted that 6 projects will be underway this summer, using Preservation Grant funds. He noted 5 affordable housing preservation grants; the reconstruction of the City Clerk's vital records vault; the ongoing digitization of the Cambridge Chronicle, going back to 1846, with the eventual ability to search the records with key words; and the upcoming digitization of the Historical Commission's photo archive, with the assistance of the CPL Archivist.

Conservation Commission Executive Director Jennifer Wright provided an update on the CPA Open Space funded projects which have been completed since the fall of 2010, including drainage area stabilization at Fresh Pond, and noted two ongoing projects, Black's Nook restoration and Glacken Slope Stabilization. She further noted that the Circulation and Access

Plan for Fresh Pond was on hold, pending the completion of the Public Shared Use process, which has been ongoing since last fall.

Community Development Department Housing Director Chris Cotter spoke about recent acquisitions by the Affordable Housing Trust (AHT) of properties in Cambridge, for which CPA funds were used. He also described the status of construction/rehab projects already underway for which CPA funds were used. Finally, he described the types of projects that the AHT is considering for which FY12 CPA Housing preservation funds could be used, particularly expiring use projects.

City Finance Director Louis DePasquale reviewed the financial status of CPA fund expenditures from FY 2002 – FY 2011, which had been provided in a handout to the CPAC. He described what the City is anticipating for available CPA funds for FY12 (\$9,600,000) from Local receipts (\$6.75 mil), State match (\$1.85 mil) and the CPA Fund balance (\$1 mil). He noted that the State Match had dropped by \$200,000 from FY11, although the Local Match had increased by \$250,000. He noted that the state match in FY12 is anticipated to be 26% of the anticipated local receipts. He reviewed the summary of Reserve Allocations for Open Space and Historic categories.

CPAC Chair Rossi described the process for CPA Committee activities in FY12 as follows: a Community Meeting on 6/21/11 at which residents can present proposals for expenditure of CPA funds; a Public Hearing in late summer 2011 (date tbd) at which the CPAC will hear about proposals for expenditure of CPA FY12 funds and at which the public can speak about their preferred allocations for CPA funds; and a CPAC meeting in early September at which the CPAC will discuss the various proposals and cast votes with regard to allocations to the three CPA categories and for particular projects.

Chair Rossi proposed 2 potential dates for the late summer Public Hearing: 8/31/11 or 8/24/11. The date was not confirmed. He noted that a poll, through email, with members able to consult their schedules, would be used to identify the date. A further proposal for the early September CPAC meeting, at which votes would be taken on allocations and projects, identified 9/7/11 or 9/8/11 as possible dates, with confirmation to be established through email.

CPAC Chair Rossi discussed the possibility of acquiring an existing Community Garden at Whittemore Ave. through a friendly taking from the current owner, Fawcett Oil. He noted that an appraisal had been done of the approximately 16,000 square foot lot, an offer made, and that discussions were underway. He further noted that should the negotiations reach fruition, a late July CPAC meeting would be required to vote on allocation of the funds for the project from Open Space Reserves.

CPAC member Ellen Shachter asked about the source of the funds for the Whittemore Gardens purchase, which Chair Rossi said would be Open Space Reserves.

CPAC member Susan Schlesinger asked whether the City was pursuing any acquisitions of open space in East Cambridge with CPA Open Space funds. Chair Rossi noted that the Alexandria Development in East Cambridge would be bringing significant new parkland into the City's

Open Space inventory, although not with CPA funding. He also described the City's efforts to identify properties that owners might be interested in selling to the City and the City's outreach to those property owners.

ConCom ED Jen Wright noted that the Whittemore Gardens acquisition would bring an existing 65 plot Community Garden into public ownership and that it could be expanded to around 80 plots. She further noted that there are currently 13 Community Gardens in the City, 7 of them (currently) owned by the City, with the remainder in private hands. She noted that owners of all of the properties had agreed to approach the City regarding the opportunity to purchase their properties in the event they decided to sell. She also noted that the City would be constructing a Community Garden in Riverside Press Park, with 15-20 raised garden plots, and that a proposed redesign of the garden plots at Fresh Pond may increase the total by approximately 20 plots.

CPAC Chair Rossi explained that the passage of pending legislation (SB 1841/HB765) would unleash the restrictions on use of the first 10% of Open Space funds and that Open Space reserves could then be used for a wider range of projects than currently possible. He further noted that the legislation was intended to stabilize the state grant portion of the funds. He noted that the City had sent letters in support of the revived legislation in January and April of this year.

The CPAC was reminded that the next meeting would be at 6:00 PM on June 21<sup>st</sup> at the Senior Center, to hear public proposals for CPA funded projects.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 6:10 PM.

Attachments:

Agenda

CPA Summary of Expenditures, Available and Anticipated Funds

CPA Affordable Housing FY11 Highlights

CPA Historic Preservation Projects

FAQ on SB 1841/HB765