

Meeting Notes from CPA Committee (CPAC) Public Hearing – 8/28/12 @ 6:00 PM – Sullivan Chamber

CPA Committee Members Present: (6 of 9)

Richard C. Rossi (Deputy City Manager/Chair CPAC)  
Louis DePasquale (Assistant City Manager – Director of Finance)  
Bill Bibbins (Historical Commission)  
Kevin Foster (Cambridge resident)  
Susan Schlesinger (Affordable Housing Trust)  
William Tibbs (Planning Board)

CPAC Members Absent:

Gerald J. Clark (CHA)  
Ellen Shachter (Cambridge resident)  
Albe Simenas (Conservation Commission)

Staff Attendees:

Susan Glazer (Assistant Director/Community Development Dept. (CDD))  
Lisa Peterson (Commissioner, Department of Public Works)  
Chris Cotter (Housing Director/CDD)  
Cassie Arnaud (Housing Planner -CDD)  
Charles Sullivan (Executive Director - Historic Commission)  
Jennifer Wright (Executive Director - Conservation Commission)  
Karen Preval (Senior Management Analyst – Executive Department)  
Angela Pierre (Senior Budget Analyst – Budget Dept.)  
Nancy Schlacter (Assistant to City Manager)

The hearing convened at 6:05 PM. Deputy City Manager (and CPAC Chair) Richard C. Rossi explained that the purpose of the hearing was to allow the CPAC to hear public testimony regarding allocation preferences for the three CPA statutory categories of Open Space, Historic Preservation and Affordable Housing, then asked the CPAC members to introduce themselves and their affiliations. He explained the CPA process to date and going forward and noted that on September 4, 2012 the CPAC would hold a working meeting at which they would review all prior testimony and vote on their recommendations to the City Council for particular projects and category funding allocations. He explained the CPA statutory requirement for an allocation minimum of 10% to each of the preservation categories. He described recent changes to the CPA legislation that will allow greater flexibility to a community that chooses to allocate only 10% of its CPA funds to Open Space, now allowing for recreational uses, including parks, playgrounds, community gardens and athletic fields. He noted that City staff would make brief presentations regarding proposed projects in the three categories.

Assistant City Manager/Finance Director (and CPAC member) Louis DePasquale provided a brief overview of anticipated available CPA funds for FY13, referring to relevant pages (4-10) of the presentation booklet. Mr. DePasquale explained that, with City raised funds and the state match, Cambridge anticipates having \$9,650,000 in CPA

funding for affordable housing, open space and historic preservation projects. He stated that this would be \$50,000 more than was available from CPA funding in FY12. He noted that the anticipated state match in FY13 of 22%, although lower than in the first years after local CPA adoption, was reflective of how many cities and towns have now adopted the CPA. He briefly reviewed the pages of the presentation booklet regarding CPA finances and prior project expenditures and noted the CPA reserves in the funding categories.

Charles Sullivan, Executive Director of the Cambridge Historic Commission, described the types of projects that could be funded with CPA historic preservation funds. Referring to the presentation booklet (pages 22-45), he described the use of CPA historic funds since FY02 and through FY12, for preservation grants to non-profit institutions; for preservation of affordable housing in historic structures; restoration of public buildings and landscapes; and for preservation of municipal archives. He noted pages of the presentation booklet where lists of the CPA Historic Preservation projects could be found (26-27, 29, 31-32) and identified recently completed projects and work underway (33-34). He briefly described the current requests for CPA historic funding (35-44), totaling over \$3 million.

Chris Cotter, Housing Director for the Community Development Department, presented information regarding affordable housing efforts using CPA funds. He reviewed the materials in the presentation booklet (pages 12 through 21). He described the types of projects CPA Affordable Housing funds support; explained that expiring use buildings are the current priority of funding efforts, due to the significant numbers of affordable housing units at stake; described eligibility criteria for affordable housing and the significant ongoing needs; noted the number of units that have been created throughout the City, leveraging CPA resources, since adoption of the CPA; and briefly described recently completed projects and projects currently underway; then noted the anticipated uses of FY13 CPA housing funds.

Jennifer Wright, Executive Director of the Conservation Commission, referring to relevant pages of the presentation booklet (46-57), provided an overview of the CPA governing statute regarding use of Open Space funds, including the recent legislative changes (46-47), described the City's open space project recommendation process (page 48), noted projects proposed at recent public meetings (49-50), briefly described recent CPA Open Space projects underway or completed (55-57), and spoke about open space projects throughout the city that have been funded with resources other than CPA funds (pages 51-54). Finally, she noted the proposed watershed protection and rehabilitation projects at the Fresh Pond Reservation under consideration for CPA Open Space funding in FY13 (61).

Lisa Peterson, Commissioner of the Department of Public Works, spoke of the opportunity that the legislative changes in the CPA could provide for rehabilitation of a variety of open space facilities throughout the City. She noted that input from a range of City departments, public input at a variety of public meetings and ongoing requests for service at open space facilities helped inform the selection of projects to be evaluated for

CPA funding. She noted that projects are under consideration throughout the City, reflected in a map on page 58, and then described the categories of types of projects and a few examples of particular projects that are under consideration (59-61) including major park and playground renovations, pocket parks and plazas, schoolyards, pathways and uses such as dog parks and community gardens.

Following Ms. Peterson's remarks, Mr. Rossi opened the floor for public comment.

John Woods, Deputy Director of Planning & Development at the Cambridge Housing Authority (CHA), spoke in favor of an 80% allocation to affordable housing, noting the ongoing substantial need, the nearly 11,000 people on CHA's waiting list and noted that 98% of the folks on the waitlist have incomes below 80% of median income for Cambridge, making market rate housing out of their financial reach.

Maria Escobar from Lancaster Street spoke of challenges she is experiencing in transferring to affordable housing that meets her medical disability, which makes stair climbing difficult.

Peter Munkenback, of Sparks Street, spoke as a resident and Board Member of Just A Start (JAS) about his concern that the costs of housing are out of reach for many and that he favors an 80% allocation to Affordable Housing. He said that he thinks that Cambridge spends its affordable housing resources efficiently and wisely, creating an effective delivery system through its relationships with local affordable housing developers.

Claire Ullram, Project Manager at 402 Rindge Avenue, an affordable rental high-rise building, spoke of the long wait list for rental units and urged an 80% allocation for affordable housing.

Devon Wesley, who works at 402 Rindge Avenue, also spoke of the long wait lists for affordable rental apartments and encouraged an 80% allocation to affordable housing.

Alex Salvi, who also works at 402 Rindge Avenue, spoke in favor of an 80% allocation to affordable housing and provided a **petition with 70 signatures** in favor of an 80% affordable housing allocation from residents of 402 Rindge.

Olga Kurland of Memorial Drive noted that she has lived in a subsidized rental unit for six years and could not afford to live in Cambridge without the subsidy. She spoke in favor of an 80% allocation to affordable housing. Ms. Kurland provided a **petition with 243 signatures** in support of continuing an 80% allocation to affordable housing.

Cheryl Ann Pizza-Zeoli of Cambridge Street, spoke as a resident and Voucher Co-Chair of the Alliance of Cambridge Tenants (ACT). She provided a **petition with 107 signatures** in support of an 80% allocation to affordable housing from tenants of the Inman Square Apartments, an expiring use rental property in Cambridge.

Kathy Watkins, a resident of Franklin Street and member of the Board of ACT, noted that she lives in affordable rental housing and spoke of her concern about expiring use restrictions on affordable rental housing and of her support of an 80% allocation to affordable housing.

Ethel Ampey of York Street noted that she is a 21 year resident of Cambridge who lives in a JAS property, which is well managed. She noted her hope that JAS will continue to receive funds from CPA and her support of an 80% allocation to affordable housing.

Rhonda Massie of Charles Street spoke of her desire that more CPA funds be spent on Open Space, to mitigate the effects of development. She spoke of her interest in sports fields for East Cambridge and more dog parks. She asked that the CPAC consider a one year increase in the allocation to Open Space so that the City could purchase more open space before it is all gone.

Nancy Lipincott, a resident of CHA housing, elected not to speak.

Elaine DeRosa of Pleasant Place, and Executive Director of Cambridge Economic Opportunity Committee (CEOC), spoke in favor of an 80% allocation to affordable housing. She noted that the CPA has enabled significant retention of affordable housing that would otherwise be lost upon expiration of affordability restrictions. She noted that many affordable rental units are coming up on the expiration of their affordability and that funds need to be available to retain them as affordable housing stock. She provided a letter with more expansive written testimony.

Bill Cunningham, a resident of Newtown Court and a member of the Board of ACT noted that while he appreciates Open Space, too, the need for affordable housing is greater and spoke in favor of an 80% allocation for housing, specifically for preservation of expiring use units.

Peter Graham, Director of Housing for JAS, stated that he echoed the remarks of many who spoke before him regarding the need to preserve affordability and noted his appreciation for the efforts of the Affordable Housing Trust. He spoke in favor of retaining an 80% allocation for housing.

Elizabeth Belstraz of Third Street noted that she is a voucher holder and supports an 80% allocation to housing. She spoke of her concern about homelessness for people who currently live in or are waiting for affordable housing.

Mike Vacchio of Broadway noted that he manages properties for JAS and said that he is concerned that more properties need restoration and preservation. He spoke in favor of an 80% allocation to affordable housing.

Victoria Bergland (no address given) noted her support of 80% for affordable housing.

Lisa Harrington (no address given) noted that she works for Maloney Management, managing JAS affordable housing developments in Cambridge and spoke in favor of an 80% allocation to affordable housing.

Anita Reed, a resident of Rindge Avenue and volunteer board member for JAS spoke in favor of supporting seniors in decent affordable housing.

Following the oral testimony Mr. Rossi read into the record the gist of six letters or emails received since the prior CPA meeting on June 26, 2012, which included the following:

Peter Daly, Executive Director of Homeowner's Rehab, Inc. (HRI), wrote to recommend an 80% allocation to affordable housing, noting that the need for affordable housing in Cambridge remains exceptionally high, with market prices increasing for both homeownership and rental, and expiring use restrictions threatening the existing affordable housing stock.

Roberta Rubin of Day Street wrote in support of the continued use of the maximum portion of CPA funding to support affordable housing.

Sarah Jane White of Columbia Street wrote in support of more CPA funds being allocated to maintain and expand green space in Cambridge, particularly in East Cambridge.

Gordon Gottsche, Executive Director of JAS, wrote in support of continued allocation of 80% of CAP funds for affordable housing.

Alemitu Kassa, resident of Lincoln Way, wrote about the positive impacts affordable housing has had on the quality of her life and the lives of others in Cambridge.

Robert Costa, Senior Project Manager for Cambridge Neighborhood Apartment Housing Services, Inc. (CNAHS), noted that he has worked for CNAHS for 23 years and wrote in continued support of allocation 80% of CPA funds to affordable housing.

At 7:15 PM public comment was concluded. Mr. Rossi thanked the participants for their testimony and noted that the record would remain open for additional testimony through the afternoon on September 4<sup>th</sup>. He further stated that CPA Committee would consider all of the testimony provided throughout the process during its deliberations on September 4<sup>th</sup>, noting that the CPAC would vote on CPA percentage allocations and specific projects at that time.

The hearing adjourned at 7:18 PM.