

Notes from Community Preservation Act Committee (CPAC) Meeting -7/28/2016 @ 6:00P.M.-Sullivan Chamber

CPA Committee members present:

Ellen Shachter (Resident)
Susan Schlesinger (Affordable Housing Trust)
Thacher Tiffany (Planning Board)
Chandra Harrington (Historical Commission)
Albe Simenas (Conservation Commission)
Lisa Peterson (Deputy City Manager/Chair)
Louis DePasquale (Assistant City Manager for Finance)

City Staff:

Jeana Franconi (Budget Director)
Karen Preval (Senior Management Analyst-City Manager's Office)
Angela Pierre (Budget Analyst- Budget Office)
Cassie Arnaud (Housing Planner- Community Development Department (CDD))
Charles Sullivan (Executive Director-Historical Commission)
Chris Cotter (Director of Housing Division-CDD)
Taha Jennings (Assistant to the City Manager-City Manager's Office)

Introduction

- The meeting convened at 6:06 p.m., Deputy City Manager (Committee Chair) Lisa Peterson gave an explanation of CPAC's interest in hearing about percent allocations for historic preservation, open space and affordable housing. It was further noted that a minimum 10% allocation of CPA funds was required for each category. This year there is a total estimated funding of \$12,300,000, so each category would receive at least \$1,230,000 (10%).
- Last month's meeting focused on specific project ideas presented by both city staff and members of the public. An online submission form was created which also allowed people to submit project ideas.
- The Chair submitted for the record, 5 separate petitions from Homeowner's Rehab Inc. that included a total of 189 signatures as well as e-mails from 24 individuals in support of affordable housing projects. There were 4 communications requesting funding for historic preservation projects including 3 from the State Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) to support an interpretive signage program at Magazine Beach, and Lowell Memorial Park. There were 7 requests for funding for open space projects including a community place for meditation, full size multi use field, Jerry's Pit, tree replacement, lighting for a baseball field, and a new pocket park in an existing plaza.
- The Chair invited those in attendance to comment on the percent allocations to each category. Participants were asked to keep remarks to 3 minutes.

Public Comment

- Cathy Zusy- Magazine Beach Neighborhood Association stated the need for parks, historical buildings, and suggested changing the allocation to 60%, 20%, 20%. She felt the rich history and

rehabilitation of the interior of the Magazine Beach powder house would be beneficial to multiple users. She also mentioned the potential of DCR matching city funds.

- Michelle Green- 57 Columbia Street, Cambridge resident, stated that she utilized Magazine Beach, and also recommended a 60%, 20%, 20% allocation of funds which would help fund creation of restrooms at the powder house.
- Deborah Rue- Resident of North Cambridge and Executive Director of Just A Start, supports maintaining the 80%, 10%, 10% allocation and submitted a petition signed by 65 residents.
- Amy Green- Resident of Cambridge, proposed an allocation of 70%, 15%, 15% so that additional funding for open space could be used to meet the demand for free space for children, and help address depression and medical conditions linked to the lack of outdoor space. She stated the importance of safe, beautiful open spaces that include bathrooms, and water fountains.
- Eva Martin Blythe - Executive Director of YWCA in Cambridge stated that the organization is mission driven as a housing provider for women that is safe and affordable since 1911. The facility provides services related to single occupancy housing, homelessness, domestic violence, and drug abuse. She noted it is a historical building and the general appreciation and value of historic preservation efforts in Cambridge. She added that the city needs more affordable housing, and recommends an 80%, 10%, 10% allocation.
- Tina Alu - Associate Director of CEOC, supports the continued allocation of 80%, 10%, 10% and stated that there is a large need for housing and she is seeing more and more residents afraid of losing their housing. She submitted a petition with 240 signatures from 362-364 Rindge Ave.
- Risa Mednick - Executive Director of the Transition House for domestic violence victims stated that affordable housing is critical to sustain diversity of Cambridge. The cost of developing affordable housing is very expensive and there is need to leverage all resources. She recommended an 80%, 10%, 10% allocation.
- Yaibhow Pii- a lab researcher living in Cambridge for 6 years, is part of the affordable housing program and supports the 80%, 10%, 10% allocation.
- Lauren Curry - spoke on behalf of the people on waiting lists and supported 80%, 10%, 10% allocation and noted that large unit housing is needed.
- Peter Daly – Executive Director of Homeowners Rehab Inc., thanked the City for its efforts and supported an allocation of 80%, 10%, 10%. He mentioned that that the affordable housing crisis is at its worst. Acquisition costs and construction costs are very high in Cambridge.
- Kathryn Fenneman-representing Tutoring Plus, spoke and supports the 80%, 10%, 10% allocation.
- Cheryl Ann Pizza-Zeoli – supports 80% allocation for affordable housing. She noted that Linwood Court affordable housing will expire in 2018, and they have family sized apartments.

- Amy Lee Jarvis – stated that she enjoys healthy outdoor space and to be near the water. She would like to continue to support Magazine Beach in regards to restrooms and historical signage. She supports an 80%, 10%, 10% allocation.
- Corrine Espinoza is a resident of Cambridge and supports the 80%, 10%, 10% allocation. She stated that we have a housing emergency situation. Prices are very high and it's hard to survive here and wants to preserve the diversity in Cambridge.
- Margaret Donnelly Moran, Planning Director for the Cambridge Housing Authority (CHA), supports 80%, 10%, 10% allocation. CHA serves very low income families and are deeply affordable. Access to capital funds are critical to their efforts.
- Hasson Rashid is a member of two community boards and supports 80%, 10%, 10% allocation. He mentioned that he supports the homeless community and is currently looking for funding to produce and host two TV programs on affirmative action and on fair housing.
- Mary Leno, a resident of Cambridge who lived in a house and for single women, supports the 80%, 10%, 10% allocation.
- James Williamson supports the 80%, 10%, 10% allocation. He mentioned that open space is very important along with historical preservation. He noted the importance of being mindful of other ways we need to support other amenities in the City. Jefferson Park housing has been demolished and is under construction. He stated that there is still a lot of confusion in the City about what programs actually exist. Also suggested an actual goal for a number of affordable units and a one sheet summary of affordable housing programs.
- Victoria Bergland - Lincoln Way, Cambridge, mentioned the families that can't come to the meetings and are head of households. She supports the 80%, 10%, 10% allocation. She said there are a large number of children at college that come home and can't afford to live in Cambridge and be with family. Older home owners are being encouraged to sell their homes.
- Sherry Tucker- Resident of Central Square, supports the 80%, 10%, 10% allocation and stated the need for low income housing. She also noted that the federal government has reduced funds for affordable housing.

Next steps

- Lisa Peterson, Committee Chair, then closed public comment at the meeting but stated that the record would remain open until September 9, 2016. She mentioned the next steps in the CPA process, beginning with staff preparing a book with project ideas and history, which will be completed and available to the public after Labor Day. The book will be emailed to committee members and online and the CPA website.
- Next meeting was set for September 13, 2016 (since moved to September 7, 2016) at 5:30 to discuss allocations and projects for FY17. The City Council vote would be held on Monday, September 19, 2016. The meeting was adjourned at 6:50pm.

