

Notes from Community Preservation Act Committee (CPAC) Public Hearing –June 22, 2017 @ 6:00 P.M  
Sullivan Chamber

**CPA Committee Members Present:**

Kevin Foster (Resident)  
Susan Schlesinger (Affordable Housing Trust)  
Gerard Clark (Cambridge Housing Authority)  
Lisa Peterson (Deputy City Manager/Chair CPA Committee)  
David Kale (Assistant City Manager for Fiscal Affairs)

**Staff Attendees:**

Angela Pierre (Senior Budget Analyst- Budget Office)  
Jen Letourneau, (Conservation Commission Director Senior Engineer- Public Works)  
Karen Preval (Senior Management Analyst-City Managers' Office)  
Charles Sullivan (Executive Director-Historical Commission)  
Chris Cotter (Director of Housing Division-CDD)  
Stuart Dash (Director of Community Planning- CDD)

- The meeting convened at 6:15 p.m., (Committee Chair) Peterson stated that the CPAC was there to hear project proposals from the public and staff in the following categories: historic preservation, open space and affordable housing. It was explained that there must be a minimum 10% allocation of CPA funds in each category. She introduced CPAC members and stated that the projected FY18 CPA funding would be \$12.57M, which was up from \$12.3M in FY17. She also mentioned that this amount may go down in future years with new towns and cities adopting CPA.
- June 7, 2017 CPA Committee meeting minutes were approved.
- A handout was provided showing all projects appropriated from FY02-FY17. Chair Peterson mentioned that the public will still be able to provide and submit project requests through July 27, 2017.

Public Comment

- Lauren Curry, from Just- A -Start, spoke about the need for affordable housing and the number of people that come to nonprofit agencies looking for housing. There are thousands of people waiting and it's important to have the resources available for any new opportunity that can preserve current affordable housing stock. She also mentioned that CPA funds are critical in developing units with the challenges of increased costs and federal cuts to the HUD budget.
- Brian Nichols, program manager for Just-A-Start, was interested in using CPA funds for preservation grants. This would allow funds to be available on an ongoing basis for home renovations through the Home Improvement Loan Program with Community Development Department (CDD).
- Elaine Derosa, Executive Director of Cambridge Economic Opportunity Committee Inc. (CEOC) mentioned that Patricia Casola, president of the Fresh Pond Tenant Association requested to preserve the long-term affordability of the Fresh Pond Apartments, an expiring use property, with 502 affordable units, that will expire in 2020. She also mentioned that Vail Court's challenges are not financial but more on how to level the voices and priorities and maintain diversity. A petition was submitted with 30 signatures.

- Cheryl Anne- Pizza- Zeoli is a resident of Cambridge and recommended preserving units at Fresh Pond and other expiring use properties. She mentioned that the Cambridge Housing Authority needs \$250M in tax exempt bonds to preserve multiple units and CPA funds are needed with the Federal cuts to the HUD budget. She also stated that public housing will advocate for affordable housing at Vail Court and the wait list for housing continues to rise even though the lists are closed.
- Karen Brown, Deputy Director of Libraries proposed two projects. The first was to replace Collins branch lights that are energy efficient, that keep the historical lighting in the building; the second request was to digitize historic records from 1848-1910 at the Main Library and to continue digitize through 1972.
- Becca Ohofied is a resident of Cambridge and works with Homeowners- Rehab Inc. and would like to allocate the max toward affordable housing. She would like to reaffirm the City's commitment to keep Cambridge affordable.
- Catherine Zusy talked about DCR parks that were under construction and how there will be a new kayak launch area, improvements to accessibility on paths, and improvements to a splash deck and pool at Magazine Beach.
- Diana Pridenux Prune is a resident, representing Cambridge Housing Authority and discussed the need for maximum support toward affordable housing projects. She stated that we need many tools to keep housing affordable and preserve current housing with the talks of financial cuts to HUD and state limitation on private bonds.
- Carlos Peralta from the Cambridge Redevelopment Authority would like to request Historic Preservation CPA funds for exterior rehab and repairs at 105 Windsor Street. A letter was submitted for the record.
- Denise Sleeper signed up by wasn't present to speak.
- Marion Darlington Hope is a resident in the Port neighborhood and was interested in historic preservation grants. She stated that prior grants helped restore Pentecostal Tabernacle church which was purchased in 2013. They would like to utilize funding to continue renovating and maintaining standards for historic preservation at the church.
- James Williamson is a resident of Cambridge and was interested in discussing the closing of DCR pools, which allows affordable recreation in the summer for many children and families. He mentioned that Gold Star was closed for construction and Magazine Beach and McCrehan Pools are planning on closing two weeks before Labor Day. He would like the pools to be kept open. He also asked if there were additional revenue sources for affordable housing and that the City should be thoughtful and provide careful stewardship with current funds and possibly consider the Divinity School as a potential opportunity for affordable housing.

#### Staff proposals

Stuart Dash, Director of Community Planning discussed the City's open space needs and concerns for FY18. Renovation work is being done at Cambridgeport School, Sennott Park basketball courts and the City has been working with parents in addressing concerns and needs at Graham and Parks, Amigos and Morse Schools. He mentioned that the CRLS tennis courts need to be resurfaced, Raymond Park will be coming up, and Sacramento Field is underway.

- Charlie Sullivan, Executive Director of the Historical Commission stated that there were \$2.2M of historic preservation proposals for FY18. The first request was for preservation grants. The City has spent half of grant funds from last year and there is currently a large demand for projects in coming years. The following are a list of project proposals: restoration of the bronze at Cambridge Common and rehabilitation of historic markers throughout the city; interior lighting and the O'Connell Branch Library and annual digitization of public library records; working with the Cambridge Health Alliance and Cambridge Redevelopment Authority, exterior restoration of the old Boardman School building at 105 Windsor Street that was built in 1868 and converted into a recreation center in 1940; additional sidewalk work on Brattle Street; digitization of records at Cambridge Cemetery; contingency funds for Longfellow Park steps; restoration of City Hall steps where there has been water damage; Council Chamber painting of flaking plaster on the walls; slate roof replacement at 35 Third Street, which is the garage at the East Cambridge fire station and window replacement at the Golf Course clubhouse.
- Chris Cotter, Director of CDD's Housing Division, stated the CPA funds have been essential to the City's success and are becoming even more critical in funding housing creation and preservation given recent cuts in federal funding. The Affordable Housing Trust meets monthly, and the flexibility that the funds give the Trust allows affordable housing developers to quickly access funds to compete with the private sector when opportunities to create new affordable units arise. CPA funds have also been used to successfully protect affordability at many of the 10 expiring use projects that were identified to be most at risk before 2020. Expiring affordability restrictions remain a concern at some properties, most significantly at Fresh Pond Apartments with over 500 affordable units. Preserving long term affordable units and the need to expand the stock of affordable housing remain priorities and continuing needs. The City is currently working on the following projects: Concord Highlands where 98 affordable mixed-income affordable rental units have been approved; a new property in Porter Square where a proposal for affordable rental housing is being put together; Vail Court where the City is moving ahead with a community process which will create new affordable housing; and the expansion of the home ownership program offering expanded support for income-eligible homebuyers.
- Chair Peterson read the following project proposals into the record:
  - Carolos Peralta from the Redevelopment Authority requested Historic Preservation Grant funds for the exterior restoration repairs at 105 Windsor Street.
  - Alex Franco, 66 Spring Street requested digital parking meters on the streets to reduce and reclaim sidewalk space. (Chair Peterson mentioned that this request is not an eligible CPA project)
  - Josh Levin, Garfield St. proposed more affordable housing projects.
  - Jennifer Sullivan, 270 Third Street proposed affordable housing projects and that her life changed because of the middle-income housing lottery.
  - Daniel Smith, 11 Garden Street requested historic preservation grants to fund phase two of the First Church Masonry preservation project.
- Chair Peterson stated that the next CPA public hearing will be held on July 27, 2017 at 831 Mass. Ave in the Lombardi Building basement conference rm. This room may be changed if another location can be found. She also noted that the record would remain open until July 27, 2017 and the public has access to request projects through an online request form, found on the City's home page.
- The meeting adjourned at 7:12P.M.

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