

Notes from Community Preservation Act Committee (CPAC) Public Hearing –June 13, 2018 6:00 P.M.  
Sullivan Chamber

**CPA Committee Members Present:**

Kevin Foster (Resident)  
Susan Schlesinger (Affordable Housing Trust)  
Ellen Shachter (Resident)  
Victoria Bergland (Affordable Housing)  
Corinne Espinosa (Planning Board)  
Kaki Martin (Conservation Commission)  
Lisa Peterson (Deputy City Manager/Chair CPA Committee)  
David Kale (Assistant City Manager for Fiscal Affairs)

**Staff Attendees:**

Justin Casanova- Davis (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-Community Development Department)  
Taha Jennings (Assistant to the City Manager- City Manager's Office)

- The meeting convened at 6:05 p.m. 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 FY19 CPA funding would be \$12.720M, which was \$150K higher than last year.
- May 23, 2018 CPA Committee meeting minutes were approved.
- Chair Peterson mentioned that the public will still be able to provide and submit project requests through July 19, 2018.

Public Comment

- Gabriel Cira, from the Cambridge Neighborhood Association, requested that CPA funds be used to restore and preserve local Cambridge churches. He mentioned that this proactive support would help the church buildings, build stronger community ties and engage young people in local architecture and preservation.
- Cheryl AnnePizza Zeoli is a resident of Cambridge and recommended preserving and creating affordable housing units. She discussed the struggles that families, especially with children have in getting housing and that federal housing is like a lottery. She felt it was unfair that there is never enough housing assistance. She also mentioned that public housing would be having budget cuts.

Staff proposals

Taha Jennings, Assistant to the City Manager discussed the City's open space needs and concerns for FY19. He mentioned that the Open Space Committee coordinates with various departments that look at the needs, issues, design, planning, programming, age and type of usage for open space citywide. The following projects were proposed; the Peabody School play structures need to be replaced with an

estimated cost of \$800K; the playground at Hoyt filed, needs play structures at two different areas along with furniture next to a youth center with an estimated cost around \$600K;

the Main Library requires improvements to bike parking, pathways, the side lawn area. This is highly used by the public with an estimated cost of \$450K. Fresh Pond Reservation, an area of golf course requires planting and landscaping that are estimated to cost \$150K. Other open space needs around the City, are either further out in the timeline or will be addressed by other fiscal resources.

- Charlie Sullivan, Executive Director of the Historical Commission stated that there are many projects in process that the committee approved in the past. He anticipated requesting \$ 600-700K for historic preservation grants. He stated that he had a very short list for municipal agencies, due to the current number of projects that are currently in progress from prior years of funded projects. The Library requested funds for compact shelving which will store historic materials. Inspectional Services would like to begin a pilot program to work on digitizing plans and materials. The roof at the Fire headquarters needs to be replaced. The historical commission continues to digitize material on 13 city buildings and will request \$85K in project costs. Every decade, statutes around the Cambridge Common need to be restored, at an estimated cost of \$25K. Additional funding may be required for the Boardman School, Bigelow St. and City Hall legislative floor projects. It was mentioned that several historic preservation projects are multi- year and includes planning, design and construction. A handout represented a list of institutional preservation grants with highlights of churches that have received funding. Mr. Sullivan mentioned that there were several current church applications that will be reviewed by the Historical Commission and the City Solicitor.
- Chris Cotter, Director of Housing for CDD, stated CPA funds have been essential to the City and highlighted several projects. One of the top propriety needs is Fresh Pond Apartments where affordability restrictions are now set to expire in 2020. There are 504 affordable units there that the City is currently working on with the owner, advocates, and residents to preserve. Although it will be very expensive, progress is being made and requests are expected to the Affordable Housing Trust for funds needed to preserve units in FY2019. While housing preservation is the highest priority, creating new affordable housing is also a critical need and the Trust has use CPA funds to initiate several new developments now underway. Although the market is high and the City is typically out bid, the City continues to be aggressive in looking for housing opportunities. CPA funds have allowed for sites to be brought into pipeline. Construction will soon begin on a new building with 98 affordable rental units. There have been acquisition funding commitments from the Trust for some which will need additional funding for construction. New affordable housing plans have been approved for 40 new units in Porter Square. Impacts to housing will be felt over the next couple of year due to cuts to entitlement grants, changes in the tax code and their impact on pricing for low-income housing tax credits. CDD will continue to work with affordable housing developers to look for land for new development, and work to preserve affordability for existing buildings. Recent progress has also been made where 8-10 people have recently been approved to purchase homes with CPA funds offered through the HomeBridge program. With this demand, CDD will soon seek additional CPA funds for this program in in FY19.
- CPA member Ellen Shachter asked for the cost estimate for expiring use at Fresh Pond Apartments
- Mr. Cotter stated that an analysis is underway and it is a significant number.
- Chair Peterson read the following project proposals into the record:
  - Mark VanMiddlesworth supported historic preservation projects
  - Rhonda Massie recommended a full-size sports field in East Cambridge and landscaping of the grounds at the O'Connell branch library.

- Phoebe Heyman requested affordable housing projects
- Krissy Robinson requested the CPA funds be used for additional affordable housing projects
- Jean Hannon requested more affordable housing for residents
- Gabriel Cira recommended historic preservation for local churches
- Doug Brown request using funds to complete the Cambridge bike path between Watertown line.

- Chair Peterson stated that the next CPA public hearing will be held on July 19, 2018 to hear from the public on recommended allocations made to housing, open space and historic preservation, with a minimum of 10% in each area.
- The meeting adjourned at 6:53 P.M.

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