

**CPA Committee Meeting – Minutes**  
**Wednesday, July 31, 2019, 6:00PM**  
**Sullivan Chamber, Cambridge City Hall, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor**  
**795 Massachusetts Ave., Cambridge, MA 02139**

CPA Committee Members Present:

- Lisa Peterson, Deputy City Manager (Chair)
- David Kale, Asst. City Manager for Fiscal Affairs
- Susan Schlesinger, Affordable Housing Trust
- Victoria Bergland, Cambridge Housing Authority
- Ellen Shachter, Resident
- Corinne Espinoza, Planning Board
- Chandra Harrington, Historical Commission
- Kaki Martin, Conservation Commission

Staff Attendees:

- Taha Jennings, Budget Director
- John Nardone, Deputy Commissioner for Operations, Public Works
- Charlie Sullivan, Executive Director, Historical Commission
- Chris Cotter, Housing Director, Community Development
- Jennifer Mathews, Asst. to the City Manager

- ❖ Chair Peterson called the meeting to order and asked Committee members to introduce themselves.
- ❖ Chair Peterson summarized the Committee’s work to date and the purpose of tonight’s meeting:
  - Tonight’s meeting is to hear public comment on the CPA percentage allocations. CPA funds need to be allocated to three categories – historic preservation, open space, and affordable housing – with a minimum of 10% in each area.
  - Since the inception of CPA in Cambridge, the Committee has allocated 80% for affordable housing, and 10% to open space and historic preservation. Every year, the Committee wants to hear from the public on whether to continue that allocation or adjust it.
  - This year, the Committee started with an organizing meeting, and reviewed the financial projection for this year’s funding. Projected funding is \$13,230,000, about \$500,000 more than last year.
  - The last meeting was a public hearing on project recommendations, and the record of that meeting is still open. The Committee received online project recommendations since then, and Chair Peterson will go through those and read them into the record before adjourning.
- ❖ Committee reviewed draft minutes from June 20, 2019 meeting.
  - Motion to approve minutes; minutes approved unanimously.
- ❖ Chair Peterson updated Committee on draft CPA booklet:

- Staff are currently drafting this year’s booklet, which will have background on the CPA process, projects that have received CPA funding in the past, projects that have been recommended this year, and other summary information.
  - The goal is to email the draft booklet out to the Committee within two weeks and make it available online. The Committee will use the booklet to make recommendations on projects and the allocation percentages.
  - Booklet will be updated slightly from previous years. Staff will be available to go through the booklet in detail with any Committee members who would like to do so.
- ❖ Committee opened the meeting for public comment:
- Doug Feinberg: Has been a Cambridge resident for 22 years; is a homeowner with a child in public schools. DF is the president of Central Cambridge Youth Baseball league, which plays on Magazine Beach, and wants to address funding for improvements there. DF knows there have been previous CPA funds for open space improvements and has seen many improvements since he first began playing there but wants to see increased funding to fix more of the park. DF has heard from many long-term Cambridgeport residents who greatly appreciate the improvements. Would like to see further improvements to the pool area and further connection to the surrounding areas of the park.
    - Chair Peterson reminded Mr. Feinberg that the purpose of this hearing is to receive comment on the allocation percentages and asked Mr. Feinberg if he had comments on that. DF did not.
  - Cathy Zousy: Would like an allocation of 70% affordable housing, 15% historical preservation and 15% open space. CZ recognizes that the City needs more affordable housing and demand is insatiable. CZ hopes and believes Cambridge will always be a great place to live, but Cambridge is great because of its open spaces and because of the City’s richness of history where many old structures survive. CZ would like Committee to continue to invest in open spaces for their health and spiritual benefit. Open space funding also provides economic benefits, with the Magazine Beach project receiving matching funds from the Department of Conservation and Recreation just today in the state budget.
  - Decia Goodwin: Appreciates the city for all its aspects – affordable housing, historic, and open space. Wants a more balanced allocation among the 3 categories. City is lacking in open space dramatically. It is always possible to build higher and denser, but the City is not getting any more open space. DG asks that Committee please increase its allocation for open space.
  - Jessica Rueben Wills: Speaking today on behalf of the maximum allocation for affordable housing and to briefly share a personal message on the HomeBridge program. JRW is a Cambridge Rindge and Latin graduate, who works as a public defender. JRW loves the work she does but never thought she’d be able to afford to continue living in Cambridge on her salary. HomeBridge made it possible. The program provided assistance to allow her to buy a condo in east Cambridge and allows her condo to go back to an income-eligible first-time home buyer in the future.
  - Eva Martin Blythe: Here on behalf of the YWCA Cambridge, a member association of a national and international movement to eliminate racism and help women. YWCA provides safe and affordable housing for women. YWCA owns two buildings in Central Square that are both historically significant and provide affordable housing. EMB appreciates the CPA

- funds that have allowed them to maintain these buildings. YWCA provides 103 single room occupancies for women who have difficulty living independently. Many residents have income below the poverty level. The reality is that we do not have enough affordable housing, and many of these women would be on the street without YWCA housing. There isn't enough to go around; there are always women waiting for safe and affordable housing. CPA has been and should continue to be one of the primary funding sources for affordable housing in Cambridge. EMB asks the Committee to maintain the 80-10-10 funding allocation. The balance has to put affordable housing first. We would lose racial and economic diversity otherwise, and EMB trusts Committee doesn't want that.
- Peter Daly: Here representing Homeowner's Rehab, Inc. (HRI); thanks Committee for the work they do. Didn't know what to expect many years ago, when CPA was first adopted, but what it's accomplished over its life is amazing and there is more to come. PD asks for 80-10-10 allocation continuation for affordable housing. PD has a series of petitions from HRI buildings; 225 signatures from residents whose homes would have been lost without CPA funding. Petitioners all live in income-restricted housing and all fully support the 80-10-10 percent allocation. New HRI project at Fresh Pond will have 98 units; just starting a complicated tenant selection process. Have been told to expect 10,000 applications for this housing, which means HRI will have to make 9,902 households wait for more housing to become available. Would like to tell them hope is on the way and there will be continued CPA funding at 80% for affordable housing.
  - Natalie Romero: Here with many petitions from Cambridge Economic Opportunity Committee (CEOC) participants, gathered over the last few weeks. These Cambridge residents recommend an 80-10-10 allocation due to the affordable housing crisis. Many in the community are concerned. NR was at an event this afternoon, and the biggest group of people hopping on the petition were teenagers concerned about housing.
  - Clara Fraden: Senior planner at Cambridge Housing Authority (CHA) and Cambridge resident. Supports affordable housing allocation at 80% and is submitting a petition from residents at CHA properties. The need is overwhelming. CHA has 19,000 distinct households on their waiting list; 5,000 have a Cambridge preference, which means they are either at risk of losing current housing in Cambridge or they work in Cambridge but live elsewhere. CHA has the opportunity to build over 150 units in near future; they already own the property but need funding for construction. CPA funding can help here. Every dollar counts and CPA funds go far by leveraging additional private funding for new construction. CPA funds can plug financing gaps, leverage private money, and make the most of public funds.
  - Peter Valentine: It is important to remember that the goal isn't just the presence of housing, it's the presence of intelligence. Another key issue is vitality. Beach openness allows the City to have dynamic vitality and appreciate the vastness of nature. Magazine Beach is a treasure chest for people to keep in touch with the forces of nature.
  - Tina Alu: Speaking as a resident and director of the CEOC. Thanks the Committee for its continuation of the 80-10-10 allocation previously and recommends maintaining this year. The CPA is one of the sole sources of funding for affordable housing and the CEOC has seen its positive impacts first-hand. Funds preserve the homes of long-term Cambridge residents; an 80% allocation ensures resources are available to preserve expiring use-restrictions. Restrictions on the Fresh Pond apartments are expiring in 2020 and over 500 housing units could be lost. Had a recent meeting to discuss restrictions and other affordable housing measures; TA also advocates for the affordable housing overlay. Cambridge has been

successful with expiring use maintenance in past years, but TA asks the Committee to please maintain the 80-10-10 allocation to keep this up.

- Elaine DeRosa: Recommends continuing the visionary 80-10-10 allocation. This is not the year to fiddle. We are in an affordable housing crisis and the City Council knows that. There are over 500 families at Fresh Pond waiting. The housing market is not a level playing field, so it does not make sense to have a different allocation. Without that allocation and without these programs, people like ED's daughter will never be able to buy in Cambridge. ED and her generation were the original gentrifiers in Cambridge. ED recognizes change is positive, but we need to make sure we're expanding the people who can live here. We know CPA funding preserves so much affordable housing; open space has other options in the City, with robust open space and recreation departments. Cambridge needs to look at housing first to make sure people can continue living here.
- Noah Sawyer: Representing Just-A-Start Corporation (JAS). CPA has helped fund JAS' Squirrelwood project; it preserves existing affordable housing and has helped add new funds. Without the CPA funds, JAS would not have been able to do this. Funds also further environmentally friendly construction. One of JAS' buildings being built to Passive House standards – a very energy efficient process. CPA investment has aided with this, and the technology will help future developments. Future developments in Wellington Harrington and North Cambridge depend on CPA funds as well. This requires an 80-10-10 allocation.
- Margaery Kriegler: Came to support the maximum allocation of funds for affordable housing. MK has a 5 year old and knows a lot of other parents in Cambridge. Living in Cambridge, as your kid ages you have to ask – Can we afford to stay here? If you're renting, and an average parent or parents out there working, you can't save; you can't do the things for your kids that you want to do. It's a real threat for Cambridge in terms of who can live here. MK has spoken with others; provides an example of a local man in his seventies who's lived here for decades. People his age also struggle for affordable housing. MK supports maximum percent for affordable housing.
- ❖ Committee is going to keep public comment open for input on the allocation percentage. Chair Peterson will read project recommendations received since last meeting into the record, and will then close the record for project recommendations. Committee will keep the record open until September 17<sup>th</sup> for comments on allocation and City will do outreach to the public for comment.
- ❖ Committee's next meeting will be on Tuesday, September 17, 2019 at 6:00 PM in the Ackermann Room.
- ❖ Committee member Susan Schlesinger asked how the City conducts outreach for comment.
  - Chair Peterson stated that it's predominantly through the City's social media accounts, directing people to comment through the website.
- ❖ Susan S. would like the Committee to consider more targeted outreach in the future, for people who aren't social media aficionados. Not everyone is comfortable with that process. More direct outreach to low and moderate-income tenants and individuals could be beneficial. As we move to social media and online comments, Committee should think carefully about how different segments of the society relate to that way of weighing in on issues.
  - Chair Peterson said this is an excellent point. Committee has seen the number of people participating in hearings shift over the years – there are less speakers but more petitions.

- ❖ Committee member Ellen Shachter would like to see summary of all the information the Committee has received to date.
  - Chair Peterson confirmed – summary will go into booklet. Full scans of recommendations will go online as well. All input will be documented, both in detail and in summary, and everything will be available to people. Staff will email Committee as soon as the minutes go up and documents are updated.
- ❖ Chair Peterson reiterated that the points on outreach and process are very important. Committee should think about that and discuss at the organizing meeting next year.
- ❖ Chair Peterson read project recommendations and comments received online since June 20, 2019 meeting into record, and provided updated proposals from Magazine Beach Partners and the Charles River Conservancy:
  - Doug Brown: Would like a new multi-use path along the south side of the rail tracks from Sherman St to Blanchard Rd, linking the Alewife district east to west and providing safer crossing on Route 2.
  - Peter Valentine: Submitted a lifestyle assessment and analysis tool which others may find helpful.
  - Melissa Robinson: Would like signage on either side of crosswalks, as opposed to signage in the middle of the crosswalk, to indicate drivers must stop; and other indicators for drivers to slow down.
    - Chair Peterson noted that only certain projects are eligible for CPA funding and CPA booklet will distinguish those that are not eligible. Staff will review projects with law department. This recommendation will be forwarded to traffic department, but is likely not eligible for CPA funds.
  - Jeanne Petropoulos: Would like better maintenance of gardens and plantings in the City, specifically the landscaping on Mass. Ave as you enter Harvard Square from Harvard Street.
  - Kathy Brenner: Would like more street trees. Would like more affordable housing for middle income residents and more facilities for the homeless.
  - Adriane Bishko: Would like a new pocket park at Porter Square, modeled after Greenacre Park in Manhattan, including falling water, granite blocks and plantings, as appropriate for the site.
  - Marty Mauzy: Supports the Hell's Half Acre ecological restoration project proposed by the Charles River Conservancy.
  - Nathalie Janson & Michael Eisenbrey: Support allocation of CPA funds at 10% to open space, 10% to historic preservation, and 80% to affordable housing.
  - Laura Jasinski: Supports allocation of CPA funds at 70% to affordable housing, 15% to historic preservation and 15% to open space.
  - Magazine Beach Partners submitted its written proposal today with an updated funding request of \$47,700.
  - The Charles River Conservancy submitted its written proposal today also, requesting \$50,250.

- ❖ Chair Peterson reiterated that staff would send booklet and all compiled requests and public comment to Committee members as soon as it is available.
- ❖ Meeting adjourned at 7:00 PM.