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CPA Committee Meeting Wednesday, June 29, 2022 5:30 p.m.

Committee members present: David Kale, Ellen Shachter, Mary Flynn, Kevin Foster, Kaki Martin, Susan Schlesinger

City staff present: Taha Jennings, Adam Corbeil, Charlie Sullivan, Chris Cotter, Jen Letourneau, Daniel Liss, Gary Chan, Lillian Hsu

I. **David Kale (DK) opens meeting:**

- DK opens meeting. This public meeting is being conducted remotely through Zoom, in accordance with Section 20 of Chapter 20 of the Acts of 2021, signed into law on June 16, 2021.
- DK takes attendance by roll call.
- Susan Schlesinger makes motion to approve minutes. Motion passes 6-0-3 absent

II. **Funding Estimates**

- Total FY23 CPA funds are estimated to increase to \$19,710,000. Each category will receive at least 10% (\$1,970,000).

III. **Public Comment**

- Eric Grunebaum, 98 Montgomery St., Friends of Jerry's Pond, Friends of Alewife; Friends of Alewife requesting feasibility study related to Jerry's Pond to reshape it as greenspace. Only area of City that meets all 3 criteria of environmental justice community. Across the street from Rindge Ave public housing.
- Peter Daly, Exec. Dir HRI. Supporting two affordable housing projects. Need for affordable housing has never been greater. Funding from CPA and housing trust is more critical than ever. First project is 1627 Mass Ave, being acquired from Lesley. This property has a historic building to be restored and developed into affordable housing. Looking to build on parking lot behind building. Second project on Cherry St. City will issue RFP to convert lot into homeownership units. Limited state subsidy for homeownership units, so CPA makes a difference.
- McNamara Buck, Friends of Jerry Pond. Looking to restore area around Jerry's Pond. Need to restore soil's ability to retain water. Jerry's Pond can play a big role in this. If there's any spot in the city that needs a newly restored green space, this is it. Transforming stark Rindge Ave into tree-lined area. It will be possible to transform it into a gem. Looking for \$500k-\$600k.
- Melissa Ludtke, North Cambridge, speaking on Jerry's Pond. Used to be public swimming hole. Now it is encircled by a chain link fence, blocked off from access. I hope you can begin to envision what this space can be. It can be more than it was when it was a swimming hole before. Requesting the \$500k-\$600k for feasibility study to take

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ideas that have already surfaced forward. Plan would reduce heat island effects at this site. Would reduce 90 degree+ days in neighborhood from 14 to 4. That alone would make this worthy. This funding request speak to foundational initiatives that Cambridge claims should be foremost in our goals – climate resilience, responding to needs of environmental justice communities, restoring natural spaces. This funding would help make this vision a reality. It is a generational opportunity to make a greenspace next to a community where residents lack access to greenspace. We shouldn't miss this opportunity.

- Rachel DeLucas. Friends of Jerry Pond. Live at end of Whittemore Ave, just up the way from Rindge. Two young sons enjoy walking up to Alewife constructed wetlands. You can see the effect of a boardwalk walkway compared to a paved road. Funding from CPA for Jerry's Pond re-naturalization could provide impact at this site.
- Zachary St. Lawrence. Speaking for need for recreational area. Lives near Gibbons Park. Linear Park apartments build. IQHQ development will bring traffic to the building. Need assessment on how to integrate it into existing parks.
- Ann McDonald. Live in Whittemore area near Gibbons Park. Indebted to neighbors who are leading the charge on Jerry's Pond. Support equitable green space and trees to reduce heat island, especially for neighbors. Would make a much more equitable offering, not just for Rindge Tower residents, but for everyone who goes to T station and baseball fields. Rindge Ave needs attention and love and care.
- Suzanna Schell. 194 Harvey St in North Cambridge. Friends of Jerry's Pond. Speaking in support of feasibility study to do public improvements to edge of Jerry's Pond. It is basically an on-ramp to Route 2 and traffic backs up. It's very narrow because of embankment. Connect Russell Field to Alewife. Flood storage and stormwater drainage. This is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to reclaim this for future generations.
- Cathleen Higgins. 345 Norfolk St. Support using CPA funds for affordable housing proposals mentioned by Peter Daly. Wonderful opportunity to increase access to affordable housing in transit-friendly areas.
- Patty Heyman. 66 Martin St., Member of Mothers Out Front. Jerry's Pond is major environmental justice issue. Hopes Cambridge will take a stand and step up to the plate to acknowledge this issue by taking an area that is so degraded. The people there deserve to have a beautiful area. It's a dark stain on Cambridge to have an area so rundown, especially in that location. It stands out as disrespectful to the people who live in the neighborhood.
- Shippen Page. 174 Lakeview Ave. Given tour of Jerry's Pond recently. Second what everyone else is saying. Fresh Pond was upgraded in early 90's. This is a fabulous opportunity to create a wonderful oasis in an area that needs it
- Public comment will remain open through 7/20 meeting. Project form posted on website – residents are welcome to submit proposals. Supporting documentation can be sent to tjennings@cambridgema.gov and they will be included in the record.

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IV. Presentations by City Staff

- Chris Cotter, Director of the Housing Division in the Community Development Department (CDD) gave a presentation on affordable housing needs and projects.
 - More new affordable housing in pipeline than in a long time. Housing Trust has made several recent investments.
 - New projects expected soon: \$4m to create 24 units at Rindge Commons (JAS) with 77 more in phase 2; AHO has 600 units moving through the process, with 62 units from CHA at 116 Norfolk St, Pres of Affordable Housing for Sacred Heart; 1627 Mass Ave (HRI); Cherry St. lot; a number of other sites.
- Charles Sullivan, Executive Director, Cambridge Historical Commission, gave a presentation on historical preservation projects
 - Last year, projects included flagpole preservation at City Hall, roof replacement of Lombardi Building, Digitization Project (on-line in September, no more money requested); preservation grant projects (6 churches all around, mostly for roofs); worked with Longy School 34 Garden St.; Affordable Housing grants include JAS and HRI (Dudley St. renovation of former rectory). Just put out mailing to 100 non-profits to promote availability of preservation grant funds. Winthrop St wall is stalled because abutting property owner has objected – working on moving it forward. Clerk for municipal records digitization
 - Prospective projects: 22-CityView to digitize recorded media from 1990's to 2015; Department of Public Works (DPW) to replace windows at Lexington Avenue firehouse and roof replacement for Cambridgeport Savings Bank building (689 Mass Ave); Cambridge Public Library (CPL) for digitizing city records and newspapers; Cambridge Historical Commission (CHC) for grant program and maintenance of monuments of old burial ground and for archival compact shelving/storage facilities in new offices.
- Gary Chan, Neighborhood Planner, Community Development Department, spoke about open space project priorities on behalf of the Open Space Committee.
 - Raymond St Park renovation – heavily used open space in Neighborhood Nine which includes a field area, playground, basketball courts, and a community garden. The project at Raymond Street Park would include renovations to the playground and basketball courts, field drainage work, new lighting and fencing to enhance the space, and extensive improvements to the community garden (new retaining wall, raised garden beds and related work). FY23 requested funds (\$1,720,000) will supplement FY22 funding. There may also be additional funding requests in the future once the design process is closer to being finalized.
 - Gore Street Park Paved Area - The courts at Gold Star Mother's Park (Gore Street Courts) are an underutilized space within the larger park - a heavily used open space in East Cambridge. The project at Gore Street Courts would include replacing the current asphalt courts with a multi-functional court space accommodating basketball (slightly undersized), soccer (appropriate for younger kids), volleyball, pickleball, and hockey (appropriate for younger kids), social

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spaces for small or large gatherings, and trees and garden beds. FY23 CPA funding (\$100,000) is requested for design and partial construction. It is anticipated that there will be future funding requests for the total estimated cost which will be determined after a design process.

- Watertown-Cambridge Greenway – Funding (\$150,000) is requested to enhance the newly completed Greenway with public art through a partnership of the City (Arts Council, CDD, DPW) and DCR.

V. **Committee Discussion**

- Ellen Shachter asked about available funding in Housing Trust. Chris Cotter noted that CPA funding is always an important component. Have not said no to anything because of funding yet but have to pay attention going forward. Susan Schlesinger pointed out construction costs are increasing which is eating into funding and the Affordable Housing Overlay has created many new opportunities.
- David Kale read 2 emails into the record
- Hearing on allocation percentages on July 20. Vote on allocations and funding requests will be September 6, 2022.
- Vote for adjournment - unanimous