



JOSEPH A. CURTATONE
MAYOR

Somerville CPA



**CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS
COMMUNITY PRESERVATION COMMITTEE
MINUTES
JANUARY 7, 2015**

MEMBERS

- Michael A. Capuano, Chair
- Dick Bauer, Vice Chair
- Tanya Cafarella
- Elizabeth Duclos-Orsello
- Michael Fager
- Arn Franzen
- Ezra Glenn
- Courtney Koslow
- Uma Murugan

STAFF

- Emily Monea

The Community Preservation Committee (CPC) held a community meeting at 7:00pm in the Aldermanic Chambers at City Hall, 93 Highland Avenue, Somerville, MA 02143. An audio recording of the meeting is available upon request.

- Members Present** Chair Michael Capuano, Vice Chair Dick Bauer, Tanya Cafarella, Elizabeth Duclos-Orsello, Michael Fager, Arn Franzen, Ezra Glenn, and Courtney Koslow
- Members Absent** Uma Murugan
- Staff Present** Emily Monea
- Others Present** Amie Hayes, John Long, Nadia Dixson, Brandon Wilson, Rob King, Mary Ann Upton, Stephen Vitello, Luisa Oliveira, and community meeting attendees

The Chair opened the meeting at approximately 7:00. The Committee members and community meeting attendees referenced the materials listed at the end of these meetings, all of which are available online and upon request.

Agenda item 1: Introduction

a. Committee introductions

The Committee members introduced themselves. The Chair explained how the hearing would proceed.

b. Approval of minutes from December 3rd meeting

Upon motion from the Vice Chair, seconded by Ms. Duclos-Orsello, the Committee voted 8-0 to approve the minutes from the December 3rd meeting.

c. Overview presentation

Ms. Monea gave an overview [presentation](#) on the Community Preservation Act (CPA).

Agenda item 2: Presentations on project proposals and questions from CPC members

a. American Tube Works Complex National Register Nomination

Amie Hayes, a planner in the City's Planning Division, gave a [presentation](#) on the [American Tube Works Complex National Register Nomination](#) project proposal.

Elizabeth Duclos-Orsello asked whether the estimate of hours required to complete the project that was included in the full application was too low. Ms. Hayes responded that a large amount of the work required for the nomination had been done in 2010 when the Complex was determined eligible for the National Register.

Michael Fager asked whether owner consent was required to submit the nomination and whether the owners had been contacted. Ms. Hayes noted that owner consent would ultimately be required and that the proposed consultant would be responsible for acquiring consent. She noted that being placed on the National Register would not burden property owners in any way.

Courtney Koslow asked to what extent the building is currently occupied. Ms. Hayes noted that all of the buildings are at least partially occupied.

b. City of Somerville Archives – Processing Contractor

City Clerk John Long introduced the Somerville Archives and gave an overview of the Processing Contractor project proposal. City Archivist Nadia Dixon gave a [presentation](#) on the [project proposal](#).

The Chair asked whether the request is a one-time request and what happens to the collections after they are processed. Ms. Dixon stated that this is a one-time request and that the collections will be stored off-site after they are processed.

Ezra Glenn asked whether the City will request funding for processing the archives every year. Ms. Dixon said the City may request funding in future years but that the collections for which the City is requesting funding this year are the most historic and important collections in the City's archives.

Elizabeth Duclos-Orsello noted that processing the collections will likely lead to increased demand to view them. She asked whether the City intends to digitize the collections and whether the physical collections will be accessible if they are stored off-site. Ms. Dixon responded that there are no plans to digitize the collections as her office has found that on-demand digitization is most cost effective. She said that there is a 24-hour turnaround for accessing the collections from the off-site storage center.

Mr. Fager asked why the City is not paying for this project. Ms. Dixon noted that the Archives budget is very limited - it only covers her salary – and that projects like this are not included in

her regular job responsibilities. However, making these collections accessible is important, so the City is turning to the CPA for support.

c. Milk Row Cemetery Rehabilitation & Restoration

Brandon Wilson, Executive Director of the Historic Preservation Commission, gave a [presentation](#) on the [Milk Row Cemetery Rehabilitation & Restoration](#) project proposal.

The Chair asked for clarification on the funding request, noting that the total anticipated project need is between \$90,000 and \$100,000 and that the \$17,500 request will qualify the project for a match from the state. He asked whether the state match would cover the remainder of the project's anticipated need. Ms. Wilson noted that the state match would not cover the remaining need and that a higher grant from the CPC would be welcome.

Courtney Koslow asked how much work the requested \$17,500 would accomplish. Ms. Wilson said the matching grant has not been issued yet and that applications are generally due in the spring. She noted that the City will apply for additional funds at that time if possible.

Mr. Glenn asked what will happen if the project receives CPA funding but does not receive matching funds from the state: will the City spend the funds or hold onto them to use as matching funds in the next state funding cycle? Ms. Wilson replied that the City will most likely spend the funds this year and apply again to the CPC next year.

d. City Hall Renovation – Design and Construction Management

Rob King, Director of Capital Planning and Projects, gave a [presentation](#) on the [City Hall Renovation – Design and Construction Management](#) project proposal.

The Chair asked whether the City intends to build a new City Hall in Union Square, as had been reported as a consideration at one time. Mr. King stated that it is his understanding that City Hall would continue to operate out of its current location.

Ms. Koslow asked whether the City was considering doing any work beyond the scope covered in the application (e.g., interior improvements) and if so, whether the City would come back to the CPC for additional funding. Mr. King noted that the City intends to pursue interior improvements but that design costs associated with those improvements would be covered by the City and are not included in the CPA request, which covers accessibility, envelope improvements, and life safety needs.

Tanya Cafarella asked what works qualifies as life safety improvements. Mr. King noted that it includes work like sprinklers and emergency egress improvements.

The Vice Chair noted that the request is for design and that the actual work would cost ten times as much. Mr. King responded that the City had commissioned a needs assessment of the building that gave the City an order of magnitude of the work needed on the building. Once an owner's project manager is brought on and a design is complete, the City will have a more accurate estimate of construction costs and will decide whether to pursue CPA funding for the project or to request authorization from the Board of Aldermen. Mr. Fager noted that the application indicates that the construction would be funded by regular City funds. Mr. King noted that the City has not yet made a final determination as to whether it would request CPA funding for the construction costs of the project.

The Vice Chair noted that the application emphasized the City's access to low interest rates, which seems to imply that the City expects the CPC to bond for the project. Mr. King noted that the City wanted to emphasize this point if the CPC faces funding constraints and decides to pursue bonding.

Mr. Fager asked whether the City intends to keep the weather vane on the building, and Mr. King said it does.

e. West Branch Library Renovations – Construction Funding

Mr. King introduced Mary Ann Upton from designLAB, the design firm hired by the City for the West Branch Library project, who gave a [presentation](#) on the [project proposal](#).

The Chair asked how frequently the West Branch Library is used and how frequently the City anticipates the library will be used if it is renovated. Mr. King did not have the numbers on hand at the time but noted during the public comment period that in fiscal year 2013, 73,369 items were checked out of the library, roughly 200 per day.

Ms. Duclos-Orsello asked whether any other Carnegie libraries have been rehabilitated using CPA or similar funding sources. Ms. Upton and Mr. King said they did not know.

Ms. Koslow asked whether the funding request covers all of the work needed for the building. Mr. King said yes.

f. Prospect Hill Tower Renovation

Stephen Vitello, Project Manager in the Capital Projects and Planning Department, gave a [presentation](#) on the [Prospect Hill Tower Renovation](#) project proposal.

The Chair noted that the request is for \$500,000 and asked for clarification on what that amount covers. Mr. Vitello noted that the City contracted a designer for the project and the cost estimate is based on that company's work. He said the funding request would cover repointing the Tower, resetting loose parapet stones, repairing the stairs inside and outside the Tower,

repairing the entry doors, and repairing the drainage. The member asked whether the request covers all of the work needed, and Mr. Vitello said yes.

Ms. Koslow asked whether the Tower would be open to everyone at all times. Mr. Vitello said the opportunity would be there but that he is unsure how the City intends to program it. The member asked whether the Tower would be ADA accessible, and Mr. Vitello said it would not be.

Mr. Fager noted that the CPA legislation prohibits CPA funds from being used for maintenance but that the project application includes a letter from Kristenna Chase stating that the intended work qualifies as ordinary maintenance, repair, and replacement. Mr. Vitello responded that much of the work needed derives from deferred maintenance and that deferred maintenance can turn into a capital issue. Maintenance of the structure, which would include inspection and touching up, is not included in the proposal. Some of the work is simply due to materials (e.g., the slab and the railings) reaching the end of their useful life.

Ms. Duclos-Orsello asked how the City intends to handle issues like deferred maintenance and investing in City-owned historic resources moving forward, noting that the project application indicates that the City hasn't substantively invested in Prospect Hill Tower in a century. Mr. Vitello noted that many of these projects are identified in the City's five-year capital plan and that the City views the CPA as an opportunity to leverage resources and get more projects done.

g. Prospect Hill Park Design Services

Luisa Oliveira, the City's Senior Planner for Landscape Design, gave a [presentation](#) on the [Prospect Hill Park Design Services](#) project proposal.

The Chair asked what the \$85,000 request covers. Ms. Oliveira noted that it includes \$10,000 for historic research, including the possibility of archeological digging, \$8,000 to \$10,000 for a site survey, and the remainder for design services.

The Vice Chair asked what the budget for the construction of the park will be. Ms. Oliveira said this would come out of the design process. She also noted that the City has committed \$4,000 to investigate the structural soundness of the site's retaining walls. She stated that once the budget for the project is known, the City will decide whether to pursue additional CPA funding or other funding sources.

Ms. Duclos-Orsello asked whether the City has a contingency plan if the archeological survey reveals more than anticipated and whether the archeological budget is sufficient. Ms. Oliveira noted that the budget is based on a preliminary bid from UMass Amherst. Another member noted that the site has changed significantly since the occurrence of the major historic events.

Mr. Glenn asked whether the project includes the adjacent playground, and Ms. Oliveira said no.

Agenda item 3: Public comment

Heather Heimarck asked what work would be covered in the Prospect Hill Park design fee. Ms. Oliviera said it would include public meetings, design development, and construction documents.

David Dahlbacka spoke in favor of the West Branch Library renovation. He said that he and his wife visit the building frequently. He stated that he grew up visiting a beautiful Carnegie library in Illinois which fell into deep disrepair and that he does not want the same for West Branch Library.

Brandon Wilson testified as a member of the public. She noted that those who grew up in the Davis area used the West Branch Library frequently but that it has lost much of its value because it has fallen into disrepair and is not accessible and therefore cannot offer programming.

Abby Freedman asked what proportion of the requested budget for West Branch Library has to do with accessibility, envelope, systems, and life safety improvements and what proportion has to do with redesigning the interior of the building. Ms. Freedman noted that she was happy to see the City apply for funds for the City Hall project. She asked what proportion of the design funds requested will be used for designing accessibility, envelope, systems, and life safety improvements and what proportion will be used for redesigning the interior of the building. She also asked whether any of the design activities will address whether the building will eventually be repurposed for another use or sold to a private developer for another use.

The Chair requested that applicants respond to questions in writing rather than going back and forth during the public comment period.

David Dahlbacka spoke in favor of the City Hall project, noting that he walks by and visits the building frequently and that it is visibly in need of repair. He also spoke against moving City Hall to Union Square.

Barbara Mangum asked for clarification about the magnitude of the West Branch Library request, noting that there is insufficient funding available to cover it. She spoke in favor of the project. She also noted that some of the work does not appear to be historic preservation. While the City should pursue that work, she suggested that it should be done in another way.

A discussion developed around bonding for the project. Mr. Fager noted that the \$6 million request would require bonding against future CPA revenue. Ms. Monea stated that the debt service on a \$6 million bond would be approximately \$500,000 per year. She noted that the debt service would not necessarily come from future historic resources CPA funds and that it would be up to the Committee to decide how to handle this.

**Agenda item 4: Next meeting: Second community meeting on Monday, January 12th at 7pm
(Community Room, Visiting Nurse Association, 259 Lowell St.)**

The Chair noted the projects that would be discussed at the next meeting, including: 56 Bow Street: Exterior Restoration, Community Growing Center – Upgrade Design/Community Building Planning, First Congregational Church of Somerville UCC Renovation Phase 2, Healey School to Mystic, Mystic Water Works, School Garden Classrooms, Somerville Museum – Capital Improvements, and Temple B’Nai Brith Fire Safety and Accessibility Project. He also noted that the Committee will be accepting written comments through the end of the month.

The Chair asked the meeting attendees if they had any additional questions about the applications. Mr. King responded to the question about West Branch Library. He noted that the estimate in the feasibility study for accessibility, building systems, and the envelope was \$4 million. The remaining funding requested is for interior and exterior design improvements. He said he would find additional information on the City Hall request.

Meeting Adjournment

Upon motion from the Chair, seconded by the Vice Chair, the Committee voted 8-0 to adjourn at approximately 8:40.

Documents and Exhibits:

1. [Meeting agenda](#)
2. [CPA overview presentation](#)
3. [Summary of FY15 CPA project proposals](#), prepared by Emily Monea
4. [Community Preservation Plan Summary](#), updated January 7, 2015, prepared by Emily Monea
5. Presentations on project proposals
 - a. [American Tube Works Complex National Register Nomination](#)
 - b. [City of Somerville Archives – Processing Contractor](#)
 - c. [Milk Row Cemetery Rehabilitation & Restoration](#)
 - d. [City Hall Renovation – Design and Construction Management](#)
 - e. [West Branch Library Renovations – Construction Funding](#)
 - f. [Prospect Hill Tower Renovation](#)
 - g. [Prospect Hill Park Design Services](#)