



JOSEPH A. CURTATONE
MAYOR



**CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS
COMMUNITY PRESERVATION COMMITTEE
MINUTES
MAY 7, 2014**

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 public hearing at 7:00pm in the cafeteria of the West Somerville Neighborhood School at 177 Powder House Blvd., Somerville, MA 02144. An audio recording of the hearing 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** Public hearing attendees

The Chair opened the hearing at 7:02. He explained the purpose of the hearing – to gather public feedback on the draft priorities the Community Preservation Committee (CPC) has created for its Community Preservation Plan (CPP) – and noted that the Committee will hold a second public hearing on Monday, May 12th at 7:00 at the East Somerville Community School.

Agenda item 1: Committee introductions

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

Agenda item 2: Approval of minutes from April 2nd meeting

Upon motion from Ms. Cafarella, seconded by the Chair, the Committee voted 8-0 to approve the minutes from the April 2nd meeting.

Agenda item 3: Presentation on Community Preservation Act (CPA) and Community Preservation Plan (CPP)

Ms. Monea presented the material about the CPA and the Committee in the presentation attached at the end of these minutes.

Agenda item 4: Discussion of general priorities in the CPP

Ms. Monea presented the Committee's draft general priorities and highlighted the specific question the Committee requested feedback on, all outlined in the presentation attached at the end of these minutes. The Chair then opened the hearing to testimony from the public on the draft general priorities.

Erin DeBenedetto suggested adding longstanding small business owners to the set of organizations from which the Committee prioritizes projects.

Mimi Graney asked whether the Committee intends to establish and communicate rough estimates of how much CPA funding it intends to devote to projects in each focus area and to short- versus long-term projects prior to releasing the application to the public. She said it would be helpful to give applicants a sense of how much money is realistic to apply for. The Committee responded that this issue is closely related to another specific question the Committee has for the public – whether the Committee should prioritize projects in certain CPA focus areas or whether it should strive to allocate CPA funding equally across the areas – and that it welcomes feedback on both. The Committee also noted that the pre-application phase of the application process is intended both to give applicants some feedback on their project with minimal effort from them and to give the Committee a sense of what the projects coming in look like. Ms. Graney also encouraged the Committee to prioritize projects that create long-lasting value.

Alan Moore encouraged the Committee think more about general priority 2b (“demonstrate that CPA funds are a source of last resort”), noting that he wouldn't want the Committee to not fund a project simply because it might get funding sometime in the distant future. He also encouraged the Committee to set goals, but not requirements, for how much CPA funding is devoted to each focus area and encouraged the Committee to strive to have a fair distribution across the three focus areas. Finally, he noted that a few communities barely spend their CPA funding and encouraged the Committee to avoid this in Somerville and to prioritize spending the funding, while acknowledging that it is reasonable to save in some years to afford larger projects down the line.

A resident from Winter Hill (name inaudible) said the following are important: art and public art space; preserving the character of neighborhoods; preserving the security of the community, perhaps by acquiring property to prevent permeation of drugs; encouraging youth to participate in the CPA process as a mechanism for them to participate in government; improving common transportation areas (e.g., bus stops) with, for example, better benches; preserving space that drives innovation and/or commerce or interdisciplinary interaction between, for example, art and youth.

Brandon Wilson encouraged the Committee to consider how to fund expensive, multi-year projects like restoring Prospect Hill Tower. She also asked the Committee to be transparent about how exactly it will select projects (for example, if it intends to use a point system based on the priorities in the Plan, that system should be released along with the Plan and the application). She supports projects that impact

two or more focus areas and encouraged the Committee to encourage the Board of Aldermen to participate in the CPC process since they have final say on projects.

Agenda item 5: Discussion of open space and recreational land priorities in the CPP

Ms. Monea presented the Committee's draft open space and recreational land priorities outlined in the presentation attached at the end of these minutes. The Chair then opened the hearing to testimony from the public on this set of priorities.

Joanna Variotis voiced her support for all of the Committee's draft priorities and in particular supported priorities 6 ("creatively and coherently combine multiple uses that meet community need") and 7 ("expand urban agriculture opportunities"). She encouraged the Committee to include community gardens in any project possible, noting that there is a multi-year wait for existing community garden plots and a growing interest in them. She noted that there are nooks and crannies all around the City that could hold 4-6 community garden plots and that community gardens can be used instead of landscaping.

A resident from Winter Hill (name inaudible) voiced his support for open WiFi and open technology access in public spaces; using rooftops of buildings to create new recreational land; and free public parking.

Alan Moore encouraged the Committee to be explicit about what urban agriculture means by adding language about community gardens. He also encouraged the Committee to add a priority about maintaining and improving paths and trails in Somerville, including the Community Path and paths along the Mystic River and Alewife Brook, if that is allowable under the CPA.

Mimi Graney supported the idea of thinking vertically and taking advantage of rooftops. She encouraged the Committee to ensure that a portion of the funds are reserved for community-sponsored projects and not just City-sponsored projects every year so that the community remains engaged in and supportive of the CPA.

Agenda item 6: Discussion of historic resources priorities in the CPP

Ms. Monea presented the Committee's draft historic resources priorities outlined in the presentation attached at the end of these minutes. The Chair then opened the hearing to testimony from the public on this set of priorities.

Brandon Wilson encouraged the Committee to consider less well known historic properties like the Somerville Museum, which is a great resource for the community and also needs assistance urgently as it is not ADA accessible and therefore cannot be used for City functions. The museum has a grant for \$85,000 that they need to match for a \$200,000 shovel-ready project. She also encouraged the Committee to consider a program that would help historic property homeowners who don't have the resources to maintain or improve their homes, noting that this would also help people to get their homes designated or keep them designated.

Lai Ying Yu would like to see the West Somerville Neighborhood improved.

Alan Moore suggested the Committee share its draft set of priorities with other municipalities and with the Community Preservation Coalition to see if it is missing anything important.

Jeff Myers encouraged the Committee to devote resources to the Somerville Museum, which is a critical resource for the City. He also voiced support for a comprehensive census of all historic properties in the City.

Agenda item 7: Discussion of community housing priorities in the CPP

Ms. Monea presented the Committee's draft community housing priorities and highlighted the specific question the Committee requested feedback on, all outlined in the presentation attached at the end of these minutes.

The Committee responded to questions from the attendees. During that time, **Alan Moore** encouraged the Committee to use community housing money to purchase deed restrictions to prevent speculative price and rent increases. In response to a question from an attendee about the pros and cons of transferring community housing money to the Affordable Housing Trust, the Committee said:

- The Committee would lose control over community housing money if it were to transfer it to the Trust. When voters passed the Community Preservation Act, they entrusted the Community Preservation Committee to make recommendations on how the funding should be spent.
- The Affordable Housing Trust has more than 20 years of experience in supporting housing projects and has considerable expertise in the area. They also have an established and well-known process in place for soliciting and approving projects.
- Affordable Housing Trust projects do not require approval from the Board of Aldermen.

The Chair opened the hearing to testimony from the public on this set of priorities.

Lai Ying Yu encouraged the Committee to prioritize projects that provide for affordability into perpetuity, projects with two- to three-bedroom units, and elderly housing.

Alex Bob seconded Ms. Yu's comments. He emphasized that with the Green Line Extension, we are facing an exceptional, time-sensitive opportunity and that we should capitalize on it. He encouraged projects with two- to three-bedroom bedroom units and encouraged the Committee to keep track of how Somerville's median income compares to HUD's area median income.

Joanna Variotis reiterated her support for all of the Committee's draft priorities and encouraged the Committee to prioritize projects that preserve owner-occupied two- and three-family structures.

Brandon Wilson encouraged the Committee to maintain control over community housing funding rather than transferring it to the Affordable Housing Trust and to maintain flexibility over CPA funding and not to commit in advance to devoting funding to any of the focus areas beyond the required 10% minimum. She also encouraged the Committee to prioritize projects that preserve owner-occupied two- and three-family structures, to consider co-housing projects, to consider projects that allow seniors to stay in their own homes, and to consider ways to preserve the historic character of Somerville's houses.

Jeff Myers noted that Committee will have to deal with competing priorities (specifically, preserving owner-occupied two- and three-family homes and creating transit-oriented, mixed-use development) and encouraged the Committee to try to strike a balance between them.

Agenda item 8: Open testimony period

The Chair opened the hearing to open testimony and specifically asked the attendees whether the Committee should prioritize projects in certain CPA focus areas or strive to allocate CPA funding equally across the focus areas.

Jeff Myers encouraged the Committee to err on the side of flexibility, especially so as to respond to urgent, time-sensitive needs, and to reevaluate in the future.

Lai Ying Yu also encouraged the Committee to maintain flexibility with regard to spending CPA funds. She also encouraged the Committee to spread the word about the CPA and future public hearings as widely as possible and be creative in doing so.

A resident (who did not identify himself) encouraged the Committee to have translators at future meetings to engage the non-English speaking portion of the community.

Agenda item 9: Next meeting: Public hearing on Monday, May 12th at 7pm at the East Somerville Community School

Meeting Adjournment

Upon motion from the Chair, seconded by Ms. Duclos-Orsello, the Committee voted 8-0 to adjourn at 8:55.

Documents and Exhibits:

1. Meeting agenda: distributed to the Committee members
2. PowerPoint presentation: presented by Ms. Monea at the hearing
3. Draft Community Preservation Plan Executive Summary: distributed to meeting attendees.
4. Draft Community Preservation Plan: distributed to the Committee members

Somerville CPA



Community Preservation Committee Public Hearing

May 7, 2014
West Somerville Neighborhood School

Committee Members

Member	Representative From
Michael Capuano, Chair	Planning Board
Dick Bauer, Vice Chair	Historic Preservation Commission
Tanya Cafarella	Housing Authority
Elizabeth Duclos-Orsello	General public
Michael Fager	Conservation Commission
Arn Franzen	Parks & Open Space Department
Ezra Glenn	General public
Courtney Koslow	General public
Uma Murugan	General public

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 617-625-6600 x2118

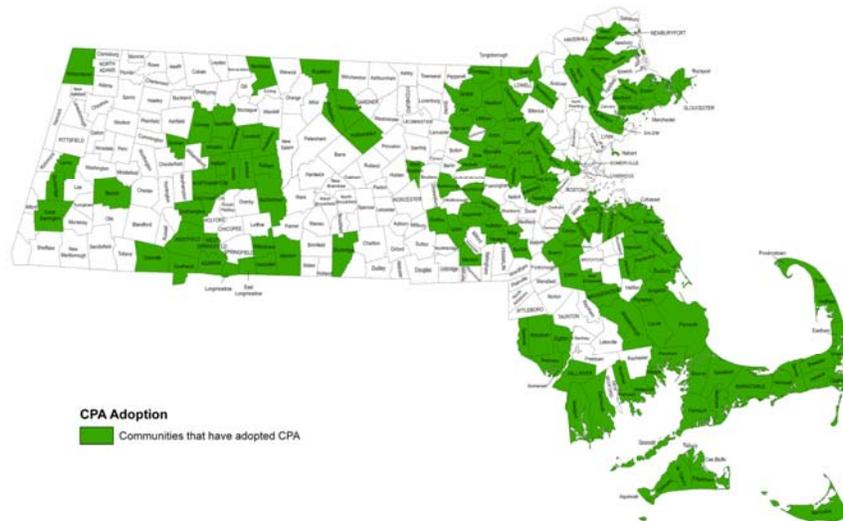
The Community Preservation Act

- ▶ Massachusetts legislation (MGL Ch. 44b)
- ▶ Local adoption
- ▶ Creates a new funding source for communities to invest in...



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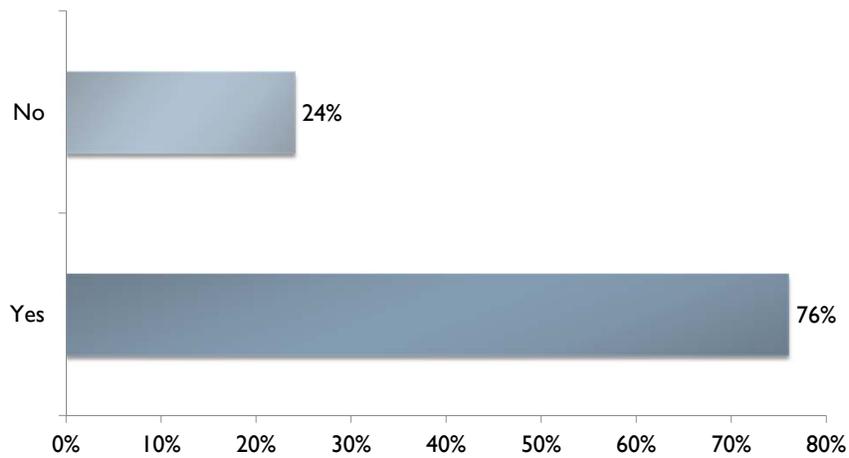
155 CPA Communities



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CPA Passage in Somerville

November 2012 Election Results



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Statewide Accomplishments

- ▶ 19,200 acres of open space preserved
- ▶ Funding for over 7,300 housing units
- ▶ 3,200 separate historic appropriations
- ▶ Over 1,000 appropriations for recreation
- ▶ Over a billion dollars raised for CPA projects (surcharge + match)

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Statewide Accomplishments



▶ 7

Funding

- ▶ 3 key sources of annual funding
 - ▶ Surcharge revenue (~\$1.2 million)
 - ▶ City appropriation (Discretionary, up to ~\$1.2 million)
 - ▶ State match (~25-50% on surcharge revenue and City appropriation)

**Total annual CPA revenue =
~\$1.5 million to ~\$3.5 million**

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Community Preservation Committee (CPC)

▶ Three key responsibilities:

1. Prepare a budget for the Board of Aldermen
2. Make project recommendations to the Board of Aldermen
3. Prepare and maintain a Community Preservation Plan, which establishes the Committee's priorities for funding projects & criteria for evaluating them

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Allowable Projects

	Community Housing	Historic Preservation	Open Space	Outdoor Recreation
Acquire	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Create	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Preserve	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Support	Yes	No	No	No
Rehabilitate and/or Restore	Yes, if acquired or created with CPA funds	Yes	Yes, if acquired or created with CPA funds	Yes

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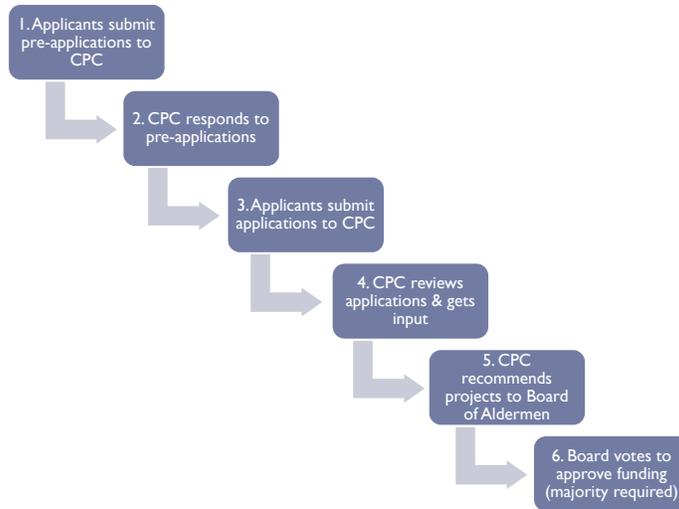
Somerville Affordable Housing Trust

▶ **Three options:**

1. The Trust applies for CPA funding.
2. The Trust serves as the housing arm of the CPC.
3. Hybrid: The CPC gives the Trust a minimum amount of funding each year & the Trust can apply for additional funding.

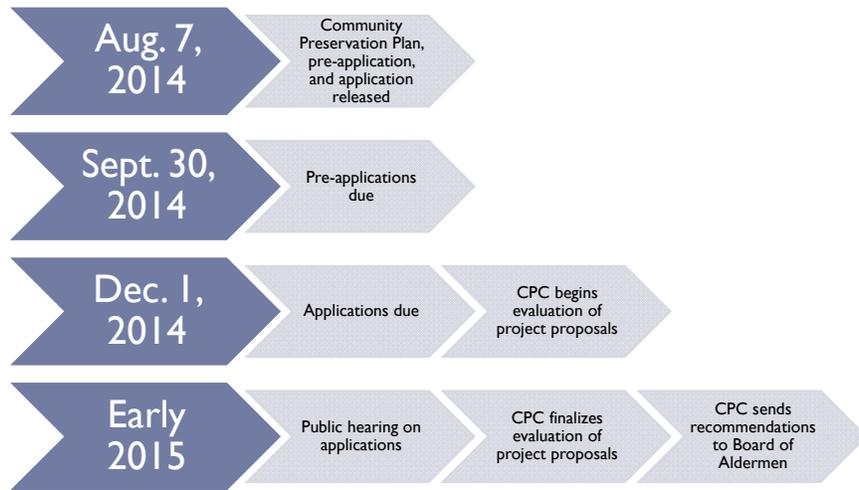
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Applying for CPA Funding



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Tentative Timeline



somerillema.gov/CPA

Community Preservation Plan Draft Priorities

Draft Priorities Based on Current Planning Documents

Somerville Vision
City of Somerville, Massachusetts
Comprehensive Plan | 2010-2030

The Dimensions of Displacement
Baseline Data for Managing
Neighborhood Change
in Somerville's Green Line
Corridor

Funding provided by the
Albertus System Commission for
Somerville Community

February 2014

**Somerville Open Space and
Recreation Plan 2008-2013**

Presented by
Metropolitan Area Planning Council
80 Temple Place, 6th Floor
Boston, Massachusetts 02111
617-451-2770
www.mapc.org

MAPC
METROPOLITAN AREA PLANNING COUNCIL
Metropolitan Council of Regional Governments

**Somerville: an Exceptional Place to
Live, Work, Play, and Raise a Family**

City of Somerville, Massachusetts

Mayor Joseph A. Curtatone

Endorsed by the
Somerville Board of Aldermen
April 12th, 2012

Adopted by the
Somerville Planning Board
April 19th, 2012

General Priorities

The CPC will prioritize projects that:

1. **Are consistent with the community's values:**
 - a. Improve accessibility for all members of the community
 - b. Incorporate sustainable practices and design
 - c. Receive endorsement from other city boards, commissions, departments, or community groups or from city, state, or federal officials
 - d. Are consistent with the goals and priorities established in other current planning documents but not explicitly addressed in this plan
2. **Use CPA funding strategically:**
 - a. Leverage other public or private funds
 - b. Demonstrate that CPA funds are a source of last resort
 - c. Address long-standing or urgent needs in the community
 - d. Take advantage of exceptional, time-sensitive opportunities
 - e. Could serve as catalysts for transformative change
 - f. Generally represent good value for the money

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Question for the Public:

1. **Should the Committee prioritize projects submitted by non-profits, the City, and residents?**

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Open Space & Recreational Land Priorities

The CPC will prioritize projects that:

1. Support the acquisition of land for and creation of new publicly accessible open space and recreational land.
2. Expand access to and use of the Mystic River and Alewife Brook corridors.
3. Improve the health of the wetlands and shores of the City's water resources.
4. Rehabilitate and restore existing recreational land according to need, as determined by the City's Open Space and Rec Plan.
5. Follow the recommendations of the City's recreation fields task force.
6. Creatively and coherently combine multiple uses that meet community need.
7. Expand urban agriculture opportunities.

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Historic Resources Priorities

- ▶ The CPC's first priority is to commission a consultant to create a historic preservation plan, as the City currently has no planning document to guide the prioritization of historic resources projects.
- ▶ In the interim, the CPC will prioritize historic resources projects that address crucial, longstanding needs in Somerville's historic landmarks and properties.

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Community Housing Priorities

The CPC will prioritize projects that:

1. Preserve expiring-use units.
2. Provide for affordability in perpetuity.
3. Target assistance to households with income below 50% AMI.
4. Target assistance to moderate-income households (80-100% AMI).
5. Include rental units with 3+ bedrooms and/or small units reserved for elderly households.
6. Are mixed-use and transit-oriented.
7. Include units for homeless and formerly homeless households.

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Community Housing Questions for the Public

1. Should the Committee prioritize projects that provide for affordability into perpetuity?
2. Should the Committee prioritize projects with certain unit sizes?
3. Should the Committee prioritize projects that preserve owner-occupied two- and three-family structures?
4. Should the Committee transfer community housing funding to the Somerville Affordable Housing Trust for it to allocate to CPA-eligible projects?

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Open Testimony

- ▶ Question for the public: should the Committee prioritize projects in certain CPA focus areas or strive to allocate CPA funding equally across the focus areas?