



JOSEPH A. CURTATONE  
MAYOR



**CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS**  
**COMMUNITY PRESERVATION COMMITTEE**  
MINUTES  
MAY 12, 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 East Somerville Neighborhood School at 50 Cross St., Somerville, MA 02145. An audio recording of the hearing is available upon request.

- Members Present** Chair Michael Capuano, Vice Chair Dick Bauer, Tanya Cafarella (arrived late), Elizabeth Duclos-Orsello, Michael Fager, Arn Franzen, Ezra Glenn, Courtney Koslow, and Uma Murugan
- Members Absent** None
- 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 CPC previously held a second public hearing on Wednesday, May 7<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 at the West Somerville Community School.

**Agenda item 1: Committee introductions**

The Committee members introduced themselves. The Chair explained how the hearing would proceed: Ms. Monea will give a presentation about the Community Preservation Act (CPA) and the priorities the Committee has drafted for the Community Preservation Plan (CPP). The Committee will respond to questions from attendees after each section of the presentation. After the presentation, the Chair will open the hearing to testimony from attendees.

Ms. Cafarella arrived at 7:08.

**Agenda item 2: 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. The Committee then answered questions from residents.

**Agenda item 3: 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 Committee then answered questions from residents.

**Agenda item 4: 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 Committee then answered questions from residents.

**Agenda item 5: 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 Committee then answered questions from residents.

**Agenda item 6: 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.

**Agenda item 7: Open testimony period**

The Chair opened the hearing to testimony and requested that each individual limit his/her testimony to three minutes.

**Mary Cassesso** shared information about the Affordable Housing Trust. The Trust has a representative appointed by the Mayor, a member of the Board of Aldermen, a representative from the non-profit world, a tenant, and a homeowner. Several of the members have expertise in banking, finance, real estate, and housing. In its 25-year history the Trust has spent \$3.5 million on more than 350 affordable units, assisted 60 to 70 renters in stabilizing their residency in Somerville, and assisted about a dozen individuals with purchasing their homes. The Trust has great flexibility in spending money and using this flexibility to leverage other resources. The Trust is currently undergoing a strategic visioning process, which it does every five years. Ms. Cassesso emphasized the Trust's deep experience, expertise, and breadth and encouraged the CPC to allocate community housing funding to the Trust.

**Courtney O'Keefe** encouraged the Committee to invest in Hoyt-Sullivan Park and Junction Park (which she mentioned is the perfect location for a community garden), both of which are underutilized. She also encouraged the CPC to integrate with the City's Capital Investment Plan. Finally, she is concerned about associations of Committee members and Board of Aldermen members with applicants; she wants an even, level playing field for CPA funding.

**Ellen Shachter** encouraged the Committee to allocated percentages for the focus areas ahead of time. While she supports all three areas, she emphasized that the majority of the funding should be dedicated to affordable housing. The City has prioritized anti-displacement and can't do this without a commitment to affordable housing. Housing is also more politicized than the other two areas, so the Committee needs to take a strong leadership role in expressing the importance of affordable housing. She encouraged the distribution of community housing funding through Trust to take advantage of its expertise and experience and avoid further politicization of the issue. She encouraged the Trust to have a designated open process or public hearing targeted to projects being considered for funding. With regard to specific housing priorities, Ms. Shachter encouraged the Committee to devote additional resources to homelessness prevention and also encouraged the Committee to link unit-size prioritization with wait times for housing, noting that the longest wait time is for single disabled people.

**Abby Freedman** suggested increasing the minimum percentage for each focus area to 20 or 25%, allowing the bulk of the funding to be distributed equally while maintaining leeway for special projects. She noted that the Historic Preservation Commission is working on a Union Square Historic District. She encouraged the Committee to support projects like the preservation and ADA compliance of the Somerville Museum, the Union Square Post Office, and the West Branch Library and to combine historic preservation with affordable housing. She emphasized that preservation is about more than just buildings and should be extended to artifacts, art work, documents, oral history, and more.

**Barbara Mangum** said that historic preservation is an underdog in Somerville and tends to be taken for granted and is therefore underfunded. She said the CPA was formed to give voice and support to historic preservation needs, in addition to open space and affordable housing. She supported Ms. Freedman's suggestion to increase the minimum percentage allocated to each focus area to 20% and noted that Brandon Wilson has many studies of buildings that need to be preserved. She also encouraged the Committee to engage the public in discussions of what has historical significance.

**Danny LeBlanc** said the need for affordable housing is well documented and that the smoothest way to spend community housing money is through the Affordable Housing Trust, which has a tried and true record of supporting affordable housing projects. He also emphasized his support for general priority 2a ("leverage other public or private funds"), noting that the CPA funding will not cover all of the needs in Somerville.

**Jim McGinnis** supported Ms. Freedman's suggestion to increase the minimum percentage allocated to each focus area to 20 or 25%. He noted that less than 3% of City has been surveyed despite the fact that it isn't very expensive and said that more surveying should be done before commissioning a consultant to create a historic preservation plan. He noted that development tends to target older priorities since they have larger lots and with the development pressures in Somerville, time is of the essence to preserve these properties. He supported the Prospect Hill Tower and West Branch Library projects but

emphasized that CPA historic resources money should also be equally devoted to homeowners who need assistance taking care of their historic properties.

**Stephanie Hirsch** said that she is interested in ease of access to and leveraging existing open spaces and suggested purchasing easements to parks to preserve pedestrian access. She also suggested taking advantage of small pockets of space by making them more accessible and enjoyable. She emphasized that all open spaces should be available to multiple users and that all of our open space should be used all day every day. She is opposed to locking spaces, including community gardens. She encouraged the Committee to take advantage of underutilized school playgrounds. She also encouraged the Committee to be creative, to invest in interesting, unique ideas, and to take risks and experiment with new ideas. For example, the Committee could require public open space with every housing project it supports or prioritize historic preservation projects that maximize community impact and involvement (e.g., the Somerville Theater).

**Donna Hayes** said that the preservation of our community means preserving people and that investing in affordable housing is the best way to preserve Somerville's people. She emphasized that affordable housing is the most serious need of the CPA areas.

**Annette McGloin** questioned whether we need a consultant to tell us which historic properties are worth preserving and said that the City should be able to do this with current resources and talent. She also encouraged grassroots historic preservation and exploring public-private partnerships to achieve historic preservation and other goals (e.g., housing, recreation).

**Fred Berman** encouraged continuing the partnership between historic preservation and affordable housing that led to the passage of the CPA. He encouraged projects that maximize public benefit. For example, the West Branch Library should be a higher priority than assisting with someone's historic property, and funding should go toward the Community Path and those parks that are most widely used. He encouraged the Committee to use the CPA to leverage other money and also encouraged the Committee to use deed restrictions to maintain the public purpose of investments in the future. He also supported transferring community housing money to the Affordable Housing Trust.

**Judy Jacobs** said the highest priority for CPA funding is affordable housing and encouraged the Committee to use an open and transparent process while accepting applications and selecting projects.

#### **Agenda item 8: Next meeting**

The CPC will hold its next meeting on Wednesday, June 4<sup>th</sup> at 7pm at City Hall in the third floor conference room.

#### **Meeting Adjournment**

Upon motion from the Chair, seconded by Ms. Murugan, the Committee voted 9-0 to adjourn at 8:40.

**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 Summary: distributed to meeting attendees.
4. Draft Community Preservation Plan: distributed to the Committee members

# Somerville CPA



## Community Preservation Committee Public Hearing

May 12, 2014  
East Somerville Community School

1

## 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

CPA Manager: Emily Monea  
[emonea@somervillema.gov](mailto:emonea@somervillema.gov)  
 617-625-6600 x2118

▶ 2

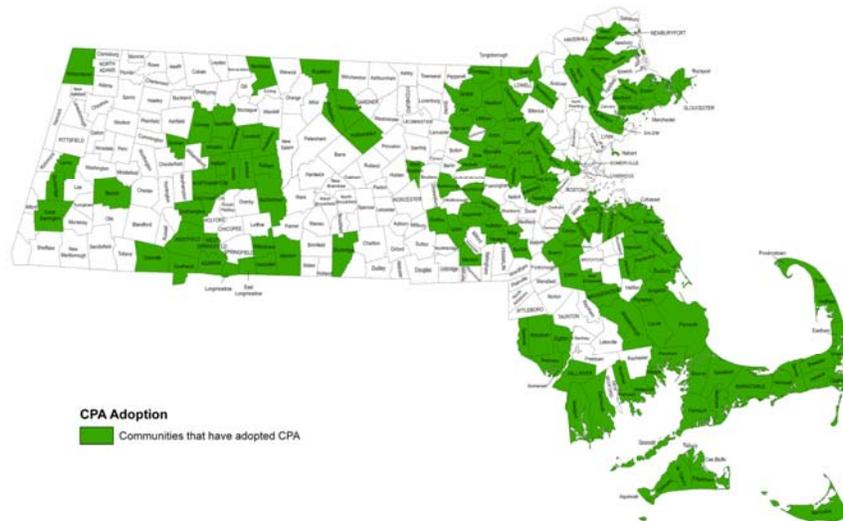
## The Community Preservation Act

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



▶ 3

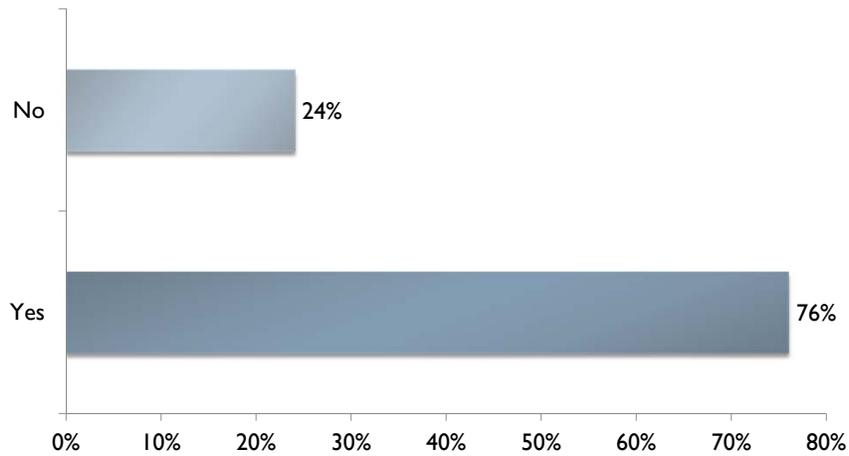
## 155 CPA Communities



▶ 4

## CPA Passage in Somerville

### November 2012 Election Results



▶ 5

## 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)

▶ 6

## 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**

▶ 8

## Borrowing

- ▶ Can bond against surcharge revenue and City appropriation, not state match
- ▶ 2/3 vote of Board of Aldermen needed to pass bonded projects

Borrowing Scenarios		
Scenario	CPA revenue dedicated to debt service	Estimated supportable debt
1	\$2.4 million	\$30 million
2	\$1.2 million	\$15 million
3	\$600,000	\$7.5 million

▶ 9

## Community Preservation Committee (CPC)

- ▶ 9 members
- ▶ Represent
  - ▶ Conservation Commission
  - ▶ Historic Preservation Commission
  - ▶ Housing Authority
  - ▶ Planning Board
  - ▶ Parks and Open Space Department
  - ▶ General public
- ▶ Can serve 2 consecutive 3-year terms

▶ 10

## Committee Responsibilities

---

- ▶ 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

---

▶ 11

## Key spending rules

---

- ▶ Must spend at least 10% of annual revenue on each of historic preservation, affordable housing, and open space & recreation
- ▶ May spend up to 5% of annual revenue on administrative and operating expenses
- ▶ Cannot pay for maintenance
- ▶ Cannot replace current spending
- ▶ Must fund allowable projects

---

▶ 12

## 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 includes funding for affordable housing trust	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

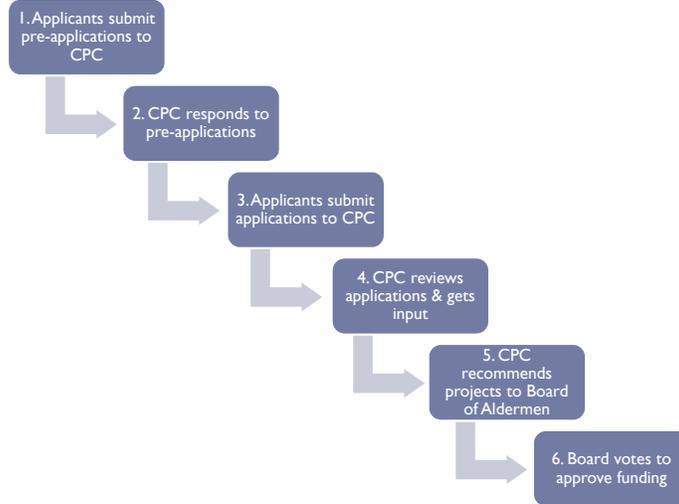
▶ 13

## Somerville Affordable Housing Trust

- ▶ **About the Trust**
  - ▶ Created in 1989
  - ▶ Preserves and creates affordable housing units and carries out programs to directly assist homeowners and renters
  - ▶ Funded by linkage fees and payments made in lieu of inclusionary zoning units
- ▶ **Three possible relationships with CPC:**
  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

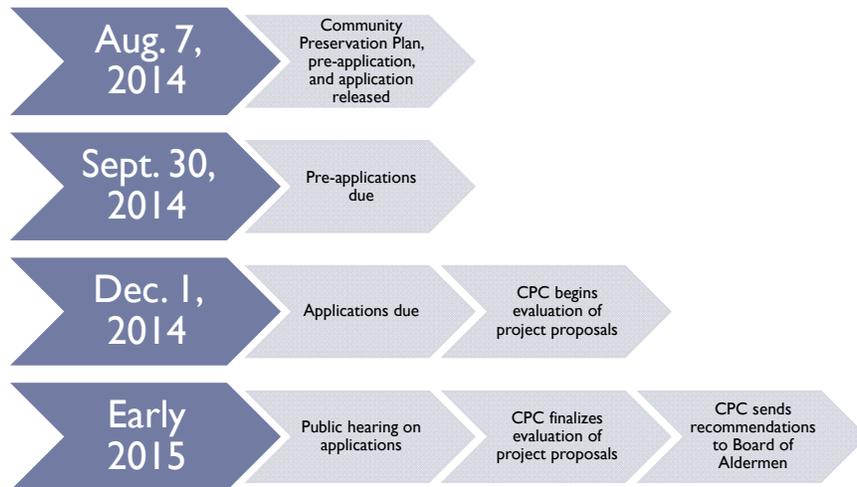
▶ 14

## Applying for CPA Funding



▶ 15

## Tentative Timeline



▶ 16

---

[somerillema.gov/CPA](http://somerillema.gov/CPA)

---

▶ 17

---

Community Preservation Plan  
Draft Priorities

---

▶ 18

## 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

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

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

City of Somerville, Massachusetts

Mayor Joseph A. Curtatone

▶ 19

## DRAFT 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

▶ 20

## Question for the Public:

---

1. Should the Committee prioritize projects submitted by non-profits, the City, and residents (over projects submitted by for-profits)?

---

▶ 21

## DRAFT 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.

---

▶ 22

## DRAFT 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.

▶ 23

## DRAFT 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.

▶ 24

## 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?

---

▶ 25

## 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?

---

▶ 26