



JOSEPH A. CURTATONE
MAYOR



**CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS
COMMUNITY PRESERVATION COMMITTEE
MINUTES
JULY 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 meeting at 7:00pm in the third floor conference room at City Hall at 93 Highland Avenue, Somerville, MA 02143. An audio recording of the meeting is available upon request.

- Members Present** Chair Michael Capuano, Tanya Cafarella (arrived late), Elizabeth Duclos-Orsello, Michael Fager, Ezra Glenn, Courtney Koslow, and Uma Murugan
- Members Absent** Vice Chair Dick Bauer and Arn Franzen
- Staff Present** Emily Monea
- Others Present** Mary Cassesso, Kelly Donato, Jennifer Goldson, Amie Hayes

The Chair opened the meeting at approximately 7:00. The Committee members referenced the material in the presentation attached at the end of these minutes throughout the meeting.

Agenda item 1: Discuss option to transfer CPA funding to Affordable Housing Trust with representatives from Trust

Ms. Cafarella arrived at approximately 7:10pm.

Ms. Cassesso began the discussion by providing an overview of the Affordable Housing Trust Fund. She explained that the Trust’s key challenge is that it lacks a consistent, reliable revenue source as it primarily gets revenue from linkage and inclusionary zoning payments, which are largely unpredictable from year to year. Ms. Donato pointed the Committee members to the handout “Trust Budget and Financial Overview” for further information on the Trust’s finances.

Ms. Goldson spoke about the key elements of effective housing trusts, noting that Somerville has all of them except a consistent revenue stream, and three models for CPA allocations to housing trusts,

referencing the handout “Consideration for Collaboration: Community Preservation Committees and Housing Trusts.” Ms. Cassesso and Ms. Goldson noted that the Trustees are open to amending the Affordable Housing Trust Ordinance to allow for one or more members of the Community Preservation Committee to serve on it, which would allow for greater coordination between the two bodies should the CPC decide to allocate funding to the Trust. Ms. Goldson also noted that, if CPA funding is allocated to the Trust, the CPC could choose to execute a grant agreement with the Trust detailing how funding should be spent.

The Committee members debated the merits of each Trust allocation model. They asked to see the Trust’s new strategic guidelines and also requested information on the types of projects the Trust would pursue if it had the consistent, reliable revenue source it currently lacks. The Chair ended the discussion with the Trust representatives at about 8:10 (the agenda allowed 30 minutes for the discussion) and said that Ms. Monea would forward any further questions from the Committee members.

Agenda item 2: Discuss historic preservation matters with Amie Hayes

Ms. Monea proposed amending the timeline for the historic preservation plan, which originally called for the plan to be completed by the beginning of January 2015. She noted that she and Ms. Hayes felt there was too much work to complete as the consultant likely would not be able to start work until September, especially given the budget established by the Committee, which is on the low end of other RFPs for comparable projects. Ms. Monea also noted that it would be ideal to provide the consultant with an intern to reduce his/her workload but that they were unsure if an intern could be secured for the fall semester at this time of year. They proposed releasing the RFP in early September and having the consultant start work in early November and complete the plan by the beginning of May 2015. This would give the consultant six months to complete the work and give the City time to find an intern for the spring.

Ms. Monea also updated the Committee members on the CPA Fund revenue and budget. She noted that the state’s Conference Committee budget included an additional \$25 million for the state CPA Trust Fund from the state’s budget surplus. Assuming all goes well, this means the City will receive a higher match. The Committee discussed whether they should request additional administrative funding from the Board of Aldermen and whether to increase the budget for the historic preservation plan. They ultimately decided not to increase the budget.

Upon motion from the Chair, seconded by Ms. Murugan, the Committee voted 7-0 to adopt the amended proposed timeline for the historic preservation plan.

Ms. Monea suggested that the Committee request the Historic Preservation Commission create written guidelines for determination of historical significance, as Braintree did. Upon motion from Ms. Duclos-Orsello, seconded by Ms. Cafarella, the Committee voted 7-0 to request that the Historic Preservation Commission create written guidelines for determination of historical significance.

Agenda item 3: Public comment period

No members of the public were present at the meeting.

Agenda item 4: Approval of minutes from June 4th meeting

Upon motion from the Chair, seconded by Mr. Glenn, the Committee voted 6-0 to approve the minutes from the June 4th meeting, with Mr. Fager abstaining as he was not present at the meeting.

Agenda item 5: Finalize Community Preservation Plan priorities

The Committee members discussed whether and how to allocate CPA funds to the focus areas beyond the required 10%. Most members agreed that a greater portion of funding should be devoted to affordable housing than the other focus areas, but some members supported simply stating in its Community Preservation Plan that the Committee will favor housing projects due to the critical need for affordable housing in Somerville. Some members supported raising the minimum percentage devoted to each area to 15 or 20 percent, while others preferred maintaining maximum flexibility over the funding. Finally, the Committee members discussed, if they chose to allocate more than the required 10% to the focus areas, whether to place this additional funding in the appropriate reserve accounts (thereby permanently limiting the use of that funding to that focus area) or to simply set guidelines for how to spend the additional funding (which would allow deviation from the allocations).

The members returned to the discussion of allocating funding to the Affordable Housing Trust. Some members expressed concern that there could be a perception that the Trust disproportionately favors projects submitted by the Somerville Community Corporation (SCC), given that 75% of development projects funded by the Trust were SCC projects. Other members noted that SCC is one of the only organizations that applies to the Trust for funding, so the appropriate question is whether SCC's award rate is higher than the award rate for other organizations that apply to the Trust (where the award rate for a particular organization is equal to the number of projects awarded funding by the Trust divided by the total number of projects submitted). These members believe this is not the case.

The Committee members generally agreed that, if the Committee chooses to allocate funding to the Trust, it should execute a grant agreement indicating how the Committee believes the funding should be spent. A Committee member noted that an advantage of allocating funding to the Trust not mentioned by Ms. Goldson is that it removes the funding of affordable housing from the political process while allowing decisions about the appropriateness of the projects themselves to go through the political process via the Planning and Zoning Boards.

The Committee members generally agreed they could not vote to allocate funding to the Trust until they were able to review the Trust's strategic plan, so the Chair suggested postponing the vote, as well as a vote on how to allocate funding across the focus areas, until the Committee's August meeting.

Agenda item 6: Review and discuss draft pre-application and application

See next agenda item.

Agenda item 7: Discuss next steps for Community Preservation Plan and CPA application process

The Chair suggested that the Committee members send their position to Ms. Monea on the following issues that will be taken up at the August meeting:

1. The model the CPC should use to allocate funding to the Affordable Housing Trust
2. How to allocate CPA funding, including:
 - a. The appropriate distribution of CPA revenue by focus area
 - b. Whether the CPC wants to set strict allocations (i.e., place funding in the appropriate reserve account) or flexible guidelines.

Ms. Monea also requested that the Committee send her specific edits on the draft application packet and community preservation plan.

Agenda item 8: Next meeting: Wednesday, August 6th at 7pm

Ms. Monea will investigate holding this meeting at the Visiting Nurses Association.

Meeting Adjournment

Upon motion from the Chair, seconded by Mr. Glenn, the Committee voted 7-0 to adjourn at approximately 9:30.

Documents and Exhibits:

1. Meeting agenda
2. PowerPoint presentation
3. "Consideration for Collaboration: Community Preservation Committees and Housing Trusts" by Jennifer Goldson.
4. "Trust Budget and Financial Overview."
5. Excerpt from Braintree's [CPC application packet](#) on Historical Commission's determination of historical significance (pg. 9-10)