

# CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS **COMMUNITY PRESERVATION COMMITTEE**



**MINUTES** 

May 28, 2025

The Community Preservation Committee (CPC) virtually held its annual public hearing and monthly meeting at 6:30 pm on the Zoom Webinar platform in compliance with Chapter 2 of the Acts of 2025 regarding the Open Meeting Law.

**Members Present** Ryan Kiracofe, Eric Parkes, Michael McNeley, Joe Capuano, Heather

Heimarck, Mary Jo Bohart, Jon Bronenkant (late)

**Members Absent** Carlos Ayala, David Turin

**Staff Present** Roberta Cameron, OSPCD Director of Finance, Alan Inacio

**Others Present** 

Ryan Kiracofe, Chair Eric Parkes, Vice Chair Carlos Ayala Mary Jo Bohart Jon Bronenkant

Joe Capuano Heather Heimarck Michael McNeley

David Turin

STAFF

Roberta Cameron

## **Roll Call**

Chair Kiracofe opened the meeting at 6:30. He reminded everyone that the meeting was being held virtually and being recorded in accordance with Chapter 2 of the Acts of 2023. CPA Manager Cameron called the roll.

### **Agenda Item 1: Approval of Meeting Minutes**

Member Heimarck moved to approve the meeting minutes from 4/23/25, seconded by member Bohart. The motion passed 6-0. (David Turin and Jon Bronenkant arrived after the vote was taken.)

### Agenda Item 2: Plan Update - Review of Financial Report

Cameron provided an overview of the contents of the Financial Report section of the annual CPA Plan Update. The Financial report includes a description of the CPA program and historical revenue and spending since the inception of the program, as well as spending activity in the past year.

Members asked for clarification about the share of spending last year in each of the program area categories. Cameron explained that, as presented in the draft the chart showing last year's spending did not include the debt service for affordable housing and historic preservation. She created a version of the chart including the debt service to replace in the report. McNeley pointed out that with the larger amount of funding available this year debt service would represent a smaller share of the overall budget.

Bohart was curious about the range of fluctuation in the proportion of spending between each of the program areas, and observed that open space will be increasingly important as the City develops more housing. Bronenkant reiterated this point. Heimarck observed that the City hasn't bonded CPA funds for open space up to now, in part because of the availability of ARPA and other funding sources to implement these projects.

### Agenda Item 3: Annual CPA Budget / FY26 Funding Distribution

Following the Financial Report presentation discussion focused around the funding distribution for the FY26 grant cycle. Cameron provided the estimated revenue in FY26 from the property tax surcharge and state match of the previous year's revenue. She invited committee members to discuss the proposed distribution of funds for FY26 between Administration and Operating Expenses, Open Space and Recreation Reserve, Historic Resources Reserve, Community Housing Reserve, and Budgeted Reserve.

Cameron explained that budgeting the maximum 5% provides flexibility for meeting admin needs, while unspent funds at the end of the fiscal year are rolled into the Undesignated Fund Balance. Kiracofe asked how much of the admin funds were spent last year. Cameron recalled that there had been higher than usual printing, mailing and design costs to celebrate the 10 year anniversary last year, but estimated that there was still approximately \$50,000 of admin funds left. Bronenkant asked what additional admin spending might be anticipated in the coming year. Cameron stated that she thought they might incorporate some additional staff time in the housing division and commission a consultant to provide the CPC with guidance on historic preservation guidelines, besides typical outreach and advertising expenses.

Kiracofe noted that it would be helpful to know how the AHT has fared with the amount of funding they received last year. While the AHT is due to present their annual report next month, Cameron pointed to the prior year's annual report which she had included in the meeting packet. Cameron noted that funds from ARPA and other sources have had a critical impact in all three of the program areas which are now going away or anticipated to diminish, so that the City will be more reliant on CPA to move projects forward. McNeley wondered whether the availability of other sources of funding would affect the AHT's return on the investment of CPA funds. Kiracofe observed that an increase of CPA funding could help to fill the gap left by other funding sources to maintain affordable housing programs.

Heimarck suggested that the admin and/or budgeted reserve percentages could be lowered to increase funding for the program area reserves, in particular for affordable housing. McNeley pondered whether admin funds could be used for additional project management capacity to help in using CPA to improve City-owned historic buildings.

Bohart asked for clarification about the purpose of the budgeted reserve. Cameron explained that the Budgeted Reserve can be used to pay for projects in any of the three program areas, and that it provides the advantage of flexibility of being able to use it where it is most needed. Funds that are in the program area reserves have to be spent in those program areas, but each year the CPC has tapped Budgeted Reserve or Undesignated Funds to respond to additional requests after the program area reserves have been spent down. Bohart remarked that this flexibility is strategically important. Parkes anticipated that the open space/recreation and historic preservation categories are the biggest wild card, as it remains to be seen what types of applications will come in this year to absorb the new amount of funding. Kiracofe and Heimarck noted that the rigid program area reserves are an expression of the CPC's priorities, but the flexible accounts allow for a balance to meet the areas of greatest need.

Committee members reached a consensus that the CPC should increase the share going to affordable housing and maintain the share of the Budgeted Reserve, reducing the share for the Admin, Open Space, and Historic reserves.

Member McNeley moved to recommend the FY26 Annual Budget based on the following distribution of funds:

Admin and Operating Expenses: 4% Open Space and Recreation Reserve: 18%

Historic Resources Reserve: 15% Community Housing Reserve 55%

Budgeted Reserve: 10%

The motion was seconded by member Bohart, and the motion passed 7-0.

## Agenda Item 4: Approval of Final CPP

Cameron asked if CPC members had any final feedback on the CPA plan before she releases the plan for public distribution. Heimarck noted that the maps still need to be updated as the ones included in the draft were from last year.

#### **Additional Business**

Cameron highlighted that some additional project reports were included in the meeting packet which had not been submitted as of last month's meeting.

Cameron looked ahead at upcoming months listed in the agenda calendar. She remarked that the AHT presentation may be postponed until July due to staffing changes.

Cameron reported that the City of Somerville was given a historic preservation award for the CPA-funded Prospect Hill Park monument and park restoration.

Bronenkant announced that a ribbon cutting for Ken Kelley park will be coming up soon.

#### Adjournment

Parkes moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Bronenkant. The motion passed unanimously, 7-0.

#### **Documents and Exhibits**

- 1. Agenda
- 2. Draft Minutes 4/23/2025
- 3. FY26 CPP
- 4. CPA Budget FY26
- 5. SAHT Spring 2024 Report to CPC
- 6. Project Status Reports
  - a. ArtFarm FY25
  - b. Elizabeth Peabody House (EPH) FY22 Annual Report
  - c. EPH FY23 Annual Report
  - d. Project Deliverables from EPH and Vida Real
- 7. CPA 2025 Agenda Calendar