



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS COMMUNITY PRESERVATION COMMITTEE



KATJANA BALLANTYNE
MAYOR

MINUTES

NOVEMBER 19, 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

Ryan Kiracofe, Chair
Eric Parkes, Vice Chair
Carlos Ayala
Mary Jo Bohart
Jon Bronenkant
Joe Capuano
Heather Heimark
Michael McNeley
David Turin

STAFF

Roberta Cameron

Members Present Ryan Kiracofe, David Turin, Eric Parkes, Heather Heimark, Jon Bronenkant, Michael McNeley, Mary Jo Bohart, Joe Capuano (late), Carlos Ayala (late)

Members Absent

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

Others Present

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 2025. CPA Manager Cameron called the roll.

Agenda Item 1: Approval of Meeting Minutes

Member Parkes moved to approve the meeting minutes from 9/24/25, seconded by member Heimark. The motion passed 7-0.

Member Bronenkant moved to approve the meeting minutes from 10/22/25, seconded by member Heimark. The motion passed 6-1-0, with member Bohart abstaining due to absence.

Agenda Item 2: Update on Kennedy Schoolyard Application Request for Bonding

Member Bronenkant provided an update on the application for funding the Kennedy Schoolyard Construction. PSUF would like to formally include a request for bonding the outstanding \$2M of the estimated budget in addition to the \$1M of current year's revenue that was previously reflected in its application. An updated Kennedy Schoolyard Application was provided in the meeting packet which included a memorandum explaining the request for bonding and an estimated debt service repayment schedule. The scope and budget in the application are still the same.

Members had several technical questions about CPA bonding. Cameron shared the FY26 CPA budget to show how existing debt service is factored into the available funding, subtracting debt service from the applicable reserve fund before calculating the amount available for new projects. Member Bohart asked

whether there is a limit to the number of debt service projects at a time. Cameron explained that the CPC can have multiple debt service obligations concurrently. Member Turin asked how long the debt service is for existing projects. Director Inacio stated that the City is currently about 5 years into paying down the oldest debts. Cameron will provide the CPC with the amortization schedules for the existing projects. Member McNelley asked what would happen to the debt service if the CPA revenue stream disappeared. Cameron stated that the state legislation requires municipalities to continue to collect local surcharge sufficient to cover debt service obligations if CPA were to be repealed.

Bohart asked why there haven't been bonds for open space projects in the past. Cameron explained that ARPA funding helped to fund construction of some major open space projects that might have otherwise required bonding to carry out. She also pointed out that the CPC had agreed in principle to bond for Artfarm, but that project has not been ready to proceed up to now, although it is anticipated to come back to request bonding in the near future. Turin asked whether the City could bond the project out of General funds instead of CPA, since the City has a much larger bonding capacity. Inacio explained that borrowing from the CPC increases the City's overall bonding capacity, and also that there is much greater competition among high priority building and infrastructure projects for general fund bonding, while top priority PSUF projects will move forward more quickly using CPA funds rather than being weighed against the City's entire CIP. Bronenkant pointed out that the OSRP defines the priorities for PSUF projects over the next several years.

Agenda Item 3: Review standard grant conditions

Cameron explained that the annual CPA Fall Report that finalizes the amount of funding available to be awarded in the funding round is delayed this year as the City Council must appropriate the remainder of the current year's budget before the CPC can count all of their funds. Instead she suggested that the CPC take a moment to review the standard conditions that are in all grant agreements and memoranda of agreements so that the CPC can consider what types of conditions might be appropriate for the projects in this year's funding round.

Cameron shared and summarized the standard conditions. She noted that the section pertaining to Deed Restrictions may be updated as a result of the ongoing consultant project to update historic preservation program guidelines. Return of Funds may also be updated with the consultant's input.

Agenda Item 4: Begin deliberation on FY26 applications

Chair Kiracofe provided an overview of the process for the CPC's deliberation on the FY26 funding round. Cameron suggested that committee members focus this evening on prioritizing projects.

Members discussed the Elizabeth Peabody House request for funds to make structural improvements to the second floor of their building. Member McNelley observed that SomerVision 2040 provides City goals which include mitigating family migration displacement, and fostering community engagement. This project and the Kennedy Schoolyard improvements specifically align with these broader community goals. Bronenkant added that the OSRP identified a need for indoor recreation spaces, which the EPH project would help to expand. Cameron pointed out that letters of support provided for several of the projects underscore the community impacts that the projects have.

Bohart asked whether the organization has demonstrated proficiency and timeliness with completing projects awarded previous CPA grants, and Cameron affirmed that they have. Committee members

suggested additional criteria for consideration such as whether the CPC has supported them in the past (demonstrating a commitment to the improvement/preservation of these assets), or the urgency to complete the work either to prevent harm to the physical asset or to meet broader community needs.

Members discussed the request for funds to preserve the stained glass windows at 404 Broadway, owned by Vida Real. This project would undertake the highest priority task identified by the architect who prepared a condition assessment funded by the CPC last year. The benefit of this project would preserve a highly visible historic landmark, and would prevent water intrusion from damaging the building, but it doesn't have as much community impact as EPH. Member Heimarck highlighted the significance of the building, and felt that it is important to support an organization that is learning how to be better stewards of a significant historic building. Member Ayala noted that the cost of repairs would increase in the future if water intrusion continues unabated.

Members discussed the request for funds to repair the infrastructure to enable Buddy's Diner to be reopened. Member Ayala felt that it was a lower priority because it is a private business. Turin felt that its landmark status elevates it as a higher priority. Kiracofe would like to see more CPA funds supporting small businesses in historic buildings. Kiracofe also asserted that many members of the community will more directly enjoy the benefits from investment in a small business like this rather than assets that are reserved for part of the day for a specific portion of the population, like the Kennedy Schoolyard.

Member Bohart shared experience she had with restoring a Worcester Lunch Car in the community where she works where health code significantly increased the requirements for the restaurant to become functional again. Cameron observed that the building currently has a modern kitchen in the rear of the lunch car where much of the food prep takes place, but that the damage that has occurred in the building necessitates the replacement of much of the existing equipment and that the applicant is seeking additional funding to be able to make it operational again. Member Bronenkant expressed concern about whether the permitting requirements could derail this owner's attempt to reopen. Heimarck questioned whether the historic preservation consultants can help to suggest conditions for this project that will protect the building regardless if it is ultimately sold to a new owner. Parkes felt comfortable with the amount of funding going to protect the building, with the understanding that the particular business might not succeed there. Bohart pointed out that Worcester Lunch Cars are movable, and there might need to be a unique condition to ensure that this building has to stay in Somerville.

Agenda Item 5: Administrative updates

- Cameron asked committee members for input on a preferred date for the December meeting, and it was decided to go with 12/17.
- Cameron gave an update on the appointment of a new General Public Member. Rona Fischman will be taking Heather Heimarck's place in January, 2026.
- Cameron further reported that a request to amend the CPA ordinance to allow members to serve two full terms in addition to completing a partial term is now going before City Council. Turin pointed out that his continuation on the CPC after the end of this calendar year would hinge on this change being passed.
- Cameron reminded committee members that officer elections will take place in December.
- Cameron reported that she and some committee members had attended a celebration for the opening of the first phase of the Clarendon development.
- Cameron will be sending out a poll to schedule a social gathering for the current, incoming, and outgoing CPC members.

Adjournment

Parkes moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by McNelley. The motion passed unanimously, 9-0.

Documents and Exhibits

1. Agenda
2. Draft Minutes 9/24/2025, 10/22/25
3. FY26 CPA Financial Worksheet
4. FY26 Full Applications
 - a. Blessing of the Bay Linear Park Improvements
 - b. Buddy's Diner 113 Washington Street
 - c. Construction Phase of Veterans Memorials
 - d. Grace Baptist Church SHA4CD Exterior Renovation
 - e. Kennedy Schoolyard Renovations
 - f. Mystic Development Recreation Improvements
 - g. Open Space Acquisition Fund
 - h. Somerville Museum Collection Care
 - i. Elizabeth Peabody House Structural Stabilization
 - j. Vida Real Broadway Roof Preservation
5. Public Comments and Letters of Support (as of 11/10/25)
 - a. Blessing of the Bay
 - b. Buddy's Diner
 - c. Elizabeth Peabody House
 - d. Kennedy Schoolyard
 - e. Mystic Open Space
 - f. SHA4CD
 - g. Somerville Museum