



# City of Somerville Community Preservation Committee

## Minutes

December 29, 2025

- Members Present:** Ryan Kiracofe, David Turin, Eric Parkes, Michael McNeley, Mary Jo Bohart
- Members Absent:** Carlos Ayala, Heather Heimarck, Jon Bronenkant, Joe Capuano
- Staff Present:** CPA Manager Roberta Cameron; OSPCD Director of Finance Alan Inacio
- Others Present:** Lindsay Allen, East Somerville Main Streets
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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.

### 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

Chair Kiracofe and member Turin requested amendments to the draft minutes to clarify the summary of discussion. Member Bohart moved to approve the meeting minutes as amended from 11/19/25, seconded by member McNeley. The motion passed 5-0.

### Agenda Item 2: Review of Financial Report

CPA Manager Cameron described the fall report which provides an update on the available funding for the CPC to award this funding round. She shared the financial worksheet which shows how the budget is derived. The final budget approved in December was the same as the budget the CPC originally recommended in the spring. The Fall Report provides calculations that show how much of the Undesignated Fund Balance is immediately available. A suggested adjustment to the Housing Reserve was calculated as 50% of unanticipated revenue from FY25, as well as the difference between the original FY26 budget approved by City Council and the Final FY26 budget.

Member Bohart asked whether the distributions from the state have been diminishing, and Cameron affirmed that they have. The history of CPA revenue is shown in the annual CPP report each spring. Bohart also wanted to know how CPC members can be better informed about how the SAHT is using CPA funds. Cameron noted that the SAHT has monthly open meetings. Member Turin asked how often the SAHT reports to the CPC. Cameron explained that they had previously been required to report twice a year, but after some lapses and the implementation of a new reporting template, the frequency had been reduced to once annually in their Memoranda of Agreements.

Vice-chair Parkes asked for clarification on the available amount from the Undesignated Fund Balance. Cameron explained that she had subtracted the unanticipated revenue from FY25 which has to be held until it is certified, and also \$150,000 for the Adams Magoun House which was previously recommended by the CPC but not yet approved by City Council.

### **Agenda Item 3: Update on Anticipated Artfarm Bonding Request**

Cameron presented a project of future CPA revenue, current bond obligations, and a potential bond repayment schedule for the Kennedy Schoolyard renovation and Artfarm, as PSUF anticipates making a bonding request in the upcoming year. Cameron confirmed that the debt service is paid out of the project area allocations that the CPC determines in its annual budget.

### **Agenda Item 4: Deliberation on FY26 applications**

Chair Kiracofe initiated discussion about the FY26 projects by reviewing the results of a prioritization poll that committee members submitted to CPA Manager Cameron to help identify the projects that have the strongest consensus around funding recommendations.

- Committee members discussed the Elizabeth Peabody House, which received the strongest prioritization score. Kiracofe acknowledged that the CPC is focused on preserving the physical building that the organization owns, rather than supporting the function of the organization itself. Kiracofe noted that this application is to reinforce the beams and joists to restore usability of the building's second floor, as well as to ensure that the roof remains structurally safe. Member Turin asked whether the proposed structural reinforcement is historically sensitive. Cameron responded that the CPA legislation allows CPA funds to be used to make code improvements as necessary for the asset to function for its intended use. Parkes noted that the funds would be going to increase the building's usability regardless of the specific type of programming that occurs in the building today, and that maintaining the structural integrity of the building is also important from a historic preservation perspective. Bohart summarized that the CPC's funding would be making it available for any type of active use, whereas in its current condition it is not useable. Turin expressed that this project would be a lower priority for him due to the lack of urgency to preserve the physical condition of the building, but that he would support funding the project if there are sufficient funds.

Cameron shared a draft recommendation letter indicating that the project would be required to follow general conditions without any project-specific conditions. Member Parkes moved to

recommend an award of \$420,566 to the Elizabeth Peabody House from the Historic Preservation Reserve, seconded by member McNeley. The motion passed 5-0.

- Committee members then discussed the Buddy's Diner application, which also received a strong prioritization score. Cameron shared a draft recommendation letter with the following conditions: 1) The Grantee will consent to general conditions provided in the Grant Agreement, which shall include a provision to ensure long term preservation of the historic asset, and 2) The Worcester Lunch Car will not be relocated outside of Somerville. Cameron explained that she drafted the wording of the first condition to enable the CPC to vote on a recommendation for this project now, while anticipating that the committee will agree on final language for the conditions after working with the historic preservation guidelines consultant next month. Kiracofe asked whether a claw-back provision can be included to repay the grant if the building is not fully restored and is thus subject to recurring damage. Cameron suggested that there would likely be a clawback in the case that the conditions aren't met or if the property loses its historic value for any reason. She asked whether the committee intended to require a clawback if the business doesn't reopen. Kiracofe clarified, and Bohart reiterated that the grant is not dependent upon this business reopening, but to preserve the historic asset which could be sold and used for something else. The goal should be stabilization of the property, not necessarily tied to a specific business or type of business operating at this site.

Parkes observed that any time you preserve a historic resource it becomes more valuable, and he suggested that the committee consider whether or not to expect funds to be repaid if the asset is sold in the near future. McNeley asked whether the standard conditions include a requirement that the grant be repaid if the property is sold. Cameron recalled that the committee discussed applying this condition on the Adams Magoun property but that the applicant didn't agree to the conditions so that the project hasn't moved forward. McNeley recommended that the committee avoid changing precedent until they have the results of the consulting analysis.

Turin questioned whether the designation of the building in a Local Historic District makes the second condition unnecessary. Bohart was concerned that the lunch car could be moved and members agreed that it is better to include this condition.

Turin recalled that the owner of the property had been pursuing other legal avenues to recovering damages that would pay for this project, and he inquired whether there could be a condition that the funds would be returned if the applicant receives a judgement that covers the cost of the work. He was further concerned that the grant might sway the case against awarding damages to the property owner. Lindsay Allen of East Somerville Main Streets was invited to share an update on behalf of the property owner. She reported that despite considerable efforts there is no viable legal pathway to funding the sewer repair at this time.

Member Parkes moved to recommend an award of \$74,365 to Buddy's Diner from the Historic Preservation Reserve with the conditions described in the draft recommendation letter, seconded by member Bohart. The motion passed 5-0.

- Committee members discussed the Kennedy Schoolyard application. Director Inacio confirmed that the timeline for this project necessitates a decision whether to move forward with a full funding commitment as early as possible so that the project can be put out to bid for construction this summer, if funded. Inacio underscored that a delay in making a decision on this project could result in increasing costs due to the seasonality of landscaping construction.

Chair Kiracofe asked whether there would be a penalty if the committee decided later this year to increase the portion of funding from the current budget to reduce the amount that is bonded. Inacio explained that the bond would not be issued until funds are actually incurred, so the committee could, if it wanted, reduce the amount of the bond authorization in advance of starting the project. Inacio further elaborated that the finance team will only borrow funds under the bond authorization as they are needed, so they may not draw the entire bond if the project finishes under budget.

Member Turin asked if the City can bond for the project rather than CPA paying the debt service on the bond. Director Inacio stated that funding a CPA-eligible project out of CPA increases the capacity for borrowing on the general fund, and allows for the project to receive higher prioritization than it would if it were weighed against other capital projects. Member Bohart shared her experience working with other municipalities, observing that bonding eligible projects with CPA frees up primary bonding capacity for other high budget, high priority capital needs. Committee members expressed concern that taking on a debt service obligation will reduce the CPC's flexibility to fund open space projects for the next 15 years. Turin asked whether the CPC would be obligated to hold the full estimated debt service amount until the project is completed, even if the bond hasn't been fully drawn. Inacio explained that the budget reflects the actual debt service due each year, so that we do not have to reserve the full estimated amount. Further, Cameron noted that when the project is completed the bond authorization will be closed out and no further funds will be drawn from it. Kiracofe asked whether a bond can be paid down early if the CPC has funds available. Inacio responded that there are many ways to structure bonds, but there would likely be no benefit to paying down early because the investors would likely be guaranteed the interest revenue.

Member McNeley moved to recommend an award of \$1,000,000 for the Kennedy schoolyard from the Open Space Reserve with the following condition: If the Kennedy schoolyard is subject to a change in use which reduces or eliminates the open/outdoor recreation space within 50 years of the approval of this grant the funds will be required to be returned to the CPA fund Open Space Reserve, unless the CPC consents to allow the City to retain the funds. Seconded by member Parkes, the motion passed 5-0.

Member McNeley moved to recommend an award of \$2,000,000 through a bond authorization for the Kennedy schoolyard with the same condition as above, seconded by member Parkes. The motion passed 4-1.

- Committee members discussed the Somerville Hispanic Association for Community Development (SHA4CD) application to make further renovations to the former Grace Baptist

Church at 59 Cross Street. Kiracofe asked about the time-sensitivity of this project. Cameron responded that the timing of the funding award isn't urgent, but it may help the efficiency of the project if they are able to proceed while their contractors are still mobilized. Kiracofe expressed concern that the project budget includes a relatively high proportion of soft costs. McNeley agreed with this concern, but he and other committee members felt that this project is a lower priority than some other projects and they would support funding if it wouldn't constrain the funding available for higher priority projects.

Member Parkes moved to recommend an award of \$480,000 to SHA4CD for renovations to 59 Cross Street from the Budgeted Reserve, seconded by member Turin. The motion passed 5-0.

### **Agenda Item 5: Member Terms and Officer Elections**

Cameron announced that the City Council finalized an amendment to the CPA ordinance which allows committee members to serve an additional term if they initially started with a partial term. Under the new rule, member David Turin would be at the end of his last term tonight, but he can now serve an additional term if he chooses to.

Cameron asked for nominations for Chair and Vice Chair for 2026. Member Bohart moved to elect Ryan Kiracofe to serve as Chair for 2026, seconded by member Turin. The motion passed 5-0. Member Turin moved to elect Eric Parkes to serve as Vice-Chair for 2026, seconded by member Bohart. The motion passed 5-0.

### **Adjournment**

McNeley moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Bohart. The motion passed unanimously, 5-0.

### **Documents and Exhibits**

1. Agenda
2. Draft Minutes 11-19-25
3. Fall Financial Report FY26
4. Debt Service Calculations 12-10-25
5. FY26 CPA Financial Worksheet
6. 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
7. Draft Recommendation Letters & Conditions
  - 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
  - k. Somerville Affordable Housing Trust Supplemental Distribution
- 8. Evaluation Criteria
  - 9. CPC Member Terms
  - 10. CPC 2025 Calendar