



City of Somerville Community Preservation Committee

Minutes

February 25, 2026

Members Present: Ryan Kiracofe, David Turin, Eric Parkes, Mary Jo Bohart, Carlos Ayala (left early), Jon Bronenkant, Joe Capuano, Rona Fischman

Members Absent: Michael McNeley

Staff Present: CPA Manager Roberta Cameron; OSPCD Director of Finance Alan Inacio

Others Present:

The Community Preservation Committee (CPC) virtually held its 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

Member Parkes moved to approve the meeting minutes as amended from 12/29/25, seconded by Chair Kiracofe. The motion passed 6-0 with Bronenkant and Ayala abstaining.

Member Bronenkant moved to approve the meeting minutes as amended from 1/28/26, seconded by member Fischman. The motion passed 8-0.

Agenda Item 2: Continuation of Deliberation over FY26 Funding Applications

Chair Kiracofe gave an overview of the decisions that remain to be made to finish out the funding cycle.

- Somerville Museum: Kiracofe reviewed that the request is for \$100,766 to preserve a variety of artifacts in the Museum's collection. Member Bohart asked if there have been similar requests to preserve artifacts in the past. Cameron recalled that the Museum spent several years working on building renovation projects, and have in recent years turned their attention to the

restoration of artifacts. Kiracofe observed that HPC had voted last fall to recognize these artifacts as significant to Somerville's history. Member Parkes suggested that, as long as there is sufficient funding to cover this project after determining that there will not likely be any additional requests this year, and to still leave a sustainable amount in the Reserves, the decision on whether to fund this project this year is equal to a decision on whether the CPC supports ever funding these types of projects.

Cameron shared the draft recommendation for the Museum Artifacts funding request. She noted that the draft includes a condition which the CPC applied to similar projects in the past which states that "Artifacts that have been preserved using CPA funds may not be sold or disposed of without first obtaining City approval."

Member Parkes moved to recommend an award of \$100,766 for the preservation of artifacts in the Somerville Museum's collection with the condition described in the draft recommendation letter, seconded by member Turin. The motion passed 8-0.

- Open Space Acquisition Fund: Member Bronenkant shared some background about the Division of Public Space and Urban Forestry (PSUF's) request for a contribution to the Open Space Acquisition Fund. The fund currently has \$800,000 from previous years' distributions. Bronenkant observed that the amount of funding is currently too small to respond to any meaningful acquisition opportunities, given that the current price of land in Somerville is \$21M per acre. Typical opportunities are for small fractions of an acre, but the City still needs to have more money in the bank to be able to use this fund. Bronenkant suggested that it is important to grow the fund, but also a relatively low priority if there are other opportunities to make an immediate impact with CPA dollars.

Member Turin encouraged PSUF to apply for a larger amount of funding for the OS Acquisition fund each year and let the committee decide if there are higher priorities. The CPC can award less than the amount requested, but cannot choose to award more than the amount requested if there happens to be more funding available. Turin then asked what is the procedure for the City to use the OS Acquisition funds. Bronenkant explained that there is also an Open Space Acquisition Study Fund which was set aside to pay for due diligence in case of an acquisition opportunity. PSUF works with members of the Economic Development team and the Somerville Redevelopment Authority and the legal team, and has identified some parcels of interest or criteria for priorities to expand open space. As an example, the City acquired 217 Somerville Ave, now Ken Kelley Park, as a response to community input and Councilor advocacy. As articulated in the OSRP, expanding existing open space by acquiring abutting parcels is a key opportunity they look for.

Member Fischman asked what other sources of funding may be tapped alongside CPA to pay for open space expansion. Bronenkant explained that the City often works with developers to create Privately Owned Public Spaces (POPS). Cameron added that the City has acquired open space recently using City funds, but the CPA OS Acquisition Fund provides some guarantee that funding is available at any given time when an opportunity arises. She also pointed out that a working group prepared a study several years ago that identified priority criteria and procedures for acquiring open space.

Parkes asked whether the OS Acquisition fund would enable the City to act more quickly in response to opportunities to purchase properties. Cameron explained that the OS Acquisition fund is pre-approved so that it doesn't have to go through the CPC's process to appropriate the funds, but that any property acquisition would still have to go through City Council for approval.

Member Fischman asked whether it was possible for the OS Acquisition Fund to be replenished after it is used. Cameron stated that there isn't any mechanism to require the City to replenish the funds, but Turin suggested that the CPC can make a routine of contributing to the fund so that it is continually replenished. Turin questioned whether the City can borrow to purchase property. Bronenkant pointed out that bonding would slow the process so that it is more advantageous to pay in full at the time of purchase, unless the City had right of first refusal.

Bohart wondered whether the fund could be used as a strategic tool, and if it would be useful to acquire "quirky" parcels that aren't suitable for housing. Bronenkant stated that such remnant spaces may be good opportunities for ecological work but not necessarily for recreation purposes.

Turin asked whether a Conservation Restriction as required as a condition of CPA funding for acquisition is the same as Article 97 protection. Cameron explained that they are both forms of permanent protection but that the CR must be held by a third party and the owner of the property must obtain their approval to make any alterations to the property, with the example of Glen Park Community Garden which was originally acquired with CPA funds. Kiracofe asked and Cameron confirmed that the specific types of ecological or recreation purposes for the property are defined in the CR.

Member Turin moved to recommend an award of \$200,000 for the Open Space Acquisition Fund with the condition described in the draft recommendation letter, seconded by member Parkes. The motion passed 7-0.

- Affordable Housing Trust Supplemental Funding: Cameron reviewed the CPA Fall Report to provide an explanation of why a supplemental funding distribution was included on the agenda, and how the amount was derived. The supplemental funding includes additional budget that the CPC had originally recommended last spring but the Council initially did not appropriate the full amount, as well as 50% of unanticipated revenue from last year to maintain the intended commitment to the housing share.

Turin asked whether the adjustment to account for unanticipated revenue is unique to Housing or if it is also applied to the other program areas. Cameron explained that the unanticipated revenue adds to the flexible amount that is available to any of the program areas, similar to the Budgeted Reserve. Although the CPC has in the past made an additional distribution to reserves to align the share of unanticipated revenue to each of the program areas, the CPC has recently only made the adjustment for housing because the CPC will still have the opportunity to determine the highest priority use of funds between the other program areas.

Cameron shared the draft recommendation letter.

Member Parkes moved to recommend to appropriate \$399,255 from the Undesignated Fund Balance to the Affordable Housing Reserve with the condition described in the draft recommendation letter, seconded by member Turin. The motion passed 7-0.

Member Fischman moved to recommend to transfer \$1,167,395 from the Fund Balance to the Affordable Housing Reserve to the Somerville Affordable Housing Trust, seconded by member Parkes. The motion passed 7-0.

- Amendment of Kennedy Schoolyard Recommendation. Committee members considered whether to appropriate additional funds out of the current budget for the Kennedy Schoolyard renovation in order to reduce the amount of the bond authorization to support this project. Turin asked to clarify how much debt service cost would be saved by reducing the amount of the authorized bond, and when the bond would likely be drawn. Bronenkant provided an update on the project budget and phasing, explaining that the project is expected to be completed over two years, and that increasing the amount of current funds to \$1.4M would cover the first phase so that the bond wouldn't need to be drawn until next year.

Members agreed that they would prefer to vote on this matter at the next meeting to ensure that the choice to spend the remainder of available funds to reduce the bond authorization would not displace any off-cycle applications that might come in.

Agenda Item 4: Grant Agreement and Memoranda of Agreement General Conditions

Cameron shared draft general conditions for Grant Agreements for contracts with outside grantees and Memoranda of Agreement used for grantees who are City departments and reviewed major changes including: compliance with Secretary of Interior Standards for historic preservation projects, a clawback provision as recommended by the historic preservation guidelines consultant which would commit to maintain improvements for both historic preservation and open space/recreation, a commitment to maintain recreational use for 50 years for open space/recreation improvements, and an assignment provision in case a property is sold.

Bronenkant asked whether the commitment to maintain recreation use for 50 years would be incompatible with possible projects that could install temporary installations. Cameron highlighted that the provision in the general conditions allows the committee at its discretion to exempt the grantee from having to return the grant in case of a change in use.

Turin expressed that he felt that 15 years was generally an appropriate length of time for the clawback, but that it should be tied to the anticipated lifespan of the asset being improved. Cameron suggested that the conditions should be standard rather than determining the length of the clawback on a case-by-case basis. Member Fischman observed that many of the improvements that she has seen the CPA program funding are more durable than 15 years. Parkes agreed that CPA funds should be spent on improvements with a longer duration, but also he noted that the value of the improvements falls off pretty quickly and that the step-down is appropriate.

Kiracofe concluded from the discussion that a 15 year clawback term is a reasonable balance. Kiracofe asked whether the clawback condition would be an impediment for prospective grantees to use CPA

funds. Cameron responded that the change from permanent preservation to clawback would make the program more workable for many applicants.

Turin asked about a provision in the draft grant agreement conditions requiring grantees to commence work in a timely period. Cameron explained that this was a recommendation from the consultants and gave examples of situations where this had been an issue. Turin suggested that the provision was too vague as written, and committee members agreed that it doesn't give the CPC any more leverage than it already has given annual reporting requirements and 3 year limits on contract terms. Committee members concurred that the proposed provision could be dropped.

Bronenkant moved to adopt the proposed general conditions, seconded by Parkes. The motion passed unanimously, 7-0.

Agenda Item 5: Amendment to 12 Pleasant Ave Funding Recommendation

Cameron invited committee members to consider amending the FY25 funding recommendation for the Somerville Community Land Trust 12 Pleasant Ave project to eliminate the requirement for a Preservation Restriction and instead apply the new general conditions as just approved. Cameron clarified that the 15 year clawback will apply to the historic improvements, while the project will also have an affordable housing restriction in perpetuity.

Bronenkant moved to amend the grant recommendation to change the conditions as presented, seconded by Fischman. The motion passed unanimously, 7-0.

Agenda Item 6: FY27 Funding Application

Cameron presented a draft of the application materials for FY27. The application instructions have been edited for clarity and updated to reflect the new guidelines under development. Cameron reported that she had surveyed prior applicants about the application process and that the responses came back with no complaints.

Cameron then asked the committee to consider a significant change to the calendar to move the application deadlines earlier by two months. The goal is to align better with the City Council's calendar and to give the committee more time to deliberate before the end of the year to avoid committee member turnover in the middle of the deliberation period. The new timeline for the application cycle would mean not having a summer hiatus because the committee would be reviewing applications over the summer months, but instead having a winter break in December. Turin pondered whether summer deadlines would be a hardship for applicants, but concluded that this was not a major concern. Bronenkant noted that earlier funding approvals would be beneficial as it would ensure that projects can be put out to bid at a more advantageous time of year.

Bronenkant moved to adopt the FY27 application materials with the revised schedule, seconded by Parkes. The motion passed unanimously, 7-0.

Agenda Item 7: Annual Review Process

Cameron pointed out that a calendar of public outreach events is included in the meeting packet and she invited committee members to let her know if they can attend any of the events with her.

Bronenkant shared that there will be an upcoming public meeting to review designs for the Kennedy Schoolyard.

Adjournment

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

Documents and Exhibits

1. Agenda
2. Draft Minutes 1-28-26
3. FY26 CPA Financial Worksheet
4. FY26 Full Applications
 - a. Open Space Acquisition Fund
 - b. Somerville Museum Collection Care
5. Draft Recommendation Letters & Conditions
 - a. Somerville Museum Collection Care
 - b. Open Space Acquisition Fund
 - c. Somerville Affordable Housing Trust Supplemental Distribution
 - d. Amended Funding Recommendation Kennedy Schoolyard
6. Application Deliberation Reference Material
 - a. FY26 Fall CPA Financial Report
 - b. Evaluation Criteria
 - c. Previous FY26 Decision Recommendations
7. Draft Grant Agreement General Conditions
8. Draft Memorandum of Agreement General Conditions
9. Draft Amended Recommendation Letter for 12 Pleasant Ave SCLT
10. Draft Grant Agreement General Conditions for Buddy's Diner
11. Draft Application Instructions
12. FY27 Funding Cycle Alternative Timeline
13. CPC 2026 Calendar
14. 2026 CPA Outreach Schedule

Minutes prepared by Roberta Cameron