



JOSEPH A. CURTATONE
MAYOR



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS
COMMUNITY PRESERVATION COMMITTEE
MINUTES
JANUARY 11, 2017

MEMBERS

Dick Bauer, Chair
Michael Fager, Vice Chair
Michael A. Capuano
Elizabeth Duclos-Orsello
Arn Franzen
Ezra Glenn
James McCallum
Uma Murugan

STAFF

Kristen Stelljes

The Community Preservation Committee (CPC) held a regular meeting at 7:00pm in the third floor community room at the Visiting Nurse Association, 259 Lowell Street, Somerville, MA 02144. An audio recording of the meeting is available upon request.

Members Present Chair Dick Bauer, Vice Chair Michael Fager, Michael Capuano, Liz Duclos-Orsello, Arn Franzen, Ezra Glenn, and Uma Murugan

Members Absent James McCallum

Staff Present Kristen Stelljes

Others Present 16 members of the public

The chair opened the meeting at 7:05p.m.

Agenda item 1: Introduction to CPA and the CPC

The members of the Community Preservation Committee introduced themselves. Ms. Stelljes provided an overview of Somerville's CPA program and funding available for FY17.

Agenda item 2: Project Presentations by FY17 CPA applicants

Five of the eleven applicants for FY17 CPA funding presented on their projects.

Rehabilitation of Grace Baptist Church, Somerville Hispanic Association for Community Development, Sammy Jimenez and Lynn Spencer

SHA4CD is seeking CPA funding to rehabilitate their historic building, which SHA4CD acquired to provide a home for the social services they offer. The building houses a day care, family homeless shelter, and a food pantry. Two religious congregations rent the use of the sanctuary from SHA4CD.

Mr. Fager asked the applicants to explain the religious status of the building. Mr. Jimenez explained that SHA4CD is not a religious organization and the proposed project is not related to the religious mission of the two religious organizations that use the space. A Seventh Day Adventist and a Baptist congregation rent the use of the sanctuary from SHA4CD for their religious services.

Mr. Capuano asked about the nature of the services provided by SHA4CD. Mr. Jimenez shared that the building is primarily used for social services. They serve 500 families. Mr. Jimenez added that there is no fee to be a member of the organization.

Ms. Duclos-Orsello asked the applicants to speak to the historic value of the building. Ms. Spencer responded that the building was built in 1892 and the architect was Edwin Melville Bridge. The building is a single building local historic district. It is a Romanesque Revival style which was likely chosen for the stability and long term endurance it conveys. Ms. Spencer added that the historic preservation work will trigger the requirement to make the building fully accessible.

Mr. Bauer asked if SHA4CD plans to request funding in future years in support of the rehabilitation project. Ms. Spencer responded that they would apply again for CPA funds. She said that they are also applying for a Massachusetts Historic Commission grant and have taken out a bank loan to help support the project.

Somerville Museum ADA Project, Somerville Historical Society, Barbara Mangum

Ms. Mangum presented the designs for an elevator for the Somerville Museum which will be added on to the Museum on the Westwood Rd. side. The Museum is requesting additional funds to be able to complete the project as a more complex design than was presented for CPA funding in FY16 received the necessary approvals.

Mr. Fager asked for further details on the lawsuit pending regarding the elevator. Ms. Mangum said the Museum will not start the work without resolution, which is required to get the building permits. The case is on the fast track, which means it will be resolved by September 2017. There is also an adverse taking suit regarding the shared driveway. They expect the case will be heard in April or May.

Mr. Capuano asked Ms. Stelljes to explain how CPA funding is disbursed. Ms. Stelljes responded that CPA grantees can receive forward funding in tranches. Grantees receive a portion of the funds and cannot receive the next tranche until they show the funds they have received were appropriately spent. The CPC could opt to recommend funding for the Museum contingent on a favorable finding in the lawsuit.

Mr. Glenn asked if the Museum has approached the other funders for this project for additional funds. Ms. Mangum said that she is not able to approach their other funders for additional funding. For example, they could return their Cultural Facilities Fund grant and reapply, but the Museum would be at risk of not receiving any Cultural Facilities funds if their second application is not successful.

Milk Row Cemetery Open Space Master Plan and Implementation, City of Somerville Planning and Zoning Division, Brandon Wilson

Ms. Wilson presented her project to refresh the master plan developed in 2002 for the Milk Row Cemetery, focusing on the green space in the cemetery. The cemetery is listed as a historic resource at the local, state, and national level.

Mr. Bauer asked if there would be further phases. Ms. Wilson responded that the site will require continual maintenance. She said that an additional phase will be the implementation of the master plan and Ms. Wilson expects that she will approach the CPA for additional funding for this phase.

Healey Landscape Design, City of Somerville Parks and Open Space Division, Arn Franzen

Mr. Franzen said that the request for design funds would further the CPA funded project to develop a master plan for the Healey and Mystic neighborhoods. Hundreds of students use the schoolyard daily, which is currently an asphalt space devoid of trees and natural space.

Mr. Fager asked why CPA funds are being requested for this project because schoolyards should be covered as part of the City's regular business. Mr. Franzen responded that CPA funds should be used when there are great opportunities to make a change and to support important projects when there is a shortage of funds to meet the demands.

Mr. Fager asked about the recreation field portion of the project. Mr. Franzen responded that the recreation field will likely be artificial turf, based on the Fields Master Plan. However, CPA funds are only being requested for the schoolyard design. Other City funds will be used to support the design of the field.

[The meeting was interrupted by a fire alarm, which was a false alarm.]

Butterfly Garden Pocket Park at Morse Kelly, City of Somerville Parks and Open Space Division and Green and Open Somerville, Tori Antonino

Ms. Antonino presented plans to convert underutilized planting beds alongside Morse Kelly Park into a butterfly pocket park, which will provide needed habitat for pollinators. She proposes creating a coastal Massachusetts habitat because of the high salt content in Somerville's soil.

Mr. Fager questioned the choice of coastal plants for Somerville. Ms. Antonino responded that the soil conditions are salty and face drought. Coastal New England plants are drought tolerant and do well in sandy, dry locations.

Mr. Fager then asked Ms. Antonino about the Somerville Land Stewards. Ms. Antonino explained this is a program that she hopes to develop for Somerville residents to care for Somerville's green spaces. She said she has other volunteers that are interested in participating and is committed to maintaining the Butterfly Pocket Park over the long term. She added that once the plantings are established the park will be very low maintenance.

Ms. Duclos-Orsello asked about the intended use of the space and the ability of the plantings to withstand foot traffic. Ms. Antonino responded that her plan is to use signage and use the space for education. She said that initially they may need to protect the plants, possibly with a rope, but her plan is that once the plants are established children will be able to explore the meadow.

Agenda item 3: Public comment period

Attendees were invited to use colored sticky notes to note how they would prioritize the projects presented tonight.

Susan Maday, Healey Teacher: Ms. Maday supports the Healey project because of the benefit it provides to the school community but also the play space it provides to the surrounding community. Families get to know each other from the surrounding community while their children play on the weekends and develop relationships that cross language barriers and economic status. She added that she is inspired by all of the projects.

Andrew Arbaugh, Healey Parent: Mr. Arbaugh supports the Healey project. The Healey is a great school but the play space is lacking and the school deserves a play experience equal to the quality of the school. The Master Plan is beautiful and inspirational and deserves to move forward.

Barbara Strell, Healey Teacher: Ms. Strell supports the Healey project because it would improve the play space available to the school students.

Greg Nadeau, Healey Parent: Mr. Nadeau supports the Healey project. He wrote the CPA grant application for the master plan and is very excited about the opportunity to bring the master plan into fruition. He shared a petition with signatures of 40 additional individuals who support the Healey project.

Brandon Wilson, City of Somerville: Ms. Wilson stated that all of the projects are wonderful. She said as the director of historic preservation, the Grace Baptist Church is a very important project that requires additional funds to ensure the historic building is preserved. The Healey project said it is a wonderful project and the partnership between the Friends of the Healey and the City should be supported. The Butterfly Pocket Park is a good idea and she can speak to Ms. Antonino's commitment to open space in the City. She shared her strong support for the Somerville Museum project. The Museum is an important partner to the City's historic preservation projects. The Museum needs additional funding because of the requirements placed on them by the Historic Preservation Commission, the Massachusetts Architectural Access Board, and by the suggestions they received from the neighbors. Becoming accessible is essential to the Museum's future.

Barbara Mangum, Somerville Historical Society: Ms. Mangum shared her support for the Milk Row Cemetery project. The Ghosts of Somerville every year reaches a lot of people and teaches residents about Somerville's history. The master plan is now out of date and needs to be updated.

Mark Niedergang, Ward 5 Alderman: Alderman Niedergang thanked the Committee for their work and encouraged them to fund all of the projects at least partially. He shared his support for the Healey project to improve the asphalt play space which is an embarrassment to the City and is a matter of social justice. Alderman Niedergang also supports the Butterfly Garden Pocket Park. The plantings there could

be greatly improved and he has found Ms. Antonino to be very committed and persistent in her efforts to improve Somerville's open spaces. He is certain she will be able to recruit people to support the maintenance of the project.

Bill Noll, Somerville Resident: Mr. Noll supports the Butterfly Garden for its educational value. It is a very inexpensive project, but a good value. Projects like this would be a great benefit to the City. He said that native species are meant to be here and they will succeed in the space. Mr. Noll also expressed his support for the Somerville Museum. There is no other resource in Somerville for residents to access the history of Somerville like the Museum. Making a building is accessible is expensive and should be supported.

Mr. Noll shared his concern that no affordable housing were presented this year. Mr. Bauer explained that the CPC allocates 45% of CPA funds each year to affordable housing and these funds are managed by the Affordable Housing Trust Fund. As a result, the CPC does not consider affordable housing projects. Mr. Noll then asked how individuals could apply for affordable housing projects. Mr. Bauer responded that they should apply to the Affordable Housing Trust Fund, but the CPC on occasion does consider requests for affordable housing funding.

Charan Devereaux, Somerville Artist: Ms. Devereaux supports the Somerville Museum projects. Somerville is very lucky to have an institution by the Museum and she is inspired by the commitment of the Museum's volunteers. Her Union Square at Work exhibit was shown at the Museum and her late mother-in-law was not able to attend because she was wheelchair bound.

Jean Millette, Healey Parent: Mr. Millette supports the Healey project. He noted that the schoolyard is an open space issue and more open space is needed in Somerville.

Tori Antonino, Somerville Resident: Ms. Antonino expressed her support for the Milk Row Cemetery Project. She thinks the space could contribute to pollinator restoration and be a way for those who are not here anymore to contribute to repopulating the monarchs. She would also like to see the Somerville Museum get the elevator.

Mr. Glenn asked Ms. Stelljes speak to the decision process for the CPC. She said that the CPC will discuss the projects at the February 22 meeting and expects to vote on their recommendations on the projects at their March 22 meeting. The CPC recommendations are approved by the Board of Aldermen. The recommendations are submitted at one Board meeting, then considered by the Finance Committee. Finally, the full Board votes to give their approval at a third meeting. This adds approximately another month to the decision process.

Mr. Bauer noted the CPA annual report is online (www.somervillema.gov/cpa).

[The meeting went into recess to allow participants to leave if they wished]

Agenda item 4: Annual CPC officer elections

Mr. Bauer noted that annual elections are required for the chair and the Committee has opted to have a vice-chair as well and invited nominations.

Mr. Capuano noted that he had nominated Mr. Bauer as chair following the completion of his term as the CPC's inaugural chair. He was pleased to re-nominate Mr. Bauer to be the CPC chair and Mr. Fager to be the vice-chair. His nomination was seconded by Ms. Duclos-Orsello.

Mr. Franzen asked Mr. Bauer and Mr. Fager if they would be willing to continue in their roles. They both said they would be willing to continue.

Upon Mr. Capuano's motion, seconded by Ms. Duclos-Orsello, the Committee voted 5-0, with Mr. Bauer and Mr. Fager abstaining for Mr. Bauer to continue as chair and Mr. Fager to continue as vice-chair.

Next meeting: The second round of FY17 CPA application presentations will be held at 7:00pm on January 31, 2017 at the Visiting Nurse Association.

Meeting Adjournment

Upon motion from Mr. Capuano, seconded by Mr. Fager, the Committee voted 7-0 to adjourn at approximately 9:00.

Documents and Exhibits

1. Agenda
2. Presentations (available at: www.somervillema.gov, CPA Projects tab- FY17)
3. Healey School petition



Last year, the **Friends of the Healey** successfully received a \$40,000 Community Preservation Act grant from the City to create what became the **Healey-Mystic Master Plan**. A central component of the plan is to rip up the pavement in the back of the Healey and create much more natural shade and grass, an outdoor performance space, and a soccer field. The plan would transform the bluff the separates the neighborhood into a new outdoor recreation center for the community. The **Mayor** has pledged his full support and his staff have added the Healey field into the City's **Field Master Plan** with a target completion date of 2019.



The City has agreed to build off the Master Plan and create a shovel ready-design for the back of the Healey. The attached CPA Application requests \$80,000 to complete this design work next summer.

Why this project is so important:

1. **Social justice.** The bluff has been a scar in the community. It is a physical reminder of a previous era of urban neglect. This neighborhood deserves the same level of open space as all neighborhoods in the City.
2. **Safety.** The current walk to school from Mystic and 10 Hills neighborhoods is hazardous at best and, in the winter, not safe. This plan would create a wonderful new transition between the two levels.
3. **Recreation.** This City needs more soccer fields. This is one of the very few areas that could add a field of any size. In the plan, the bluff would be lowered 10 feet which would expand the footprint by 20 feet and allow for the creation of a Capuano sized soccer field half way between the school level and the neighborhood level.
4. **Community.** Instead of a dangerous barrier, we could have wonderful outdoor recreation and performance space that unites the community and continues the neighborhood transformation into a vibrant neighborhood for all to enjoy.

Bridget Adam	13 Henderson Street
Patricia Swarms	100 Glenwood Road
Daniel Swarms	100 Glenwood Road
Dawn Carney	120 pearson rd
Susan Maday	12 Webster St
Michael Maday	12 Webster St.
Kerri Lorigan	5 Thorndike Street
Greg Nadeau	6 Thorndike Street
Andrew Arbaugh	43 Minnesota
Jacob Wilson	83 Jaques St
Will Thalheimer	2 Belmont Terrace
Abbe Cohen Dvornik	81 Bromfield Rd #2
Amelia Wilson	83 Jaques Street
David Zraket	25 Kingston Street
Michael Chmielewski	115 Bartlett St. #1
Lee Brody	120 Pearson Road
Rebecca Grunko	88 Belmont St #2
Marie E. Baxter	101 Central Street
Jim Hanley	80 Bay State Ave
Jennifer Kimball	23 Dane Ave

Jane Anna Chapman	38 Browning Road
helen brown	102 Heath st. #1
Beth Bernstein	5 Meacham Street, Room 306
Kim Conley	19R Albion St
Kevin Andrew	25 Willoughby
Lucas Friedlaender	77 Partridge Avenue
Sean Brann	42 Vinal Avenue
Debora Leopold	
Beatriz Gomez	bc.gomez@gmail.com
Chico Membreno	17 Prichard Ave,
Erik Hook	36 Richdale Avenue
Karen Hopkin	17 Ames St
Peter Ungar	18 Fellsway West
julie carpineto	29 Summit Ave
Jean Millette	50 Mount Vernon St
Ken Thompson	110 Belmont St
Celia Taylor	32 Vinal Avenue
Maria Shik	39 florence st
Mark Beckwith	Heath Street
Michael Patterson	636 Mystic Avenue