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Mayor

Barney S. Heath  
Director of Planning and Development

**COMMUNITY  
PRESERVATION  
COMMITTEE**  
Eliza Datta, Chair

Susan Lunin, Vice Chair

Mark Armstrong  
Dan Brody  
Byron Dunker  
Robert Maloney  
Jennifer Molinsky Martin Smargiassi  
Judy Weber

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## COMMUNITY PRESERVATION COMMITTEE

### Minutes

January 09, 2024 at 7:00 P.M.

**The Community Preservation Committee (CPC) held this meeting as a virtual meeting. No in-person meeting will take place at City Hall.**

#### **Attendance:**

Eliza Datta, Chair  
Susan Lunin, Vice-Chair  
Jen Molinsky, Member  
Judy Weber, Member  
Buzz Dunker, Member  
Mollie Hutchings, Staff

#### **Second Church in Newton Docketing Update**

Ms. Hutchings provided an update on Second Church in Newton's expected timeline in appearing before the Zoning & Planning and Finance Committees. Ms. Hutchings also explained the process of docketing items and the selection of subcommittees, with items usually going to either ZAP or Land Use, depending on the nature of the project. She also mentioned that in some cases, projects might go to both subcommittees simultaneously. Ms. Datta and Ms. Hutchings discussed the possibility of influencing which subcommittee an item goes to, depending on the project.

#### **Current Projects Status Update**

Ms. Hutchings provided updates and responded to Mr. Dunker's query about the balance on the athletic field improvement fund. The committee, including Ms. Datta, Ms. Molinsky, Ms. Weber, and Ms. Lunin, discussed the upcoming bond payments, and brought up concerns about about future funding and the need to determine when the bonds would be sold. Ms. Hutchings agreed to seek further information from the Comptroller's Office.

#### **Finances at a Glance and State Matching Concerns**

Ms. Weber raised a concern about the discrepancy between the budget numbers and the percentage of state matching funds. Ms. Hutchings clarified the fundraising and matching process, stating that the City collected a certain amount, which the state matched. The state's financial situation was discussed, with Ms. Datta and Mr. Dunker noting potential issues with the expected surplus due to recent tax cuts. The distribution of funds among different communities was also discussed, with Ms. Datta asking Ms. Hutchings if she

knew what differentiated those groups. Ms. Hutchings suggested consulting Stuart Saginor from the Coalition for an answer.

Ms. Hutchings raised concerns about the impact of lower funding on the committee's priorities, to which Ms. Molinsky suggested that if we were to have fewer resources in the future we would want to think carefully with the Council and public about priorities. This transitioned into a discussion of the application criteria and form.

Ms. Lunin expressed optimism about reaching the "safe harbor" status, and emphasized the importance of asking applicants about their other sources of support.. Ms. Weber suggested telling applicants not to ask for more than half of the requested funding to manage expectations, while Ms. Datta emphasized the need for realistic and reliable budgets from applicants, and suggested the focus should be on understanding available funding and comparable projects.

Ms. Molinsky stressed the need for projects to align with the city's climate goal, and suggested applicants research sources of funding related to sustainability. Ms. Hutchings agreed with this, and noted that there were probably similar goals and funding related to accessibility.

### **Application Process and Advising Applicants**

The committee discussed the funding application process, with Ms. Hutchings clarifying what type of references are sought by the committee. Ms. Datta and Ms. Weber added that the committee looks for references from community groups, supporters, and other funding sources, with Ms. Weber emphasizing the importance of demonstrating the project's impact. The committee also discussed the implications of the affordable housing aspect being removed from their responsibilities, with Mr. Dunker and Ms. Lunin highlighting the importance of councilors' endorsements, and encouraged Ms. Hutchings to ask if applicants had explored other funding sources.

### **Future Meetings and Minutes**

The committee discussed and unanimously voted to approve the minutes from July, August, and September 2023. They also touched upon the need to approve the November 2023 minutes in the upcoming meeting. Ms. Datta confirmed that the next meeting, which will include a discussion on the West Newton Cinema Proposal, would be in February. At the end of the meeting, they voted to adjourn.