



Ruthanne Fuller,
Mayor

Community Preservation Committee

MINUTES
 3 April 2018

The meeting was held on Tuesday, 3 April 2018 starting at 7:00 pm in Newton City Hall Room 204.

Community Preservation Committee (CPC below) members present: chair Peter Sargent, vice chair Mark Armstrong, and members Dan Brody, Byron Dunker, Beryl Gilfix, Susan Lunin. Member Robert Maloney was absent.

Community Preservation Program Manager Alice Ingerson served as recorder.

[Blue, underlined phrases](#) below are links to additional information online.

PUBLIC HEARING on proposed revisions to *Community Preservation Plan*

Alice Ingerson briefly reviewed the basic rules set for the program by the state Community Preservation Act (CPA) and proposed revisions to the program’s funding guidelines. The only change proposed to the program’s flexible, ±5 percent targets for funding of each CPA-eligible resource was to increase affordable housing from 30 percent to 35 percent and reduce historic resources from 25 percent to 20 percent. For the combination of open space and land for outdoor recreation, the program would continue to target about 20 percent of funds for land acquisition and another 20 percent for rehabilitation. The other proposed revisions were principles for prioritizing “CPA-appropriate” projects and leveraging non-CPA funds:

project categories	CPA appropriateness & funding leverage
special public resources and public-private partnerships: publicly or privately owned assets that benefit all Newton residents & neighborhoods, including housing that is both deed restricted to ensure permanent affordability and proactively marketed to all eligible households	highest priority for CPA funding, with these minimums from other sources: 30% for public projects, 50% for private projects
limited-benefit special public resources: publicly owned assets that benefit only some Newton residents or neighborhoods	lower priority for CPA funding, with a target of at least 60% non-CPA funding
core public resources: assets already in public ownership and that the City of Newton would be obligated to rehabilitate even if Newton had not adopted the CPA with one primary exception: CPA funding may be appropriate for the <i>difference</i> between lowest-cost and historically appropriate methods or materials for the rehabilitation of publicly owned historic resources	usually not appropriate for CPA funding,
limited-benefit private resources: privately owned assets that benefit only some Newton residents or neighborhoods	not appropriate for CPA funding

public comments

Kevin McCormick, 52 Madison Avenue, spoke on behalf of UCHAN (United Citizens for Housing Affordability in Newton). They would support an even higher target allocation for housing but supported the proposed increase, along with the other proposed changes to the guidelines.

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Nancy Zollers, 154 Oliver Road, appreciated the chance to speak at this hearing, as some CPC public meetings did not include time for public comments. She supported the proposed slight but important increase for affordable housing. She strongly supported the CPC's recent decisions not to consider a funding request for the private Suzuki School and to commission an independent consultant analysis of the City's Crescent Street housing proposal. She appreciated the work of the CPC and its willingness to listen to citizen input.

Fran Godine, 19 Crofton Road, spoke on behalf of Engine 6, a group of advocates for affordable housing. They commended the CPC for its work and supported all of the proposed changes, which they saw as visionary for the City. Newton needed more housing for seniors who want to stay in the City and young people who grew up here and want to come back to Newton. Engine 6 would also be happy to see an even higher share of CPA funds targeted for housing and supported the proposed principles for evaluating CPA appropriateness and leveraging non-CPA funds.

Lizbeth Heyer spoke as a staff member and representative of Jewish Community Housing for the Elderly (JCHE). Her organization owns two properties in Newton, Golda Meir House and Coleman House, and she lives in Newton. JCHE also supported the proposed increase for housing and would like to see an even higher housing target percentage, especially for senior housing. They felt it was important to send signals that Newton will support affordable housing projects, such as the expansion of Golda Meir House, for which JCHE plans to request CPA funds. Summarizing JCHE's more detailed letter to the CPC, she noted that the income of many seniors is not sufficient to cover their current combined housing and living expenses. Additional senior housing was critical to allow people to age in their home communities without having to move into institutions such as nursing homes. She pointed out that of all the states, Massachusetts is second-highest in both nursing home placements and in the discrepancy between the cost of living and incomes.

Tamara Bliss, 9 Lewis Street, had been very involved with affordable housing during her fifty years living in Newton, including work with Florence Rubin and the League of Women Voters of Newton and on a 1968 report by then-Planning Director Jim Miller. She was also a founding board member of the Newton Community Development Foundation, which developed and manages several affordable housing projects. She observed that as available funding of any kind for affordable housing has shrunk, CPA housing funds have become even more important. She strongly supported the proposed increase in CPA funds targeted for housing and would like to see an even higher percentage. She felt that many people had been attracted to Newton by its economic diversity, which is now being lost. She emphasized the need for accessible one-floor housing for seniors and affordable housing for cost-burdened families who are now paying more than one-third of their income for housing. She encouraged the CPC to consider using historic resources funds for affordable housing by preserving and converting some historic homes. Ingerson noted that the recently funded housing project at 236 Auburn Street included rehabilitating an 1860s home as an affordable 3-bedroom rental unit.

Dan Elias, Executive Director of the New Art Center, applauded the proposed changes in the CPC's funding guidelines. Along with others in the City, the New Art Center welcomed support for affordable housing. He also encouraged the CPC to make historic resources funding available to nonprofit or arts organizations operating in historic buildings, which are expensive to preserve and to adapt to meet current accessibility and public accommodation requirements. He thanked the CPC for the CPA funds the New Art Center is currently using to create a historic preservation /adaptive reuse plan for its building and noted that the Center hopes to request additional CPA funds in the future for final design and construction.

Seeing no other members of the public who had signed up to speak, Peter Sargent then closed the public hearing. He emphasized that the *Community Preservation Plan's* allocation goals were flexible, multi-year targets rather than rigid annual quotas. As always, the CPC would continue to evaluate each proposal on its merits and might recommend a funding mix that differed from the targets in any given year. The CPC would also revisit these targets periodically in the future, to reflect changing community priorities and needs.

CPC discussion

Since proposals for open space or recreation land acquisition were likely to come only from the City, in contrast to the multiple organizations that might submit housing proposals, Rick Kronish wondered what the CPC could do to encourage land acquisition proposals.

Ingerson noted that the City's [Recreation and Open Space Plan](#) included a prioritized list of potential future acquisitions, either of land or of conservation restrictions. Dan Brody explained that the Newton Conservators, as Newton's local conservation land trust, pro-actively monitored high-priority sites, particularly along the Charles River, and often initiated conversations with the owners of such sites when the Conservators sensed impending opportunities for acquisition. The Conservators' collaboration over several years with the Wilson family in Newton Centre had recently culminated in the donation to the Conservators of a conservation restriction on a portion of the family's property between the Cochituate and Sudbury aqueducts.

Ingerson noted that Newton's [Comprehensive Plan](#) suggested using CPA funds to provide technical or legal assistance for either donations or below-market sales of private property rights for either open space or affordable housing. Sargent noted that Somerville was doing this for housing.

Kronish asked that the CPC schedule a future, more in-depth discussion of affordable housing strategies. He wondered whether the CPC should acknowledge that small housing projects could not leverage the same proportion of non-CPA dollars as larger projects. He would support a state tax on home renovations and sales, with the revenue used for affordable housing. He felt such a policy would both discourage tear-downs and encourage the use of union labor. Ingerson explained that the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board (VHCB) was funded through a statewide real estate transactions tax, but that this had been considered and rejected during the original campaign to pass the Community Preservation Act in Massachusetts.

Sargent supported scheduling the broader discussion requested by Kronish at a future CPC meeting.

VOTE Based on a motion by Beryl Gilfix, seconded by Susan Lunin and Mark Armstrong, the Committee voted to adopt the proposed revised funding guidelines by a vote of 7-0.

Committee Business

Ingerson presented the draft program budget for Fy19 (attached below), which she had already provided to the City to meet its budget preparation deadlines. Though the state Dept. of Revenue (DoR) had that morning authorized communities to budget an 11.5% state match for Fy19, she recommended staying with the currently budgeted 8.5%. The final, confirmed state match would probably be higher than either of these budget estimates, but would be issued only after Newton had already set its Fy19 tax rate, after which Fy19 budgets could no longer be amended. As it had in most recent years, the CPC would then add to its Fy20 budget any Fy19 state funds received in excess of those budgeted in Fy19.

Ingerson also requested that the Committee authorize its officers and staff to adjust the program administrative budget as needed to keep that cost below the maximum 5 percent of new funds set by the CPA statute. She explained that in the past, late-announced City policies had occasionally pushed the program's administrative budget above this state limit.

VOTE Based on a motion by Kronish, seconded by Sargent, the draft budget as submitted was approved 7-0. Also based on a motion by Kronish, seconded by Lunin, the Committee delegated to its officers and staff any necessary adjustments to the program administrative budget, also by a vote of 7-0.

Ingerson updated the Committee on several current proposals and projects. For the Crescent Street proposal, she explained that the CPC's project webpage now included the updated budgets submitted by the City in late March, along with the scope of work for and qualifications of the consultant selected to conduct the analysis of the proposal's financials on behalf of the CPC. That analysis was expected to be complete by mid-May.

Kronish updated the Committee on the Newton Housing Authority (NHA) Haywood House/Jackson Road proposal, for which the CPC had already recommended that the City Council appropriate \$2.5 million in CPA funding. He said NHA the now planned to restrict to 99 percent of area median income the 13 units previously been planned to have no income restrictions. NHA also intended to request additional CPA funding to make this possible. Ingerson asked that the Authority send her a written request to put the CPC's current funding recommendation to the Council on hold.

Lunin moved and Armstrong seconded approval of the minutes as submitted for 13 February 2018. The minutes were approved 7-0.

Sargent's motion to adjourn, seconded by Armstrong, was also approved unanimously at 8:20 pm.

City of Newton, Massachusetts Community Preservation Program Budget	Fiscal 2018 budgeted	Fiscal 2019 approved by CPC 3 April 2018
REVENUE	Fiscal 2018	Fiscal 2019
local CPA surcharge	\$2,987,877	\$3,062,574
state matching funds	\$291,500	\$253,970
undesignated fund balance	\$181,657	\$240,424
TOTAL REVENUE	\$3,461,034	\$3,556,967

EXPENDITURES	Fiscal 2018	Fiscal 2019
PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION & DEBT SERVICE		
Program Administration	-\$155,728	-\$160,044
Debt Service: none currently	\$0	\$0
BUDGETED RESERVES		
Community Housing Reserve <i>(10% of annual new funds)</i>	-\$346,103	-\$355,697
Historic Resources Reserve <i>(10% of annual new funds)</i>	-\$346,103	-\$355,697
Open Space Reserve <i>(10% of annual new funds)</i>	-\$346,103	-\$355,697
General Reserve - <i>all annual new funds not budgeted above.</i>	-\$2,266,996	-\$2,329,833
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	-\$3,461,034	-\$3,556,967