

Community Preservation Committee

Annual Report

Year-ended December 31, 2015

The Community Preservation Committee (CPC) is charged with the administration of Waltham's Community Preservation Fund and with giving initial approvals to historic preservation, open space, recreation or community housing projects presented by the City of Waltham and third-parties. The CPC has nine members, five of whom are also members of other City commissions or Boards: Justin Barrett, Survey & Planning Board, Tom Creonte, Recreation Board, Jerry Dufromont, Conservation Commission, Bob LeBlanc, Housing Authority Board, and Sean Wilson, Historical Commission. Four members are chosen by the City Council: Kevin Dwyer (Vice Chair), Randy LeBlanc, Dan Melnechuk (Clerk) and Diana Young (Chair).

The CPC had \$21.4M available for new projects at the beginning of 2015 and \$21.1M at the end, but that amount will be reduced to \$19.1M if the Tenant Rental Voucher program is approved. The CPA fund received approximately \$2.8M from Waltham taxpayers through the CPA surtax and \$771K in state matching funds in the year.

The CPC spent much of the year working on the Tenant Rental Voucher program. Until this proposal, the CPC had approved only \$300K for housing projects. The CPC worked with the proposer, WATCH, and the Waltham Housing Authority and did substantial research with the DOR, the City's Law Department, Mass DHCD, Fair Housing advocates, the local landlords' association, the Community Preservation Coalition, and the Dukes County Housing Authority to fashion the proposal approved in September. There were several meetings with the Council's Long-term Debt Committee before the City Council approved the proposal on December 28.

The following is additional discussion of the CPC's activities in 2015:

Meetings: The CPC had eight meetings, including the statutorily mandated Public Input meeting.

Applications received: We received two regular applications and two applications to use the CPC's administrative funds to authorize appraisals. The regular applications were for a Tenant Rental Voucher (\$2,001,500) program and for the Fernald Demolition (\$1,200,000) proposal.

Recommendations & Approvals: The CPC recommended the Tenant Rental Voucher program and the Fernald Demolition proposal to the City Council. The City Council approved both proposals before the end of 2015. The Demolition Proposal needed no additional approvals as it was the Mayor's proposal. The CPC also approved the use of its administrative funds for appraisals of 67 Crescent Street and 1 Balm Avenue.

The CPC amended its recommendation for the purchase of Arrigo Farm and obtained an update to the appraisal that supports the purchase.

Site views: The CPC had no site views in 2015.

Inquiries: The following are the inquiries received, some of which became proposals in 2016:

- Salvation Army – Asking if the CPC could help with the restoration of the original building and in funding accessibility additions.

- Rail Trail – Confirmation that CPA funds could be used for the 25% design study.
- Music Hall – Confirmation that CPA funds can be used for a privately owned historic building.
- Cemeteries – Checking availability of CPA funds to restore and place sunken headstones.
- Fernald Building Survey – Confirmation that CPA funds can be used for surveys.
- Prospect Hill Park - Questions asked about various capital improvements to the park and confirmation that CPA funds could be used. Confirmed that CPA funds could also be used to add land to the park.
- Sacred Heart Old Church – Inquiries from the Church about how to apply for funds to restore the original church.
- Woerd Avenue Land Fill – Various inquiries about how the property could be converted to playing fields.
- Falzone Field – Discussion with the Youth Soccer League about how to light the playing field.
- Wellington House furniture – Discussion of using CPA funds to restore the square piano and other furniture given by Betty Castner.

Outreach/Seminars: The CPC held training sessions on how to use CPA funds to create, acquire, restore or support community housing and on a way to combine CPA funds with Massachusetts and federal low income housing credits.

In April, 2015, the CPC held its annual Public Input hearing that invites the public and city officials to give their suggestions as to what the CPC should fund. Among the suggestions received were to approve projects to:

- Demolish buildings at Fernald.
- Restore the Fernald wetland and daylight the stream.
- Create affordable housing and provide rental vouchers.
- Acquire land around Hardy Pond.
- Digitize old newspapers and maps.
- Improvement the McDonald playground.
- Acquire and develop a Crescent Street riverside park.
- Acquire land to create other pocket parks.

The CPC continues its process to place conservations restrictions (CRs) on open space/recreation land acquired with CPA funds. Each property acquired for the City must have a CR that is held by a third-party and filed with the Registry of Deeds. The CRs for properties on Arcadia Avenue and Trapelo Road are in negotiation and the CPC has begun the process to find an organization to hold a CR on the Grove Street property.