

**24-043**  
**COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE**  
**MEETING REPORT**  
**TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 20, 2024 @ 6:00 P.M.**

Zoom Link: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/83612501851>

Call-in Number: +19292056099,,83612501851#

To participate remotely outside of Zoom, please e-mail [AHurtubise@medford-ma.gov](mailto:AHurtubise@medford-ma.gov).

Attendees: Council President Isaac “Zac” Bears; Council Vice President Kit Collins; Councillor Anna Callahan; Councillor Emily Lazzaro; Councillor Matt Leming; Councillor George Scarpelli; Councillor Justin Tseng; CPC Manager Theresa DuPont; CPC Chair Roberta Cameron; Assistant City Clerk Sylvia DiPlacido; other participants as noted in the body of this report.

President Bears called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. on February 20, 2024 in the Medford City Council Chambers on the second floor of Medford City Hall, and via Zoom. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss funding requests covered by the Community Preservation Act.

President Bears thanked participants for attending. He went over the framework for the meeting. He said that the Mayor had requested CPA funding for the following projects:

1. Requesting the appropriation of \$69,000.00 from the CPA General Reserve to Housing Families for the Homelessness Prevention Pro Bono Legal Services Program.
2. Requesting the appropriation of \$50,000.00 from the CPA Historic Preservation Reserve to City of Medford – Cemetery Division for the Oak Grove Cemetery Access Road Study.
3. Requesting the appropriation of \$200,000.00 from the CPA General Reserve to City of Medford – Cemetery Division for the Oak Grove Cemetery Access Buildings Restoration project.
4. Requesting the appropriation of \$229,000.00 from the CPA General Reserve to City of Medford – Office of Planning, Development, and Sustainability for the Logan Park Natural Play Area project.
5. Request the appropriation of \$10,000.00 from the CPA General Reserve to City of Medford – Cemetery Division for the Salem Street Burying Ground Conditions

## Assessment.

6. Requesting the appropriation of \$205,525.00 from the CPA General Reserve to City of Medford – Parks Division for the Tufts Park Basketball Court Resurfacing project.
7. Requesting the appropriation of \$106,625.00 from the CPA General Reserve to City of Medford – Parks Division for the Capen Park Basketball Court Resurfacing project.
8. Requesting the appropriation of \$99,965.00 from the CPA Historic Preservation Reserve to the Medford Brooks Estate Land Trust (MBELT) for the ADA Pathways and Parking Improvements project
9. Requesting the appropriation of \$98,275.00 from the CPA Historic Preservation Reserve to the Medford Brooks Estate Land Trust (MBELT) for the East Elevation ADA Improvements project.
10. Requesting the appropriation of \$4,800.00 from the CPA Historic Preservation Reserve to City of Medford – Cemetery Trustees for the Cross Street Cemetery Conditions Assessment.

Ms. DuPont said that this is the annual request for CPA funding. Chair Cameron said that every year, the CPC holds a grant funding round and invites people to submit applications for funding. The CPC determines which applications meet the community's needs and recommends that the City Council approve certain appropriations. She said that this year, there were a significantly large number of requests submitted off cycle. She said some of the applicants including Walkling Court and the McGlynn School Playground. She said that there were also other smaller projects. MsDuPont said that the applicants are not available tonight but that she could answer any questions.

Councillor Scarpelli said we're seeing adjustments with homeowners and taxes. Councillor Scarpelli said he had requests from constituents on what money was going toward affordable housing. Chair Cameron said the Affordable Housing Trust Fund was just established this past year. She said that the board has not yet been appointed and there hasn't been anyone to apply on behalf of the trust fund yet. She said the CPC anticipates that this will be a factor in the future. Councillor Scarpelli said he has some concerns about the funding that is going out to legal services.

Chair Cameron said in the past, funds were set aside for the Affordable Housing Reserve. She said some of those funds in the past have helped the Walkling Court project. Councillor Scarpelli said that there are concerns from residents about being taxed more. Chair Cameron said that this year, it's about an even split among the three

program areas. She said with respect to Housing Families, CPA funds cannot go to legal services. She said that these funds are going to pay for rental arrears.

Councillor Callahan arrived at 6:13 p.m.

Councillor Leming said he was previously on the CPC and wanted to add some context. He said typically affordable housing projects before the CPC, there is typically one project every couple of years. He said the price tag will probably be over \$100 million and the CPC is donating about \$800,000. He said the CPC has to spend a certain amount every year. He said the benefit of the Affordable Housing Trust is that it allows funding to be collected year to year. He said the CPC will be an important feeder into the Affordable Housing Trust.

The Committee of the Whole addressed the funding requests.

1. Requesting the appropriation of \$69,000.00 from the CPA General Reserve to Housing Families for the Homelessness Prevention Pro Bono Legal Services Program.

Ms. DuPont said that this has been funded in the past. She said it is one of the very few resources that the City can offer to people facing eviction or homelessness challenges.

Councillor Tseng said we have been funding this for a while. He said he is comfortable with this request.

2. Requesting the appropriation of \$50,000.00 from the CPA Historic Preservation Reserve to City of Medford – Cemetery Division for the Oak Grove Cemetery Access Road Study.

Ms. DuPont said that Oak Grove has been a victim of deferred maintenance for many years, including looking into an access road to the historic section of the cemetery. She said right now it is challenging for accessibility. The access road study could expand access for vehicular traffic.

3. Requesting the appropriation of \$200,000.00 from the CPA General Reserve to City of Medford – Cemetery Division for the Oak Grove Cemetery Access Buildings Restoration project.

Chair Cameron said that the purpose for this project, is that the CPC funded a study in prior rounds for restoration of the caretaker's residence and the garage, a historic

building. This will begin implementation of the studies for these buildings. Ms. DuPont said no CPA funds will be used on the residential portion of the building.

4. Requesting the appropriation of \$229,000.00 from the CPA General Reserve to City of Medford – Office of Planning, Development, and Sustainability for the Logan Park Natural Play Area project.

Ms. DuPont said that this project would update some of the playground elements currently at the park. It would allow natural play for children.

Councillor Scarpelli said that this is great. He asked if any of this is for accessibility. Chair Cameron said that any new playground construction has to meet accessibility standards. She said it will be accessible. Ms. DuPont said that PDS will seek community feedback on the final design.

5. Request the appropriation of \$10,000.00 from the CPA General Reserve to City of Medford – Cemetery Division for the Salem Street Burying Ground Conditions Assessment.

Chair Cameron said that the wall of the Burying Ground needs restoration. She said that the wall also needs restoration. She said this is the first step toward restoration.

6. Requesting the appropriation of \$205,525.00 from the CPA General Reserve to City of Medford – Parks Division for the Tufts Park Basketball Court Resurfacing project.

Ms. DuPont said that for this park and for Capen Park (below), they were applications received in the 2022 funding round. They were deferred. The Parks Department re-applied. The surfaces need resurfacing.

7. Requesting the appropriation of \$106,625.00 from the CPA General Reserve to City of Medford – Parks Division for the Capen Park Basketball Court Resurfacing project.
8. Requesting the appropriation of \$99,965.00 from the CPA Historic Preservation Reserve to the Medford Brooks Estate Land Trust (MBELT) for the ADA Pathways and Parking Improvements project.

Chair Cameron said this is the continuation of project funded in the past. She said that this is a critical piece of making this City-owned property accessible to the public. President Bears said it is also partially being matched by state funding through ARPA.

9. Requesting the appropriation of \$98,275.00 from the CPA Historic Preservation Reserve to the Medford Brooks Estate Land Trust (MBELT) for the East Elevation ADA Improvements project.

Ms. DuPont said that there is an East side elevation that needs some drainage improvements and maintenance.

10. Requesting the appropriation of \$4,800.00 from the CPA Historic Preservation Reserve to City of Medford – Cemetery Trustees for the Cross Street Cemetery Conditions Assessment.

Chair Cameron said that this was a small grant application received out of cycle. She said we have a streamlined process for people to apply for small grants. She said the application is for a condition assessment to restore a historic section at Oak Grove. President Bears said that Cross Street Cemetery was displaced by the construction of I-93.

Councillor Tseng asked how many applicants we usually get per year, versus how much can actually be awarded. Chair Cameron said that in most years, up until now, we have been able to fund all of the projects that had applications that made it all the way through the application cycle. She said sometimes, projects weren't ready to go yet. She said last year there were very large requests and we had to ask people to break the requests into two asks and come back this year. She said we were also able to fund three projects postponed last year. She said that there is a limit to how much funding we have. She said there is not a limit to what we need to improve in the City. She said the amount of funding requested every year has increased faster than the rate of revenue growth. She said we will have to make tough choices moving forward.

Councillor Scarpelli asked for some examples of affordable housing projects that were denied. Chair Cameron said we haven't denied any projects that are affordable housing. She said we have funded the full amount requested for two housing construction projects over the six years that the CPA has been in existence. She said that was for Medford Community Housing and the Walkling Court Redevelopment project. She said we have also funded an emergency rental assistance program and funds to supplement the pro bono legal assistance program at Housing Families. She said an earlier funded housing project also fell through.

Councillor Scarpelli said that CPA has funded affordable housing issues to date. He said that this speaks volumes.

Councillor Callahan said she wants to understand the process a little better and asked about the application process. She said she's hearing from some constituents who might not be getting as much funding and she asked who in the City is looking at the whole City. Ms. DuPont said that we identify needs and that this year we intend to add additional information and listening sessions. She said she understands the question on the equity issue. She said she has heard about Barry Park. She said that this is a staffing issue.

Councillor Tseng said that often the need is deeper than the applicant pool. He said sometimes funding is not realistic even though it is needed. Ms. DuPont said that this is correct. Chair Cameron said that in addition to CPA funds for these larger projects, the City is relying on funding from multiple sources. She said that we have applied ARPA funding and state grants. She said that there are restrictions on what CPA funds can be used for. Councillor Tseng said that this is helpful context. He said that all the CPA projects are excellent.

Vice President Collins thanked participants. She said she always looks forward to these meetings because staff does such a great job of putting these projects together and presenting them. She said it's good to have a conversation about what role CPA funds can play.

Kelly Catallo, 23 Salem Street, said everyone is here because of the sales tax thing. She said she gets that you want money for affordable housing. She said she went through the CPA site. She said in the last seven years, the CPA has collected an estimated \$7 million from the taxpayers in Medford. She said that they have spent about 25% on housing. She said she is not surprised to hear that the majority of applications were for parks and recreation. She said Medford is almost 40% conservation land. She said we are the fourth-oldest English settlement in the country. She said that the application for \$69,500 was for attorney fees to defend tenants that were being evicted. She said if you don't have the money for your rent, you are considered indigent. She said you can go to court and fill out the application and be assigned the attorney of the day. She said the court still has a two-tiered system starting with mediation. She said cities have the authority to earmark a certain amount of funding above the 1/3. She said if we're not seeing this need now, she questions whether there's a need to charge the taxpayers another two percent when they sell their houses. She asked the Council to go back and actually read the request for the funding. She said the homeowners in the community matter just as much.

Vice President Collins moved to report the paper out favorably (Councillor Leming second)—approved on a roll call vote of seven in favor and zero opposed.

Councillor Tseng moved to adjourn at 6:44 p.m. (Vice President Collins second)—approved on a roll call vote of seven in favor and zero opposed.

President Bears adjourned the meeting at 6:44 p.m.