



BOSTON CITY COUNCIL

Committee on Community Preservation Act

Enrique Pepén, Chair

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REPORT OF COMMITTEE CHAIR

May 1, 2024

Dear Councilors,

The following docket was sponsored by the Administration and referred to the Committee on March 13, 2024:

Docket #0503, Message and order for an appropriation order in the amount of Thirty-Eighty Million Two Hundred Seventy-Seven Thousand Forty-Seven Dollars (\$38,277,047.00) from Fiscal Year 2024 Community Preservation Fund revenues for community preservation projects at the recommendation of the City of Boston Community Preservation Committee (“CPC”).

Summary of Legislation:

Docket #0503, is an appropriation order from the FY24 CPA revenue fund in the amount \$38,277,047.00 for community preservation projects pursuant to the recommendation of the City of Boston Community Preservation Committee (“CPC”).

The City of Boston's CPA fund was established pursuant to the Community Preservation Act (M.G.L.44B). Section 5 of the Community Preservation Act, mandates that the City Council, upon receiving recommendations from the Community Preservation Committee, annually approve appropriations from the Community Preservation Fund to implement the Committee's recommendations.

The Community Preservation Committee has proposed allocating \$18,607,257 for affordable housing projects, \$9,603,843 for historic preservation projects, and \$10,065,947 for open space and recreational use projects.

Information Gathered at the Hearing:

The Committee held a hearing on April 11th, 2024. The Chair was joined by Councilors Louijeune; Flynn; Weber; FitzGerald; Santana; and Durkan.

Thadine Brown, Director of the Community Preservation Office; Sheila Dillon, Chief of the Mayor's Office of Housing; Ryan Woods, Commissioner of Parks & Recreation; and Maureen Garceau Senior Deputy Treasurer for the City of Boston Treasury Department, testified on behalf of the Administration.

The Administration testified about the CPC's history of funding thus far and the forthcoming projects. It was stated that over \$154 million has been granted to 290 projects in all of Boston's neighborhoods since the Act's adoption. It was further explained that with approval of the current request, the total awarded funds will surpass \$193 million across 347 projects since 2018.

The Administration presented an overview of the Community Preservation Act (CPA) and statutory requirements, such as the mandate to allocate at least 10% of funds annually to each of the three categories (affordable housing, historic preservation, and open space/recreation), with a maximum of 5% allowed for administrative expenses.

In presenting the projects for fiscal year 2024, the Administration highlighted the funding distribution: 49% for affordable housing, 25% for historic preservation, and 26% for open space and recreation. It was explained that the forthcoming projects aim to enhance Boston neighborhoods' quality of life by allocating funds to plant trees and augment the city's canopy, preserve historic structures, support first-time homebuyer programs, and construct affordable housing units. The Administration highlighted that each project is anticipated to positively impact Boston's neighborhoods and communities.

Regarding operations, The Administration described improvements in the Community Preservation Office's operational efficiency, including enhanced project monitoring and expedited payment processes for applicants. The Administration further emphasized the importance of fostering community relationships and sustaining a robust pipeline of potential projects.

Councilors inquired about the focus and goals for this funding round, the CPA's engagement efforts, assistance with applications, and the process for city projects to receive funding.

It was explained that the focus of this round of funding was to ensure that projects in every neighborhood were considered, particularly those with critical needs for repairs. Further, it was stated that the goal was to fund projects that were ready to proceed and could be completed within 24 months. Applicants who did not receive funding were encouraged to reapply. The Administration assured that Community Preservation staff is available to assist applicants with understanding the process and preparing their applications and that language access and translation services are provided.

The Administration explained the Community Preservation Office's proactive engagement efforts, which include hosting information sessions, community outreach, and education about the allowable uses of CPA funds.

For city projects to receive funding, like the Boston Open Space Acquisition Fund, it was explained that the process involves the city applying for CPA funds, similar to outside organizations, and then using the funds to acquire parcels to preserve them as recreational spaces.

Councilors expressed appreciation for the Community Preservation Office's work and the positive impact of the funded projects on their districts and the city as a whole.

Public testimony was provided on behalf of various community members and representatives of organizations expressing gratitude for the CPA's support for their projects. Speakers highlighted the importance of the funded projects for community engagement, historic preservation, open space creation, and affordable housing. Public testimony also highlighted the importance of ensuring equitable distribution of funds, particularly with respect to African American and Caribbean communities in Boston.

Recommended Action:

The Chair of the Committee on Community Preservation Act, to which the following was referred:

Docket #0503, Message and order for an appropriation order in the amount of Thirty-Eight Million Two Hundred Seventy-Seven Thousand Forty-Seven Dollars (\$38,277,047.00) from Fiscal Year 2024 Community Preservation Fund revenues for community preservation projects at the recommendation of the City of Boston Community Preservation Committee ("CPC"),

submits a report recommending that this docket **ought to pass**.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Enrique Pepén', written in a cursive style.

Enrique Pepén, Chair
Committee on Community Preservation Act