



BOSTON CITY COUNCIL

Committee on the Community Preservation Act
Michael Flaherty, Chair

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REPORT OF COMMITTEE CHAIR

April 12, 2023

Dear Councilors:

The Committee held a hearing on April 6, 2023 regarding *Docket #0574, message and order for an appropriation order in the amount of Forty Million Six Hundred Seventy-Six Thousand Four Hundred Fifty-Five Dollars (\$40,676,455.00) from Fiscal Year 2023 Community Preservation Fund Revenues for Community Preservation Projects at the Recommendation of the City of Boston Community Preservation Committee (“CPC”)*, where public comment was taken. Docket #0574 was referred to the Committee on March 15, 2023 and sponsored by Mayor Wu.

Summary of Legislation as Filed:

Docket #0574 provides funding for 56 total projects in the areas of affordable housing, historic preservation, and open space and recreation. This order appropriates \$40,676,455.00 for projects in these areas.

Information Gathered at the Hearing:

The Chair convened the hearing, provided opening remarks, and summarized the legislation. The following individuals from the Administration attended the hearing: Thadine Brown, Director, Community Preservation Office; Maureen Garceau, Senior Deputy Treasurer; Jessica Boatright, Deputy Director, Neighborhood Housing Development; Ryan Woods, Commissioner, Parks and Recreation; Sheila Dillon, Mayor’s Office of Housing; and, Rev. Mariama White-Hammond, Chief, Environment, Energy, and Open Space. The Administration reviewed their presentation that described all of the projects and the use of the funds. The Administration provided an overview of the FY23 funding and reviewed projects funded by neighborhood in this round and from 2018-2022.

The Committee discussed the Community Preservation Act (“CPA”), allowable uses of funds, total funding since CPA inception in Boston, and the specific projects. The CPA statute, Chapter 44B defines the allowable categories for CPA funds which are affordable housing, historic preservation, and open space and recreation. Funding is only for capital projects and cannot be used for maintenance, operations, or programming. Recipients may be public or private entities as well as nonprofit and for profit organizations. The allowable uses of CPA funds are acquisition, creation, preservation, rehabilitation, restoration, and support.

The Administration reviewed the CPA funding total, the rules required by the CPA statute, the allowable uses for CPA funds, and an overview of previous funding rounds. Director Brown reviewed the Community Preservation Office highlights which include efficient internal tracking

systems and timely payments of grant installments to applicants, rolling eligibility determination form allowing applicants to apply early, upfront legal review, virtual community engagement and education through workshops, meetings, and informal sessions. Director Brown reviewed the new FY2023-FY2027 plan approved by the CPC in 2022 that will guide the City's allocation of CPA funds for fiscal years 2023 through 2027. The Administration reviewed the overall goals of the plan which are to prioritize CPA funding for projects that further equity by addressing needs in the City's historically underserved neighborhoods and marginalized populations; prioritize CPA funding for projects that advance climate resistance and sustainability; balance use of CPA funds to support community led projects as well as City priorities; and continue to establish an annual CPA funding allocation formula to help guide CPC recommendations. The Administration reviewed the affordable housing goals which are as follows: distribute new units of affordable housing in areas with higher median household income; preserve naturally occurring affordable housing through acquisition and preservation programs; promote homeownership to enable household equity growth to help address the racial wealth gap; and, support local rental assistance and relief programs to expand upon federal and state housing vouchers. The Administration reviewed the open space and recreation goals which are as follows: promote climate equity and resilience; mitigate effects of climate change; promote healthy food access in historically underserved neighborhoods; create more public open space in underserved neighborhoods; rehabilitate existing parks, playgrounds, athletic fields, greenways, and schoolyards; and, promotion of greenways that connect neighborhoods. The Administration reviewed the historic preservation goals which are as follows: prioritize projects that honor the history and contributions of Boston's BIPOC population and other historically marginalized populations; further preservation and rehabilitation of properties that provide public access or environmental economic or social benefits; protect privately owned properties that are threatened by demolition or demolition by neglect that will provide a demonstrated public purpose.

The Administration described the community engagement process of the Community Preservation Office explaining that the Office is collaborating with civic and neighborhood associates, reinstating the CPA Community Ambassador Initiative which recruits volunteers in all neighborhoods, partnering with nonprofits, and building a network of professional resources for underserved and inexperienced applicants. The Administration highlighted the FY23 funding recommendations explaining that 56 projects are being considered with 44 of the 56 projects recommended to receive full funding. Ten projects are recommended for affordable housing for a total of \$20,491,834.00; 27 projects are recommended for historic preservation for a total of \$10,182,600.00; and, 19 projects are recommended for open space and recreation for a total of \$10,002,021.00. Administration officials provided a detailed review of all of the projects and what the funds would be used for.

The Committee recognized the work and professionalism of Director Brown and the Community Preservation Office. The Committee inquired about the allowable uses and the community engagement process. The Committee discussed the importance of the recommended projects and the benefits that these projects will provide to the residents of Boston.

The Committee heard comments from the public. Many of the recipients of the funds offered comments in support of their projects, described how the funds will be used, and how it will benefit the residents of Boston.

Rationale and Recommended Action:

Docket #0574 provides for the funding of 56 projects in affordable housing, historic preservation, and open space and recreation. These recommended projects will help the City


meet its goals with affordable housing, preservation and rehabilitation of buildings and spaces, climate equity and resiliency and providing open green spaces through an equity lens. Passage of this order will allow these recommended projects to advance the City's objectives to provide affordable housing to residents, to restore and rehabilitate buildings that provide services, resources, and historical significance to City, and to provide open spaces to enhance the quality of life for City residents

By the Chair of the Committee on Government Operations, to which the following was referred:

Docket #0574, ,

submits a report recommending that these dockets **ought to pass**.

For the Chair:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael Flaherty". The signature is stylized and cursive.

Michael Flaherty, Chair
Committee on the Community Preservation Act