



Malden Community Preservation Committee

Hybrid Committee Meeting

Malden City Hall Room #105

Teams

January 21, 2025 | 6:00 p.m.

Meeting Minutes

Committee Members in Attendance: Rachael Running, *Chair*, Inna Babitskaya, Jamie Kendall, Brendan Brett, Sam Watters, *Vice Chair*

Committee Members Absent: Ronnie Raj Verma, Monique Ching,

CPC Manager: Daniel Koff

1. Meeting Called to Order

Running called the meeting to order at 6:11 p.m, read the provisions of the MA Governor allowing remote participation at the meeting, and conducted attendance.

Running introduced City Solicitor McNeil and Assistant Solicitor Rajasekaran.

2. Approval of CPC Monthly Meeting minutes from December 17, 2025

Running tabled this item until February.

3. Deliberation on FY26 Awards to Projects

Running introduced two members of the Solicitor's Office, City Solicitor McNeil and Assistant Solicitor Rajasekaran. They provided an opinion that the buildings from all three churches that applied for funding in FY26 are eligible to receive CPA Funds since they are either: 1) listed on the National Register of Historic Places; 2) listed on the State register of historic resources; 3) have been found to be historically significant by the Malden Historical Commission.

Running opened the floor for questions.

Watters questioned as to whether it is materially significant whether a project is for design/planning or construction. Rajasekaran explained that giving CPA Funds to religious projects is walking a tight line with the anti-aid amendment which says that government funds should not aid religious organizations. Yet the First Amendment does not allow CPA to deny religious organizations outright. The SJC case that is relevant to this determination was issued on a project that included three phases, including a planning phase, and the SJC did not rule on that. They explained that the funds may not go towards an explicitly religious space, such as a worship space, or to fix a stained-glass window with religious imagery. Rajasekaran believes that a planning phase of a project that deals with the architectural integrity of the structure may be eligible, whereas planning for the building's operation would not be eligible.

Kendall inquired how guidelines for historic restoration could be met with a building from the 1980's. Rajasekaran explained that would need to be investigated further. The Solicitor does not have a position on it.

Babitskaya explained that the age should be 50-75 years old or more to meet the Secretary of Interior Standards for historic rehabilitation.

Kendall inquired as to whether the building or congregation has been deemed to be historic by the Historical Commission. Rajasekaran confirmed that the building itself is an historic resource because the designation says it's historically significant.

Babitskaya explained that the designation was granted because of the congregation, not due to the building's significance. The most significant element of the historic designation is that the property must now be compliant with the demolition delay. Babitskaya explained that every restoration project must go in front of the Historical Commission for the demolition delay ordinance.

Brett explained that \$60k of the request from Emmanuel Baptist Church is for coordination, and he inquired as to whether that is an allowable expense. Solicitor McNeil advised that CPC place a condition on funds (if awarded) that any funds to support project management go towards an outside entity, and not a member of the Church. She advised to err on the side of caution that they should hire an outside coordinator.

Running inquired as to whether funding any of the churches may set a precedent. Solicitor McNeil advised that if the projects are funded, that the rationale be clear as to its reasons as to how they are defined as an historic resource. In the decision she recommended to be clear that it was decided on a case by case basis.

Brett expressed reservations on supporting all the churches, and Emmanuel Baptist Church in particular. The older church buildings have more architectural significance, whereas the new one is legally as historic as the others.

Watters asked if there are any legally significant differences between the church projects before CPC. Rajasekaran explained that legally speaking they all qualify under the statute. Qualitatively, CPC is empowered to make a determination between them.

Kendall pointed out that there are other conditions that could be placed on the projects including clawback restrictions, preservation restrictions, requirements for matching funds, etc.

Kendall inquired as to whether preservation restrictions could be applied to a building at various ages.

Watters pointed to an evaluation criteria about whether the project creates a burden for the city and inquired as to whether funding for the project would create an inevitable situation where CPA becomes the likely source of funding for repairs. Rajasekaran brought up the SJC ruling that pointed to potential entanglement of government and religious organizations. The Solicitor explained that is up to CPC's discretion. She explained that CPA funds necessitate that the organization take care of maintenance.

Linden Park

Kendall advocated for the Linden Park project because they have an engagement plan and it is the only Open Space project before CPC in FY26. Brett confirmed that the application was well-written, the park will positively impact the community. Watters agreed.

Running explained that OSPCD has a good track record in managing parks projects and so she feels comfortable funding it to the maximum amount.

Kendall inquired as to what happens if they do not receive the funding from their expected cost share. Running explained that there are many sources of funding available, and that the City would return to CPC if they didn't have funding.

Affordable Housing Trust Fund

Running summarized that the proposal is to continue CPC's relationship with the Trust Fund and that they've identified projects at 245 Bryant Street and 105 Salem Street where the \$500k request could be spent.

Conversation ensued to clarify that the FY26 request includes an amount above the 10% that has been allocated to the housing reserve. Funds from the General Reserve could support the rest of the request.

Brett mentioned that the Advocate just announced that the Trust Fund awarded funding to 105 Salem Street but they didn't mention that the funds came from CPC. Babitskaya advocated for a plaque explaining that funds came from CPC. Running agreed and advocated for adding a condition that CPC should receive credit for funding projects.

Running explained that other funding sources are drying up, so she advocated for supporting the request at its full amount. She mentioned that members are open to attending the Affordable Housing Trust meetings.

Watters advocated for advancing the project as part of a package since the request is not tied to a specific budget.

Digitization of City Records

Running explained that the \$114k request would allow them to preserve and digitize a small portion of the City's collection of historic resources.

Kendall advocated for the clear public benefit so that people can access the records more easily. Watters agreed as did Brett, Babitskaya, and Running.

Malden Rental Assistance

Running explained that ABCD is requesting \$60,000 to pilot a new rental assistance program. The program could impact upwards of 20 households in Malden to provide support towards their rental arrears.

Kendall reminded the CPC that ABCD confirmed that this award would not go towards broker fees since they are not allowed by law any longer.

Kendall advocated for funding the project due to the high cost share. Running explained that ABCD receives a lot of grants, so their budget is geared towards specific programs. Kendall advocated for providing funding to keep people housed which provides a clear benefit to the community.

Running advocated for supporting both the Trust Fund and this program to provide direct assistance. Watters pointed out that it is relatively short money.

Brett inquired as to why they aren't asking for more. Running appreciated that they're starting small with a pilot and likes the model.

139 Oliver Street

Running explained that Public Facilities is seeking \$100,000 to rehabilitate the old fire station at 139 Oliver Street. She explained that this building was a WPA project.

Brett believes the project itself is worthy, but he wanted to see more bids and a breakdown of the budget. Koff agreed to share the full quote with the Committee showing a total estimate of \$80,900 for the masonry work.

Running agreed that the application was thin, but that since it was coming from Public Facilities, she had confidence that it would be managed well, if awarded.

Babitskaya advocated for preserving the old fire stations in Malden.

Kendall confirmed that the request is for \$100k including \$80k for the masonry work, \$10k for an engineering assessment, and \$10k for dumpsters.

Saint Paul's Parish Buttress Restoration

Running summarized the request is for \$122,500 which would be a 50% match for an award from the Mass Historical Commission (MHC).

Kendall explained that the churches encompass the three historic applications that are not coming from the City, so she advocated for wanting either a clawback clause or a strict preservation restriction to be put into place. Saint Paul's has an existing perpetual preservation restriction on the exterior and interior.

Babitskaya advocated for the architectural and cultural value of the building.

Running explained that based on the prior award, they have a high degree of confidence that the project would be managed well. They are also asking for the lowest amount of all churches.

Watters explained that the smaller scale projects reduce risk for the City, which he appreciated.

Kendall explained that they have a good record of receiving matching funds with the architect. This is not their first grant review.

Running explained that the Church is not in a state of disrepair because it has been continuously maintained well.

Brett raised his hesitation of supporting churches with public funds. He mentioned that there are few historic buildings remaining in Malden, so he would like to keep these in good shape, although he hesitates to use public funding to do so.

Babitskaya explained that the City does not own many historic buildings. Most are privately owned. And over time the City has lost many of its most significant buildings.

Kendall advocated for only providing funding for historic preservation projects if a preservation restriction is put in place on the building. Kendall believes that there may be less of an anti-aid amendment concern with providing funding to Oliver Street since it is owned by the City.

Brett agreed that since it is a privately owned building, requiring a preservation restriction would be reasonable.

Kendall inquired as to whether it matters that some churches have an endowment and more funding available than others. Running pointed out that First Parish is already using some of their endowment, but they're trying to preserve it for future maintenance.

Running opened the floor to talking about the other projects.

Babitskaya advocated for considering improvements to the façades so applicants can find other sources for interior improvements.

Kendall advocated for establishing a precedent to fund private historic restoration to fund façades, and to require a preservation restriction if one isn't in place already.

Running inquired about funding planning. She made a case for funding plans to set the stage for future restoration. Saint Paul's and First Parish already have plans in place. Emmanuel Baptist does not have a plan yet. Running advocated for helping Emmanuel to create a plan that can establish their building as an historic resource.

The Committee assessed the budget and discussed whether Emmanuel Baptist may benefit from a lower fidelity design plan, such as a building conditions assessment.

Running advocated for funding all three projects, but not to the full amount for each. Watters agreed.

Watters asked if stipulations could be put in place to refine a scope of work for the projects. Running and Babitskaya concurred.

Kendall advocated for being clear as to CPC's rationale for funding. Watters agreed that being clear about the rationale, and defining parameters that work across them all.

- 1) The Massachusetts Anti-Aid Amendment (Article XVIII, later Amend. Art. 46, § 2, as amended by Art. 103) states that no public money may aid a religious organization. Meanwhile, the First Amendment guarantees that religious organizations cannot be discriminated against by being categorically denied public funds.
- 2) Buildings must be deemed to be an historic resource in one of three ways: 1) the building is listed on the National Register of Historic Places; 2) the building is listed on the State of Massachusetts Cultural Resource Information System; 3) the building has been deemed significant by the Local Historical Commission.
- 3) CPC is comfortable with scope of project and believes that the organization has the capacity to carry out the project in a timely manner.
- 4) Awards may be provided to privately-owned historic properties on the condition that an Historic Preservation restriction be placed on the building to preserve the historic character of the structure in perpetuity. If that Preservation Restriction does not cover the interior of the property, CPC may also require that a clawback clause be included in the Grant Agreement so that if the building is sold and converted into another use, CPC will recoup its investment.

4. Other Business

Running announced that Koff will prepare the annual survey to be inserted into the next water bill.

5. Adjournment of CPC Monthly Meeting

Kendall made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Watters seconded. Unanimously approved.

Meeting Packet:

CPC Meeting Packet

January 21, 2026

1. [FY26_0031_FPC-Restoration_App-Attachment_2](#)
2. [FY26_0032_139-Oliver-St.-Restoration_App-Attachments](#)
3. [FY26_0033_St.-Pauls-Parish-Restoration_App-Attach_2](#)

4. [FY26_0038_Digitization-CC-Records_App-Attach](#)
1. [Malden City Charter - City Clerk](#)
2. [First Parish Malden_CPC Prelim Review Questions](#)
3. [FY26_0035_Emanuel-Baptist-Restore-App-Attach_v2](#)
4. [FY26_0033_SPMResponse to Questions CPC_FY26_0033 Final](#)