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CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS COMMUNITY PRESERVATION COMMITTEE



COMMUNITY PRESERVATION COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION FOR Somerville Museum FY23 Collections Conservation

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Somerville Museum requests CPA funds to stabilize and protect the collections as they are returned from off-site storage. Currently the museum’s historic art and artifacts are in storage in a warehouse off site where they were held while the elevator installation and other renovations took place. To enable the collections to be returned to the museum, the condition of each object must be assessed, treated, and properly secured by a conservation professional. The Museum also requests funds to conserve specific artifacts, artifacts including the 1792 Bulfinch Staircase and three high priority paintings which are in deteriorated condition.

ELIGIBILITY

Historic Resources: This project would preserve artifacts which were found by the Somerville Historic Preservation Commission to be significant to the history of Somerville.

RECOMMENDATION

On March 1, 2023 by a vote of 4-0, the Community Preservation Committee recommended approval to City Council that the Somerville Museum be awarded \$151,000 of Community Preservation Act funds to conserve its collections, as described in their application from the following account:

Category: Historic Preservation	Recommended Funding Source	Amount
Somerville Museum FY23 Collections Conservation	Historic Preservation Reserve	\$130,000
	Budgeted Reserve	\$21,000
	Total	\$151,000

FUNDING CONDITIONS

- Artifacts that have been preserved using CPA funds may not be sold or disposed of without first obtaining City approval.
- The CPA-funded portion of the project must be initiated within three years unless extension is granted by the CPC.
- CPA funds will be used only for CPA eligible expenses.

ALIGNMENT WITH COMMUNITY NEEDS

The Somerville Museum serves Somerville residents, as well as school students, researchers, artists, musicians, historians, and cultural organizations throughout the city. Since 2015 the Somerville Museum has undertaken essential upgrades including building envelope, handicapped accessibility, and climate resiliency renovations that enable the building to continue functioning as a museum. Over \$1.5M CPA funds invested in previous years have leveraged close to an equal match in private donations and grants from the state and charitable foundations. The City holds a Preservation Restriction on this building, which was granted by the Somerville Museum as a condition of a prior CPA grant.

The project funded by this grant will enable the museum to return its collections to storage in the newly renovated building, so that it can continue to provide educational programming, community gathering space, and awareness of Somerville.

PROJECT BUDGET AND SCOPE

CPA Expenses	Amount
Collection Care	\$70,000
Bullfinch Staircase	63,500
Conservation of paintings	\$17,500
Total	\$151,000

MEASURES OF SUCCESS

The goals of this project are to:

- Contract with two conservators/collection managers for 6 months to stabilize and conserve 3,000 works of art and artifacts returning from off-site storage.
- Conserve 1792 Bulfinch Staircase
- Conserve four high priority 19th century artworks and their frames

The full original proposal is available at: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1dq5W-Y7ImFrquRDsR1XBkyfwai3vr0NM/view?usp=share_link