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January 20, 2016

Councilor Steven Martins
Chair, Committee on Ordinance
City of New Bedford
133 William St. Rm 214
New Bedford, MA 02740

Dear Councilor Steven Martins:

I am writing to you in regards to the Community Preservation Committee for the newly adopted Community Preservation Act. I was in the role of the Community Coordinator during the campaign to educate neighborhood groups, senior groups, and housing groups about the Community Preservation Act and the great role it will play in strengthening our community. Thanks to the support of the Mayor and City Council approving the ballot measure, we were successful in the campaign. The citizens of New Bedford overwhelmingly voted in favor, proving they are willing to give a little more in taxes for open space, recreation and historic preservation.

The next step is the formation of the Community Preservation Committee. In accordance with Section 5(a) of the CPA statute, the CPC is to have a minimum of five members, one each from the Conservation Commission, Planning Board, Historical Commission, Housing Authority, and Board of Park Commissioners. There are up to four additional seats allowed on the board by either election or appointment.

I bring up this point because I am aware that the CPC has not been organized. The CPC is often formed shortly after the adoption of the CPA Ordinance, since it takes time for the CPC to review the neighborhood needs, accept project proposals, and make recommendations to the legislative body, so when the funds are available (about one year after adoption), there are projects slated to start in the first round.

During CPA presentations to groups all over the city, residents raised concerns about the formation of the committee. I would like to propose that the four seats would be representative of the great diverse city we have both in its geography and culture. This would be an opportunity for someone living in the Far North or South End and between to show ownership of their part of the city, and be involved with city government. A great importance for the CPA to the community groups was that CPA funds would be available for projects all over the city, and it was clear that residents were eager to have input from their own neighborhoods.

Once the Community Preservation Committee is formed, the group will develop a Community Preservation Plan. This involves researching the preservation needs throughout the city, including public forums for input.

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Secondly, the CPC will accept project proposals from the community, review and make recommendations for projects including the amount for funding, to the legislative body. Lastly, the CPC is responsible for record keeping of budgets, meetings and proposals which are all submitted to the legislative body. This is a brief overview, and I encourage you to take a look at the Community Preservation Coalition's website for more information, <http://www.communitypreservation.org/CPCs>

The adoption of the Community Preservation Act in New Bedford is great proof that we as residents highly value our city's treasures in history and open spaces. Please consider this urging to begin the process of forming the Community Preservation Committee. Thank you in advance for the opportunity for representatives from New Bedford organizations and residents to present at the January 26th Ordinance Committee Meeting, in support of drafting the Ordinance to create the Community Preservation Committee.

Thank you very much for your time, please feel free to contact me with any questions or concerns. Thank you so much as well for your service to our city.

Sincerely,

Sherry McTigue

Cc:

Linda M. Morad, President, Councilor-at-Large
Brian K. Gomes, First Vice-President, Councilor-at-Large
Joseph P. Lopes, Second Vice-President, Ward Six Councilor
Dennis Farias, City Clerk & Clerk of the City Council
Ian Abreu, Councilor-at-Large
Naomi R.A. Carney, Councilor-at-Large
Debora Coelho, Councilor-at-Large
James Oliveira, Ward One Councilor
Steven Martins, Ward Two Councilor
Henry G. Bousquet, Ward Three Councilor
Dana Rebeiro, Ward Four Councilor
Kerry Winterson, Ward Five Councilor