

City of Salem, Massachusetts



**"Know Your Rights Under the Open Meeting Law, M.G.L. c. 30A ss. 18-25 and
City Ordinance Sections 2-2028 through 2-2033."**

The City Council Committee on Government Services

met in the Council Chamber on July 9, 2026 at 6:00 PM

for the purpose of discussing the matters(s) listed below. Notice of this meeting was posted on

June 17, 2026 at 12:04 P.M.

(This meeting is being recorded)

ATTENDANCE

GS – Turowski (chair), Sydoriak, King, Flynn and Varela. **COW** – Smith, Prosniewski, Merkl, and Hapworth.
Community Preservation Committee Applicants – Bruce Baisch, Christopher Patzke, Annie Thompson.

ABSENT WERE: **COW** – Davis and Holappa.

SUBJECT(S)

Review Community Preservation Committee Applications

Turowski – Due to time constraints since there is a regular city council meeting at 7pm, the candidates will be introduced in alphabetical order and given 5 minutes to speak about their background, why they think they are qualified for the role and what they would like to accomplish while on the committee. Then the GS committee will have 10 minutes with each candidate to ask questions before moving on to the next candidate. That should leave 5-10 minutes for additional discussion and a vote with our recommendation to the full council.

Baisch –

Bruce Baisch is a construction project manager with roughly a decade of experience overseeing a wide range of projects, including historic renovations, new ground-up construction, retail, and restaurant work, some of which has taken place in Salem. In his current role at J.J. Welch Construction in Shetland Park, he has managed projects with budgets up to \$15 million, giving him substantial familiarity with budgeting, cost control, and scheduling. His day-to-day responsibilities include coordinating multiple stakeholders—ownership groups, architects, and city departments—and leading owner-architect-contractor meetings, which he cites as the foundation of his collaborative working style.

Baisch has strong personal ties to Salem, having worked in the city for about six years and purchased a home there with his wife two years ago. He describes his guiding philosophy as "always leave a place better than you found it," and frames his interest in the Community Preservation Committee as an opportunity to safeguard and steward what makes Salem distinctive. While he has not attended CPC meetings, he has reviewed CPC agendas and minutes and is familiar with current and upcoming projects. He also identified specific local priorities, such as improving the Forest River Conservation Area—particularly a deteriorating bridge on a heavily used trail—where he believes his construction and feasibility expertise could be directly useful.

Patzke –

Christopher Patrick Drosner Patzke is a highly credentialed expert in historic preservation and landscape architecture. He holds a master's degree in landscape architecture from the University of Virginia with a specialization in historic preservation, a course of study he notes took seven and a half years to complete. Professionally, he has served as Curator of Landscapes for what is now Historic New England (formerly SPNEA), where he established policies and procedures for maintaining and preserving historic landscapes and led the organization's only full landscape preservation and restoration project in its 100-year history at the Beauport Sleeper-McCann House. He is currently a senior landscape architect at the McDowell Company and has experience in construction estimating and large, complex preservation projects. Nationally, he was rated 97 out of 100 by the U.S. Department of the Interior for his knowledge, skills, and abilities in historic landscape architecture and was one of three candidates interviewed to serve as landscape architect for President's Park (including the White House, the Eisenhower Executive Office Building, the Treasury, the Ellipse, and Lafayette Park).

In Salem, Patzke is known as a vocal advocate for historic preservation and an outspoken critic of certain city initiatives, including the Camp Naumkeag/Pioneer Village project and the City Seal effort. He established the Facebook group called "Saving Our Heritage in Salem, Massachusetts" group in direct response to initiatives by the city that he has serious concerns about that he believes violates preservation practices and deceptively presented to the community. He gave several examples of residents supporting him becoming a committee member. His central focus is on raising the level of professionalism in local preservation decisions, a better understanding of cultural landscapes, and on ensuring that Community Preservation Act funds are treated as "the people's money," spent with integrity. While he acknowledges that his criticism can be harsh, will continue to be harsh, and reflects deep frustration with government responsiveness and public trust, he frames his approach to collaboration as asking tough questions, listening to all voices, and resisting any expectation that he will simply "rubber stamp" decisions.

Thompson –

Annie Thompson is the Director of Finance and Administration at the state's economic development agency, where she manages capital infrastructure grant programs that invest in communities. Her work involves evaluating projects for community growth, economic development and community housing, giving her direct experience with the kind of capital planning and due diligence that the Community Preservation Committee (CPC) requires. She has significant familiarity with state programs such as the Seaport Economic Council, MassWorks, and Destination Development Capital Grants, and understands how to leverage public resources, match funding, and align local projects with state-level tools. Her earlier role in the state tourism office exposed her to assets across the Commonwealth, including Salem, and helped her understand how tourism, historic resources, and community investment intersect.

Thompson's qualifications are strengthened by her strategic, process-oriented approach to project evaluation and community. She emphasizes aligning CPC decisions with the city's strategic and economic development plans, prioritizing shovel-ready projects with sound permitting, realistic budgets, and identified vendors. She also brings a strong public process background; organizing and attending listening sessions, managing contentious tourism-related feedback, and advocating for accessible, respectful engagement (appropriate meeting times, translation, multiple venues, and genuine listening). She describes herself as a calm, team-oriented collaborator who listens first, contributes when it adds value, and uses applicants past performance with public funds as a factor in future funding decisions, an approach well-suited to responsible stewardship of Community Preservation Act resources.

Motions –

Varela motions to recommend approval to reappoint Kate Martin to the Community Preservation Committee for a two-year term. Seconded by Flynn. Motion carries 5-0.

Varela motions to recommend approval to appoint Annie Thompson as the City Council appointment to the Community Preservation Committee for a one-year term which will be effective upon approval of the full council. Seconded by Flynn. Turowski asks if there are any other motions. Motion carries 5-0.

On the motion of C. Varela, the meeting adjourned at 6:48 P.M.

Erin Turowski.

MB

(Chairperson)