

CITY OF NEWTON

IN BOARD OF ALDERMEN

FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT

MONDAY, MARCH 28, 2005

Present: Ald. Coletti (Chair), Gerst, Linsky, Gentile, Stewart, Parker, Schnipper and Lipof

Also Present: David Wilkinson (Comptroller), Paul Camilli (Constable), Josephine McNeil (Executive Director, CAN-DO), Carol Stapleton (Parks/Recreation), Jayne Colino (Director, Newton Senior Center), David Olson (Director, Jackson Homestead), Kathy Glick-Weil (Library Director), Bob Rooney (DPW Commissioner), Sandy Pooler (Chief Budget Officer)

Appointment by His Honor the Mayor

#101-05 PAUL A. CAMILLI, 37 Clinton Street, appointed as a Constable for the City of Newton for a term of office expiring June 1, 2008.

ACTION: **APPROVED 5-0 (Lipof, Parker, Linsky not voting)**

NOTE: Mr. Camilli was present this evening. He explained that he is a lifelong resident of Newton. He submitted a letter to Mayor Cohen some time ago requesting to be appointed as a Constable. The Committee received a copy of his required \$5,000 Constable Bond (attached to this evening's agenda).

Mr. Camilli is the first new Constable to be appointed during this term for Mayor Cohen. It is understood that requests to be appointed Constable are received by the Mayor and processed in the order in which they are received as the positions may become available. Background checks are performed on all candidates prior to their being appointed.

Mr. Camilli is currently an operations manager in the Water/Sewer Department for the Town of Winthrop. He attended Newton North High School and Wentworth Institute in Boston.

The Committee had a very brief interview with Mr. Camilli and was pleased to support his appointment by a vote of 5-0, with Ald. Lipof, Parker and Linsky not voting.

#102-05 CITY ENGINEER requesting approval of the following mentioned sidewalk/driveway apron and/or curb betterments; said betterments to be graded and constructed and assessments to be levied under the provisions of MGL Chapter 83, Sec. 26, authorizing the assessment of betterments for sidewalk construction:

<u>PROPERTY OWNER</u>	<u>LOCATION/SBL</u>	<u>BOOK/PAGE</u>	<u>AMOUNT</u>
I) Murphy, Donna More, TR	496 Comm. Ave. 61-003-0037	41298/069	\$1,188.00
II) Gill, Thomas G.	126 Eastbourne Rd. 73-043-0007	16665/007	\$2,424.00
III) White, Robert and Panella, Beth	127 Eastbourne Rd. 73-044-0007	32279/072	\$ 865.50
IV) Kelly, David A. and Alice M.	98 Fairway Drive 31-023-0004	1261/134	\$1,087.50
V) Monaco, Anthony and Mary Louise	25 Farlow Road 72-037-0002	36061/544	\$2,259.00
VI) Jaffe, Jeremy C. and Linda S.	8 Grant Avenue 73-041-0009	32201/284	\$ 939.00
VII) Stearns, Franklin G. and Evans, Susan P.	11 Grant Avenue 73-042-0013	20630/274	\$1,104.00
VIII) Miles, Marc. A. and Krieks, Manja	16 Grant Avenue 73-041-0008	15644/510	\$ 708.00
IX) Salter, Stanley and Marilyn	20 Grant Avenue 73-041-0007	12347/392	\$1,038.00
X) Sassieni, Paul and Jakubovic, Valerie	160 Grant Avenue 61-022-0025	26543/482	\$1,434.00
XI) Marks, Timothy and Valerie	241 Grant Avenue 61-025-0005A	31714/184	\$1,780.50

ACTION: APPROVED 7-0 (Lipof not voting)

#103-05 CITY ENGINEER requesting approval of the following mentioned sidewalk/driveway apron and/or curb betterments; said betterments to be graded and constructed and assessments to be levied under the provisions of MGL Chapter 83, Sec. 26, authorizing the assessment of betterments for sidewalk construction:

<u>PROPERTY OWNER</u>	<u>LOCATION/SBL</u>	<u>BOOK/PAGE</u>	<u>AMOUNT</u>
I) Kisiuk, Roy L. and Ingrid	65 Grasmere Street 71-024-0012	11859/354	\$ 687.00
II) Dunning, Russell K. and Sallie F.	91 Grasmere Street 71-024-0007	23713/037	\$5,931.00
III) Litman, Marilyn	102 Grasmere Street 71-028-0001	11571-672	\$2,547.00
IV) Shaffer, Lynn L.	115 Grasmere Street 71-030-0003	36830/049	\$ 829.00
V) Ravi, Sarathy and Goldstein, Beth	57 Hunnewell Ave. 71-025-0007	22259/276	\$4,337.50
VI) Grau, Daniel and Cheryl Lyn	334 Kenrick Street 72-040-0001	35313/269	\$ 808.50

VII) Mendelsohn, Sylvan M. and Jennifer S.	3 Magnolia Avenue 73-009-0005	27295/185	\$1,072.50
VIII) Kreppin, Michael S. and Blair M.	6 Magnolia Avenue 72-039-0027	26269/069	\$ 823.50
IX) Kasman, Barbara J., TR	30 Priscilla Road 63-012-0004	29315/044	\$ 981.00
X) Edwards, Audrey	53 Priscilla Road 63-013-0027	32239/452	\$1,120.50

ACTION: **APPROVED 7-0 (Lipof not voting)**

NOTE: These two items were presented by DPW Commissioner Bob Rooney this evening. Each of these line items meets the guidelines for betterments (over \$500) to be paid back over 20 years (included in the property tax bill for each property owner listed).

Without debate, the Committee voted 7-0, with Ald. Lipof not voting, to approve each of these items.

REFERRED TO PUBLIC FACILITIES AND FINANCE COMMITTEES

#107-05 **HIS HONOR THE MAYOR** requesting that the sum of \$18,000 be appropriated from monies received from Newton-Wellesley Hospital (as reimbursement to the City for the installation of drainage in Washington Street) for the purpose of funding a 350 foot drainage extension on LARKSPUR ROAD.

PUBLIC FACILITIES APPROVED 5-0 ON 3/23/05

ACTION: **APPROVED 7-0 (Lipof not voting)**

NOTE: Commissioner Rooney also presented this item to the Committee this evening. He presented a letter dated March 15th which indicated that this drainage extension is being granted to allow for drainage upstream in Larkspur Road to flow continuously for the entire length of Larkspur Road, across Quinobequin Road and into the Charles River. This project is being done in order to provide some relief to the current drainage problems in the area. Currently, the drainage is being directed through the City easement behind #14 Larkspur Road.

Commissioner Rooney explained that, after meeting with the neighborhood residents regarding this drainage issue in the Public Facilities Committee, it was determined that this new outflow pipe installation (to be performed at some time over the upcoming summer months) is necessary. This work is to be done by City work forces. The estimated cost of the project is \$70,000. Commissioner Rooney informed the Committee that \$52,000 of this cost will be funded using DPW operating budget accounts. Therefore, this request is being brought forward to make up the difference needed to complete the funding for the project.

The Committee had no problem with this request. Many members of the Committee were familiar with the drainage issues in this area. The Committee agreed that this is certainly necessary to reduce future flooding risk in this area. The Committee voted 7-0, with Ald. Lipof not voting, to approve this item.

#104-05 HIS HONOR THE MAYOR, in accordance with MGL Ch.44, Sec.31D, requesting authorization to expend funds in excess of available appropriations for the purpose of funding snow and ice removal.

ACTION: **APPROVED 7-0 (Lipof not voting)**

#104-05(2) HIS HONOR THE MAYOR requesting authorization to expend FEMA funds from the federal grant account (when received) for the purpose of funding snow and ice removal costs. (It is currently anticipated the City will receive approximately \$600,000 from FEMA.)

ACTION: **APPROVED 7-0 (Lipof not voting)**

NOTE: Sandy Pooler, Chief Budget Officer, was present this evening. He presented a letter dated March 15th which indicated that these items are needed to authorize deficit spending for the remainder of this fiscal year. This is necessary in order for the City to be able to pay all of its contractors who worked on snow and ice control during this very tough winter season that we have endured. It is understood that, hopefully before July 1st, the City is to receive approximately \$600,000 in FEMA reimbursements for costs incurred during the January blizzard. The second item will authorize the expenditure of those funds when they are received.

Mr. Pooler informed the Committee that the Executive Department and the Public Works Department are not expecting that any more funds will be needed this fiscal year for control of snow and ice this late in the season. If, however, there is a spring snowstorm, the Mayor's office proposes to cancel other DPW work projects in order to free up funds for the control of snow and ice.

It was clearly stated by Mr. Pooler to the Committee that this deficit spending authorization only relates to the expenditure of funds for control of snow and ice payments while the City awaits its FEMA reimbursement funds. Any additional expenditures will be dealt with by transferring funds within the current DPW operating budget.

With that understanding, the Committee voted 7-0, with Ald. Lipof not voting, to approve each of these two items.

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON COMM PRES & FINANCE COMMITTEE

#31-05 **COMMUNITY PRESERVATION COMMITTEE** recommending that the sum of \$550,000 be appropriated from the Community Preservation Fund to create four units of low-income housing at 20-22 Falmouth Road, West Newton and 163 Jackson Road, Newton Corner.

CMTE ON COMM PRES APPROVED 7-0 ON 1/25/05

ACTION: APPROVED 6-1-1 (Gerst opposed; Stewart abstaining) SUBJECT TO SECOND CALL

***Chairman's note:** It is anticipated that some of these items may be placed on Second Call at the Board meeting on April 4th, therefore, the notes contained in this report will be brief. Please refer to the attached backup information for specific details.*

NOTE: This item was approved by the Committee on Community Preservation on January 25th, but not taken up by the Finance Committee until this evening because it was necessary to gather more information in order to gain a better understanding of the details related to the purchase of the property and the financing issues related thereto.

Josephine McNeil from CAN-DO, the petitioner, was present this evening. She informed the Committee that CAN-DO is requesting these funds to assist in the paydown of the mortgages for these two properties for the purpose of creating 4 additional units of low-income housing. These properties will be rental units for individuals at or below 50% of the median income in Newton.

An analysis of the materials provided relating to the purchase of these properties showed that both of these properties were assessed at somewhere in the \$400,000 range. They were purchased by the petitioner for \$660,000 each. This was a 50% increase over the assessed value for these properties. The purchase price was based upon appraisals performed by Boggini Realty. The price seemed to be somewhat excessive. In reviewing this information, the Assessing Department made the observation that the Falmouth Road purchase was within the comparable prices analyzed for that location in Newton. However, the same comparable prices were used to set the purchase price of the Jackson Road property, which is not located in the same area of the city; this purchase price was significantly higher than the appraised value of similar homes in that neighborhood. This purchase was the highest price for a two-family dwelling of this size to date in this area.

This project will also receive approximately \$150,000 in CDBG funds to upgrade these two properties. The Committee understood that the total combined cost for these two properties will be \$1.9 million. Approximately \$1.4 million of these funds will come from either CDBG funds, state and NHRF money or Community Preservation funds. Therefore, there is a very high input of assistance for this project.

The most important part of the discussion this evening focused on the possibility to restrict a portion of the tenancy of these units to current Newton residents or employees who work for the City of Newton. This suggestion was brought forward by Ald. Gentile.

Chair Coletti mentioned that, since the City is investing money in this project, it would also be desirable to have a deed restriction whereby (if CAN-DO can no longer keep up these properties and will re-sell them), the City should have first right of refusal to purchase the properties. The properties could be put into the City's own stock of affordable housing at that time.

Ms. McNeil was agreeable to both of these requests. The Committee requested that the Planning Department work with the Community Preservation Committee to make these changes and incorporate them into the final draft Board Order prior to Board of Aldermen vote on this item.

With the understanding that these changes would be forthcoming, the Committee ultimately voted 6-1-1, with Ald. Gerst opposed and Ald. Stewart abstaining, to approve this item.

COMMITTEE CLERK'S NOTE: Please refer to memo from CPC dated April 1, distributed under separate cover to all Board members. This memo incorporates the requested changes and has the proposed Board Order attached to it.

REFERRED TO CMTE. ON COMM. PRES. AND FINANCE COMMITTEE

#40-05 **COMMUNITY PRESERVATION COMMITTEE** recommending that the sum of \$64,000 be appropriated from the Community Preservation Fund for purposes of funding the Wellington Park Improvement Project.
CMTE. ON COMM. PRES. APPROVED 7-0 (Lennon not voting) on 3/1/05

ACTION: APPROVED 8-0

NOTE: This item was presented by Judy Jacobsen, representing the Planning Department. Carol Stapleton was also present this evening, representing the Parks and Recreation Department. This project is for renovation of Wellington Park, a small neighborhood park. It will include installation of new basketball and tennis courts, accessible pathways, park benches, a water fountain, information kiosks, signage and other small items.

The project actually has a total cost of \$135,000 being spent (this \$64,000, \$60,000 from Capital Improvement funds, \$10,000 from CDBG funds, and \$1,000 from funds raised in the community).

There was some discussion in Committee about the level of local fundraising (which is considered as part of the acceptance of these funds). Ald. Gerst spoke to variations in the policies followed (regarding Farlow Park, which was requested to have a larger neighborhood fundraising input) and why this project had a significantly lower input of fundraising to assist in the funding.

Actually, the Committee was informed that there is no actual set percentage as to how much is to be contributed on these types of projects from community fundraising. In this instance, this is a small playground (a "pocket park"), and therefore does not have the level of input that other parks (because of their locations) would have.

Ultimately, the Committee voted 8-0 to approve these funds, with the expressed concern that this park not be designated as an off leash dog park after these improvements are completed.

REFERRED TO CMTE. ON COMM. PRES. AND FINANCE COMMITTEE

#68-05 COMMUNITY PRESERVATION COMMITTEE recommending that the sum of \$271,210 be appropriated from the Community Preservation Fund for purposes of creating The Park at the Newton Senior Center.

**CMTE. ON COMM. PRES. APPROVED 7-0-1 (Sangiolo abstaining)
on 3/1/05**

ACTION: APPROVED 7-0-1 (Gerst abstaining)

NOTE: Jayne Colino, Director of the Senior Center, was present this evening, along with Carol Stapleton from the Parks and Recreation Department. There were many other area residents in attendance this evening who wished to show their support of this project and the Senior Center.

The total cost of the proposed project is \$329,210 (\$271,210 from Community Preservation Funds and other funds are being provided by donations at the Senior Center and the Senior Center fund has promised \$6,000 per year for ongoing maintenance of the park.

There was a plan, drafted by Presley Associates, to redo the front of the Senior Center grounds with new plantings, trees, benches, walkways and the like. The budget involves site preparation (disposal of existing landscaping), paving and surfacing (including sidewalks and granite curbing), fencing (to completely enclose the area with a 4-foot high fence with stone entry columns, installation of game tables, benches and chairs, black metal overhead light fixtures, and significant planting and irrigation work.

In reviewing the application, the concern that the Committee had was the excessive cost for the work being done; the estimate seemed to be high. The Committee members expressed their hope that the cost for these items be brought down before the final contracts are awarded. It is hopeful that the bidding climate will produce lower costs for

this project. Most importantly, it was requested that , if there are any unspent funds, they be returned to the Community Preservation Fund.

With that, the Committee voted 7-0-1, with Ald. Gerst abstaining, to approve this item.

REFERRED TO CMTE. ON COMM. PRES. AND FINANCE COMMITTEE

#39-05 COMMUNITY PRESERVATION COMMITTEE recommending that the sum of \$257,395 be appropriated from the Community Preservation Fund for purposes of the preservation and restoration of Phase II (year 2) of the Historic Burying Grounds Project.

CMTE. ON COMM. PRES. APPROVED 5-0-2 (Vance, Parker abstaining; Linsky not voting) on 3/1/05

ACTION: APPROVED 6-0-1 (Parker abstaining; Lipof not voting)

NOTE: David Olson, Director of the Jackson Homestead, was present this evening. There were many people present this evening in support of this project (including members of the Jackson Homestead board). There is great concern about the current status of the historic burying grounds in the City.

This application is for the second phase of funding (Phase IIA of III Phases to complete the project). This covers the East Parish, West Parish and South burying grounds. The primary intent of this phase is to address what the Master Plan has identified as the immediate needs of the burying grounds, including the rebuilding and repair of certain tombs and vaults, gravestone conservation, lawn rehabilitation, and re-grading and replacement of fencing on these properties.

Initially, the Phase II funding request amounted to over \$739,000, but this is the first portion of that phase. The Community Preservation Committee recommended that the additional \$481,000 for Phase IIB be held off until next fiscal year.

CPA funds in the amount of \$188,277 were used to fund Phase I of this project. This Phase IIA will accomplish some significant improvements.

The Committee reviewed the work to be done and it is clear that this is certainly a worthwhile use of CPA funds. Chairman Coletti indicated that he considers it to be a very significant justification for the expenditure of CPA funds, since these gravestones mark the permanent resting places of many people dating back to the 1700s who were descendents of current Newton residents.

There was a request that this work be completed no later than December 31, 2006 and that Phase IIB be put off until next fiscal year. With that understanding, the Committee voted 6-0-1, with Ald. Parker abstaining and Ald. Lipof not voting, to approve this item.

REFERRED TO CMTE. ON COMM. PRES. AND FINANCE COMMITTEE

#69-05 COMMUNITY PRESERVATION COMMITTEE recommending that the sum of \$41,000 be appropriated from the Community Preservation Fund for the purpose of providing additional funding for the Newton Corner Library Restoration Project.

CMTE. ON COMM. PRES. APPROVED 8-0 ON 3/1/05

ACTION: APPROVED 7-0 (Lipof not voting)

NOTE: Kathy Glick-Weil was present this evening. The CPC voted to recommend that these funds be appropriated in order to supplement the funding of approximately \$195,000 for the Newton Corner Library Restoration Project. There is money in the City Hall Balustrade project account. That project is completed, therefore that account will be closed out and these funds will be re-allocated for this project.

The comprehensive scope of the work includes site work, repair and replacement of the roof sheathing (metal and slate), replacement of wood gutters, paint and repair of wood trim, repair and re-glazing of windows, and insulation.

This property is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Temporary repairs have been done on this property over the years. At one time, someone from Boston College faculty used the upper portion of the building for housing. The lower portion has been used as the Junior Library for many years.

The Committee was in full support of these improvements and, without much debate on the issue, voted 7-0, with Ald. Lipof not voting, to approve this request.

All other items were held. The Committee adjourned at approximately 11:00 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Paul E. Coletti, Chair