

CITY OF NEWTON

IN BOARD OF ALDERMEN

PUBLIC FACILITIES COMMITTEE REPORT

WEDNESDAY, MAY 5, 2010

Present: Ald. Schnipper (Chairman), Lennon, Albright, Salvucci, Gentile, Crossley, Danberg, and Lappin

Also present: Clint Schuckel (Traffic Engineer), Alice Ingerson (Community Preservation Planner), Cindy Stone (Director of the History Museum), Susan Abele (History Museum Curator), Arthur Cabral (Interim Public Buildings Commissioner), and David Turocy (Deputy Director of Public Buildings)

#128-10 COMMISSIONER OF PUBLIC WORKS requesting Board of Aldermen approval to remove the traffic island at the intersection of Beacon Street and Herrick Road. [04-27-10 @ 1:59 PM]

ACTION: **APPROVED 8-0**

NOTE: Clint Schuckel, Traffic Engineer, explained that he is seeking Board of Aldermen approval to remove a traffic island at the intersection of Beacon Street and Herrick Road. It is the final piece of the Union Street paving project. The removal of the traffic island would create a safer pedestrian crossing. The sidewalks would be reconstructed and accessible ramps would be installed. The curbs would be bumped out to create a narrower intersection and create additional green space. The City is hoping that the owner of Piccadilly Square, who currently maintains the traffic island, would adopt the green space and install a bench. The bumped out curbs would be stamped concrete in a brick pattern. There would be a proposed concrete walkway between the stamped concrete and the green space. The work will be done in-house by the Department of Public Works and would not require any additional appropriation.

Ald. Danberg has received a number of complaints from pedestrians regarding the unsafe crossing at the intersection and is supportive of the redesign of the intersection. Ald. Danberg has worked with the Traffic Engineer to create a safer intersection. She has also spoken with the owner of Piccadilly Square regarding adopting the green space. The owner is interested; however, he is not willing to install a bench in the green space due to liability issues. Ald. Danberg would like to see a bench in the green area and thought perhaps the City could install it and the property owner could landscape around the bench. Ald. Danberg is planning on having additional conversations with the property owner regarding adopting the space and will determine if the owner is willing to provide the landscaping.

Ald. Gentile asked if a turning lane would be lost due to the curb bump outs, as he is concerned with creating additional traffic in the area. Mr. Schuckel responded that the street is a one way; therefore, there would not be a loss of a lane. The bump outs and removal of the traffic island should not create any additional traffic backups in the area. Mr. Schuckel ran a computer turning template for a coach bus at this location. The turning template showed that this type of bus would have no issue with turning onto Herrick Road. With that, Ald. Danberg moved approval of the item, which carried unanimously.

REFERRED TO CMT ON COMM PRES., PUB. FAC. AND FIN. COMMITTEES

#83-10 THE COMMUNITY PRESERVATION COMMITTEE recommending that the sum of sixty three thousand, eight hundred forty five dollars (\$63,845) be appropriated from the FY10 Community Preservation Fund's historic resources and general reserves to be expended by the Public Buildings Department to complete the design of storage and accessibility improvements for the archives at the Jackson Homestead. [03/09/10 @ 4:20 PM]

COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY PRES. APPROVED 7-0

ACTION: APPROVED 6-0-2 (Gentile and Salvucci abstaining)

NOTE: In July of 2008, the Board of Aldermen approved \$37,500 for design work for the Newton History Museum to rehabilitate and expand storage space at the Jackson Homestead. During the course of the design process, it was determined that the accessibility issues at the Jackson Homestead should be addressed. The Jackson Homestead currently has a handicap lift that is not sufficient when compared to today's accessibility requirements. The additional \$63,845 would provide the money to complete the design with the inclusion of a ramp for accessibility and other accessibility upgrades. The additional funding would also provide funding for hazardous material testing, geotechnical services and a site survey, which were not included in the original design funding request.

The docket item was previously discussed at a joint meeting with the Finance Committee and held by the Committees for further information on April 7, 2010. The Committees requested a structural engineer's report on the museum, a rough construction cost estimate, a breakdown of the architectural fee request, the other funding sources for the project and how the other funding sources would be used. Commissioner of Public Buildings Arthur Cabral provided the Committee with the information, which was attached to the agenda. Committee members reviewed the information.

Ald Salvucci commented that the project seems very costly for an archival storage project. Ald. Crossley explained that it is a much larger project than archive storage and document retention. The project includes a large renovation of a section of the Homestead to provide universal access to all visitors. Ald. Crossley suggested that the architects label their drawings and provide a narrative with the plans.

The project has not exceeded the original \$37,500 for design but approximately \$32,000 has been spent. There was some concern that the soft costs for the project seem high. Generally the soft costs are 10% of the renovation. Based on the design costs, Committee members were anxious that the construction costs could amount to more than \$900,000. The Commissioner reminded the Committee that the soft costs include hazardous material testing and geotechnical testing and site survey costs, which are usually not included in the soft costs for a project. Commissioner Cabral explained that the estimated construction costs are \$375,000 and based on feed back from the architect the Commissioner is fairly certain that it is a close estimate. Community Block Grant Funds totaling \$40,000, and \$37,164 from private donations will be used for the construction portion of the project. The Commissioner will provide a more exact figure at the design development phase of the project.

Many Committee members felt that if a feasibility study were done before design money was requested many of the issues related to design could have been avoided. Ms. Ingerson

pointed out that the Board of Aldermen requested that Community Preservation Fund money not be used for study. It was suggested that the Board of Aldermen and the Community Preservation Committee may want to come up with guidelines or a policy, which would allow some studies to be funded depending on the project.

Ald. Gentile asked how the architect was hired. Commissioner Cabral stated that the Designer Selection Committee made the recommendation for the architect. Ald. Gentile asked if the Designer Selection Committee was informed of the design fee issues related to the project. Commissioner Cabral responded that he does let them know but it is not the role of the Designer Selection Committee to deal with financial issues. Ald. Gentile felt that it would be advantageous for the Board of Aldermen to change the role of the Designer Selection Committee and the Design Review Committee to benefit from all of their expertise including construction related financial issues. The Chair pointed out that there is a docket item pending, which requests review and amendment of the ordinance related to design, which include the responsibilities of both Design Review and Designer Selection Committees.

Ald. Gentile requested an update on the overall Community Preservation Fund finances for the Finance Committee meeting. Ald. Lappin moved approval of the item, which carried by a vote of six in favor and two abstentions. Both Ald. Gentile and Salvucci abstained as they will further discuss the item at the Finance Committee meeting.

REFERRED TO COMM. PRES., PUB FAC & FINANCE COMMITTEES

#147-08 COMMUNITY PRESERVATION COMMITTEE recommending that the sum of \$359,400, including \$2,000 for legal costs, be appropriated from the FY'08 Community Preservation Fund's historic resources and general reserves, for a project to rehabilitate and expand storage space for the research library and archives at the Newton History Museum, to preserve the existing collections, and enhance public access to the collections. [04-01-08 @ 4:10 PM]

COMMUNITY PRESERVATION APPROVED 6-0 on 4-29-08

(A) DESIGN FUNDS ESTIMATE \$37,500.00 – BOA APPROVED ON 07/21/08

(B) BALANCE OF PROJECT ESTIMATE \$321,900.00 – HELD

ACTION: PART B VOTED NO ACTION NECESSARY 8-0

NOTE: The Community Preservation Committee has requested that the Board of Aldermen take a vote of no action necessary on Docket Item #147-08(B). The Community Preservation Committee will docket another request for construction funds for the History Museum construction project when the design is complete and a final construction amount is available. The Committee unanimously voted approval of a motion for no action necessary.

REFERRED TO PUBLIC FACILITIES AND FINANCE COMMITTEES

#133-10 HIS HONOR THE MAYOR requesting authorization to appropriate one hundred twenty thousand dollars (\$120,000) from Free Cash to the Public Buildings Department for the purpose of funding actual and anticipated costs associated with the restoration of City Hall as a result of the severe rain storms in March of this year.

ACTION: APPROVED 8-0

NOTE: Commissioner Cabral presented the request for funds to renovate the basement of City Hall after it sustained severe water damage caused by the March rain storms. There is a groundwater issue at City Hall that was aggravated by the extreme amount rain that fell in March. The Public Buildings Department is in the middle of restoring the basement and is using existing funds from various Public Buildings accounts that need to be replenished. The restoration needs to be done as quickly as possible as the Planning Department and the consumer affairs personnel are displaced. The Commissioner hopes to have everybody back into their office space by June 1, 2010. In addition, there is no access to the City Hall vaults, which need to be cleaned and sanitized as recommended by the Health Department. The cost of shredding damaged records is also included in the request.

The Commissioner provided a breakdown of the requested \$120,000 for restoration costs, which was attached to the agenda. The Commissioner informed the Committee that he is pursuing a claim through the building insurance and Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). Should the City receive any compensation, it would be placed into Free Cash. The City is unlikely to see any reimbursement from FEMA this fiscal year, if at all.

Ald. Crossley asked if there was any mitigation work included in the restoration. Commissioner Cabral stated that the down spouts were checked, unblocked and extended. The City currently uses pumps to remove groundwater from underneath the building. Ald. Crossley thought it might be beneficial to investigate the installation of French drains, while all of the furniture and equipment was out of the Planning Department. The cracks in the basement floor are being dealt with by a mason. Commissioner Cabral is in the process of discussing a perimeter drainage system but it is unlikely that a drainage system will be installed during the restoration project. There is no funding and it is important to get employees back into their working space. Ald. Crossley suggested that the Building Department get a proposal from an engineering company for a French drainage system. Ald. Gentile reiterated that the drainage system would not happen at this time, as it is imperative to get the staff back into their space because they are terribly inconvenienced. Ald. Lappin suggested that the Public Buildings Department implement a schedule for down spout clean outs at City hall. The Commissioner is currently working on developing a schedule.

Ald. Gentile asked Commissioner Cabral to look at how documents are stored in the vaults. It is his understanding that the City lost some essential information because it was stored on the floor. Mr. Cabral agreed to look at the storage of documents. Gentile moved approval of the item, which carried unanimously.

REFERRED TO PUBLIC FACILITIES AND FINANCE COMMITTEES

#134-10 **HIS HONOR THE MAYOR** requesting authorization to transfer one hundred thousand dollars (\$100,000) from the Sewer MWRA Assessments line item to the Sewer Main Repair/Installation Overtime account to fund a projected shortfall in the Sewer overtime account.

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

NOTE: Deputy Commissioner of Public Works David Turocy presented the request for a \$100,000 transfer from the Sewer Massachusetts Water Resources Authority (MWRA) account to the Sewer Main Repair/Installation Overtime account. The transfer is necessary to cover extraordinary overtime costs related to the March rain storms and the settlement of the Newton

Municipal Employee Association contract. Although the Public Works Department brought \$190,336 in funds from the previous budget to cover the collective bargaining, the department was under-funded for the settlement by \$80,000. The overtime related to the rain storms totaled \$68,482. There is some hope that the Federal Emergency Management Agency will reimburse the City for some of the overtime costs related to the storms but the City is unlikely to receive any reimbursement this fiscal year.

The shortfall created by these two things amounted to \$150,000 but the Department of Public Works was able to cover \$50,000. The \$100,000 is available within the MWRA Assessments line item due to a variance between the February 2009 preliminary sewer wholesale charge and the actual charge, which amounted to \$260,093. Ald. Gentile moved approval of the item, which carried unanimously.

#385-07 ALD. SCHNIPPER AND GENTILE updating the Public Facilities Committee on the progress of the Newton North High School Project. [11/21/07 @ 10:23 AM]

ACTION: **HELD 7-0 (Albright not voting)**

NOTE: Ald. Gentile and Schnipper provided the Committee with an update on the Newton North High School project. There were many questions from neighbors regarding the move from the old school to the new school at the Newton North Liaison Committee meeting. The Committee members asked that Public Buildings Commissioner Arthur Cabral provide the information to the liaison committee as soon as it is available. Ald. Gentile also requested that Commissioner Cabral investigate the night lighting at the new school. There are several lights left on that are very bright including the lights at the docking bays, which shine into the houses on Elm Road. Ald. Gentile has spoken with the project manager regarding the lights because he is not sure that the emergency lights are working the way they are meant to work.

The tennis court issue has been resolved. The tennis courts are in compliance with the site plan approval board order. The shift in the courts has resulted in one smaller tennis court, which no longer meets the MIAA size requirements for doubles tennis matches. The light for the last court has also been taken down to provide the neighbors with some relief. Ald. Crossley requested further information on what type of lights are being used and how they are lamped. Both Commissioner Cabral and Public Works Deputy Commissioner David Turocy agreed to provide the information.

Ald. Schnipper and Gentile will be attending a meeting on May 12, 2010 with two of the bidders for the demolition of the old school. The bids for the demolition came in with a wide array of pricing for the demolition. Three of the bids were close and less than the budget line item for demolition; however, there is always the potential for additional costs. The abatement for the old building will start in July and it is believed the demolition will be complete by March 2011.

Representatives of the Massachusetts School Building Authority recently walked through the new school and were very pleased. They commented that the building is not extravagant and is extremely well built.

Respectfully submitted,

Sydra Schnipper, Chairman