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## **Community Preservation Committee**

### **MINUTES**

11 July 2012

The meeting was held on Wednesday 11 July 2012 at 7:00 pm in City Hall Room 202.

Community Preservation Committee (CPC) members present: Leslie Burg, Nancy Grissom, Thomas Turner, Jim Robertson, Joel Feinberg, Michael Clarke (absent on some items as noted below, while attending another meeting in City Hall), Dan Green (arr. 7:15 pm). Absent: Wally Bernheimer.

Also present: Senior Planner Alexandra Ananth (Newton Farm Commission staff) and Commissioner of Public Buildings Stephanie Gilman (both for the first part of the meeting), and Alderman Amy Sangiolo (for the last part of the meeting).

Program manager Alice Ingerson served as recorder.

Committee Chair Leslie Burg opened the meeting at 7:10 pm.

## **PROJECTS & PRE-PROPOSALS**

### **Staff Presentation on Long-term Program Planning**

Alice Ingerson provided a brief review of the current funding forecast for the program, Newton's allocation of CPA funds among eligible resources over the past 10 years, and possible future funding requests. She had found roughly \$160 million of potential requests for the roughly \$20 million of CPA funding that Newton could reasonably expect to have available over the next 5 years. This presentation is appended to these minutes.

### **Fy13 Pre-Proposals from the City *Capital Improvement Plan (CIP)***

Public Buildings Commissioner Stephanie Gilman presented the following three pre-proposals. The Committee agreed to vote on whether to request full proposals for each project only after discussing all of them. Mike Clarke was intermittently absent during this discussion.

### **Angino Farm Barn Interior – Supplemental Request**

Design is now 90 percent complete for this project, which received \$568,000 in CPA funds in 2010. Design work gradually made it clear that construction would cost \$300,000 more than that. The City's licensee Newton Community Farm, Inc. (NCF), the Newton Farm Commission, the architects and project manager Maciej Konieczny in the Public Buildings Dept. then worked together to eliminate or defer as many project features as possible, so they could be funded privately, and to minimize the request for supplemental CPA funding. Original plans and estimates had not included all necessary site and utilities work, building code requirements that the barn must meet as a place of public assembly for educational and fundraising events, or all structural work the building required, including: reinforcement of all floor joists, rebuilding part of the foundation, and stabilizing the walls.

Alice Ingerson noted that this project illustrated the wisdom of funding design separately, to provide reliable construction cost estimates, before recommending funding for construction.

In response to Dan Green, NCF Board President Peter Barrer noted that NCF has raised and spent \$230,000 of private funds on the barn's exterior and has committed to raising an additional \$120,000 for features that will now not be built with CPA funds, even if supplemental CPA funding is approved.

In response to a question from Jim Robertson, Gilman noted that the project was included in the City's *Capital Improvement Plan* with a very low ranking, because the risks and consequences of not converting the barn into an educational facility were low. However, the project ranked highly for its contributions to community quality of life.

Leslie Burg felt the CPC would not have supported a supplemental request for \$300,000. She was willing to consider a full proposal for the reduced amount of supplemental funding but felt this should be the farm's last request for CPA funds. Nancy Grissom noted that the CPC had said the same thing when recommending the original \$568,000 in 2010.

In response to a question from Joel Feinberg, Barrer said renovations to the barn would support educational and fundraising activities that would help to fund the farm's operating budget.

In general, CPC members agreed that any full proposal for this supplemental funding should provide a clear, detailed breakdown of what had changed from the original plan, to show why the cost had increased, as well as an updated operating budget for the farm, including maintenance of the barn.

### **Carr School - Historic Windows**

This building was originally built as a public elementary school in 1934/35, decommissioned in 1979, sold to a private school with an option to repurchase, then re-acquired by the City in 1999. It currently houses several nonprofits and the Mayor's Office of Cultural affairs but is scheduled for renovation in fy13-14 to house the staff and students of several public schools during the remodeling or replacement of those schools over the next two decades.

Gilman asked for guidance from the CPC about possible requirements for matching funds and on requesting CPA funds only for the difference between lowest-cost and historically appropriate treatments of the building's historic windows.

In response to Grissom, Gilman said the City had not pursued possible state funding for this project because it was reserving that source for other school projects.

In response to questions from Green and Robertson, Gilman said the overall project was intended to meet LEED energy efficiency standards, so some work would be done on the windows with or without CPA funds. Public Buildings is concerned that work on the windows will not meet historic preservation standards without CPA funding, however. In response to Grissom, Gilman believed that the Newton Historical Commission could not compel the City to follow preservation standards if the project did not receive CPA funds (Grissom later confirmed this with Senior Preservation Planner Brian Lever, who staffs that Commission).

Burg, Green and Feinberg all felt the windows should be included in the work at Carr School to be funded by City bonds. Burg also recalled Robertson's suggestion at a prior CPC meeting to reduce costs by preserving the building's historic window openings but using energy-efficient new glazing, by combining standard new units of different shapes.

### **City Hall - Historic Windows**

Gilman explained that a consultant had found the windows in much worse shape than anticipated. The masonry walls are currently being repointed, and the workers cannot find wood around some windows solid enough to hold the staples for protective plastic sheeting. The windows are allowing water to infiltrate the masonry walls; if this continues, the repointing will not hold. Installing double-pane glass with CPA funds a few years ago in about 33 of the building's 200 windows did not address this problem. This project is the highest-ranked CPA-eligible project in the City's *Capital Improvement Plan*, other than the Newton Centre Branch Library (see below).

Gilman asked for guidance from the CPC on phasing the project and on treating the building's large, arched windows – about one-third of the total – differently than the rectangular basement windows.

Robertson noted that since CPA funds had already been spent on City Hall, Newton's CPA ordinance required work on City Hall to meet historic preservation standards, even if CPA funds were not used.

Burg felt the CPC should be willing to fund some, high-priority City preservation or restoration projects, even if they were partly a result of deferred maintenance. She noted, however, that absent member Wally Bernheimer had indicated his opposition to both windows projects on that basis.

Feinberg and Burg felt a full proposal should include: the dollar value of energy savings from the project, options for phasing the project and for cost-sharing between different funding sources, and alternative approaches (at different cost levels). Robertson asked that the proposal identify and justify its preferred alternative, however.

VOTES on whether to request full proposals

Angino Farm barn supplemental request: Green moved to request a full proposal and Robertson seconded the motion, which was approved 7-0.

Carr School historic windows: Green moved not to request a full proposal and Clarke seconded the motion, which was approved 7-0.

City Hall historic windows: Green moved to request a full proposal and Grissom seconded the motion, which was approved 7-0.

### **Additional Pre-proposals from the CIP**

Gilman briefly discussed the additional potential projects listed in her letter to the CPC, and asked for guidance on whether and when to submit pre-proposals for these.

#### **Newton Health Department/Former Newton Centre Library**

This is the highest-ranked CPA-eligible priority in the *CIP*, but it is currently under review for re-use or de-accessioning. That review will determine the City's next steps.

#### **Parks and Recreation Department/Former Newton Corner Library**

Approximately \$275,000 in CPA funds were spent to preserve or restore the exterior and slate roof of this building between 2003 and 2007. Its windows and doors now need to be rehabilitated. This project is ranked highly because of the windows' potential for causing water damage to the building, and the building's historic significance. Feinberg favored considering CPA funding only for the "differential" between standard new windows or doors and historically appropriate treatments.

VOTE Grissom moved and Green seconded requesting a pre-proposal for this project.  
The motion was approved 7-0.

### **War Memorial Auditorium - Stairs and Interior Renovations**

Ingerson and Burg noted that most groups now avoid meeting in the Auditorium due to its acoustics; investing in improved access and entrances would make more sense if the room were usable.

VOTE Green moved and Robertson seconded requesting a pre-proposal for this project.  
The motion was approved 7-0.

### **War Memorial Auditorium - Interior Improvements.**

Gilman explained that the Public Buildings Dept. was already committed to a study of options and will propose a solution once that study is finished. The Committee asked to be informed of the study's results, but by sense of the meeting decided not to request a pre-proposal for this project.

### **East Parish Burying Grounds**

Gilman noted that the burying grounds, like many CPA-eligible resources other than buildings, were not highly ranked in the *CIP* because the consequences of their failure were low. Ingerson explained that there was still \$60-70,000 of unspent funds in the CPA accounts previously created for work on the historic burying grounds, and that Cindy Stone, director of the Jackson Homestead, intended to request CPC approval to retain those funds for further work, once she had staff available to manage that work. The Committee asked Ingerson to invite Stone to a future CPC meeting to explain why these unspent funds should not simply be returned, and agreed in the meantime not to invite a new pre-proposal for the burying grounds.

### **City Archives – Strategic Plan**

Clarke felt that the City needed to restore its previous staff archivist position. Ingerson thought the City's fy13 operating budget included some funding for a part-time archivist on the Library staff, but supervised by the City Clerk. She felt a strategic plan was needed to determine whether the risks and problems identified in the CPA-funded Archives Survey would be solved best through new or improved storage facilities or through additional scanning, and to estimate the cost of any recommended solution.

VOTE Green moved and Clarke seconded requesting a pre-proposal for this project.  
The motion was approved 7-0.

### **Farlow Park - Pond Restoration**

Gilman acknowledged that this project was not highly ranked in the *CIP* because, like the burying grounds, the risks and consequences of not restoring the pond were low. Ingerson explained that about \$90,000 of CPA funds had been spent on historic landscape preservation and rehabilitation recommendations for this historic park, and on a feasibility study and initial design for restoring the ornamental pond. Although there was strong support for proceeding to restore the pond among the Friends of Farlow Park, most of whom are park abutters, other residents and City organizations had in the past opposed restoring the pond, which they saw as a potential drowning hazard.

Ingerson also advised the CPC to require the Parks and Recreation Dept. to add management capacity before considering construction funding for this project. The pond feasibility study had taken much longer than expected partly because it was assigned to a staff member whose time was already more than fully occupied managing outdoor recreation programs and camps. Since outdoor recreation and construction occur at the same time of year, this “doubling up” naturally led to delays.

Green, Robertson, Feinberg and Burg were not in favor of requesting a pre-proposal for this project. Clarke favored requesting a pre-proposal only if the Parks and Recreation Commission prioritized it.

VOTE Green moved and Clarke seconded not requesting a pre-proposal for this project in fy13.  
The motion was approved 7-0.

Following up on Ingerson’s comments about project management, Gilman asked whether, once the City had requested funding for a “critical mass” of CPA projects, the CPC would consider funding a temporary project manager/clerk of the works to manage only those projects. The sense of the meeting was that the Committee would consider recommending such funding.

After a brief discussion, the sense of the meeting was to let Gilman and the City’s CIP working group decide whether to submit the newly invited pre-proposals for fy13 or fy14.

At this point the Committee took a short break.

### **Walker Center, Auburndale – Pre-proposal**

Walker Center Board members Wende Weinstein and Sharon Wright presented this pre-proposal, to remove a non-historic covered passage and restore the original exterior entrances to 2 of the Center’s 7 buildings. Weinstein distributed a revised pre-proposal with a total cost of \$62,116, based on estimates from one contractor.

Weinstein described the Center as a campus in the Auburndale Local Historic District (LHD), and noted that the two buildings in the pre-proposal are 150 years old and on the National Register of Historic Places. Wright explained that the institution had been founded as a home for retired missionaries but had been sold by the United Church of Christ in the 1960s and is now run as a private nonprofit with a focus on social justice. It provides graduate student housing and runs both a conference center and a bed and breakfast. Alderman Amy Sangiolo added that the Center had housed Chinese political refugees after Tiananmen Square, rented meeting space for the Newton Public Schools, and hired interns with mental disabilities. She also noted that Rev. Howard Haywood had served on the Center’s Board.

After a period of mismanagement and neglect, the Center’s current Board is working to balance the budget and begin a capital campaign. On the recommendation of the City’s Senior Preservation Planner Brian Lever, they would like to request CPA funds as the required match for a planned proposal to the Massachusetts Preservation Projects Fund.

In response to Feinberg, Wright said that the passageway did not provide useful wheelchair access, because the interior doorways and layout of both buildings were not wheelchair accessible.

In response to Robertson’s question about why the project needed to happen now, Wright, Weinstein and Sangiolo said that the current condition of the non-historic passageway was esthetically unappealing, an obstacle to increasing conference center income, and possibly a health hazard. The Auburndale LHD Commission has encouraged its removal.

Ingerson asked the Committee to clarify its guidelines and priorities for privately owned historic resources. In the past, the CPC had declined to fund such buildings if they were not widely used by the public, or if they already had a preservation restriction. Location in a local historic district could be seen as the equivalent of a preservation restriction. Grissom felt the Walker Center was CPA-eligible, and Feinberg felt it provided significant public access and benefits, but Robertson and Burg felt that much of the proposed work was either not eligible or not a priority under the CPC's current guidelines.

In response to Green's suggestion that CPA funds might provide a repayable loan for the project, Wright said the Center would prefer to receive a grant, since they can and have gotten loans from other sources. The Center's financial planner had also recommended not tapping their own endowment, reduced by the recent recession, for these capital projects. Wright explained that the Center had spent \$177,000 of its own funds on de-leading and other capital work recently.

Turner, Green, Grissom and Feinberg all encouraged the Center to explore other funding sources more thoroughly before requesting CPA funds. The sense of the meeting was that the Center could submit a revised pre-proposal for further discussion once this was done.

In conclusion, Alderman Sangiolo urged the CPC to support projects such as this one and expressed her concern that funding projects from the City's CIP would make Newton's Community Preservation Fund a "City slush fund." She also felt that making broad public access or benefits a condition for CPA funding was inconsistent with past CPC decisions to fund PTO-sponsored outdoor classrooms, which were used by a single school and not by the general public.

Burg noted that the CPC generally agreed that not all of Newton's CPA funds should be used for City projects.

## **COMMITTEE BUSINESS**

The Committee agreed that that they would apply their current guidelines to proposals in the fy13 annual funding round while working to create new guidelines that would reflect both recent changes in the CPA and the results of their 10<sup>th</sup>-anniversary community outreach in Newton. The new guidelines would apply to requests for funding in fy14 and later years. The Committee confirmed its commitment to the proposed schedule for creating its new funding guidelines and asked Ingerson to add the public meetings and comment periods from that proposal to the program's online calendar.

With the correction of noting Zack Blake's resignation from the Committee, as a result of moving outside of Newton, Tom Turner moved approval of the draft minutes for 26 June 2012. Grissom seconded the motion. The minutes were approved 6-0, with Green abstaining because he had not been at that meeting.

By Committee consensus, the meeting was adjourned at 9:50 pm.

Attachment: presentation on long-term planning

City of Newton  
Department of Planning & Development  
**Community Preservation Program**

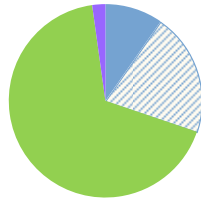
# Long-term Planning

*continued ...*

Alice Ingerson for  
Community Preservation Committee  
11 July 2012

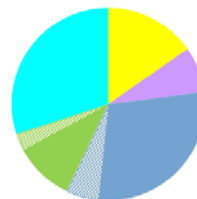
## What's on the list? Minimum vs. Maximum

### City Projects Only Minimum CPA-Eligible List in Current CIP



all projects  
**\$6,091,730**

### All Projects Maximum CPA-eligible List in Current CIP + Eligible under Amended CPA in Current CIP + Non-City Projects



all projects  
**\$84,981,032**

**plus potential acquisitions in draft Recreation & Open Space Plan: \$60 million+**

