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Candace Havens
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Community Preservation Committee

MINUTES of PUBLIC MEETING

16 February 2011

The meeting was held on Wednesday 16 February 2011 at the Newton Senior Center, 345 Walnut Street, Newtonville. Attending members of the Community Preservation Committee (CPC): Nancy Grissom, Thomas Turner, Leslie Burg, Michael Clarke, Dan Green (arr. 7:20 pm). Mayoral nominee to the CPC Jim Robertson also attended.

Program manager Alice Ingerson served as recorder.

Committee Chair Nancy Grissom opened the meeting at 7:05 pm.

UPDATE on CURRENT PROJECT

ANGINO FARM BARN

Alexandra Ananth, the Senior Planner who supports the Newton Farm Commission, made a presentation with the participation of Farm Commission Chair Rick Lipoff and Frank Nichols, project manager from the Engineering Division. They explained that the site's topography and utilities have been surveyed and the original concept plan has been refined through multiple meetings with City staff, the site licensee (Newton Community Farm, Inc.), the Mayor's Committee for People with Disabilities, and the City of Newton Law Dept.

The revised plan calls for two handicapped parking spaces on the semicircular drive in front of the farmhouse. These are near the low point (start) of the accessible walkway to the main door of the barn. There will be 3 parking spaces along the driveway to the barn, with a low retaining wall separating the driveway and the accessible walkway. A gateway will be installed between the northeast corner of the farmhouse and the retaining wall at the southwest corner of the barn, to discourage the public from driving vehicles into the dead end space between the field and the ground/field level doors of the barn. The driveway is and probably will remain asphalt. The surface finish for the accessible walkway has not yet been determined, though the project team knows it needs to be plowable, which may rule out gravel.

The barn's ground/field level will include equipment storage, an area for the public to pick up their produce shares from the Community-Supported Agriculture operation (CSA), a produce washing station, a 3-season accessible bathroom, and a mechanical bay for building utilities. A walk-in produce cooler will be roughed in at this level with CP funds, but will be purchased or constructed with other funds.

The barn's main level will include 2 year-round accessible bathrooms; an accessible, commercial-grade kitchen; and a large, open space for gathering & events. The kitchen design will allow for full

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use from a wheelchair. There will be stairs to a partial loft or mezzanine with staff office and storage space. There will be no handicapped access to the loft, and no interior access from the main level to the ground/field level.

In response to questions from Nancy Grissom, the project team noted that they were still considering suggestions to have one accessible parking or drop-off space closer to the main (driveway) barn door or closer to the double doors on the ground/field level. These spaces need to be on fully level ground, so wheelchairs will not roll during loading & unloading.

Dan Green reminded the project team to make sure pipes on the lower level were gravity-drained, so that level can be shut down in winter. He also offered to donate 2 handicapped accessible bathroom sinks to the project.

The sense of the Committee was to accept the current revisions to the concept plan on which their original funding recommendation was based.

STAFF PRESENTATION

OVERVIEW OF HISTORIC RESOURCES

Alice Ingerson presented a brief overview of how historic resources may be funded under the Community Preservation Act, and how Newton's program has allocated funding for these resources in the past.

PUBLIC HEARING

CITY HISTORIC BUILDINGS SURVEY

Stephanie Gilman, City of Newton Public Buildings Commissioner, presented this new proposal, which the CPC accepted off-cycle at the Mayor's special request. This project will cover 35 bldgs with a total of about 400,000 sq ft. It will include all major public buildings except schools, for which the School Dept. recently conducted a comprehensive conditions assessment. When she photographed some of the buildings to be assessed, Gilman had expected to find mostly evidence of their poor condition, but had instead been impressed by their wonderful architecture and potential.

The proposed survey will seek appropriate, adaptive modern uses for these historic spaces that will preserve their significant historic features. The overall Comprehensive Citywide Capital Assessment, using general City funds, will assess the condition of building envelopes & systems and building code or safety issues. The specialized consultant hired with CP funds will make additional, separate recommendations, and will prioritize buildings based less on their current condition than on their historic significance. An example would be how best to insulate City Hall without causing moisture problems.

The Committee's discussion focused on:

- the list of buildings to be surveyed, and whether schools should be included
- the project timeline
- requiring the project consultant to report back to the CPC
- the distinction between eligible preservation and ineligible maintenance

In their recent meeting with the Mayor, Nancy Grissom and Wally Bernheimer had discussed the various CPA-eligible City resources needing broad surveys as a basis for setting priorities: archives, buildings, landscapes, art & objects, and open space & recreation land. From this list, CP funds have already been used to complete a landscape survey (Heritage Landscape Report); were recently

appropriated to survey City archives; and have now been requested to survey City buildings. The Mayor agreed that these surveys were necessary and useful. Grissom and Bernheimer had emphasized the need to update and replace the City's currently expired Open Space Plan. Leslie Burg reiterated that the City cannot apply for grants from other sources, including the state, with an outdated *Open Space Plan*. Prompted by a question from Michael Clarke, Grissom noted that CP funds could be but have not yet been requested to survey the City's historic art & objects, such as the historic dioramas at City Hall.

Grissom, Dan Green, and Michael Clarke, along with current Mayoral nominee Jim Robertson, questioned the current buildings survey proposal's list of buildings. They were concerned that historically significant buildings might have been omitted from the list because they were small or not very visible, or because the City was considering their sale or demolition. Examples included the Fire Alarm/Fire Dept. Headquarters building in Newton Centre, the Crystal Lake bathhouse, and the Bulloughs Pond skating shelter. Green preferred a more expensive but fully comprehensive survey. Clark preferred to see a revised list before voting on the current proposal.

Grissom pointed out that the proposed survey might need to redo some past studies, but could build on others. An example is the Crafts Street Stable: a past study of the building using CP funds had really been a conditions assessment, rather than an analysis of historic significance; but the City's recent successful nomination of the building to the National Register of Historic Places may have already provided the missing historic analysis.

Gilman explained that the list in the proposal had built on, but was not identical with, the list of historically significant buildings in the final report of the 2004-05 Newton Public Buildings Preservation Taskforce. The proposal included every major City building that has not been recently assessed. She did not want to waste a specialized consultant's time assessing non-historic buildings. Of the City's 70-plus buildings, many are schools, which were recently assessed. She was not sure if the proposed survey should include City-owned buildings currently leased to others, such as the clubhouse at Commonwealth Golf Course. The City is unlikely to invest funds in such buildings.

Grissom felt that schools should be included in the proposed survey, but some other buildings listed in the proposal could be omitted, such as the 1991 main library. The Newton Historical Commission had been very concerned that the School Dept.'s assessment did not consider historic significance and had proposed the demolition of 4 historic schools. Dan Green and Leslie Burg suggested that the Commissioner should bring the CPC another, separate proposal to evaluate the City's most historically significant schools, and should ask the consultant hired for the currently proposed survey to recommend schools that should be included in that separate proposal.

Gilman agreed that some buildings could be removed from the current proposal's list because they were clearly not historic, so that other, more historic buildings could be added.

Several CPC members noted that the current proposal's timeline did not seem realistic. Gilman acknowledged that the proposed September completion date was an ideal target. She may ask bidders on the contract to advise her on how long it should take to do the historic survey properly.

Grissom and Burg suggested that the consultant hired for the historic survey should be required to present its final results at a future CPC meeting, or perhaps at a joint meeting of the CPC and the Newton Historical Commission.

Michael Clarke was concerned that the proposed survey would not focus on genuinely historic preservation analyses and needs, but more on deferred maintenance. Grissom agreed that these two

approaches were different. She pointed out that appropriate maintenance for historic buildings could be more expensive than repairs based on a non-historical analysis of building needs. Inappropriate or inadequate maintenance could also create a need for historic preservation, rehabilitation or restoration.

Grissom asked if any members of the public wished to comment on this proposal. Mr. Michael Lepie asked how much the proposal was for, and how much was currently available in Newton's CP Fund. He felt that the CPC was not adequately informed of its currently available funds. He also felt the Committee should reserve a specific amount for future use before deciding which current proposals to fund.

Grissom explained that the current proposal was for \$98,780. She noted that the Committee's monthly meeting packets and also posts online an updated report of available funds, showing the impact of funds already appropriated in the current year and the potential impacts of funding additional current proposals. Mr. Lepie had received a copy of this report in the copy of the meeting packet he had requested in advance of this meeting. Grissom and Leslie Burg explained that the Committee had a broad goal of reserving about one year's worth of new funds (approx. \$2 million) for future use, but that the Committee decides how much to reserve each year based partly on the quality of current proposals.

VOTE Dan Green moved that the CPC recommend the requested funding of \$98,780 for the survey of City historic buildings, contingent on

- ◆ receiving an updated project timeline,
- ◆ having the consultant hired begin by doing a high-level survey of all City buildings other than schools, and only then identify the list of the most historically significant buildings to be assessed in greater detail,
- ◆ having the consultant present that proposed list and the criteria used to compile it for approval by the CPC; along with any resulting, required budget revisions (for example, if the number of buildings to be assessed is larger than envisioned in the current proposal)
- ◆ the CPC recommendation for this proposal strongly urging submission of a further proposal to assess historically significant school buildings

Leslie Burg seconded the motion and conditions.

The motion and conditions were adopted by a vote of 5-0.

UPDATE/REVISION OF CURRENTLY FUNDED PROJECT

JACKSON HOMESTEAD EXTERIOR PRESERVATION

Nancy Grissom reviewed the written request received from the Director of Historic Newton, Cindy Stone, and the backup information provided by the Public Buildings Department, in support of the request to use \$27,000 of unspent funds from this appropriation to install a new gutter along the rear wall of the ell and to move an electrical box currently located in the only accessible entrance & exit to the basement level.

Dan Green, Tom Turner, and CPC nominee Jim Robertson all thought the estimated cost of \$20,000 for relocating the electrical box was very high, perhaps by a factor of 2, and could be reduced through bidding or by finding a less expensive new location for the box. Based on cost alone, Green inferred

that the plan must be to create an entirely new power line to the building. He also wondered if private fundraising or donated labor could reduce project costs.

Committee members asked Commissioner Gilman whether costs could be reduced by having the trenching done by the City's Dept. of Public Works. Gilman noted that Public Buildings had suggested reserving enough funds to have all work done by their on-call electrical contractor, to avoid potential delays caused by coordinating among multiple departments. She also noted that Historic Newton was eager to resume large-group programming in the basement, which had been halted because the electrical box's location violated current building codes.

Nancy Grissom questioned the need and estimated cost for a wooden, copper-lined rear gutter. Leslie Burg and Michael Clarke agreed that the cost seemed high, but acknowledged that the copper lining would reduce the maintenance otherwise needed for a wooden gutter.

Given that the gutter would be on the rear rather than front of the building, and that the building has a functional, asphalt shingle roof rather than a historically accurate but more expensive wood shake roof, Dan Green suggested using aluminum or plastic for the rear gutter, to reduce costs. Grissom responded that the gutter would have to be approved by the Newton Historical Commission, which would probably prefer wood.

The Committee directed Alice Ingerson to invite a representative of Inspectional Services to the March CPC meeting, and to request more details from Public Buildings and Historic Newton about both the electrical box relocation and the size & location of the proposed rear gutter.

The sense of the Committee was that, as recommended by the City of Newton Law Dept. in its opinion about the eligibility of the proposed expenses, the contractor who allowed the original shutter dogs to rust should pay to recondition & reinstall them, and to re-install the shutters, which had been installed backward after the building was painted.

Commissioner Gilman declined to provide an update on the Museum Archives Project, which would reconfigure portions of the building's interior, because she was not currently fully familiar with it. She suggested that an update could be provided for the CPC's March 2011 meeting.

UPDATE ON RECOMMENDED PROPOSALS

Alice Ingerson noted that the Aldermanic Committee on Community Preservation would be taking up three items on 1 March 2011: the CPC's funding recommendations for the Early Architecture Survey, 1830-1840, and for community housing at 61 Pearl Street; and the Mayor's nomination of Jim Robertson to the CPC.

SCHEDULE OF FUTURE WORKING SESSIONS

Based on the earlier discussion with Commissioner Gilman, the Committee tentatively scheduled a continuing working session on the Museum Exterior project for its March meeting.

Alice Ingerson reported that the CPC-commissioned outside analysis of the proposal for housing at 112-116 Dedham Street should be submitted in time for the March 2011 meeting, so the Committee agreed to put that project first on its March agenda.

Several members commented on the pending proposal for the Historic Burying Grounds. Leslie Burg and Nancy Grissom both felt the current \$614,461 request was too large for the CPC to consider in the current year. Based on visits to two of the three sites, Green questioned the proposal's request

for about \$300,000 for fencing. He felt the proposed fencing was not appropriate, and was not sure any fencing at all was necessary. The Committee agreed to discuss this proposal at its March 2011 meeting, but directed Alice Ingerson to request a more detailed breakdown of the proposed budget.

The Committee also directed Alice Ingerson to request brief updates from Historic Newton on the current status of the Museum Archives and Durant-Kenrick project. The Committee expected to receive a final construction funding request for the Museum Archives project by December 2010, but nothing has been submitted to date.

Members discussed the current request for \$1,903,000 to preserve the City's Engineering Maps and Plans. Nancy Grissom recommended waiting to schedule any working session for this until the full survey of all City archives has been completed; and asking the Engineering Division to consult a professional archivist for assistance in breaking down and prioritizing the budget in more detail. Alice Ingerson suggested that breakdown should clearly distinguish the cost of document preservation from the cost of geo-registration, the process of integrating scanned maps into the City's geographic information system. The sense of the Committee was to accept these recommendations.

Nancy Grissom summarized the meeting she and Wally Bernheimer had with the Mayor, which covered the need to integrate planning for CP funds with the City's overall capital planning process, among other issues. They received no definitive answers about how this integration would proceed, but the Mayor responded positively to the Committee's desire for closer cooperation. Grissom suggested the CPC chair and vice-chair should meet with the Mayor and perhaps the President of the Board of Aldermen every few months.

After a short discussion, the Committee agreed to pay its 2011 dues (\$7500) to the statewide Community Preservation Coalition. Ingerson suggested that these dues were best seen as a way for Newton to support other CPA communities around the state, rather than as a fee for service or technical assistance, since the Coalition staff often refer people with questions from other communities to the Newton program for answers or assistance. The Committee asked Ingerson to track these requests and estimate the amount of time spent on them.

The Committee deferred to future meetings discussion of a new approach to choosing officers.

Leslie Burg moved, and Michael Clarke seconded, approval of the minutes for the 19 January 2011 meeting, subject to several corrections noted by Nancy Grissom. The minutes were unanimously approved by a vote of 5-0.

With unanimous consent, Nancy Grissom adjourned the meeting at 9:30 pm.

PRE-MEETING PACKET & MEETING HANDOUTS

Available online from www.newtonma.gov/cpa

- Current pre-proposals, proposals & funded projects, click on "Proposals & Projects"
- Future meeting schedule, click on "Calendar."
- Full meeting agendas & minutes, click on "Committees & Meetings"
- Staff presentation on historic resources, click on "Reports" & scroll down to "Special Reports"

Available by request:

- CP Coalition dues
- staff memo on continuing program issues, updated February 2011 from June 2008 original