

The meeting was held on Wednesday 15 September 2010 in the Cafeteria of Newton City Hall.

Attending members of the Community Preservation Committee (CPC): Nancy Grissom, Leslie Burg, Michael Clarke, Joel Feinberg, Zack Blake, Dan Green (arr. 7:30 pm), Thomas Turner.

Program manager Alice Ingerson served as recorder.

Current Committee Chair Nancy Grissom opened the meeting at 7:15 pm.

## **COMMITTEE BUSINESS**

### **WORKING SESSION SCHEDULE for CHARLES RIVER LOWER FALLS BRIDGE PROPOSAL**

While waiting for late members to arrive, the Committee took up the question of whether and when to schedule a working session for the Charles River Lower Falls Bridge proposal, carried over from fiscal 2009.

Nancy Grissom announced that the work on the bridge itself, managed by the state Dept. of Transportation, appeared to have begun, and that the Wellesley Community Preservation Committee had confirmed in writing that the Wellesley Selectmen were not requesting any CPA funds for improvements along the approach to the bridge on that side of the river.

Grissom recommended scheduling a working session for this proposal on at the Newton CPC's 20 October 2010 meeting. The CPC would like someone from the sponsoring Dept. of Conservation & Recreation (DCR) to come to that meeting, since DCR will be the project manager if the proposal is funded.

George Kirby of the Newton Bicycle Pedestrian Taskforce, a cosponsor of this proposal, also attended the meeting. He had asked DCR if they planned to withdraw their proposal to the Newton CPC, and confirmed that the proposal had not been withdrawn.

### **PLANNING for the PROGRAM'S 10<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY, 2011-13**

Nancy Grissom explained that her goal for this brainstorming session was to come up with lots of ideas, and set some goals, not to make decisions or assess costs or other details of implementation. Ideas could have to do with evaluating past work, ways of generating future work, publicity, etc. She felt lots of different people should be involved.

To start the conversation, Grissom summarized Alice Ingerson's staff memo, included in the pre-meeting packet, particularly factors Ingerson hoped the Committee would consider in deciding which ideas to implement: impact (contribution to goals), urgency (could it be done AFTER the 10th anniversary?), dollar costs (direct expenses & paid time from consultants, interns, staff), and committed/reliable volunteer hours (from CPC members & others). This staff memo is included at the end of these minutes.

Leslie Burg asked what the CPC's objectives were for the anniversary. Grissom suggested that evaluating the work accomplished by the program to date was one possible goal.

Mike Clarke suggested a goal should be showcasing the work the program has done. Grissom was not sure the Committee should look at this as just a celebration. Dan Green felt that having a big party in a time of economic austerity was not a good idea, something more subdued would be more appropriate.

Ingerson explained that in 2002, the founding members of the CPC had held several meetings in different neighborhoods around the City, to meet the requirement under the CPA that the CPC study the "needs and resources" of the community. Each of those meetings had dealt with ideas or needs for all fundable resources. In 2008, in contrast, the CPC had held 3 citywide public hearings, each inviting public comment on the needs for one particular resource: housing, historic resources, and open space or recreation.

Joel Feinberg asked if the Committee had ever compared the ideas generated by the 2002 meetings to the projects actually funded, to see whether the projects funded had met the community's initial goals. Ingerson said that this comparison had not been done, but that the 2002 meetings had directly informed the *Funding Guidelines* that the Committee has used since 2003, and still uses. The *Guidelines* have been only slightly revised since 2003. The 2008 hearings led to the shorter, more often revised *Funding Priorities*, which the Committee also still uses. Both the *Guidelines* and the *Priorities* were so general that it would probably be hard to say that any particular funded project had not met the goals in them.

Nancy Grissom felt that the 2008 meetings had attracted mostly people had turned into something of a "gripe session," especially about project management by the funded organizations and departments. Ingerson felt the 2008 meetings had mostly produced comments from the sponsors of potential proposals about why their projects should get top priority.

Burg suggested that the weaknesses of the 2008 meetings were a reason not to hold more such meetings. The goal of anniversary activities should be to showcase the really important projects, and what they've meant from the community. Her personal objective would be to educate the public about the CPA and what the CPC does, and to show the public how CPA funds benefit the community. The overall goal should be to ensure continuing public support for the program. Blake strongly endorsed that goal.

Burg agreed with Ingerson that past projects should be evaluated, but felt that evaluation should be an internal activity for the committee, rather than an external event for the public. Mike Clarke suggested that the Committee review its funding guidelines, categorize the projects funded, and focus as much as possible on positive accomplishment. Evaluation should be done, and year 10 was a good time to do it, but the CPC should mostly be broadcasting the program's accomplishments.

Joel Feinberg compared this goal to the current debate about the proposal to repeal Chapter 40B, the comprehensive permit law. Those who wished to keep the law had focused their campaign primarily on the law's accomplishments, providing examples of happy people living in housing built under Chapter 40B. He had no sense that CPA is under threat in Newton, but he felt that most people don't know what the program has done. The focus should be on success stories.

In response to a question from Ingerson, Burg said she did not consider the CPA under threat in Newton, but that there were lots of new people in Newton, who were not aware of the program or what it does.

Dan Green felt that publicizing the entire program's history might be a double-edged sword, because it would involve acknowledging the total amount spent. What the CPC might consider a successful project, others might consider wasteful spending. For example, recent affordable housing development projects have involved a total public subsidy of about \$300,000 a home. A lot of people might feel that money could be better spent on other things, though Green himself would not agree with them.

Ingerson noted that the total spend through Newton's CP Program was now over \$32 million. In economically tough times, Green felt this figure might be controversial. He suggested staying away from dollars and focusing on benefits.

Burg suggested that the CPC needed to choose a few projects that it was proud of, and thought were worthy of presenting as accomplishments. There will always be nay-sayers.

Ingerson suggested that deciding which projects the CPC considered accomplishments worth highlighting required evaluating the past projects in some way. Burg felt that formal evaluation was unnecessary. By simply looking at a list of projects, she could easily find ten that were worth showcasing. She felt the Committee did not need to take time to define or list criteria for identifying successful projects.

Grissom felt that one of the objectives should be to educate the public enough about the CPA and the Newton program so that the CPC would continue to get good, worthwhile proposals. Zack Blake agreed. He would love to be overwhelmed with great proposals. He felt that the CPC now gets only a

handful of proposals and is forced to spend money on some of them, even if none are as good as the Committee would like them to be.

Ingerson said this was similar to the advice she had received soon after accepting her staff position with the CPC, from Alderman Stephen Linsky as chair of the Aldermanic Committee on Community Preservation. Alderman Linsky felt that the program should set absolute standards and only fund proposals that deserved an "A," rather than "grade on a curve" and simply fund the best proposals in any given year, regardless of whether they met any minimum standard. Dan Green felt that this idea was dangerous, and that he had never seen any standards or criteria that would apply in all situations. Burg agreed.

Zack Blake felt that Newton was light-years ahead of other CPA communities around the state in terms of defining goals, setting criteria, etc. Other members were glad to hear this.

Ingerson noted that there might be a significant difference between "first generation" and "second generation" proposals. The CPC may have already funded most of the large, obviously high-priority proposals it was ever going to get, including the acquisition of Kessler Woods, Angino Farm, and land at Crystal Lake. Unless one of the City's remaining large private open spaces, such as a golf course, came up for sale and development, most future proposals might be worthwhile but less obvious priorities.

Mike Clarke suggested that the rehabilitation of the old Pine Street dump for active recreational use might be another large project. He then asked whether any of the golf courses might be willing to sell a conservation restriction to the City, to protect their land from future development. Alice Ingerson noted that the golf courses were zoned residential. They do receive a tax break for their current use, some of which would have to be repaid if the land were sold for development, but not much. Grissom and Green felt the private golf courses were operating successfully. Green felt the members of any of the golf or country clubs would probably oppose selling any development rights or conservation restrictions.

Nancy Grissom asked about Ingerson's suggestion that one or more anniversary events should feature or foster regional collaboration, such as a meeting with other CPA communities along the Charles River. The Community Preservation Coalition had reported to Ingerson that as far as they knew, none of the other 34 communities that adopted the CPA the same year as Newton, in 2001, were planning any anniversary events. The Coalition had held a statewide celebration at the 5-year mark, but did not feel it was necessarily successful.

Zack Blake felt the Community Preservation Coalition should do any statewide celebration. Newton should not take the lead in regional events.

Ingerson clarified that she had intended "regional" to mean collaboration with nearby communities, to explore projects no one community could accomplish on its own. As an example, Dan Green suggested a walk going from Wellesley to Newton, along the Charles River.

Burg suggested a project fair or exhibition, which need not be a one-time event. There might be an event every other month. It might not make sense to present all the projects in one event. An evening event, a weekend event, various formats could be combined. Grissom felt any anniversary events could occur over the entire 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary year. Events could use various media, including the *Tab*, NewTV, direct mailings, school events, etc. They should include creating new site signs and a citywide contest to design a new logo for the program.

Joel Feinberg thought the CPC should join in existing, regular events sponsored by other organizations, that attracted the attention of a random collection of people. Examples included the Angino Farm's Harvest Fair, or a Spring Fest with rides for kids. People will not come to an event just to hear about the CPA.

Zack Blake suggested that the CPC should have a booth at the Fourth of July celebration at Albemarle Field. Nancy Grissom suggested having a presence at the Library's annual barbecue fundraiser. Joel Feinberg wondered whether there was an annual event at Crystal Lake in which the CPC could participate. Nancy Grissom suggested holding a picnic at Crystal Lake.

Zack Blake asked Dan Green to explain more about activities the CPC could do with children, such as a contest to create a new logo. Grissom felt that a logo contest should not only involve kids. Dan Green said many programs in the schools, including "Kids in Action," are looking for projects. The CPA could be the subject of a project, getting kids to talk about what's good about the CPA and how the program works.

Grissom asked who drove decisions for school programs: teachers or PTOs? Green responded that sometimes the kids initiate ideas, and sometimes adults present a program to the kids. An example is the Green Team, which composts waste from school events. The kids at his children's school did a video about this in one of their classes. School functions could also be a venue for the CPC to tell people about the CPA. Burg noted that Angino Farm does programs with the schools, and asked how the CPC could initiate these ideas, whether the CPC should talk to individual PTOs or to the assistant superintendents in the central administration of the School Department.

Burg pointed out that Angino Farm does a lot of educational programs for the public, including children.

Joel Feinberg noted that the history activities at the Jackson Homestead helped families to see that "history is all around you," and not just in history classes. Nancy Grissom noted that many CP-funded historic projects had occurred at sites that attract people. For example, the Durant-Kenrick Homestead, once it is rehabilitated as a regular museum, will have activities for children. Topics will include public service as well as education in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century, and the historic Kenrick nursery and broader landscape history. She noted that the CPA is broader than just historic resources or the farm or housing, it's about civic engagement.

Zack Blake noted that the CP Program per se was not a "bricks and mortar" project, and wondered how the CPC could promote civic engagement with the program as a whole. Burg and Grissom emphasized that, for getting information into the schools, it was important to talk to teachers and understand how the information fit into the curriculum. Burg suggested telling the School Department that the Committee would like to involve the schools and kids, and asking how that could happen.

Dan Green noted that many of the ideas presented involved a big time commitment. For example, he wondered who was going to present programs to all the different schools. Grissom felt this question could be addressed further along in the planning process for the anniversary. Burg noted that the Committee could choose just one activity to do with kids; they wouldn't have to do multiple activities.

Clarke wondered whether NewTV could do a program about the CPA. Nancy Grissom felt high school students could be involved in such a project, since the new Newton North has state-of-the-art equipment. Leslie Burg noted that videotaping is a big project. She knows a local filmmaker Barbara John who is doing a series for NewTV about women in politics. That is a big project, but she might be interested in helping. Zack Blake said he knows other documentary filmmakers in the City who would like to do such a project. Dan Green noted that Dwayne Hillis of the Newton Conservators was involved with NewTV and would be receptive to helping the CPC. Grissom also suggested trying to get the CPC and CPA included in other, existing NewTV shows.

Grissom also pointed out that Ingerson's staff memo had mentioned options around the City for other kinds of displays, at the library, at the Jackson Homestead, etc. Clarke suggested creating and displaying a poster, for example, at the Crystal Lake bathhouse. The "Newton Salutes" series of community-sponsored temporary exhibits at the Homestead was one option, though that option was being phased out to make room for a revised permanent exhibit on Abolition.

Grissom said tonight's discussion as a whole was a good start. She summarized the sense of the meeting as making the major objective of any anniversary events to educate the public about the CPA and the achievements of Newton's program. Leslie Burg thanked Ingerson for her list of possible ideas.

Ingerson felt some kind of evaluation should be part of the plan, to help the Committee allocate scarce time and resources to the activities that would most improve public understanding of the program, not

just make people aware of it. For example, should they do a survey of some sort, before and after the anniversary activities?

Leslie Burg felt that it would be impossible to document the impact of educational activities or publicity without a formal survey instrument, and she could not volunteer to help design such an instrument. The Committee would just have to hope that its educational activities had an impact. However, she suggested that any activity that involved a group of people interacting might include a very short survey. Grissom and Ingerson suggested perhaps including such a short survey in the annual tax bill, or the annual questionnaire sent to all Newton households, asking them to evaluate the performance of City departments and programs. The survey could be sent out once before, and once after, the year's worth of anniversary activities.

Mike Clarke noted that in his work with the National Science Foundation, evaluation was often qualitative; it involved highlighting a few specific projects and telling their stories.

Zack Blake felt the CPC should get more publicity, apart from the anniversary. The CPC should not wait for the project sponsors to contact the *Tab* or NewTV about their projects, but should write an editorial for the *Tab* every time the CPC approved a project. Dan Green felt that the *Tab* often had space available and would print word-for-word any press release that the CPC submitted, so whatever was published would reflect what the CPC wanted people to know. The writing of such press releases could be assigned to CPC members; it did not have to become another task for staff. This would be a no-cost form of publicity.

Grissom felt it was difficult to get press releases published. She and Ingerson noted that many projects got press coverage now, especially when they involved activities that provided good photo opportunities. Most such articles acknowledged the use of CP funds, but they did not go into detail about the goals or operation of the program as a whole. Ingerson felt the program, as distinct from the projects, was not usually newsworthy except when it was involved in controversy.

Grissom cited as examples two recent full-page photo spreads in the *Tab* about City Clerk David Olson's history tour of City Hall, where CP funds had supported several projects, and about the ground-penetrating radar survey of the East Parish Burying Ground, for the CP-funded archaeology survey. Burg offered to ask the *Tab* if they would publish a regular series of articles and op eds. Ingerson noted that the *Tab* had published an op ed and a series of letters to the editor from the CPC in 2008. Many current CPC members had not seen these articles or did not recall this op ed. Grissom suggested that many people in Newton did not read the *Tab* or watch NewTV. Burg agreed.

Joel Feinberg felt that more proactive outreach by the CPC was important both to encourage submission of good new proposals, and to ensure continuing support. Support of the CPA in Newton should not be taken for granted. Feinberg also asked how the CPC would pick a few "poster-child" projects to focus on; ones that are really good to talk about and easy for people to latch onto. The challenge will be how to pick these few specific projects to highlight.

Burg wondered whether the CPC had a list of all past projects. Ingerson noted that this list was on the website and was updated and published every year in the CPC's annual report, which the Committee reviewed before its publication.

Burg then asked what the CPC wanted to do on this topic before its next meeting. Zack Blake suggested simply putting this same item on every meeting agenda for a while, with the goal of bringing some focus to the discussion.

As an aside, Nancy Grissom noted that three site signs paid for with CPC administrative funds were now up at the Lexington Street housing project, at Angino Farm, and at the Veteran House housing project. Two other signs were going to be set up at the sites of two Historic Newton projects: Jackson Homestead and Durant-Kenrick Homestead. Ingerson noted that fiscal 2010 funds had been used to produce the signs, but the additional cost of an extra installation trip for the two Historic Newton signs, which could not be installed at the same time as the other three, would have to come from fiscal 2011 funds. In response to a question from Zack Blake, Ingerson noted that this use of fiscal 2011 funds was allowable.

## **PROGRAM FINANCES**

Alice Ingerson summarized for the Committee its currently available funds, including the administrative budget, which is limited by law to a maximum of 5% of total local and state funds for any given year. She emphasized that the budget was drawn up in April, based on estimates of the next year's local revenue and state match. She suggested that the CPC should continue its past practice of allocating administrative resources conservatively until the following October, when the actual state match was confirmed, and the CPC knew what consulting services it might need to evaluate new proposals.

Ingerson also explained that the Mayor's staff was working hard on a new capital budget for all City departments. She had been asked to review the resulting interdepartmental list and identify any projects that, based on the short descriptions in the list, appeared to be eligible for CPA funds. This list would not be available to the CPC shortly after their own October 15th proposal deadline. The list should help the Committee evaluate current proposals in light of potential future proposals, at least from the City.

Leslie Burg also reported that she had contacted the Board of Aldermen to begin a conversation about whether and how the Aldermanic part of the proposal review process might be simplified and shortened. She would report back on this at future meetings.

## **PUBLIC HEARING: City Archives Survey proposal**

City Clerk David Olson presented a summary of the proposal, which had been presented outside the regular funding cycle at the CPC's request. He noted that many City depts. do not know what archival or historic records they hold. This project will allow an archivist to visit every department to evaluate briefly: what records the department has, what storage spaces hold those records, the condition of the records themselves, the historical significance of the records as a collection (not the significance of individual documents). The project will produce a broad ranking or rating of these collections, to guide future preservation funding decisions. Proposal does not include a strategic plan with detailed recommendations for the treatment of individual collections; the inventory to be produced by this project is a prerequisite for creating such a strategic plan.

In his prior position as director of the Newton History Museum, Olson had overseen other interdepartmental efforts at archival assessment and access improvements. The current proposal is based on best guesses by himself, by Newton History Museum/Jackson Homestead archivist Susan Abele (who had also served temporarily as interim City Archivist), and by Newton Free Library assistant director Ryan Hanson about the volume and types of records scattered among City departments, and how much time it will take to provide a quick assessment of each department's holdings.

Olson felt the estimated cost in the current proposal was probably high. It was based on the highest-cost estimate received from the consultants the proposal team had contacted, but they felt it was appropriate, because it was not possible to predict exactly what the consultant hired by the project would find.

Olson also offered to provide for the CPC or Aldermanic committees, upon request, the resumes of the three individual consultants the team had contacted: Melissa Mannon, who has a degree in archival management from Simmons College and has done similar surveys for other communities; Nancy Kougeas who worked on City of Newton archives under the previous City Clerk, and Anne Ostendarp, who has similar credentials, and Judith Farrar. All estimated the cost of the project at or below the total funding requested in the proposal.

Susan Abele noted that many documents are part of a state retention schedule, and the City is required to keep them. Olson noted that state law also sometimes specifies where records must be kept; for example, Fire Dept. records must stay in the station (or at the headquarters) that created them.

Nancy Grissom had been surprised by the proposal, because she felt she had made it clear that the CPC wanted the proposed survey to include both archives and historic works of art. She still felt strongly that

she would like such a City-wide inventory for works of art or objects, before the CPC receives any more proposals for specific resources in these categories.

David Olson noted that the biggest collection of historic art and objects is held at the Jackson Homestead. That collection is well-documented.

Grissom asked about other collections that are less well-known or neglected, such as the portrait of Mayor Hyde that had been in storage at City Hall after being damaged, or objects held by the Fire Department, the School Department, etc. Olson felt that this material was limited, though the managers of the archival survey could ask the consultant doing that project to keep an eye out and record such materials.

Susan Abele noted that she had some experience with this issue; during the move to the new high school, the Public Buildings Dept. had called the Museum's attention to a painting that might be discarded, and as a result that contact, the painting was saved. Abele also received a call from the Police Dept, explaining that they have a garage full of old records that they simply have no time to catalog or assess.

Olson felt that if, as the proposal team anticipates, the requested funding proves to be more than enough for an archival survey, some of the objects survey could be done as well, if the CPC agreed to this as an acceptable use of these funds. Susan Abele noted that artwork is a particular genre. Looking for and assessing metal cups, fire carts, and other objects should be a separate project. It would be important not to spread the time and attention of the consultant hired for the archives survey too thinly. Olson agreed that archives are actually easier to assess. Assessing historic value for other things requires many different specialists, for different categories of objects.

Grissom thought it would be important to get a handle on the historic value of objects, and that it would be good to include objects as much as possible. However, she agreed that this might require a different kind of consultant, and might be done through a separate project.

In response to a question from Zack Blake, Olson clarified that the currently proposed project would assess relative historic significance for archives, but not for objects. Any work done on objects will be strictly an inventory. The archival survey will use a ratings system, with separate ratings for historical significance, condition, and needs. Abele noted that the archival survey would describe collections. Olson reinforced this point by saying that the consulting archivist will characterize records series, not individual documents or pieces of paper.

Joel Feinberg and Dan Green asked what the consultant would do if she or he saw a document in conditions that were so dangerous or disorganized that the document might not still be there in a year. Olson said the consultant could draw the project managers' attention to dire emergencies, and if necessary, Susan Abele would find a safe place for threatened records.

However, Olson emphasized that systematic recommendations for action would emerge only from a strategic plan, which would be the next stage of work after this preliminary assessment. Zack Blake asked whether a strategic plan would identify short-, middle- and long-term priorities. Olson said a strategic plan would determine whether to build new storage, consolidate or move collections, and what should be done now or could be done later.

Blake noted that the Newton Historical Commission had just voted to support a potential \$2 million proposal to the CPC for the preservation of the map archives held by the Engineering Division of the Dept. of Public Works. Susan Abele felt that this collection would come right to the top of any priorities identified by the proposed survey. Nancy Grissom noted that any total funding request of \$2 million should really be broken down into smaller phases.

Dan Green was concerned about timing. He cited the staff memo to the CPC explaining that, even if the proposed survey were funded quickly, its results would not be available in time to inform the CPC's decisions about other, more specific archival proposals until the fall of 2012.

Joel Feinberg asked how the project managers would respond if a particular department takes longer than estimated on the draft project schedule. Dan Green wondered whether the project included contingency funds.

Olson pointed out that the budget in the proposal included 5 “contingency days” from the project consultant. The proposal team felt this time might be entirely absorbed by the School Department, since no member of the team was at all familiar with their holdings.

Mike Clarke noted that, in his service with the Parks & Recreation Commission, he had found their earlier annual reports very useful. For many decades, these reports included explanatory narratives of the year’s projects and challenges. These narratives seemed to disappear starting in the 1960s, when the Parks & Recreation Dept. began to file only annual budgets. He wondered why this was, and whether it would be possible to resurrect the tradition of narrative annual reports. Susan Abele said she had those narrative reports often for exhibit preparation, project management, etc.

David Olson explained that state law requires towns to have annual reports, but it exempts cities. He was not sure when that changed, perhaps in the 1960s.

He noted that the archival survey project could not re-create historical records that had been lost, or never created in the first place. However, he also said that the new open meeting law requires the creation of narrative minutes, not just records of actions – though the narrative minutes will not and should not be though not word-for-word transcripts. The law also requires the retention of all backup material distributed to inform the deliberations of any public body.

Dan Green asked Olson to confirm that the survey would establish preservation priorities among the collections surveyed. Olson said the survey would provide ratings, but that true priorities could be identified only through a strategic plan.

Grissom also asked whether the proposal sponsors had looked for leverage or sought any funding from other sources. Susan Abele explained that years ago the City had received a grant from the National Historic Records and Publications Commission. It was a substantial project and funded significant work in the conservation of specific documents. The currently proposed survey is really a prerequisite for seeking more such grants.

Olson also expressed the hope that the CP funds for this survey would leverage other City funds. Alice Ingerson pointed out that even a simple site visit from the consulting archivist was likely to raise each department’s awareness of its archives, including the possibility of obtaining CPA funds for their preservation, and would therefore make it at least temporarily less likely that archives would be discarded or destroyed.

Olson hopes the survey will help the CPC identify priorities, but will also help the Clerk to have a conversation with City government as a whole about the City Archivist position, which had been eliminated due to budget cuts. He felt that if the survey could demonstrate the need for such a position, and the possibility that having an archivist could help the City obtain outside grant funds, the position might be restored.

Ingerson noted that no public comments had been received on this proposal, and that no members of the public had attended the hearing to comment on the proposal. The hearing had been announced ahead of time in the *Newton Tab*, on the program website, in the meeting agenda posted on the City website and on City Hall bulletin boards, in the Planning Department’s weekly *Friday Report*, and via email to all Newton PTOs and the email list of 600-plus names to which she sent monthly program and agenda announcements.

**VOTE** Dan Green moved to recommend the requested \$46,640 for the City Archives Survey proposal, as submitted. Leslie Burg seconded the motion.

The Committee voted to recommend the proposal by a unanimous vote of 7-0.

The Committee then directed Alice Ingerson to draft its funding recommendation to the Board of Aldermen and circulate it by email for members’ review and approval.

#### **OTHER COMMITTEE BUSINESS**

**VOTE** Zack Blake moved approval of the minutes for the Committee’s 19 August 2010 meeting as submitted by staff, without revision. Nancy Grissom seconded the motion.

The minutes were approved unanimously by those members present who had attended the August meeting (Blake, Grissom, Turner).

The discussion of program administration and staffing was postponed.

Alice Ingerson distributed the current status report on active, funded projects. She noted that this report is updated every 4-6 weeks and posted on the Reports page of the program website.

#### KESSELER WOODS

Nancy Grissom expressed concern that the Kessler Woods project has not been truly wrapped up. Because the affordable housing component has not been built, the public open space has not been finally delineated, nor have the paths been improved using the required \$75,000 contribution from the private developer. She wondered whether the CPC could get anyone else interested in moving the project to completion.

Dan Green said the remaining housing component was uneconomical to develop under current economic conditions. The developer may simply walk away from that commitment.

Joel Feinberg wondered in that case whether it was possible to rethink this component and get something to happen. He suggested that someone should approach the developer to see if they are interested in going forward or getting out.

Leslie Burg recommended no action. She felt it could do more harm than good to try to do something.

Dan Green and Joel Feinberg pointed out that the main goal of CP funding for this project had actually been accomplished: to preserve one of the last remaining large open spaces in the City from development.

The sense of the meeting was that the CPC did not need to take any specific further action on Kessler Woods.

The Committee adjourned by unanimous vote at 9:15 pm.

Staff Discussion Notes for Newton CPC  
**HAPPY 10<sup>TH</sup> BIRTHDAY, NEWTON CPA!**

**STEPS for ANNIVERSARY PLANNING**

- ◆ Set measurable goals. What do we most want 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary events to accomplish? How will we know whether we accomplish it?
- ◆ Brainstorm & rank ideas by combined estimated
  - impact (contribution to goals)
  - urgency (could it be done AFTER the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary?)
  - dollar costs (direct expenses & paid time from consultants, interns, staff)
  - committed/reliable volunteer hours (from CPC members & others)
- ◆ Prioritize by "bang for the buck/hour."
- ◆ Budget time & dollars not only to plan & implement each activity, but also to measure achievement of goals after the activity is finished (see \*\* below).

**POSSIBLE 10<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY GOALS**

In the program's first nearly 18 months, it had no funds to spend, so there was nothing to publicize except symbols and intentions. The CPC did this very well, for ex., by commissioning and publicizing its own logo. In contrast, other communities' CPA programs just use their city/town seal.

Very different activities than these may make sense as the program enters its 10<sup>th</sup> year, when it will have funded over \$32 million in projects, and has a record to explain or defend.

The 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary should engage the community as a whole in talking about whether Newton's aspirations for the CPA have been realized, and what the program should do next:

- ◆ How can CPA dollars be used, and why? If Senate Bill 90 (the pending amendment to the CPA supported by the Community Preservation Coalition) has not yet passed, the anniversary will be an opportunity to debate it. If it has passed, the anniversary will be an opportunity to explain its implications.
- ◆ What have Newton's CPA dollars accomplished?
- ◆ What else can & should be accomplished, & how?

**1. integrate all four CP-fundable resources**

Ideally, the CPA is not about getting "a bigger piece of the pie" for each fundable resource, or about filling short-term funding gaps. It is about making "a different pie" – bringing housing, history, open space & recreation advocates together to create & sustain all these things in perpetuity.

- A.** The Newton CPC conducted its initial 2002 study of community needs & resources through a series of meetings that solicited ideas for all resources, one neighborhood at a time.
- B.** In 2008 the Newton CPC updated its funding priorities by soliciting ideas from the entire City in 3 public hearings, one resource at a time (combining open space and recreation).

Strategy **A.** risks reinforcing "village parochialism," but **B.** reinforces "resource parochialism," which may be worse. **A.** is more labor-intensive, but it seems worth doing once every 10 years.

**2. promote frank discussions about preserving & enhancing Newton's community character & quality of life over the next 30-50 years**

The CPA requires producing and protecting affordable housing, historic resources, open space and recreation in perpetuity. Yet CP funds cannot be spent on routine maintenance. As a result, more than almost any other City institution, the CPC cannot succeed unless it can persuade others to provide long-term support for its own short-term funding decisions.

This is a difficult challenge. Annual budgets, biennial local elections, and many citizen demands promote short-term thinking. Many Newton citizens only support community investments that will pay off within 20 years, between the time they move into Newton for the public schools and the time they move out again after their children graduate, or when they themselves retire. The high relative price of housing in Newton further encourages short-term thinking, because many current residents believe – and are probably right – that their own children and grandchildren will never have the option to live here, even if they have the desire to.

### **3. foster regional learning & leadership**

Newton's program has been seen as both a positive and negative model by others. What should Newton be doing with other CPA communities, or other communities considering the CPA but that have not yet adopted it, beyond subsidizing the CP Coalition through our dues?

For example, the CPA foresaw cross-boundary projects, by allowing every CPA community to spend its program dollars in any city or town in the Commonwealth. Yet very few such projects have happened.

Anniversary events should help Newton residents and organizations

- Learn from other communities (not something Newton is well-known for doing!).
- Identify any regional leadership role Newton wants to play.

### **POSSIBLE NEIGHBORHOOD EVENTS**

Combine several of these ideas into a program that rotates to all neighborhoods (min. 4, max. 8?? one in each of 13 villages is just not practical!).

- ◆ at all previously funded sites: a weekend day with balloons, lawn signs, guided walk/bike ride, or hosted visits/tours
- ◆ a staffed table at a weekend "village day" or school fair
- ◆ ad/map in the *Tab*, mailings, storefront posters
- ◆ weekday evening public hearing on impact of past projects, future needs

### **POSSIBLE CITYWIDE EVENTS**

#### **◆ RAISE AWARENESS:**

##### ◇ PROJECT FAIR/EXHIBIT

- Multiple options, any can start with a short opening reception/panel.
- How long could display remain up? City Hall Rotunda or War Memorial (1 week?), Newton Free Library or Jackson Homestead (1 month), City Hall hallway (1 year)

##### ◇ BRANDING

- logo redesign – community contest
- new site signs, with new logo
- website improvements, additions
- *Newton Tab* (color insert with map of all projects, total spending, etc.? 2007 ad rates were about \$2,500 for black and white full page)

#### **◆ EVALUATE PROGRAM IMPACTS**

##### ◇ COMPLETE CUMULATIVE WEBSITE/DATABASES

- document long-term results/impacts, update contacts (who still cares about/for each project?)
- as part of this project: complete & correct Newton CP website & state project database (For ex., most project files have no reliable final data on leveraged funds. This will require some real digging.)

◇ SURVEY CUSTOMERS \*\*

- Our intensely publicized, very short survey, left online for 2+ months each year, produced only 45 responses in 2007 and 16 responses in 2008. Staff gave up this effort because the cost/benefit ratio seemed too high.
- Instead, could we put a new short survey online AND mail it to all households (with the City's `existing annual survey), both *before* anniversary events and *after* them – to gauge the anniversary's impact on what people know & think about the CPA?

◆ PUBLICIZE CUTTING-EDGE APPROACHES TO CPA-ELIGIBLE RESOURCES: CO-SPONSOR SPEAKERS

- Many groups in Newton already sponsor speakers on CPA-related topics (Newton Historical Society, Newton Conservators, Newton Housing Partnership, etc.). The CPC could serve as a cosponsor for talks in these series, while asking the other sponsor to use its own, established publicity mechanisms and membership lists to attract an audience.
- Have a CPC member serve as liaison to each organization.

**POSSIBLE REGIONAL ACTIVITIES**

◆ CHARLES RIVER CPA SUMMIT (CPC, staff, intern)

- In the 1970s, Newton took the lead in fostering a collaborative approach to the river, with partial funding from the Ford Foundation. Is Newton willing or able to resume such a regional leadership role now?
- At the least, should reduce the chance of plans on one side or segment of the river undercutting or conflicting with community preferences/plans elsewhere along the river.

**SOURCES of HELP**

◆ PAID HOURS

- staff (how much CP staff time can we really allocate, over 2 years, if we don't cancel regular work?)
- consultants (paid – see funding below)
- interns (paid or unpaid, see staff time above & funding below)

◆ VOLUNTEER HOURS/PARTNERSHIPS

- Current & past members of CPC: Would anyone volunteer on weekends or evenings, beyond attending the regular monthly meetings?
- original CPA advocates, including most nonprofits that have rec'd or hope to receive CP funding: Historic Newton, Newton Conservators, housing advocates, Crystal Lake Conservancy, Newton Tree Conservancy, Newton Community Farm, ...
- for neighborhood events: ward aldermen, neighborhood associations, PTOs could help to organize events and attract an audience
- for regional events: Charles River Conservancy, Charles River Watershed Association, Metropolitan Area Planning Council, ...

◆ FUNDING

- Newton CPC administrative budget; what amount would be appropriate to allocate to this?
- partnerships & in-kind contributions (see speaker series, above)
- private donations & foundations (for which event/product? who will write proposals, solicit donations, and maintain relationships by reporting back?)