

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

Attending members of the Community Preservation Committee (CPC): Nancy Grissom, Thomas Turner, Dan Green, Zack Blake, Leslie Burg, Joel Feinberg (arr. 7:10 pm).

Program manager Alice Ingerson served as recorder.

Committee Chair Nancy Grissom opened the public meeting at 7:00 pm.

FINAL REPORT ON COMPLETED PROJECT:
WARREN HOUSE

Jeanne Strickland, Executive Director of Newton Community Development Foundation (NCDF), presented the report, along with Olga Hathaway, the project engineer from Gale Associates. As is often the case with historic projects, once work began the contractors and engineers found some new needs, but they also found that some features planned for replacement could be repaired instead. They aimed to retain as much of the original historic fabric as possible. All originally scheduled work, change orders, and lighting for the cupola were accomplished with the CP funds, including: replacement of roofs, parts of the cast stone pediment, flashings, woodwork, steel, and masonry that had suffered serious water damage. Code violations were also corrected. Strickland praised Gale Associates for bringing the project in on time and on budget despite all the changes in scope. She reported that the portions of the building rehabilitated in phase 1 had no leaks during the heavy rains of March-April 2010, while work was still underway, or since.

The Newton CPC's funding, which was restricted to phase 1, was critical in obtaining over \$300,000 of state preservation tax credits from the Massachusetts Historical Commission, and approval of refinancing by Mass Housing, which will finance phase 2. About \$1,000 of additional work was done with Warren House reserves.

Ingerson pointed out that this final report will serve as a model for other projects. The full final report will be posted online from the Newton CPC's projects webpage, at www.newtonma.gov/cpa/projects.htm.

PUBLIC HEARINGS on NEW PROPOSALS:
61 PEARL STREET (HOUSING)

Josephine McNeill, Executive Director of CAN-DO, made the presentation. CAN-DO proposes to acquire and rehabilitate an 1870 building in Newton Corner, initially with a loan from Cambridge Savings, which will be paid down with CP funds, if awarded. The building's current 4 apartments, with a total of 5 bedrooms, will become 3 new apartments, with a total of 6 bedrooms. All units will be permanently deed-restricted for rental to households earning less than 65% of the area median income. CAN-DO expects to have a family with 2 members in each unit, most likely a mother and child. The location is well-served by public transit, including express buses, and is within walking distance of public transit, shopping, restaurants, the YMCA, 2 supermarkets, places of worship and public services, including schools. A City lot on Carleton Street abuts the project site.

Project architect Terry Heinlein summarized the plans for renovation and construction. The building currently consists of 3 1-bedroom apartments, one of which occupies the 2-story rear addition, and 1 2-bedroom apartment on the third floor of the main building. The project will integrate the main building and addition to create one 2-bedroom apartment on each floor. The new first-floor unit will be fully handicapped accessible; ramps for this unit will be the only significant change to the building's exterior. The roof will also be reconfigured to eliminate the v-shaped valley between the main building and addition, which in the past has led to leaks and interior water damage. The project will also add insulation, correct structural and fire safety issues, address the presence of lead paint, and re-partition heating and electrical systems to serve the 3 new apartments. The parking lot will be repaved, but total impermeable surface will actually be reduced.

McNeil then summarized how the project's budget had been revised in response to comments by the Newton Housing Partnership and the Planning & Development Board, which reviewed CAN-DO's concurrent request for federal housing funds (CDBG and HOME) through the City. The debt coverage ratio

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in the operating budget was reduced from 1.30 to 1.17 between 2015 and 2020. Cambridge Savings has agreed to a 4% interest rate for the first 4 years, with a cap of 5% after that.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Lisa Mirabile, representing the League of Women Voters, expressed support for the project on these grounds: it will meet the City's housing goals through small-scale, infill development that does not expand the existing building's footprint, adds wheelchair access, and provides single-floor housing. The League urged CAN-DO to meet Newton's new "stretch" building code for energy use, to make the project more sustainable and affordable over time, and would support increasing the request for CP funds if required to accomplish this.

Michael Lepie opposed the project. He noted that he has been following CAN-DO's projects in the City for the past 6 years. He was not sure this was the best way to spend taxpayers' money, by reducing a 4-unit building to a 3-unit building. He felt the proposed \$125,000 developer fee seemed excessive for a small project like this. He noted that CAN-DO's Veterans House project was still not developed at the time of this meeting, a year after it was first submitted to the CPC. He was not sure if this project's budget included a year of carrying costs, because he had not studied the budget, but felt that housing projects should be completed within 6 months. He noted that CAN-DO's cost per unit seemed to increase with each project. In this case the cost was approximately \$380,000 per unit. He had heard that this project was put together within a week of the funding deadline, and he felt that due diligence may not have been done. He urged the CPC to ensure that taxpayer funds were used efficiently, and was not sure that was happening. He concluded that because CAN-DO is well-regarded in the City, other more developers seem not to be applying for these housing funds.

COMMITTEE QUESTIONS & COMMENTS

Dan Green asked about LEED, the stretch energy code, and recycling of existing building components or materials. Heinlein described the green materials that will be used, but said the project would not meet requirements for certification. He explained that the building's rear addition would basically be gutted, but that existing components will be saved wherever possible. They will add closed-cell insulation in some places, foam insulation where joists are exposed and where the roof needs to be re-configured. Walls will be insulated only where interior finishes will already have to be removed. There are differences of opinion about this, but current building science suggesting not blowing insulation into a wall cavity if it cannot be made completely tight.

In response to Joel Feinberg, McNeil explained that the budget had been revised to allow for relocation of the current tenants, and that the construction budget was based on walking contractors through the site, but the work has not yet been bid. For CAN-DO's previous project, Veterans House, bids had all come within \$1-\$1,500 of the original estimate in the funding proposal.

Leslie Burg, who had heard the proposal presented to the Planning & Development Board, felt this was a very good project. She added that the project exceeds all applicable legal requirements for accessibility, as urged by the Mayor's new guidelines for City-funded housing projects.

PUBLIC HEARINGS on NEW PROPOSALS: HISTORIC BURYING GROUNDS TOMB REPAIR & CONSERVATION

Harry Lohr, chair of Historic Newton's volunteer Burying Grounds Committee, began the presentation. He identified the Committee's other members at the meeting as Marietta Marchitelli, Sheila Donahue, Historic Newton Executive Director Cindy Stone, and City Senior Preservation Planner Brian Lever. Lohr explained that the project had taken longer than initially expected partly because of the special expertise required and partly because the CPC had preferred to fund it in phases. The total project should be complete within a decade, rectifying the past century of benign neglect and preserving these sites for another century.

Lohr summarized the historic significance of the burying grounds and project achievements to date, including: removal of dead trees and brush and stabilization and repair of gravestones. The sites are maintained by the Parks & Recreation Department and several volunteer workdays every year.

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The remaining work involves historic tombs and new fences. Some tombs will be repaired and restored, but those that are beyond repair will simply be covered with grass, to show respect for those interred there. The Secretary of the Interior's *Standards* do not allow reconstruction when there is not enough surviving physical or written evidence to ensure accuracy. The planned fences and gates, which are black chain link, will protect the sites but also make them inviting to the public.

Cindy Stone explained that the public procurement process had also slowed the project. However, the budget submitted with the proposal was based on recent estimates and specifications, created by qualified specialists, and on the only bid received when those specifications were put out to bid.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Lisa Mirabile, representing the League of Women Voters, said that the League neither supported nor opposed this proposal, but agreed that the burying grounds were historically important and had been neglected. The project also addresses passive recreation and open space goals. The League urged Historic Newton to look further for funds from sources other than the CPC; to add new letters to the 2002-03 letters of support resubmitted with this proposal; and to provide more details about volunteer work at the sites, particularly which villages or neighborhoods were represented. Finally, the League wondered whether the current request could be further subdivided or phased.

In response to these comments, Cindy Stone mentioned that Historic Newton was using a private \$5,000 fund and the time of the privately funded Historical Society staff to produce brochures. Lohr noted that National Lumber had replaced at its own expense a damaged part of the existing fence at one site. Stone said she would gladly follow up on any sources suggested by others, but would also do more grants research herself.

COMMITTEE QUESTIONS & COMMENTS

In response to Zack Blake's question about the qualifications of the firm on whose bid the proposal budget was based, Ingerson clarified that even a sole bidder was required to meet the full list of posted qualifications for any City bid request.

In response to a question from Leslie Burg, Stone thought the project could be subdivided, by doing work on the tombs first and work on the fences later. In response to Dan Green's skepticism about the viability of a later request only for fencing, Ingerson pointed out that the Board of Aldermen had often expressed a strong interest in the fences, which would make the sites' rehabilitation more visible to the public.

In response to a question from Joel Feinberg, Cindy Stone and other Burying Grounds Committee members present agreed that they were not sure the current request would indeed complete the entire project. Ingerson noted that the current request would bring total funding to a little over \$1 million, but that the most recent prior estimates of total project cost had been over \$1.5 million. The earlier estimates, as well as previous proposals and progress reports, are online from www.newtonma.gov/cpa/projects.htm.

Lohr suggested that Historic Newton might submit future requests to repair new damage caused by time and the elements. Nancy Grissom noted that CP funds cannot be used for maintenance or routine repairs, and suggested that Historic Newton as the custodian of the sites should budget for that. Blake and Grissom asked Ingerson to have the Newton Law Department confirm whether the proposal's maintenance training for volunteers was an allowable use of CP funds.

After further discussion, the Committee agreed that Historic Newton should submit the following additional information for a future working session: detailed support for the estimated costs of the fences and staff management time; updated letters of support; a timeline through actual construction (not just through the next request for bids); and the most recent annual financial statement and annual operating budget for both partners in Historic Newton, including the private Newton Historical Society, as required by the published proposal instructions.

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**SCOPE CHANGE REQUEST for CURRENT PROJECT:
MUSEUM EXTERIOR PRESERVATION**

Cindy Stone presented Historic Newton's request to use \$12,000 of the remaining unspent \$17,000 from the appropriation for Museum roof and painting to refinish and reinstall the original shutterdogs, which had been damaged when forgotten for several weeks in a contractor's truck; to add a new wooden gutter on the rear of the archival wing; and to repair and paint the perimeter fence.

Brian Lever noted that, in addition to installing incorrect modern shutterdogs, the contractors had reinstalled the shutters themselves backwards.

Nancy Grissom felt that restoring the shutter dogs could be an appropriate use of CP funds, but Dan Green felt the contractor should be required to cover that cost.

Grissom felt the fence fell under routine maintenance, and might not be eligible for CP funds. Dan Green and Leslie Burg asked if the fence work could be done by volunteers. Stone felt this work required some expertise, and that fence maintenance seemed to fall into the crack between the City's Public Buildings and Parks departments; neither had accepted responsibility for the Museum's fence.

The Committee asked Ingerson to have the Newton Law Dept. confirm whether work on the fence was an eligible use of CP funds.

**WORKING SESSION for CURRENT PROPOSAL:
EARLY ARCHITECTURE SURVEY, 1830-1840**

To illustrate this project's final products, Brian Lever passed around samples of correctly completed survey forms. Survey forms and requirements are set by the Massachusetts Historical Commission.

Nancy Grissom called on Lisa Mirabile for the League of Women Voters, which had not completed its review of the proposal in time for the public hearing. Mirabile said the League did not have a final recommendation on this project, but that it would satisfy their past recommendations that the CPC base its preservation funding decisions on good information, and would similarly help the Newton Historical Commission. They would have liked to see letters of support from citizens or property owners.

In response to other questions from the League, Lever confirmed that the Planning Dept. could indeed contribute the staff time listed in the proposal as covered by the City's operating budget. He also explained that staff survey of buildings from before 1830 showed that many actually dated from after 1830; although the first survey covered a much longer period, there were many more buildings to document from the shorter, later period.

In response to a question from Zack Blake, Mirabile clarified that the League had sometimes opposed proposals in the past, it did not always choose as it had this year between support and no position.

VOTE Zack Blake moved recommendation of the full funding requested for this proposal. Leslie Burg seconded the motion. All members present voted in favor of the motion.

The Committee directed Ingerson to draft and circulate its funding recommendation for comment, before forwarding that recommendation to the Board of Aldermen.

COMMITTEE BUSINESS

SCHEDULE OF FUTURE WORKING SESSIONS

After some discussion, the sense of the meeting was to accept Nancy Grissom's suggestion to schedule working sessions at the Committee's 19 January 2011 meeting for both housing proposals (61 Pearl Street and 112-116 Dedham Street), but to postpone working sessions for all other current proposals until February or later.

Ingerson urged the Committee to consider commissioning an outside expert review of the Dedham Street proposal, which had requested only CP funds. Additional reviews of the Pearl Street proposal, including an independent appraisal, would be paid for by the City's CDBG program because that proposal had

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requested both CP and CDBG funds. In addition, she noted that an outside review could consider Joel Feinberg's suggestion that a CP grant agreement for the Dedham Street proposal might include a provision for revenue sharing. Tom Turner and Zack Blake felt that rehabilitating the barn would cost more than the estimate in the Dedham Street proposal. Joel Feinberg thought maintaining the barn would be financial a burden on the owners of the affordable units, and that rehabilitating the barn as a strictly private space was not a good use of CP funds. The Committee asked Ingerson to draft a scope of work for a consultant and circulate it for comments.

MINUTES of 17 NOVEMBER 2010 MEETING

Zack Blake moved approval. Leslie Burg seconded, but asked Ingerson to confirm and correct the time of adjournment. With that correction, the minutes were unanimously approved.

DRAFT FY12 ADMINISTRATIVE BUDGET

Ingerson quickly reviewed the draft fy12 program administrative budget and advised the Committee to budget conservatively, given that state funds were likely to decline further next year. She explained that the Committee would need to finalize and vote on this budget at its January meeting.

Chair Nancy Grissom adjourned the meeting at 9:45 pm.

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