

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
STATE HOUSE, BOSTON 02133-1054

JOHN J. LAWN
STATE REPRESENTATIVE
10TH MIDDLESEX DISTRICT

Committees:
Economic Development & Emerging Technologies
Mental Health & Substance Abuse
Elder Affairs

STATE HOUSE, ROOM 134
TEL. (617) 722-2400 EXT. 7970
FAX. (617) 722-2774
John.Lawn@MAhouse.gov

Thomas Concannon, President
Newton Cultural Alliance
1301 Centre Street
Newton, MA 02459

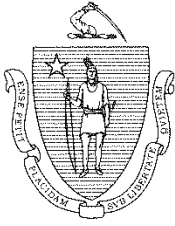
August 29, 2013

Dear Mr. Concannon,

In late 2012, the Newton Cultural Alliance (NCA) acquired the historic Nathaniel Allen Homestead house at 35 Webster St. in West Newton. The NCA is a non-profit organization of 25 arts and cultural organizations across Newton. The NCA is now working on the development and funding plan for rehabilitation of the Nathaniel Allen Homestead. This development, like the many other organizations by the NCA will build awareness of the richness in cultural activity, as well as contribute greatly to the economic development of Newton.

This property is one of the most prominent in West Newton Village, an historic home acquired in the 1800's, it was once used as a residence, then a school and has been an important part of Newton for many years. As a State Representative of Newton, I am proud to know that the NCA has taken the lead to restore this property, and intends to convert it into a community and non-profit arts and cultural center. I applaud the work of NCA and am happy to do whatever I can to support your efforts in the development and funding efforts for the property.

This project is one that embodies the spirit of the citizens of Newton. It encapsulates several of the attributes that characterize our city including our historic and ongoing interest in innovative and quality education, our strong creative sector of artists, historians and innovators, and deep civic pride and spirit of community volunteerism. Allen's work was truly that of a pioneer in education and this property is a testament to his legacy. I am happy to support the NCA in its



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efforts to develop a funding plan for this important community asset and thank you for your efforts.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John J. Lawn".

John J. Lawn
State Representative
10th Middlesex District



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
MASSACHUSETTS SENATE

SENATOR CYNTHIA STONE CREEM
First Middlesex and Norfolk District

STATE HOUSE, ROOM 312A
BOSTON, MA 02133-1053
TEL. (617) 722-1639
FAX (617) 722-1266

August 29, 2013

Chair
SENATE POST AUDIT AND OVERSIGHT

CYNTHIA.CREEM@MASENATE.GOV
WWW.MASENATE.GOV

Thomas Concannon, President
Newton Cultural Alliance
1301 Centre Street
Newton, MA 02459

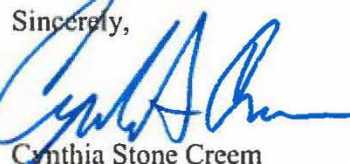
Dear Tom,

I am pleased to write this letter in support of the Newton Cultural Alliance's request for Massachusetts Historic Tax Credits applicable to the funding plan for the rehabilitation of the Nathaniel Allen Homestead in West Newton. The NCA's plan to renovate and develop the Allen House in West Newton as a non-profit community arts and education facility is admirable.

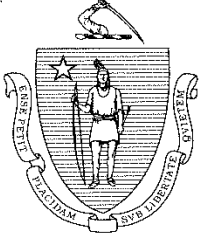
The Allen House, located at 35 Webster Street, is listed on the National Registry of Historic places and, as a Newton Historic Landmark, this property is essential to the historic fabric of the City of Newton. Built prior to the Civil War, this was the home of renowned educator Nathaniel Topliff Allen and was later used as a school run by his daughters.

Renovating this property is a project that embodies the spirit of the citizens of Newton. It encapsulates several of the attributes that characterize our city including our historic and ongoing interest in innovative and quality education, our strong creative sector of artists, historians and innovators, and deep civic pride and spirit of community volunteerism. Nathaniel Allen's work was truly that of a pioneer in education and the completed facility will be a testament to his legacy.

I am happy to support the NCA in its efforts to develop a funding plan for this important community asset and thank you for your efforts.

Sincerely,

Cynthia Stone Creem
State Senator

Cc: Adrienne Hartzell, NCA Clerk



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
STATE HOUSE, BOSTON 02133-1054

RUTH B. BALSER

STATE REPRESENTATIVE
12TH MIDDLESEX DISTRICT
NEWTON

ROOM 136, STATE HOUSE

TEL: (617) 722-2396

FAX: (617) 626-0340

Ruth.Balsler@MAhouse.gov

Thomas Concannon, President
Newton Cultural Alliance
1301 Centre Street
Newton, MA 02459

August 29, 2013

Dear Tom,

Recently I was pleased to learn that the Newton Cultural Alliance (NCA), after acquiring the historic property in late 2012, is now working at a rapid pace to put into motion its development and funding plan for rehabilitation of the Nathaniel Allen Homestead in West Newton. This property is a community historic gem and as a state elected representative of Newton I am proud to know that the NCA has taken the lead to save this property and intends to convert it to community and non-profit arts and cultural educational use. As a listing on the National Registry of Historic places and a Newton Landmark, this property is essential to the historic fabric of the City of Newton. I applaud the work of NCA and am happy to do whatever I can to support your efforts in the development and funding efforts for the property.

This project is one that embodies the spirit of the citizens of Newton. It encapsulates several of the attributes that characterize our city including our historic and ongoing interest in innovative and quality education, our strong creative sector of artists, historians and innovators, and deep civic pride and spirit of community volunteerism. Allen's work was truly that of a pioneer in education and this property is a testament to his legacy. I am happy to support the NCA in its efforts to develop a funding plan for this important community asset and thank you for your efforts.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Ruth B. Balsler".

Ruth B. Balsler
State Representative



527 Washington Street, Newton, MA 02458
TELEPHONE 617-796-1450
FAX 617-552-7228
www.historicnewton.org


Tom Concanon,
Board President
Newton Cultural Alliance

Dear Tom,

I am writing in support of the NCA's application to the Mass Historical Commission for a Preservation Projects grant. The Allen House is an important historic property in the city of Newton. Nathaniel Allen ran one of the first co-ed desegregated schools in the country where many of the Boston area abolitionists sent their children. Many of his ideas were incorporated into Horace Mann's educational philosophy. The site was also served as a station on the Underground Railroad.

We think that the usage that the NCA proposes is an excellent match for the site. The anchor tenant will be a music school using progressive educational methods like the Allen School did. It will also provide sorely needed performance, rehearsal and meeting spaces for the cultural community in Newton. Historic Newton plans to collaborate with the NCA in developing exhibitions about this historic property.

Over the years there have been many plans for this property, some of which, in our opinion, did not mesh well with its historical and educational opportunities. We believe this proposed project does. It is my hope that the MHC will support this application.


Cindy Stone
Historic Newton

JACKSON HOMESTEAD AND MUSEUM
DURANT-KENRICK HOUSE AND GROUNDS
HISTORIC BURYING GROUNDS PRESERVATION
NEWTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY, INC.

Susan & Gorham Brigham
401 Cherry Street
West Newton, MA 02465-1831

March 14, 2013

Mr. Tom Concannon
President, Newton Cultural Alliance
1301 Centre Street
Newton, MA 02459

Dear Mr. Concannon:

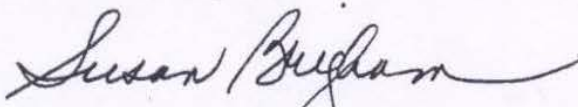
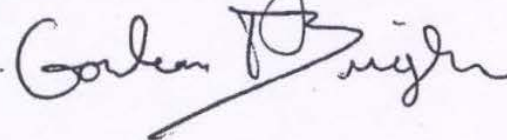
We are writing to let you know how delighted we were to learn that the Newton Cultural Alliance has acquired the Allen House property in West Newton.

Nathaniel Topliff Allen and his mentor, Cyrus Peirce, were significant players in developing leading edge education philosophies and practices in the 1800s and we need to commemorate and continue to recognize their important contributions. Restoring and renovating Allen House is one meaningful way to preserve this legacy.

As the northern edge of West Newton village gradually transitions to more multi-family buildings, of which our residence is one, we are comforted and pleased that Allen House will not fall into this category. It is far more important to know that its historical character will remain intact and we welcome its addition as a signal component of the village cultural scene.

Please accept our gratitude for undertaking this project and for engaging with our community as your development plans move forward.

With kindest regards,



527 Washington Street, Newton, MA 02458
TELEPHONE 617-796-1450
FAX 617-552-7228
www.historicnewton.org

March 12, 2013

Tom Concannon
President, Newton Cultural Alliance

Dear Tom,

Historic Newton is pleased to support the Newton Cultural Alliance's application for funding to rehabilitate the Nathaniel Allen House in West Newton. As a member of the Cultural Alliance, we are pleased to see this property converted to a facility that the whole community can use. We look forward to seeing it develop into both classrooms and an intimate performance space, both of which are sorely needed by the cultural community in Newton.

Moreover, as the Historical Society of Newton, we are thrilled that such an important historic property will be preserved for public use. As you know, Nathaniel Allen opened the first co-ed and first integrated school in the United States. Many of the abolitionists sent their children there. So it is very appropriate that the building continue to harbor a progressive educational function.

For our part, we will be delighted to work with the Alliance to mount historical exhibitions about the history of the school, to hold lectures in its assembly spaces and to include the property on our walking tours of West Newton and African-American history.

Best wishes for the success of this project. Please let me know if there is anything else I could do to help.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Cindy Stone".

Cindy Stone
Executive Director,
Historic Newton

JACKSON HOMESTEAD AND MUSEUM
DURANT-KENRICK HOUSE AND GROUNDS
HISTORIC BURYING GROUNDS PRESERVATION
NEWTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY, INC.

James R. Cote
Alderman at Large, Ward 3
508 983-4535
coteward3@gmail.com

January 6, 2014

Allen House Project

Re: Alderman Cote's Support for the Allen House Project (35 Webster St, West Newton) and CPC Funding


In advance of my absence at the January 9, 2014 meeting of the Community Preservation Committee (CPC), I am writing this letter of support for the Newton Cultural Alliance's (NCA) request for Community Preservation Funds for the Allen House project.

The Allen House project is a large undertaking that I view as critical to maintaining a historically significant property in West Newton. Absent this approval the NCA will be challenged to raise the funds necessary to preserve the property for community use. It is my understanding that West Newton has not benefited greatly from CPA money and this highly visible iconic home would be a great start.

Approval of this request allows for the NCA to get underway on a great future cultural resource for the entire city; and benefits the residents of West Newton in many ways to include the prevention of high density housing units on the location.

I enthusiastically recommend approval of this request.

Sincerely,


James R. Cote
Alderman at Large, Ward 3

Project Name: Nathaniel Allen Homestead (NAH)

Submitted by: Newton Cultural Alliance, Adrienne Hartzell, Acting Managing Director

Category: Historic Preservation

COMMENTS

The LWVN's reviewing team thought this was a highly worthy application, complete, detailed. It preserves a valuable historic resource and enhances a village center, meeting many of the City's long-term goals.

HOWEVER, this is a large ask (\$2 million) on an increasingly limited CPA budget. That said, LWVN reviewers appreciated the large match of outside funds (\$2.25 million).

QUESTIONS

The Contingency of less than 5% (\$312,900 out of \$4.5 million) worried reviewers. We wondered what happens if dry rot, hazardous materials, archeological material or other common discoveries in old, wooden homes were discovered, adding costs and delay. Should this amount be higher?

What happens if the Suzuki School cannot meet its commitment to pay the bulk of the rent/operating costs in the next decade? What backup plans do the proponents have to protect this large investment?

It seemed to us that the ca.\$30,000 budgeted for property manager in the 10-year budget was low.

The plans call for the removal of 14 large trees (\$4,000 for each one). Marc Welch has been consulted, our hope is that these are truly diseased large trees?

RECOMMENDATIONS

This large investment of taxpayer funds in an essentially private building concerns the LWVN. Usually, the CPC requires some assurance that the funds will benefit the public at large. LWVN reviewers suggest that the proponents find ways to make the space available to the state and local taxpayers who will be supporting such a large project. One suggestion was to make spaces available for outside community groups to rent for a fee, as well as concerts or other performances that the public can attend.

Parking in West Newton is already a concern that the City is taking up in its planning for a reconstruction of West Newton Square. We believe that the 26 spaces on site will not meet the demand for parking during concerts and other events, given that public transportation here is not frequent or ideal. We recommend looking at sharing parking with the Police and Courts, with the local banks, with NCSC, Second Church, the two Baptist Churches, and the Chestnut St. garage opposite the Police Annex as well as meter pricing either here or on abutting streets to ensure adequate availability of spaces.