



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS NEWTON

PO Box 610207 Newton, MA 02461 www.lwvnewton.org
617-383-4598 Email: info@lwvnewton.org

Alice Ingerson
Community Preservation Committee Program Manager
Newton City Hall
1000 Commonwealth Avenue
Newton, MA 02459

Board of Directors

President
Susan Flicop

Clerk
Theresa Fitzpatrick

Treasurer
Andrea Kozinetz

Directors
Pia Bertelli
Bonnie Carter
Linda Green
Ellen Grody
Lois Levin
Lisa Mirabile
Linda Morrison
Sharyn Roberts

Dear Alice:

Below are our comments on the two proposals before the Community Preservation Committee. Thank you so much for your efforts and for the opportunity to comment.

Project: Nathaniel Allen Homestead—Phase II (also known as the Allen House)

The League of Women Voters of Newton (LWVN) has reviewed this proposal and makes the following observations:

- This application is complete, thorough, and provides good support for the project.
- It appears to fit well within the CPA law, and also fulfills the basic goals set forth by the Newton CPA.
- Allen House and the described use are specifically noted in the 2007 Comprehensive Plan. It aligns well, establishing a cultural/performance space in a Village Center and supporting City economic development goals.
- NCA and NAH have secured additional help from the Junior League, which wants to use the house as a show house for its 2016 fundraiser.
- A full business plan is presented, created by working with SOAR55.
- Significant outside funding has been secured, and NCA has a plan for the remainder.
- NCA is planning to hire a private project manager for this phase of the work.
- The LWVN concerns in 2013 were the allocation of funds for an essentially private building. NCA is addressing this by applying for an historic restriction and with plans for extensive public access via performances and rentals.

LWVN reviewers did express the following concerns.

- The total CPA request (\$2 m) is large and may place limits upon other City opportunities.
- The strong team of partner organizations no longer includes the commitment of a tenant who will cover some portion of the ongoing expenses in the form of rent.



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS NEWTON

PO Box 610207 Newton, MA 02461 www.lwvnewton.org
617-383-4598 Email: info@lwvnewton.org

- Given the size of the city's contribution to this project, LWVN would like the proponents to consider making space available for the community. For example, a future Area Council will need a place to meet, and this location would be ideal. Rental fees would need to be waived for such a purpose, however.
- In 2013, our reviewers worried about the adequacy of 26 parking spaces, given that the Allen House plan is for performances and other events, and suggested that NCA look into sharing spaces in nearby lots. This continues to be a concern today.

In evaluating all these points, LWVN recommends support of this application.

Project: Crescent Street—Affordable Housing and Community Park (Site Assessment):

Comments on this proposal are posted with the proposal on the Newton CPC website.

and
Community Housing. It also fits well into the City's Recreation and Open Place Plan Update--2013-2019, Sec. 1, Plan Summary. Additionally it is consistent with the Newton Comprehensive Plan, Sec. 7: Open Space and Recreation, Sec. 3: Land Use, and Sec. 5: Housing.

LWVN reviewers note the following:

- A strength of this proposal is that this is a joint, interdepartmental effort between three city departments: Planning, Public Buildings, and Parks and Recreation.
- Alex Varcarce and Josh Morse are to manage the project. Their competency is reassuring.
- Thinking forward to get site and environmental information before construction is the best professional process.
- There are three community contacts listed, two of them local residents who were very involved with the Robinhood Park proposal, and Beth Wilkinson of the Newton Conservators. There are no optional letters of support, but the three community contacts are likely representative of neighborhood and community interests.
- While the application is complete, thorough, well written and clear, LWVN readers were confused by p. 3, as it seems only to mention the market-rate housing, not the four units of affordable housing. Is this an oversight?

LWVN strongly recommends support of this proposal.

Many thanks, again, for your time and effort.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Susan Flicop".

Susan Flicop
President, LWVN