



**City of Newton, Massachusetts  
Community Preservation Committee**



**DOCKET  
ITEM NO.  
  
113-10**

Setti D. Warren  
Mayor

**FUNDING RECOMMENDATION**

*DATE:* 1 April 2010  
*TO:* The Honorable Board of Aldermen  
*FROM:* Community Preservation Committee  
*RE:* **recommended funding for  
CITY HALL – Historic Art**

**PROJECT GOALS & ELIGIBILITY**

This project will clean, repair, and restore the portrait painted in the 1870s of Newton’s first mayor, James F. C. Hyde, by Newton artist Nahum Onthank. As shown in the attached proposal, over the years this painting and its historic frame have sustained major damage. The restored painting will be displayed in a public space at City Hall.

The Community Preservation Act specifically allows funding the preservation and restoration of any “artifact ... that has been determined by the local historic preservation commission to be significant in the history, archeology, architecture or culture of a city or town.” The attached proposal includes the Newton Historical Commission’s determination that this portrait is such a significant resource.

The proposal also provides additional clear justifications for this project from Newton’s *Comprehensive Plan* and the Community Preservation Committee’s *Funding Priorities & Guidelines*. In addition, Newton’s first mayor seems an especially significant symbol of unity in the current climate of fiscal stress, which could all too easily foster a sense of competition rather than collaboration in our “city of villages.” A short biography of Mayor Hyde is available from the website of the city’s history museum: [www.ci.newton.ma.us/Jackson/research/history/newtons-first-mayor.asp](http://www.ci.newton.ma.us/Jackson/research/history/newtons-first-mayor.asp)

**RECOMMENDED FUNDING**

On 17 March 2010 by a vote of 9-0, the Community Preservation Committee recommended that the requested amount of **\$5,200** be appropriated from the historic resources and general reserves of the Community Preservation Fund, to the control of the City Clerk, for the purposes described in the attached proposal, and allocated 100% as historic resources. The following summary budget is provided solely as background information:

<b>Project Budget for Portrait of James F. C. Hyde</b>	
Conservation, Repair, and Cleaning of painting	\$3,200
Conservation, Repair and Cleaning of frame	\$1,500
10% contingency	\$500
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$5,200</b>

**Special Issues Considered by the CPC**

At the Committee’s request, City Clerk David Olson submitted three estimates for this project. Two of these, from highly qualified fine art conservators, are higher than the amount requested. However, the process outlined in all three proposals is essentially the same.

The Committee therefore deferred to Mr. Olson’s judgment that the requested amount was adequate, given that: the painting is of local rather than national, and historical rather than artistic, significance;

the restorer who provided the lowest estimate has done excellent work for the City in the past; and the proposed work is reversible, should a different treatment ever be recommended for this painting in the future.

Finally, the Committee also bore in mind Mr. Olson's report that the City owns many other historic works of art in need of repair and restoration. Without a thorough inventory, assessment, or priorities for all these artworks as context for its decision, the Committee was wary of spending more than necessary on the first proposal ever submitted in this category.

## **OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Community Preservation Committee further recommends:

1. That this project be completed within 12 months after the funds become available, or by any other deadline granted in writing by the CPC.
2. That the City Clerk as the project manager
  - ◆ work closely with the CPC and its staff to publicize the project
  - ◆ respond to all requests from the CPC or committees of the Board of Aldermen for progress reports
  - ◆ before releasing the final payment for project work, submit to the CPC a brief report comparing actual expenditures with the approved budget from the original proposal
3. Finally, that any portion of the Community Preservation Fund grant not used for the purposes stated herein be returned to the Newton Community Preservation Fund

## **ATTACHMENTS**

(delivered to the clerks of the Committee on Community Preservation and Finance Committee)

- ◆ Original funding proposal & required attachments
- ◆ Letters of support, including letter from the Newton Historical Commission
- ◆ Public hearing presentation (photographs)
- ◆ Additional cost estimates requested by the CPC

This recommendation and all attachments are also available online from this webpage:

[www.newtonma.gov/cpa/projects/city-hall/city-hall.htm](http://www.newtonma.gov/cpa/projects/city-hall/city-hall.htm)