



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

David B. Cohen
Mayor

MEMORANDUM

TO: Honorable Board of Aldermen
FROM: Community Preservation Committee
DATE: 28 January 2004
RE: **CPC Recommendation for CPA Funding**

PROJECT TITLE: BRIGHAM COMMUNITY HOUSE
CPA PROJECT ID: CPA-FY04- 1
CPA CATEGORY: Historic Preservation

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The applicants, Brigham Community House, Inc and the Commissioner of Public Buildings, originally requested \$105,600 to restore various exterior and interior elements of this Queen Anne style building that was constructed in 1886. However, the applicants are now planning to first hire a preservation architect. An amended request was submitted on 12/22/03, which seeks \$20,000 of CPA funding to hire the preservation architect to conduct a needs assessment, leading to the preparation of construction documents and supervision of the work for the restoration of the building as Phase I of the project. Phase II, in a subsequent application, will be to request funding for construction costs and will be based on the work of Phase I.

FINDINGS

Community Preservation Act (MGL c. 44B)

This proposal meets the criteria established under MGL c.44B for the following reasons:

1. Brigham House complies with §2 which defines an historic resource as “a building . . . that is listed or eligible for listing on the state register of historic places. . .” The Brigham House is listed on the National Register of Historic Places as contributing to the Newton Highlands Historic District (all buildings listed on the National Register are also listed on the state register).
2. The project complies with §5(b)(2), which allows the CPA to fund the preservation, rehabilitation, and restoration of historic resources. The first phase of this project, to hire a preservation architect, would create a detailed scope of work to preserve and restore this building in a way that is appropriate to its historic and architectural character. The Community Preservation Coalition’s report titled *Potential Uses of CPA Funds* states that “CPA funds may be used for . . . historic or housing consultants, architectural and engineering fees, . . . construction consultants . . . and similar costs associated with and incidental to the development of a CPA project.”

**Newton Community Preservation Plan
Overarching Goals**

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| 1. Contribute to the preservation of Newton’s unique character, boost the vitality of the community and enhance the quality of life for its residents. | Yes |
| 2. Serve more than one CPA category. | No |
| 3. Demonstrate the highest cost/benefit value relative to other proposals. | See below |
| 4. Leverage other public and/or private funds. | No |
| 5. Preserve a resource or opportunity that would otherwise be lost. | Yes |
| 6. Create incentives for other private projects to occur. | No |
| 7. Show that a project is the most reasonable available option to achieve the objective. | Yes |
| 8. Demonstrate strong community support. | Yes, see below |
| 9. Serve to equitably distribute CPA funds throughout the City. | See below |

Additional comments on selected goals:

Goal #3: Projects received during the November funding round included a high CPA cost of \$375,000 and a low CPA cost of \$20,000. The CPA cost for this project is \$20,000 (for Phase I). The relative benefit for this project is creating a detailed scope of work that is based on a needs assessment and is appropriate to guide the restoration of this historic building.

Goal #8: Community support for this project is detailed and documented through letters that are included in the application. At the November 24 Public Hearing held by the CPC, State Representative Ruth Balser supported this project and submitted a letter of support. Deb Crossley, League of Women Voters, stated that the project seems to meet the historic preservation goals of the Act, but that the scope of work should be more detailed.

Goal #9: The November round of applications includes funding requests for projects in Nonantum, Newton Corner, West Newton, Newton Center, Chestnut Hill, and Newton Highlands; this project is located in Newton Highlands.

Historic Preservation Goals

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| 1. Support the preservation and restoration of privately-owned properties that are on the National or State Historic Registers, or that have been landmarked or found to be “preferably preserved” by the Newton Historical Commission. | No |
| 2. Support the preservation and/or restoration of municipally-owned resources that are on the National or State Historic Registers, or that have been landmarked or found to be “preferably preserved” by the Newton Historical Commission. | Yes |
| 3. Encourage protection of resources that retain their historic integrity, in terms of location, context, design, style, workmanship, and materials. | Yes |
| 4. Enable access to the resource by the public. | See below |
| 5. Support the objectives and priorities of local historic preservation organizations, such as the Newton Historical Society, the Jackson Homestead, local historic districts, and other such organizations within the City of Newton. | Not known |

Additional comments on selected goals:

Goal #4: After the building was made available to the Brigham Community House organization in 1998, the organization undertook a restoration project that included improvements to handicap access. The building is currently accessible and open to the public.

CPC RECOMMENDATION

The proposal is consistent with the CPA criteria and many of the Plan's goals, as described above. Therefore, the Community Preservation Committee voted unanimously to recommend funding this application to hire an architect to conduct a restoration/preservation needs assessment, leading to the preparation of construction documents and supervision of the work for the restoration of the Brigham House at 20 Hartford Street by appropriating and transferring the requested \$20,000 to be expended under the direction and control of the Public Buildings Commissioner for purposes of funding a grant for Phase I of the Brigham House Restoration as detailed in the application (submitted 1 November 2003) and subsequent revision (letter from Nick Parnell, Public Buildings Commissioner, dated 22 December 2003), subject to the following conditions:

1. Prior to release of CPA funding, a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) shall be executed by the Historic Commission, Public Building Commissioner, and the Mayor which shall require that any major alterations of the exterior or site shall be reviewed and approved by the Newton Historic Commission. This MOU should be modeled after the Newton Corner Library MOU as an interim process to project the historic and architectural integrity of the building until a more permanent measure of protection is in place.
2. Prior to applying for CPA funding for Phase II of this restoration project, a more permanent measure of protection of the historic and architectural integrity of the building shall be in place (e.g., a Preservation Ordinance for City-owned properties that requires all major alterations be approved by the Newton Historical Commission or a modification of the Landmark Ordinance to include historic City-owned buildings).
3. Prior to applying for CPA funding for Phase II of this restoration project, the Public Buildings Preservation Task Force shall approve the scope of work for the restoration of the Brigham House.
4. Work shall commence no later than 31 December 2004 and shall be completed no later than 31 December 2005 or such other date(s) as may be approved in writing by the Director of Planning and Development. In the event of failure to meet the project start or completion dates as stated herein or as approved by the Director of Planning and Development, any remaining funds in the project account shall be returned to the Newton Community Preservation Fund.
5. Any portion of the grant not used for the purposes stated herein shall be returned to the Newton Community Preservation Fund.