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Community Preservation Committee

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MEMORANDUM

TO: Honorable Board of Aldermen
FROM: Community Preservation Committee
DATE: May 19, 2006
RE: **CPC Recommendation for CPA Funding**

PROJECT TITLE: Brigham Community House Restoration
CPA PROJECT ID: CPA-FY06-1
CPA CATEGORY: Historic Preservation
RECOMMENDED CPA FUNDING: \$519,700

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

The applicants, Brigham Community House and the Public Buildings Department, request \$519,000 of CPA funds, plus \$700 for the Law Department, to undertake a comprehensive restoration of the Brigham House based on the scope of work identified through the CPA-funded preservation needs assessment and design study completed by architect Russel Feldman. The building was originally designed as a private single-family residence in 1886, has many architectural elements intact that define it as a Queen Anne style building, is historically significant through its association with the Brigham Family (of Brigham's Ice Cream), and is an integral element in the Newton Highlands National Register Historic District. In 1998, the non-profit Brigham Community House Inc. (BCH) was awarded the current long-term lease (of 21 years, which terminates in 2023) for a rent of \$1.00 per year to operate a teen center in the City-owned property. After the award of the lease, BCH privately funded a \$100,000 phase one restoration of the building, which included construction of the handicap ramp at the front entrance, restoration of the original first and second floor windows, and exterior painting. However, significant work remains to protect the structural and historical integrity of the building as well as its utility as a community center. The current CPA application for funding seeks to address these long-term needs.

Over the past year and a half, representatives of the BCH worked with Nicholas Parnell, Public Buildings Commissioner, Michael Duff, Rehabilitation Program Manager, and Russel Feldman to create the scope of work for this restoration project. The funding request would help shore up the structural integrity of the BCH with historically appropriate materials. Initially, in fall 2005, the applicants asked the CPC to approve a smaller amount of restoration of the facility. The CPC reviewed the proposal and thought some of the interior work was not CPA eligible since it related to programmatic changes. Following the advice of Michael Duff, additional work was requested on the building's envelope and systems. The CPC held the funding application until the Public Buildings Preservation/Reuse Ordinance was enacted to protect the CPA investment in the property. The BCH project work is broken down as follows:

Exterior

- Site work, demolition
- Foundation wall repair, repointing, cut and frame new bulkhead to basement
- Floors, stairway repair, railings
- Roof construction
- Walls, soffits, replacement siding, painting

- Windows, framing, repair, replacements
- New doors, frames, and bulkhead door

Interior

- Partitions, interior doors
- Wall, floor, ceiling finishes
- Accessible bathroom construction, plumbing work
- Furnace replacement, chimney work
- Electrical work, lighting

The CPC wishes to allocate \$250,700 of the project cost from FY06 CPA reserve funds and fund the balance, \$269,000, from FY07 funds pending the Board’s approval in July 2006.

FINDINGS

Community Preservation Act (MGL c.44B)

Historic Preservation

MGL c.44B §2 defines an historic resource as “a building...that is listed or eligible for listing on the state register of historic places . . .” The Brigham Community House is listed as a contributing element to the Newton Highlands National Register Historic District, and is, therefore, an historic resource as defined by the Act since any property listed on the National Register is also listed on the State Register.

The project complies with MGL c.44B §5(b)(2), which allows CPA funds to be used **preservation, rehabilitation, and restoration** of historic resources. Within the definition of rehabilitation, §2 of the Act allows improvements to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act and other access codes. §2 also permits the “remodeling, reconstruction, and making of extraordinary repairs to historic resources... for the purpose of making such historic resources functional for their intended use.”

Newton Community Preservation Plan

Overarching Goals

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.	See below
5. Preserve a resource or opportunity that would otherwise be lost.	Yes, see below
6. Show that a project is the most reasonable available option to achieve the objective.	Yes, see below
7. Demonstrate strong community support.	Yes, see below
8. Serve to equitably distribute CPA funds throughout the City.	Yes, see below

Additional comments on selected goals:

Goal 3: The following table illustrates the comparative costs of historic preservation projects, excluding studies. The BCH request would make it the most expensive historic preservation project, but the cost would still be substantially less than what has been spent for projects in other categories.

<i>Project Name</i>	<i>Fiscal Year</i>	<i>Total CPA Funds (for preservation only)</i>
Brigham Community House	06	\$519,700
Historic Burying Ground Restoration – Phase I/II	03/05	\$445,672
Newton Corner Library	03	\$236,129
YMCA	05	\$160,273

City Hall – Balustrade	03	\$150,660
Washington Park Lighting	05	\$131,035
City Hall – Lighting	03	\$121,200
City Hall – Windows	03	\$119,400
Linden Green	05/06	\$106,890
Angino Farm	04/06	\$110,000
Millhouse Commons	05	\$41,653
Historic District Signs	04	\$2,000

Goal 4: There are no other funds available to contribute towards this phase of the BCH restoration. During the first phase of the BCH restoration, \$100,000 of private funds were raised. The Brigham Community House Inc. receives regular contributions from the local business community, churches, and other organizations. It is expected the BCH will continue to fundraise to support some of the building’s on-going maintenance.

Goal 5: The BCH is an historic home and serves as Newton’s only teen center, hosting approximately 8,000 people each year. Other community activities are held at the BCH, including substance abuse meetings, domestic violence support groups, sewing programs, and a chess camp. The proposed restoration would help ensure that the structure remains sound, is restored to its original historic integrity, and is able to be utilized by the community.

Goal 6: A significant amount of restoration work must be done to protect the Brigham House. The scope of work outlined in this CPA application consists of necessary work to restore the structure in an historically appropriate manner.

Goal 7: At the public hearing for the proposal, several residents spoke in favor of the CPA application. No one spoke in opposition to the project. Letters of support have been received from the Mayor, several Aldermen, the Waban Improvement Society, the Newton South High School Guidance Department, the Newton Highlands Neighborhood Area Council, and the Newton Highlands CDC among others.

Goal 8: The FY06 applications include funding requests for projects in Nonantum, West Newton, Newtonville, Newton Centre, Chestnut Hill, Newton Highlands, Auburndale, Newton Upper Falls as well as citywide projects. The BCH is located in Newton Highlands, where it would be the first non-study CPA project funded in that neighborhood.

Historic Preservation Goals

1. Support the preservation and/or restoration of municipally owned resources that are on the National or State Historic Registers, or that have been landmarked, found to be “preferably preserved” or historically significant by the Newton Historical Commission.	Yes
2. Support the preservation and restoration of privately owned properties that are on the National or State Historic Registers, or that have been landmarked, found to be “preferably preserved” or historically significant by the Newton Historical Commission.	N/A
3. Encourage protection of resources that retain their historical integrity, in terms of location, context, design, style, workmanship, and materials.	Yes, see below
4. Enable access to the resource by the public, including access by disabled residents.	Yes, see below
5. Support the objectives and priorities of local historic preservation organizations, such as the Newton Historical Society, the Newton History Museum, local historic districts, and other such organizations within the City of Newton.	Yes, see below
6. Where appropriate, address the issues and goals raised in the forthcoming Citywide Preservation Plan.	N/A

Additional comments on selected goals:

Goal 3: The restoration project would help to protect this historic resource to retain its historic integrity despite its conversion from a single-family house to a library and, more recently, to a teen center. The scope of work

calls for using historically appropriate materials, including cedar clapboard siding, columns, and decorative shingles.

Goal 4: The facility is a widely used community resource for meetings and a day-to-day teen center. The project would also enable greater access by disabled residents by reconfiguring the facility's bathroom to make it ADA compliant.

Goal 5: The Brigham Community House is listed as a contributing element to the Newton Highlands National Register Historic District, and is, therefore, an historic resource as defined by the Act since any property listed on the National Register is also listed on the State Register. In addition, the Brigham Community House is listed by the Public Buildings Preservation Task Force as a property that is "significant" to the City.

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 the Brigham Community House Restoration by appropriating and transferring the requested \$250,700 in FY06 and \$269,000 in FY07 under the direction and control of the Public Buildings Commissioner for purposes of this project as detailed in the application dated September 13, 2005 and revised on April 18, 2006, subject to the following conditions:

1. Work shall commence no later than December 31, 2006 and shall be completed no later than December 31, 2007 or such other date(s) as may be approved in writing by the Planning Director. 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.
2. Promptly after substantial completion of the project, the applicant shall submit to the Community Preservation Committee a final project development cost statement. Any portion of the grant not used for the purposes stated herein shall be returned to the Newton Community Preservation Fund.