

October 31, 2013

Mr. Joel Fineberg, Chairperson
Community Preservation Committee
City of Newton

Re: Restoration of Newton's Historic Burying Grounds

Dear Mr. Fineberg,

I am writing to request that the Community Preservation Program support the project entitled "Restoration of Newton's Historic Burying Grounds" located at the East Parish Burying Ground at the corner of Centre and Cotton Streets in Newton Centre.

The old burying grounds are literally repositories of Newton history, provide serene open space within the bustling environment of the Centre Street corridor. The gravestone inscriptions provide unique personal insights into the past.

The city is fortunate that historic resources such as those found at the burying grounds have not been lost over time. The mounded tomb structures and the table top monuments at the East Parish site are particularly remarkable and in need of preservation. The gravestones themselves should be repaired. The refurbishing of the historic landscape, removal of scrub vegetation and arborist's attention to the major trees will enhance the beauty of the open space itself and encourage greater public appreciation and enjoyment of the site.

The proposed project will bring the East Burying Grounds back to life in the same way as a previous project at the South Burying Grounds has done. The project also meets needs previously identified in the "2013-2019 Recreation and Open Space Plan Update", the city's current Capital Improvement Plan and continues the long range program initiated in 2003 by Historic Newton and Newton Parks and Recreation Department to stabilize all three of the city's old burying grounds.

Sincerely,



Donald Lang AIA
President, DLA Architecture
and Chair, Newton Historical Commission

November 11, 2013
Electronic Transmission Only

Community Preservation Committee
c/o Alice E. Ingerson, Ph.D.
Community Preservation Program Manager
City Hall
1000 Commonwealth Avenue
Newton, MA 02458
aingerson@newtonma.gov

To the Members of the Community Preservation Committee:

I am writing in support of Historic Newton's application for a Phase Three of the Burying Grounds project.

Given your previous and very substantial support for this work I will not make a case for the importance of this for our city's cultural, historical and open-space character. You obviously already understand that. However, I recognize that there are many possible and meritorious uses for Newton's CPC funds and, for this reason, I'm pleased to submit this letter for your consideration.

I was president of the Newton Historical Society when we formalized the relationship between our membership organization and the City's Parks and Recreation Department for stewardship of the three historic Burying Grounds. Since that time, I have continued to serve as a Trustee and as a member of Historic Newton's executive committee. I have observed all of the work proposed and implemented by our organization on the Burying Grounds project. I believe it has brought about critical stabilization and preservation of some of our City's most important historic artifacts, vastly improved the appearance and safety of our public open space, and set the stage for a greater understanding and appreciation by our residents of the art, culture and history embodied in these landscapes.

This isn't easy work; nor is it inexpensive. I recognize that any committee or agency concerned with disposition of public resources must pay careful attention to how those moneys are spent. Historic Newton and the members of its Burying Grounds Committee have done an excellent job working with the City departments and the public procurement process to assure that the work is done correctly and cost-effectively, by some of the most skilled contractors in the country.

I believe this effort represents to be one of the most meaningful – and successful – uses of Community Preservation funds undertaken in our City. Please continue to support this

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combination of historic preservation and public open space management as we continue this important work.

Thank you for your consideration. Please don't hesitate to contact me if I can be of any further assistance.

Sincerely,



Russel Feldman
85 Langley Road
Newton, MA 02459
671 964-3915

c: Cindy Stone, Executive Director Historic Newton

101 River Street
West Newton, Massachusetts 02465

November 11, 2013

Alice E. Ingerson, Ph.D.
Community Preservation Program Manager
City of Newton Planning & Development Department
10000 Commonwealth Avenue
Newton, Massachusetts 02459

Dear Ms. Ingerson:

I am writing in support of the funding request for the Restoration of Newton's Historic Burying Grounds. My house is adjacent to the West Parish Burying Grounds (WPBG) in West Newton. My husband, Kevin Galli, and I have enthusiastically participated in each Newton Serves spring cleanup at WPBG ever since we moved to Newton, nearly eight years ago. We have also volunteered for the East Parish Burying Grounds (EPBG) fall cleanup activities and I am a member of the Historic Newton Burying Grounds Committee.

The reason why I care about the Burying Grounds is both obvious and not easily put into words. As an architect, I understand the importance of preserving open space within a city. My first studio class at the Harvard Graduate School of Design required me to analyze The Old Burial Ground in Harvard Square, to internalize the ability of a formal cemetery to anchor an urban street corner. There is an intangible tranquility offered by this type of space. Now, in Newton, I notice that every kid who comes to my house to trick-or-treat, who manually turns our old 1905 doorbell and glances over at the WPBG from our porch, cannot help but exclaim, "Oooh! Old cemetery! Yay!"

I am hopeful that in the future, Newton's three burying grounds will promote even more than just these types of children's visceral reactions. "Interpretation of these properties" is listed under the project's "Community Needs" heading and I look forward to the day that Newton residents will be able to stroll through the burying grounds, learn about the landscape and discover the history of families buried here.

Before this dream can be realized, however, the properties need to be made safe for visitors. Just last weekend at the EPBG cleanup, I had to carefully navigate the ground around a tarp-covered tomb that still needs to be repaired. Every morning I have to look at the dying maple tree in WPBG and wonder if it is going to fall on the 18th century head stones or my early 20th century house! The three burying grounds are desperately in need of tree maintenance (pruning, removal) and structure stabilization (stones, tombs, perimeter walls). For the large hospital and university projects that my architecture office designs, we call this the "enabling phase" of a development. The preliminary work must be done in order to move forward to reach the true goals.

Best regards,



Jane B.Y. Galli, AIA, LEED AP

Constance G. Kantar
382 Kenrick Street
Newton, MA 02458
Tel: 617-332-7495

November 12 2013

Newton Community Preservation Committee
City of Newton
1000 Commonwealth Avenue
Newton, MA 02459

To Whom it May Concern:


I am writing in support of Historic Newton's request for funds for continued restoration of Newton's Historic Burying Grounds, specifically those at the East Parish Burying Ground: Corner of Centre and Cotton Streets, Newton, MA 02459.

As a long-time resident of the City of Newton, and one who has always appreciated the historic and horticultural significance of our City, 'the Garden City,' I believe there is an important benefit to our community in keeping structurally sound and in good repair the tombs and gravestones of our departed founders, early settlers, and citizens. At the East Parish Burying Ground, members of the Kenrick and Jackson families are interred. They, among others, are still present in our lives, vibrant in our children's education, and have meaningful significance in the historic and cultural fabric of our City and the Greater Boston area. Their tombs and gravemarkers are visual reminders of these citizens' roles in the development of our City. The trees that provide shade and ornament for these resting places are a reminder, too, that our City was the center of the first major tree, fruit tree, and plant nursery in our country, its more than 100 acres producing not only the many handsome trees that still grace our city streets, but also fruit that we still enjoy. The Kenrick Nursery sent many a tree to other parts of New England, and indeed, even to the central parts of our country. Mr. John Kenrick, the founder of the Nursery, was one of the founders of the Massachusetts Horticultural Society.

Preserving the actual burial monuments and tombs, as well as caring for the health of the trees and burial grounds is critical to the historic preservation of this resource for the present and the future understanding and appreciation of our citizens.

I hope that the Community Preservation Committee will continue its important support.

Sincerely,



Constance G. Kantar
382 Kenrick Street
Newton, MA 02458



Joel Feinberg
Chair
Community Preservation Committee
Planning Department
Newton City Hall
1000 Commonwealth Avenue
Newton, Massachusetts 02459

Dear Mr. Feinberg,

I am delighted to write in support of Historic Newton's application for funding to continue the restoration of East Burying Ground and other Historic Burying Grounds. As a member of the Historic Burying Ground Committee, I participated in the cleanup of East Parish last Saturday, and I can verify personally that there is some work that remains to be done that is beyond the capacity of volunteers. The Hovey grave facing Centre Street is in particularly bad shape with two folded tarpaulins protecting it. I spend most of my time at the Burying Ground cutting the smaller branches off a major fallen branch. Despite the best efforts of me and another volunteer, the bulk of the fallen branch remained in place. There were two large trees behind it that are leaning badly and need to be removed. Both of these tasks will need professional equipment and staff. There's a tree near the fence at the end of the South Burying Ground that has half fallen and looms over an historic gravestone.

The restoration of the Historic Burying Grounds has been one of the greatest triumphs of the Community Preservation Act in Newton. I urge you to continue this success with funding for the proposed project.

Sincerely,

Brian Yates
Alderman-At-Large