



City of Newton, Massachusetts Community Preservation Committee



David B. Cohen
Mayor

MEMORANDUM

DATE: 19 May 2008
TO: The Honorable Board of Aldermen
FROM: Community Preservation Committee

**RE: recommended funding for
Farlow Park Preservation and Restoration, Phase 1:
Pond Restoration Feasibility & Design**

sections in this recommendation

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|--------------------------------|--|
| 1. Project Goals & Eligibility | 4. List of Attachments |
| 2. Funding Recommendation | 5. <i>Appendix</i> : Detailed Findings on Funding Eligibility & Priorities |
| 3. Other Recommendations | |

1. PROJECT GOALS & ELIGIBILITY

This project will determine the feasibility of restoring the historic 1880s pond in Farlow Park by exploring for on-site water or providing cost estimates for an alternative water source; and by providing design specifications and cost estimates for both restoring the pre-existing pond basin and installing a new pumping system that could supply both a pond and the irrigation system for the Underwood School Playground. The project is eligible for community preservation funding because it will preserve, restore, and rehabilitate the pond and park as historic resources.

(For further discussion, see appendix.)

2. FUNDING RECOMMENDATION

On 30 April 2008 the Community Preservation Committee recommended funding this proposal by a vote of **6 in favor, 1 abstainng**. The abstaining member (Judy Jacobson) felt that the project as a whole, including future phases, was simply not a high priority for its cost. The CPC as a whole explicitly noted that a funding recommendation for this phase did not imply any commitment to funding further phases of this project.

The CPC recommends that \$40,000 be appropriated from the historic resources and general reserves of the Community Preservation Fund for the following purposes –

Farlow/Chaffin Phase 1

Item Description	estimated costs
1. Well investigation/Groundwater testing	\$13,000
2. Testing of original outflow system to Eldredge Street sewer	\$5,000
3. Inspection and redesign of pond basin	\$5,000
4. Design of pumping and irrigation system, including study of safety issues and long-term operations & maintenance plan for the pond, with dedicated funding sources	\$16,250
5. Law Dept. costs	\$750
Total Phase 1	\$40,000

– and that this appropriation be allocated as follows among the allowable uses of community preservation funds:

historic resources 100%

3. OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS

The Community Preservation Committee further recommends that:

1. Project funds be appropriated under the direction and control of the Newton Parks and Recreation Department.
2. For project planning, oversight and reporting, the Friends of Farlow Park serve as the Parks and Recreation Department's primary community partner.
3. The project be completed by 1 September 2009, or 1 year from the date that funds are released, whichever is sooner, unless an extension is granted in writing by the Director of Planning and Development.
4. The Parks and Recreation Department's project manager provide regular quarterly status reports to, and respond promptly to any other requests for updates from, Community Preservation Program staff.
5. Contracts be executed and funds released for project work only when all applicable standards for public procurement, permitting, liability, and safety have been met.
6. As required by the Community Preservation Act, all design work for the rehabilitation of the historic pond comply with the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Cultural Landscapes* (www.nps.gov/history/HPS/hli/landscape_guidelines/index.htm).
7. Before funds are released for purposes listed in budget lines 3-5 above, the Parks and Recreation Department and Friends of Farlow Park provide the CPC with the following written reports:
 - ◆ a report on the results of the water exploration study (budget lines 1-2),
 - ◆ and *if a usable water source is not found on site*, a plan for using remaining project funds to produce designs and cost estimates for an alternative water source to supply the restored pond and existing irrigation system
8. The plans produced by budget lines 3-5 above include, along with the design for restored pond and new pumping system,
 - ◆ an analysis of available options and recommended approach for addressing any safety and liability issues raised by the pond's location near playgrounds used by small children
 - ◆ a long-term operations and maintenance plan for the restored pond, including cost estimates and sources of funding, which can be used as the basis for a legally binding Memorandum of Understanding with the City and any neighborhood or nonprofit organizations whose time or resources are critical for successful maintenance of the pond.
9. Any portion of the Community Preservation Fund grant not used for the purposes stated herein be returned to the Newton Community Preservation Fund.

4. ATTACHMENTS

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

- ◆ Proposal
- ◆ Letters of support
- ◆ Excerpts from *Farlow-Chaffin Park Historic Planning and Design Landscape Restoration Report* (Brown, Richardson & Rowe, Inc., June 2006): table of contents, park history (pp. 1-3), restoration plan (p. 22)
- ◆ Summary of the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards & Guidelines for Rehabilitating Cultural Landscapes*

Appendix

DETAILED FINDINGS on FUNDING ELIGIBILITY & PRIORITIES

COMMUNITY PRESERVATION ACT (MGL C.44B)

Fundable resources: The CPA's definition of "**historic resources**" includes any "real property ... that is listed or eligible for listing on the state register of historic places or has been determined by the local historic preservation commission to be significant in the history, archeology, architecture or culture of a city or town." As all funding proposals for Farlow and Chaffin Parks have noted, both parks were listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1982 as part of the "Farlow and Kenrick Parks National Register Historic District." The Newton Historical Commission has endorsed these proposals and considers both parks historically and architecturally significant. Farlow Park was Newton's first park and was designed by famed landscape architect George Frederick Meacham.

Fundable activities: The CPA's definition of "**rehabilitation**" includes the "remodeling, reconstruction and making of extraordinary repairs ... for the purpose of making [fundable resources] functional for their intended use." Historic resources are the only resources under the Act for which rehabilitation is fundable regardless of whether community preservation funds were used to acquire or create the resource originally.

The Act also specifically requires rehabilitation of historic resources to "comply with the Standards for Rehabilitation ... in the United States **Secretary of the Interior's Standards** for the Treatment of Historic Properties, which since 1995, have included specific provisions for historic landscapes (www.nps.gov/history/HPS/hli/landscape_guidelines/rehab/approach.htm). The work described in this proposal was described in the June 2006 *Historic Planning and Design Landscape Restoration Report* by Brown, Richardson, & Rowe, which explicitly followed the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and was supported by Newton community preservation funds.

NEWTON PLANS & PRIORITIES

FY08 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.
4. Leverage other public and/or private funds.
5. Preserve a resource or opportunity that would otherwise be lost.
6. Show that a project is the most reasonable available option to achieve the objective.
7. Demonstrate strong community support.

Historic Resources 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.
3. Encourage protection of resources that retain their historic integrity, in terms of location, context, design, style, workmanship, and materials.
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.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN, Ch. 9, "Planning For and With History"

Farlow and Chaffin Parks have long been listed both locally and nationally as significant historic resources, but as noted in this *Plan* and illustrated by the past several decades in the life of these two historic parks, "contrary to common assumption ... inclusion in historic resource surveys or listing on the State and National Registers of Historic Places" does not in itself guarantee preservation.

More broadly, this plan recommends using historic resources to build both a "sense of place" and a "sense of community" in Newton, by "recognizing and sustaining both the connections and the contrasts

among different parts of the City.” Newton Corner has long been one of Newton’s most densely settled and economically diverse neighborhoods. Yet as Farlow Park demonstrates, it has also been the site of some of the City’s most ambitious public-private partnerships, and of beautiful public spaces that have attracted and served people from all walks of life. A restored Farlow Park will make an important contribution to preserving and restoring Newton Corner’s historic sense of place and sense of community.

DISCUSSION

Leverage: The proposal for this project outlines the following impressive history of additional public funding and private fundraising for Farlow and Chaffin Parks:

<i>as of December 2007</i>				
Community Fundraising & Other Non-CP Funding for Underwood Playground, Chaffin Park Tot Lot, and Farlow Park				
Date	PARK LANDSCAPES	PLAYGROUNDS & TOT LOT	Source	Use
1993		\$50,000	PTO	Underwood playground
2006		\$6,000	PTO	Underwood playground swings
2006	\$5,000		community	Farlow Park restoration design
2007		\$71,000	community	Chaffin Park tot lot
2007		\$13,000	CDBG	Chaffin Park tot lot
2008?	\$30,000		CDBG	Chaffin Park - committed to overall repairs & improvements
	\$35,000	\$140,000	Subtotals	

Efficient use of funds and site integrity: When the historic pond was drained, its basin was merely grassed over. Preliminary exploration suggests the basin has so far remained relatively intact, allowing the pond to be restored at a lower cost, and with greater historical accuracy, than may be the case in the future.

Community & institutional support: This proposal is supported by numerous neighborhood residents, schools and daycare providers, and elected officials, as well as by the Newton Historical Commission and Newton Historical Society.

Sense of place and sense of community: The many historic postcards and photographs included in the funding proposals for Farlow and Chaffin Parks demonstrate that the pond was an original focal point for both passive enjoyment and active recreation. Restoring the pond is therefore a logical starting point for restoring and rehabilitating these historic parks.

Along with Underwood Elementary School and the Newton Corner Branch Library, Farlow and Chaffin Parks are the cornerstone public spaces in Newton Corner. A restored pond would reinforce the image of Newton Corner in the minds of many of its residents - as a thriving, diverse neighborhood with a strong sense of its own history - by building on the restoration of the branch Library, the return of the gazebo, and recent improvements to the school and playground. Finally, a restored, revitalized historic Farlow Park would encourage visitors and residents from other Newton neighborhoods to recognize that Newton Corner’s contributions to the historic character of Newton go far beyond serving as the location for Exit 17 of the Massachusetts Turnpike.