



City of Newton, Massachusetts Community Preservation Committee

DOCKET
ITEM NO.

41-10

Setti D. Warren
Mayor

FUNDING RECOMMENDATION

DATE: 2 February 2010

TO: The Honorable Board of Aldermen

FROM: Community Preservation Committee

RE: **recommended Community Preservation funding for
ANGINO FARM BARN - Interior Rehabilitation**

PROJECT GOALS & ELIGIBILITY

This project will adapt the historic 19th-century barn at the City-owned Angino Farm for public programs and other activities required for the operation of this site as a community-supported agriculture farm, under a license granted by the Newton Farm Commission to Newton Community Farm, Inc.

In addition to adding water and sewer connections and heating, the project will: install a new "window wall" in the main barn door opening; restore the historic timber main floor and preserve the visibility of the historic timber framing in the north, west, and south walls; create a partial second floor/loft, accessible by stairs and lift, with a kitchen and accessible bathrooms below and office/library space above; adapt the roof of the north shed to serve as the floor of a new, 3-season screened addition; on the lower/field level, restore the historic windowed doors and add a produce washing station; finally, provide a new, accessible entrance (by regrading the driveway) and exit (through the new screened addition).

(For further discussion, see appendix.)

FUNDING RECOMMENDATION

On 20 January 2010 the Community Preservation Committee voted unanimously (9-0) to recommend the appropriation of **\$569,000**, including \$1,000 for City of Newton legal costs, from the fiscal 2010 historic resources, open space, and general reserves of the Community Preservation Fund under the direction and control of the Public Buildings Department.

Based on project budget and the original allocation of acquisition costs for the Farm, the CPC recommends that this appropriation be allocated as: 15% for historic resources (items capitalized on budget below), 75% for recreation, and 10% for open space.

| Building | |
|--|-------------------|
| 3-season classroom addition (rebuild shed roof as new floor) | \$ 64,000 |
| Floors: RESTORE HISTORIC MAIN FLOOR, build new floor on upper level | \$ 37,000 |
| Stairs & lift to new upper level | \$ 42,000 |
| Plumbing, electrical, heat (all levels) | \$ 87,000 |
| Kitchen and two accessible bathrooms | \$ 63,000 |
| New partitions and finishes, LEAVING HISTORIC EXT. WALLS VISIBLE; new window wall in main door opening | \$ 46,000 |
| Lower level: RESTORE HISTORIC DOORS, PRESERVE/STRENGTHEN COLUMNS & SOUTH SILL | \$ 32,000 |
| Site | |
| Water, sewer, gas connections | \$ 35,000 |
| Sign, driveway regrading and other improvements/landscaping for accessibility | \$ 66,000 |
| Total construction contract * | \$ 472,000 |
| Soft Costs | |
| Design fee (final specifications & construction documents) | \$ 66,000 |
| City project management | \$ 30,000 |
| City legal costs | \$ 1,000 |
| TOTAL CP FUNDS | \$ 569,000 |

* Assumes City procurement. All lines include general conditions, contractor OH&P, and 15% contingency.

OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS

The Community Preservation Committee further recommends that:

1. Funds be appropriated to the spending authority of the Public Buildings Department, which should designate as City project manager either a qualified firm on its list of on-call professionals and/or the Community Preservation Engineer in the Department of Public Works.

The cost of this project manager may be charged to project funds but shall not exceed \$30,000 (listed in the approved budget as "City project management"), and Public Buildings should use its best efforts to keep this cost below that maximum.

2. The City project manager work with Public Buildings, the City of Newton Law Department, and the Newton Farm Commission to
 - ◆ submit the project's concept plans for review by the Design Review Committee and the Mayor's Committee for People with Disabilities, and take the comments of these committees into account when commissioning final design specifications and construction documents
 - ◆ commission final design specifications and construction documents *either* from a qualified firm on the City's existing list of on-call architects, *or* from a firm selected through public bidding (in which case, the Designer Selection Committee must review the submitted bids).
 - ◆ bid and award the construction contract(s) through the City of Newton Purchasing Department
 - ◆ serve as the "owner's representative" at project meetings, make regular site visits, approve appropriate change orders and payment of invoices from project accounts
 - ◆ respond to all requests from the Community Preservation Committee or committees of the Board of Aldermen for progress reports and accounting of funds spent
 - ◆ within 1 month of completing all work on the project, submit to the CPC a report of how all funds were spent, comparing actual expenditures with those in the final design that served as the basis for construction bidding
3. The first task listed in recommendation **2** above occur within 2 months, and all project work be completed within 18 months, of the Board order appropriating the recommended funds, or by any extension of that deadline granted in writing by the Community Preservation Committee.
4. Any portion of the Community Preservation Fund grant not used for the purposes stated herein be returned to the Newton Community Preservation Fund.
5. The project sponsors work closely with the Community Preservation Committee and its staff to publicize the project, both before and after all funds have been spent.

ATTACHMENTS

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

- ◆ Proposal, including budget and concept plans
- ◆ Letters of support
- ◆ Supplemental information requested by the CPC
- ◆ Confidential Law Dept. memo on funding eligibility (in print only)

See also detailed findings on funding eligibility & priorities on following pages. →

Appendix:

DETAILED FINDINGS on FUNDING ELIGIBILITY & PRIORITIES

Community Preservation Act (MGL c.44B)

In its confidential memo to the Community Preservation Committee, the City of Newton Law Department noted that the original CPA funds used to acquire Angino Farm were allocated overwhelmingly to recreation land, with the remaining approximately 20 percent of the funding split between historic resources and open space. The Law Dept. concluded that the current proposal is eligible for funding on approximately the same basis: primarily for recreation, and secondarily as historic resources or open space. Since Angino Farm was acquired with CPA funds in the first place, the proposed project does not have to qualify primarily in the category of historic resources to make the barn's rehabilitation eligible for funding.

The Act defines rehabilitation as "making a resource functional for its intended use." The Farm was acquired with CPA funds to preserve its active use through community gardening and farming. All farms require indoor space for storage of equipment and produce, for other farm work, and for training. A community-supported farm involves – and needs to accommodate – a significantly larger number of people in such indoor activities than do most private farms. At this particular site, however, Jerry Angino had deeply involved the public, especially school children, in farmwork for decades before the site was acquired by the City. The community strongly supported using CPA funds to preserve this Farm partly to continue that tradition.

This Law Dept. memo is being forwarded to the Board of Aldermen along with this recommendation (on paper only, as a confidential document).

Newton Plans & Priorities

COMMUNITY PRESERVATION PLAN

The proposed project meets the following published priorities and goals of the CPC:

Fiscal 2010-12 Priorities

- ◆ combine two or more fundable resources:
- ◆ integrate planning for CP funds with other citywide plans
- ◆ give priority to projects that leverage CP funds
- ◆ make proposal review more efficient by using pre-proposals
- ◆ apply the Secretary of the Interior's *Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties*

Long-Term Goals

- ◆ contribute to the preservation of Newton's unique character, boost the vitality of the community, and enhance the quality of life for residents
- ◆ demonstrate strong community support
- ◆ distribute CPA funds throughout the City
- ◆ provide multiple recreation opportunities in a given location
- ◆ enhance public access, including access for people with disabilities.
- ◆ consider both current and future needs
- ◆ preserve sight lines

DISCUSSION

As did the original acquisition of Angino Farm, this proposal combines active and passive recreation, the preservation of open space and sight lines, and the preservation of historic resources. The preservation of the Farm as an actively working landscape has been identified as a priority in Newton's *Comprehensive Plan*, *Open Space & Recreation Plan*, and *Heritage Landscape Report*.

The Farm was acquired with CPA funds but has been brought back to life and maintained with almost no City funds. All operating costs, including staff salaries and program equipment and materials, are funded privately. The stabilization and restoration of the barn's exterior and basic structure was both urgent, given its deteriorating condition when the City acquired it, and a prerequisite for any work on

its interior. That exterior work was completed entirely with private funds. In short, Angino Farm has set a “gold standard” for both funding leverage and resource stewardship.

The Newton Farm Commission and its nonprofit licensee, Newton Community Farm, Inc., invested significant effort in developing a pre-proposal. That work paid off in a final proposal that the CPC found clear and persuasive, which in turn minimized the need for supplemental information requests and questioning before the Committee voted unanimously to support the project.

This is one of the first proposals to meet the CPC’s new requirements for historic resources based on the Secretary of the Interior’s *Standards*. It clearly relates the proposed work to the preservation of the site’s most historically significant features, particularly to its active use as a working landscape and its simple buildings, which were constructed partly with material recycled from older buildings and designed for function rather than display.

From one perspective, the original purchase of the farm contributed to a geographic imbalance of CPA funds: most open space acquired with these funds has been on Newton’s south side. However, this pattern is itself historically significant. The concentration of public transportation in other parts of the City led to rapidly rising land values, which displaced farms and farmers by the late 19th century. Angino Farm survived as the last working farm in Newton in part precisely because of its location on the city's south side.

Many people in Newton originally questioned whether community-supported agriculture could be viable on such a tiny site in a densely-developed city. Angino Farm has won over nearly all of these skeptics, attracting financial support and active participation from residents of all ages and walks of life, including those with mobility challenges. Many people travel regularly to the farm from the opposite corners of the City.

Finally, as the Farm Commission and Newton Community Farm, Inc., originally envisioned, the Farm has become a catalyst for better stewardship of public and private landscapes throughout the city. Farm programs are helping residents understand and manage their own front and back yards, as well as public open spaces including schoolyards, simultaneously as “edible landscapes” and wildlife habitat.