



City of Newton, Massachusetts Community Preservation Committee



MEMORANDUM

David B. Cohen
Mayor

TO: Honorable Board of Aldermen
FROM: Community Preservation Committee
DATE: 2 March 2005
RE: **CPC Recommendation For CPA Funding**

PROJECT TITLE: Flowed Meadow Improvement Project, Phase 3, Design/Study
CPA PROJECT ID: CPA-FY05-17
CPA CATEGORY: Open Space

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The applicant, the Newton Conservation Commission, is requesting \$30,700 in CPA funds to conduct a design/engineering study for phase 3 of the Flowed Meadow Improvement Project, which will include a boardwalk to connect Lexington Street and Wabasso Street as well as a new entrance gateway on Lexington Street. The Flowed Meadow Improvement Project is a five-phase project that developed from the recommendations of the Flowed Meadow Planning Group with an overall intent to restore wetlands and create passive recreation and nature-related educational opportunities at Flowed Meadow. The CPC already funded portions of Phase 2 of the project and expects to continue recommending support for future phases, as well.

The design/engineering study, proposed here as part of phase 3, includes costs for wetland delineation, a survey, geo-technical engineering to select boring locations and number, a design professional for design of the gateway and boardwalk, neighborhood meetings, final drawings and cost estimates, and permitting with the Conservation Commission and Engineering Department.

FINDINGS

Community Preservation Act (MGL c.44B)

Open Space

Flowed Meadow complies with the definition of **open space** under §2 which includes, but is not limited to “. . . wetlands . . . lands to protect scenic vistas, land for wildlife or nature preserve, and land for recreational use . . .”. The project also complies with §5(b)(2), which allows the CPA to fund the **creation** of land for open space. This project is phase 3 of a larger project to cap an existing landfill and convert the site to open space. This phase of the project would plan for the creation of public accessibility to the open space for passive recreation purposes.

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.	Yes
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
6. Create incentives for other private projects to occur.	Yes, see below
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 October funding round included a high CPA cost of \$1,000,000 and a low CPA cost of \$19,250. The CPA cost for this project is \$30,700. The relative benefit for this project is designing and engineering a new boardwalk to enable passive recreation enjoyment of this open space.

In terms of CPA cost related to all other CPA open space projects, this project ranks 6th out of 6 total. The following table illustrates the comparative costs of open space projects (both funded and under consideration).

CPA Project Costs (open space)

<i>Project Name</i>	<i>Fiscal Year</i>	<i>Total CPA Funds</i>
Kessler Woods	03	\$5,103,500
Angino Farm	05	\$2,435,000
Webster Park/Forte Property*	04	\$726,000
Elgin Street	03	\$245,000
Flowed Meadow, Phase 1 & 2	03	\$74,250
Flowed Meadow, Phase 3, Design	05	\$35,700

* The Webster Park/Forte Property was awarded a total of \$1,100,000, 2/3rds of which was directly towards the open space acquisition. The remaining 1/3rd was supporting the creation of community housing.

Goal 4: Although this portion of the project (the design/engineering portion) does not include matching funds, prior phases of the project have leveraged substantial funds through private donations, city funding, and volunteer labor. Other funding will be sought in addition to CPA funding for the construction phase, as described in the application.

Goal #6: The work already funded through phases 1 and 2 have spawned various Eagle Scout projects, such as creating educational and directional signage, and building bridges across streams. With the expectation of continued funding support for this project, more private volunteer efforts of this sort are planned for future phases of the project.

Goal #8: This project seeks to implement the recommendations of the Flowed Meadow Planning Group, as identified in its final reported issued in August 2000. The Planning Group developed its plan with extensive community input including Aldermen, Conservation Commission, various City Departments, Auburndale Community Association, and many other groups and community members.

Goal 9: The FY05 applications include funding requests for projects in Auburndale, Nonantum, Newton Corner, West Newton, Newtonville, Newton Upper Falls, Newton Center, Newton Highlands, Waban as well as city-wide projects. Flowed Meadow serves as an open space connection between Auburndale and West Newton.

Open Space Goals

1. Provide protection for land listed in the <i>Recreation & Open Space Plan</i> .	Yes
2. Expand existing open space.	Yes
3. Enhance biodiversity or wildlife habitat and reclaim natural resources.	Yes
4. Protect wetlands, mitigate flooding and improve groundwater recharge.	Yes

5. Create small pocket parks.	No
6. Enable the development of passive recreation opportunities.	Yes
7. Serve as suitable sites for nature-related education, scientific study, or observation and enjoyment of nature.	Yes
8. Protect a natural feature of special interest.	No
9. Enhance public access (where access does not seriously threaten habitat).	Yes
10. Provide linkages and wildlife corridors between open spaces.	Yes

Past Performance Rating

Applicants who are prior recipients of CPA funds are rated on past performance. The ratings system contains four categories: 1. starting the project on time; 2. completing the project on time; 3. submitting quarterly reports on time; and 4. remaining within budget constraints. An overall ratio is assigned to each applicant, with 1.0 being the highest. A rating of 1.0 indicates an applicant has met all requirements (four out of four) in a timely fashion for each past project; a rating of 0.8 indicates a compliance rate of 80%, etc. The table below represents a summary rating for all of the applicant's past projects:

Past Performance Rating

<i>Applicant</i>	<i>Prior Projects</i>	<i>Rating</i>	<i>Missed Criteria</i>
Conservation Commission	4	0.8	One project not begun on time; Three projects not completed on time

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 for Flowed Meadow Improvement Project, Phase 3, Design/Study by appropriating and transferring the requested \$30,700 to be expended under the direction and control of the Director of Planning and Development for purposes of this project as detailed in the application (dated 15 October 2004), subject to the following conditions:

1. Work shall commence no later than 31 December 2005 and shall be completed no later than 31 December 2006 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.
2. Promptly after substantial completion of the project, the applicant shall submit to the Community Preservation Committee a final project development cost statement. If such final development costs are less than the development budget on which the CPC based its funding recommendation, then the CPC reserves the right to require the applicant to remit to the Newton Community Preservation Fund a share of such surplus.
3. Consideration of CPA funds for future phases will require the demonstration of a good-faith effort on the part of the applicants to substantially leverage other funding sources.
4. Any portion of the grant not used for the purposes stated herein shall be returned to the Newton Community Preservation Fund.