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**DOCKET
ITEM
365- 10(2)**

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Candace Havens
Director

**Community Preservation Committee
FUNDING RECOMMENDATION**

date: 4 March 2011
from: Community Preservation Committee
to: The Honorable Board of Aldermen
about: **City Historic Buildings Survey, docket item 365-10(2)**
as a component of the Comprehensive Citywide Capital Assessment (docket item 365-10)

PROJECT GOALS & ELIGIBILITY

This project will hire a qualified consultant to set priorities and make recommendations for the preservation, rehabilitation, or restoration of the most historically significant buildings owned by the City of Newton, based on the U.S. Secretary of the Interior's *Standards and Guidelines for the Treatment of Historic Properties*.

The Community Preservation Act states that "community preservation funds shall not replace existing operating funds, only augment them," and does not allow funding of routine maintenance. CP funds may be used for work on a building that was not acquired or created using CP funds only if that building meets the CPA's definition of a historic resource, which requires listing on or eligibility for the state and national registers of historic places, or a determination by the Newton Historical Commission that the building is "significant in the history, archeology, architecture or culture" of Newton. The proposed survey will provide the information needed to make this determination. The survey will also set clear priorities for a multi-year series of proposals for these historic buildings, both to the CPC and to other historic preservation funders.

RECOMMENDED FUNDING

On 16 February 2011 by a unanimous vote of 5-0 (members absent: Bernheimer, Blake, Fauteux, Feinberg) the Community Preservation Committee recommended that total funding of **\$98,780** be appropriated to the control of the Commissioner of Public Buildings for this project. All funds should be drawn from the fy11 historic resources reserve of the Community Preservation Fund.

SOURCES of Funds for City Historic Buildings Survey as part of Comprehensive Citywide Capital Assessment	
\$20,000	CDBG (federal funds)
\$395,000	Overlay Surplus Reserve (city funds)
\$98,780	Community Preservation funds, for historic survey component only
513,780	TOTAL PROJECT COST

website www.newtonma.gov/cpa
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SPECIAL ISSUES CONSIDERED BY THE CPC

The CPC has been urging submission of this proposal for almost two years and fully supports the proposed survey in concept. The Committee had several concerns about the proposal as submitted, however:

- ◆ the timeline did not seem realistic (for example, consulting contract to be executed in March 2011)
- ◆ no community letters of support were submitted
- ◆ the criteria used to include or exclude buildings from the proposed survey were not clear; some listed buildings did not seem historically significant, though they may be significant in other ways; some buildings that seem historically significant were not listed, especially those significant primarily for their association with the City's economic and social history

The Commissioner of Public Buildings agreed to address these concerns by following the "additional recommendations" below.

The CPC also noted that this project should take into account prior assessments of City buildings, in several ways:

- ◆ It should refine rather than repeat the work of the 2004 Newton Public Buildings Taskforce. For example, that Taskforce's final report listed City building in several categories of descending historic significance, but it did not spell out the criteria used to define those categories.
- ◆ It should take advantage of the research already done to add some City buildings to the National Register of Historic Places. In most cases, however, this work did not include clear plans for the future use of these buildings, as is required to identify appropriate treatments under the Secretary of the Interior's *Standards and Guidelines for the Treatment of Historic Properties*, www.nps.gov/history/hps/tps/standguide/overview/choose_treat.htm
- ◆ It should revise or expand as needed prior assessments of City buildings, whether these used CP funds or other funding, if they did not fully follow the Secretary of the Interior's *Standards*. For example, several years ago the School Department conducted an assessment of all school buildings. That study did not focus on historic significance or preservation, yet schools are among the City's most historically significant buildings. The Public Buildings and School Departments should submit a future proposal for the historic assessment of school buildings, using the Secretary of the Interior's *Standards*.

ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS/ FUNDING CONDITIONS

The CPC's recommendation to fund this proposal was based on agreement by the Commissioner of Public Buildings to meet the following requirements:

1. Before the full Board of Aldermen's vote on this recommendation, submit to the CPC and the full Board of a realistic project timeline and at least some letters of support from the community at large.
2. Before posting the RFP for work supported by CP funds, submit to the CPC a final scope of work requiring the consultant hired to:
 - 2a. Submit and present in person to the CPC a brief report from an initial, high-level survey of all City buildings other than schools, explaining the criteria used to identify the subset of those buildings that will be evaluated in detail, using the U.S. Secretary of the Interior's *Standards and Guidelines for the Treatment of Historic Properties* (www.nps.gov/history/hps/tps/standguide/overview/choose_treat.htm).
 - 2b. As part of this initial report, submit for CPC review and approval the list of buildings to be evaluated in detail for their historic significance and features, prior to beginning that detailed evaluation.
 - 2c. Submit and present in-person to the CPC, or to a joint meeting of the CPC and Newton Historical Commission, the final project report, including a prioritized list of future preservation, rehabilitation or

Additional recommendations continued on next page.

Additional recommendations, continued.

restoration projects for historic City buildings, and detailed recommendations for each building.

The report should be designed to support two possible approaches to future funding:

- ◆ *strongly preferred:* a phased, multi-year proposal for a "City historic resources program" that will systematically address the highest priorities identified by the report, as part of the City's multi-year Capital Improvements Plan
- ◆ *less preferred:* a series of separate proposals for individual buildings, submitted in the priority order recommended by the report

In either case, the final report should simplify the submission of future funding proposals by providing for each building surveyed the basic information required by the CPC's historic resources checklist, www.newtonma.gov/cpa/program/NewtonCP-proposal-historic.pdf, namely:

- ◆ assessment of historic significance, using the broad criteria of the National Register of Historic Places and other National Park Service guidelines
- ◆ identification of historically significant features, including those that should be protected by a permanent preservation restriction if the building is ever sold out of City ownership
- ◆ recommendations for historically appropriate treatment (preservation, rehabilitation, or restoration), based on clear plans for the building's future use

3. Any portion of the Community Preservation Fund grant not used for the purposes stated herein will be returned to the Newton Community Preservation Fund.

KEY OUTCOMES

The Community Preservation Committee will evaluate this project based on

1. satisfying the "additional recommendations" above
2. efficient submission of complete, future funding proposals based on this survey
3. successful completion of any projects recommended for funding as a result of those proposals
4. adequate, historically appropriate maintenance -- without further requests for CP funds -- of all City buildings that receive CP project funding

ATTACHMENTS

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

Proposal with the following attachments:

Budget

Project Manager's Resume with Relevant Experience

Docket Item for Municipal Building Assessment funding (general City funds)

Relevant Sections of the RFQ for Municipal Building Assessment:

www.newtonma.gov/purchasing/bids/fy11/11-42-RFQ-Assessment.pdf

List of Historically Significant City-Owned Buildings from May 2005 Public Buildings Preservation Taskforce Report

21 April 2009 CPC memo to the Mayor and Board of Aldermen, urging creation of a successor to the Public Buildings Preservation Taskforce, for all City historic resources