



**City of Newton, Massachusetts**  
**Community Preservation Committee**



**DOCKET  
 ITEM NO.**

**91-09**

David B. Cohen  
 Mayor

**MEMORANDUM**

*DATE:* 9 March 2009

*TO:* The Honorable Board of Aldermen

*FROM:* Community Preservation Committee

*RE:* **recommended Community Preservation funding for  
 ARCHAEOLOGY SURVEY**

**1. PROJECT GOALS & ELIGIBILITY**

Specialized consultants will work with the City of Newton’s Senior Preservation Planner to conduct a citywide survey to identify areas of archaeological sensitivity, as well as a ground penetrating radar survey of the East Parish Burying Ground. Final products will include a technical report for use by the Planning Department and the Newton Historical Commission in project review and proactive preservation of archaeological sites, and by the Community Preservation Committee and Board of Aldermen in evaluating future proposals for the protection of these resources; and a public summary of findings, for use by the Newton History Museum and Newton Public Schools.

The Community Preservation Act’s definition of eligible historic resources includes any “building, structure, vessel, real property, document or artifact that ... has been determined by the local historic preservation commission to be significant in the history, archaeology, architecture or culture of a city or town.” The Newton Historical Commission fully supports this proposal, because it recognizes that Newton’s archaeological resources are threatened first of all by lack of knowledge.

As several CPC members noted when voting on this proposal, “we can’t protect what we don’t know we have.” Less than 1 percent of the city’s area has been investigated by professional archaeologists. Many of the city’s currently known 29 archaeological sites were discovered accidentally and then destroyed by construction projects, including 3 sites demolished by the Massachusetts Turnpike. This survey will permit more systematic, proactive, and effective protection of Newton’s archaeological resources.

*SEE ALSO: appendix with further comments on City goals & priorities;  
 and two nearby examples of urban archaeology: Boston’s Ancient Fishweir Project at [www.fishweir.org/](http://www.fishweir.org/)  
 and “Mining the Big Dig” [1999] at [www.nps.gov/history/archeology/Cg/win\\_1999/Bigdig.htm](http://www.nps.gov/history/archeology/Cg/win_1999/Bigdig.htm)*

**2. FUNDING RECOMMENDATION**

On 25 February 2009 the Community Preservation Committee voted unanimously 9 in favor, 0 opposed, to recommend that the sum of \$37,500 be appropriated under the direction and control of the Director of Planning and Development, drawing first from the historic resources reserve and then as needed from the general reserve of the Community Preservation Fund, to be expended 100% for historic resources as follows:

| <b>PROJECT BUDGET</b>  |                 |
|--|-----------------|
| archaeological consultant  | \$30,000        |
| ground-penetrating radar consultant <i>(depending on qualifications, may be same as above)</i> | \$5,000         |
| Planning staff – project mgmt  | \$2,000         |
| Law Dept. – bidding and contracting  | \$750           |
| <b>TOTAL</b>   | <b>\$37,750</b> |

## ADDITIONAL SOURCES & USES OF FUNDS

Newton's Senior Preservation Planner Brian Lever submitted a 2008 application to the Massachusetts Historical Commission (MHC) for phase 2 of this project, requesting \$12,000 to update Newton's 1980s survey of the city's remaining pre-1820 buildings. That application was denied but will be resubmitted in 2009. The CPC strongly encouraged Mr. Lever to request CPA funds for this work, if MHC does not fund it.

## 3. OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS

The Community Preservation Committee notes that, as proposed, the project will meet all standards for archaeological surveys established by the Massachusetts Historical Commission and by Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 9, Section 27C. The Committee further recommends that:

1. Surveys and reports funded through this project be completed with 18 months after the funds are appropriated.
2. The public summary of project results be widely publicized and made available online, either through the Newton History Museum or the Planning Department.
3. 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
- ◆ Article/web page for archaeological surveys in other Massachusetts communities

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## *Appendix: DETAILED FINDINGS on FUNDING ELIGIBILITY & PRIORITIES*

### **Community Preservation Plan**

This project addresses the following goals in this *Plan*:

|   |
|---|
| OVERARCHING GOALS   |
| 1. Contribute to the preservation of Newton's unique character ...  |
| 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.  |
| 8. Equitably distribute CPA funds throughout the City.  |
| HISTORIC RESOURCES GOALS  |
| 1.-2. Support the preservation and/or restoration of public and private resources ... found to be historically significant by the Newton Historical Commission. |
| 5. Support the objectives and priorities of local historic preservation organizations, such as the Newton Historical Society and the Newton History Museum ...  |

### **Other Newton Plans & Priorities**

The proposal as submitted includes supporting quotes from Newton's *Comprehensive Plan* and *Preliminary Preservation Plan*.

Finally, education per se is not an allowable use of CPA funds. It is worth noting, however, that the Native American section of the permanent exhibit at the Newton History Museum, and the museum's public and school programs on this theme, are among its most popular. Yet Museum staff have long recognized that these programs could be strengthened by incorporating more recent archaeological research and more Newton-specific information. Identifying and protecting archaeological resources that could support future research on the city's Native American history is a critical first step in this direction.