



City of Newton, Massachusetts Community Preservation Committee



David B. Cohen
Mayor

MEMORANDUM

TO: Honorable Board of Aldermen
FROM: Community Preservation Committee
DATE: January 13, 2006
RE: **CPC Recommendation for Funding**

PROJECT TITLE: Newton Health Department Building Study
CPA PROJECT ID: CPA-FY06-5
CPA CATEGORY: Historic Preservation
RECOMMENDED CPA FUNDING: \$26,425

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The applicants, the Commissioner of Public Buildings and the Newton Health Department, requests \$26,425 to prepare design plans for the restoration and replacement of various elements of the Health Department building on Centre Street in Newton Centre. Such elements include work on the masonry, windows and sidewalks, to repair termite damage and a comprehensive energy audit of the building. In the initial CPA application, a considerable restoration project estimated to cost \$175,000 was described and laid out. However, at this time, the applicant requests funding only for the design and study portion of the project. The current \$26,425 CPA request for the Health Department Building is broken down into approximately \$20,750 for architectural and professional restoration services, \$5,000 to conduct the building's energy audit and \$675 for legal costs. If this study is funded, the applicants plan to return to the CPC at a later date to request funding for subsequent phases of work.

FINDINGS/PROJECT EVALUATION

Community Preservation Act (MGL c.44B)

Historic Preservation

MGL c.44B defines an **historic resource** as "a building...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..." The Newton Health Department Building (formerly the Newton Centre library) is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. A site listed on the National Register is automatically listed on the State Register.

In accordance with §5(b)(2), the study would provide designs for a larger project that would **rehabilitate** and **restore** certain elements of the building. Preparation of such design work complies with the *US Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties, Standards for Preservation*. Standard #6 states, "The existing condition of historic features will be evaluated to determine the appropriate level of intervention needed..." After the study is completed, the recommended scope of work must also comply with the *US Secretary of the Interior's Standards*.

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.	No
3. Demonstrate the highest cost/benefit value relative to other proposals.	Yes, 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. Show that a project is the most reasonable available option to achieve the objective.	Yes
7. Demonstrate strong community support.	See below
8. Serve to equitably distribute CPA funds throughout the City.	See below

Additional comments on selected goals:

Goal 3: The following table illustrates the comparative costs of historic preservation projects. The Newton Health Department Building study is inexpensive compared to other historic preservation projects.

<i>Project Name</i>	<i>Fiscal Year</i>	<i>Total CPA Funds (for preservation portion only)</i>
Historic Burying Ground Restoration – Phase II	05	\$257,395
Newton Corner Library	03	\$236,129
Historic Burying Ground Restoration – Phase I	03	\$188,277
YMCA	05	\$160,273
City Hall – Balustrade	03	\$150,660
Washington Park Lighting	05	\$131,035
City Hall – Lighting	03	\$121,200
City Hall – Windows	03	\$119,400
248 Elliot Street/Linden Green	05	\$63,290
Crafts Street Stable Study*	06	\$65,575
Farlow/Chaffin Park*	05	\$51,500
Millhouse Commons	05	\$41,653
City Hall Historic Landscape*	05	\$40,000
Newton Health Department Building Study*	06	\$26,425
Brigham House Study*	03	\$20,000
Civil War Monument*	05	\$15,000
War Memorial Stairs*	05	\$15,000
Historic District Signs	04	\$2,000

*Denotes projects requesting CPA funds to conduct a study in preparation for a larger preservation project.

Goal 4: No other funding has been identified, and the applicants state that upkeep of the Health Department building has been reduced through budget cuts. However, the Commissioner of Public Buildings pledged to seek other funding sources beyond CPA for the construction phase of the project.

Goal 7: The use of CPA funds for the Newton Health Department Building Study is supported by the Public Buildings Preservation Task Force.

Goal 8: The FY06 CPA applications include funding requests for projects in Nonantum, West Newton, Newtonville, Oak Hill, Newton Centre, Newton Highlands, Auburndale as well as citywide projects. The Newton Health Department Building is located in Newton Centre.

Historic Preservation 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.	Yes
2. Support the preservation and restoration of privately owned properties that are on the National	No

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 historical integrity, in terms of location, context, design, style, workmanship and materials.	Yes, see below
4. Enable access to the resource by the public, including access by disabled residents.	Yes, see below
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.	Yes, see below
6. Where appropriate, address the issues and goals raised in the forthcoming Citywide Preservation Plan, which is scheduled to be finalized in Fall 2005.	See below

Goal 3: The Newton Health Department Building is historic in both its style and materials and how it came to be built. In 1927, money for construction of the building was raised by citizens of Newton Centre. Some of the key architectural features include the structure’s windows, doors and masonry. To insure that the building continues to serve the City, work must be done to treat the masonry and mitigate termite damage.

Goal 4: Part of the building study will look at the quality of the sidewalks and ramps accessing the building to make recommendations for their replacement in the construction phase, thus enable improved public access.

Goal 5: The Newton Health Department Building is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and is an important public facility for the citizens of Newton. The Public Buildings Task Force supports this CPA application to maintain the historical and structural integrity of the building.

Goal 6: The City’s Preservation Plan has not yet been finalized.

CPC RECOMMENDATION

The proposal is consistent with the CPA criteria and many of the Plan’s goals, as outlined above. Therefore, the Community Preservation Committee voted unanimously to recommend funding the Newton Health Department Building Study. The study would plan for preservation of such building elements as the masonry and windows and improving energy-efficiency. The CPC recommends the requested \$26,425 be appropriated, transferred and expended under the direction and control of the Commissioner of Public Buildings for the purposes of funding the Newton Health Department Building Preservation Study as detailed in the application dated October 15, 2005, subject to the following conditions:

1. Prior to appropriation of any CPA funds, the Public Buildings Department shall identify a City project manager who will be responsible to issue the request for proposals and consultant contracts, authorize payments of invoices and generally oversee the project.
2. The City project manager shall submit a status report to the CPC on a quarterly basis that describes work that is complete, work remaining, expenditures and target completion date.
3. The design and restoration plans shall incorporate improved energy efficiency techniques based on the results of an energy audit and shall account for the City’s capacity to effectively maintain the facility over the long-term.
4. Prior to submitting an application requesting CPA funds for the restoration project, a legally enforceable mechanism protecting the CPA investment must be in place (e.g., a Preservation Ordinance for City-owned properties that requires the Newton Historical Commission to approve all major alterations or any demolition).
5. Prior to submitting a subsequent application for CPA funds for the restoration project, the plans shall be reviewed and approved by the Public Buildings Preservation Task Force.
6. Consideration of CPA funds for future phases will require the demonstration of a good-faith effort on the part of the applicant to substantially leverage other funding sources; provided, however, the applicant understands and agrees that CPC’s recommendation of funding for this design plan does not imply any CPC support for, or any applicant expectation of, a further CPC recommendation for the funding of future project design or construction phases.

7. Work shall commence no later than December 31, 2006 and shall be completed no later than December 31, 2007 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.
8. Promptly after substantial completion of the design work, the applicant shall submit to the Community Preservation Committee a final project development cost statement. Any portion of the grant not used for the purposes stated herein shall be returned to the Newton Community Preservation Fund.