

The meeting was held on Wednesday 24 February 2010 in Newton City Hall Cafeteria.

Attending members of the Community Preservation Committee (CPC): Nancy Grissom, Leslie Burg, Thomas Turner, Walter Bernheimer, Michael Clarke, Dan Green, Joel Feinberg, Steve Fauteux, Zack Blake (arr. 7:10 pm).

Program manager Alice Ingerson served as recorder.

Committee Chair Nancy Grissom opened the meeting at 7:05 pm.

WORKING SESSION on MUSEUM ARCHIVES (revised proposal)

Historic Newton Architect Martha Werenfels gave a brief presentation about the revised design for the archives, and how it has changed since the original submission. The original scope of work was confined to the garage/archives wing, but the project has expanded through discussions with the client. The original area is still intended to be the climate-controlled archives, but a new universal (accessible) entrance will be created by converting a current window into a new door. That new entrance will be accessed via a walkway and ramp along the east side of the main house. The walkway will have a 1:20 slope, leading to a ramp with a 1:12 slope and railings, onto a porch at the new door into the wing. The main reception area will be moved nearer to the new front door, so that visitors will enter through the shop and reception area.

The project raised building code issues. Neither the current lift nor the current bathroom meets current codes for the Americans with Disabilities Act. In response, the revised design proposes a ramp rather than a lift.

Nancy Grissom and Zack Blake noted that the interior historic preservation restriction held by the Massachusetts Historical Commission as a result of an earlier, Commission-funded project would require review of interior changes by that Commission.

In response to a question from Grissom, Werenfels acknowledged that the proposed new railing, which crosses in front of the current primary door from the parking lot into the main house, has not been reviewed by the Historical Commission for its impact on historic character. The client and architect considered about a dozen different ways of improving handicapped access to the building and looked for the least obtrusive, most welcoming option.

Also in response to a question from Nancy Grissom, Werenfels clarified that the images she was showing to the Committee differed slightly from those submitted in the pre-meeting packet, in that the once-proposed additional classroom/program space on the rear of the building has now been completely removed from the plans. Werenfels noted that the meeting presentation reflected the current project scope, which may not be the final one, since the plan must be reviewed by both the Newton Historical Commission and the Massachusetts Historical Commission. The classroom was been removed because there was no interest in proceeding with that classroom at this time, and because it triggered additional, expensive standards for accessibility and sprinklering. Historic Newton director Cindy Stone added that the Inspectional Services Dept. had explained that adding this room would require adding more bathrooms to the building.

Grissom noted her concern about the phasing of future improvements, based on her experience with the Newton Historical Commission. The Commission had found that developers sometimes avoided the demolition delay ordinance, which applies to partial as well as full demolitions, by replacing a building one wall at a time. She felt that phasing could cause some confusion if the long-term plan was not understood as a whole.

Historic Newton curator Susan Abele noted that the proposed universal-access entrance solved other issues and eliminated the need for the separate classroom or multipurpose room, by allowing an existing room to serve that purpose.

Noting Werenfels' comment that the plan being presented was not final, Leslie Burg asked when the final plan would be available. Cindy Stone explained that the entire project had originally been presented when the Committee was not accepting proposals strictly for planning or design grants. During the initial design phase, it became apparent that the planning issues were complex, and Historic Newton had decided to

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request additional funding now, strictly to complete the new, more thought-through design. They will submit a separate, future request to implement that design once it is approved.

Dan Green asked for confirmation that the easternmost two bays of the garage wing were currently used both for the archives (2-dimensional materials) and to store objects from the Museum's 3-dimensional collections. Susan Abele confirmed that, and noted that the plan currently called for breaking through an existing wall to the existing storage garage used for the 3-dimensional objects, so that space could be incorporated into the redesigned archives area. Werenfels noted that maximum use would be made of the archives area by exposing beams and extending storage up between the beams in the wing.

Green felt that it was often very expensive to renovate a historic structure and wondered whether Historic Newton had considered instead an additional building in the back yard for the archives, with access off Jackson Road, which could be built to code and designed to resemble a historic barn. He saw the things being given up, such as the multipurpose room, to avoid the more stringent code requirements as integral to the operation of the Museum.

Cindy Stone noted that the current project was being planned in the context of Historic Newton's overall capital campaign. She had been told that a few years ago before she was director, Larry Bauer had done a space study for an expansion that would have cost \$10 million. Subsequent to that plan, Historic Newton had agreed to accept the additional challenge of preserving the Durant-Kenrick Homestead. The feasibility study commissioned for Historic Newton's overall capital campaign had concluded that the organization could not raise enough to fund the previously proposed space plan for the Jackson Homestead and the preservation of Durant-Kenrick.

Dan Green redirected his question -- about whether an additional building or other options on the Jackson Homestead site had been considered -- to Larry Bauer, who was present at the meeting. Cindy Stone introduced Bauer as a nationally recognized museum architect and Newton resident. Bauer noted that he was a former member of the Historical Commission and currently served on the Designer Selection Committee that chose Martha Werenfels' firm for this project. He had a copy of his original space study out before the meeting, but had not brought it with him. Nancy Grissom asked whether the Committee could see the study. Bauer explained that he would send a copy electronically to Historic Newton, and the Committee should request it from Historic Newton.

Bauer recalled that when the study was done, the organization had been looking at the possibility of acquiring and expanding onto abutting properties. Werenfels explained that these options had not been considered for the current project, though they might make sense if the organization wished to pursue the option of adding the previously proposed new classroom or multipurpose room. At the moment, the organization is assuming there will be no classroom. She also noted that the interior improvements currently being proposed would be necessary regardless of whether an addition or separate building were created, to bring the building as a whole up to code.

In response to a question from Nancy Grissom, Werenfels explained that the current, very preliminary estimate of construction costs for the archives project was about \$375,000.

Grissom asked whether the schedule submitted to the Committee as part of the revised proposal was reasonable. That schedule shows design work completed by summer of 2010, with a proposal for construction funding to be submitted soon thereafter. Cindy Stone noted that achieving this schedule depending on whether and how quickly funding for completing the design was approved and available, but Historic Newton currently expects to present a funding request for construction by the Committee's mid-CPC's October 2010 funding deadline.

In response to a request from Ingerson to clarify acronyms used in the presentation and plans, Werenfels explained that MAAB is the Massachusetts Architectural Access Board; MEP is mechanical, electrical, and plumbing.

Nancy Grissom suggested that any Committee recommendation for the currently requested additional design funding of \$63,845 also withdraw the Committee's previous recommendation for total project funding, to avoid confusion with the future, final request for construction funding.

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VOTE Zack Blake moved to recommend the requested \$63,845 as a new appropriation, and to ask the Board of Aldermen to vote “no action necessary” on still-unappropriated funds under the previous CPC recommendation (Board order 147-08).

Nancy Grissom asked that the Committee’s recommendation to the Board require the final plan to be approved by all relevant reviewing authorities; include a construction estimate by a professional cost estimator, which could be used as the basis for a final construction funding request; and require Historic Newton to keep the Committee updated on the status of other sources of funds in the current proposal, including the \$40,000 of CDBG funds for accessibility improvements.

Susan Abele and Alice Ingerson noted that this CDBG funding had been recommended in the new, 5-year Consolidated Plan for Housing and Community Development. That plan has gone through all but its very final steps for City approval and submission to the federal Dept. of Housing and Urban Development.

Wally Bernheimer seconded the motion.

The motion was approved by a unanimous vote of 9-0.

WORKING SESSION on MUSEUM COLLECTIONS STORAGE

Historic Newton director Cindy Stone summarized the need for this project by explaining that, for lack of storage space, Historic Newton has basically stopped collecting 3-dimensional objects. The current collections are not stored in acceptable conditions. Her predecessor as director had been looking at moving these collections into the Crafts Street Stable, and she has discussed this option with the Commissioner of Public Works.

The Committee’s pre-meeting packet had included only a very rough construction cost estimate for the proposed storage facility of up to \$280,000. On behalf of Historic Newton, architect Larry Bauer distributed a more detailed breakdown of this estimate to the Committee.

Nancy Grissom noted that the Committee’s pre-meeting packet had included some pages from the prior, CP-funded assessment of the Crafts Street Stable building. That study appeared not to have focused on historic preservation standards, since it proposed replacement of many if not most of the building’s existing windows. Acting Public Buildings Commissioner Art Cabral said that study had focused simply on making the building weather-tight.

Wally Bernheimer noted that if the Committee committed to \$30,000 in design funds, that might be seen to imply a commitment to funding the implementation of the resulting design. He did not know where this project fit into the overall scheme of things for the City as a whole, given limited CP funds next year and following years. He felt that it would be acceptable to fund the design study, but would be reluctant to recommend that if doing so might be taken as a promise to recommend funding for construction.

Nancy Grissom commented that the previously funded study had documented that the building’s exterior was in poor condition. The building has recently been added to the National Register of Historic Places, so the impacts of the proposed study on the interior need to be considered, and the exterior needs to be treated as historically significant as well.

Larry Bauer explained that he had written the proposal for CP funding of the exterior study, and considered the condition of exterior to be a separate issue. He believes that the currently proposed storage facility will not compromise any of the building’s historic fabric. He also noted that the storage facility proposal was somewhat related to the archives project, in that some of the objects proposed for storage at the Crafts Street Stable are currently stored in the part of the Jackson Homestead that will be needed for the expanded archives, if the archives project goes forward.

Bauer noted that Historic Newton proposes to build a single module inside the Crafts Street Stable with protection so that, if the building as a whole has a failure such as a leak in the roof, the contents of the module will be protected. They plan to use existing to get fresh air into the module without affecting the historic fabric of the building. The proposal, tries to make allowances for building failure, including the

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roof and other systems. Finally, the Museum has looked for years for another space for this purpose and has been unable to find one.

Nancy Grissom was concerned about whether the City is really committed to giving this space over for this purpose, with a new mayor, a new Board of Aldermen, and new staff. She had no doubt that the collections need help.

Alice Ingerson asked whether the Committee might wish to make funding for this proposal contingent on first completing the broader assessment of all public buildings, which had been docketed with the Board of Aldermen in 2007 and for which the Committee had previously expressed its general support.

Historic Newton Board members Jay Walter and Jonathan Kantar felt obtaining an explicit commitment by the City to the project was not necessary, as the City would have to approve the design in any case.

Joel Feinberg noted that he had not previously been aware that the condition and future of the full building were issues, but that it sounded like the whole building needs some assessment and repair. He thought it might make sense to do some of the other repairs before designing and installing this unit in the interior. He asked what the City's current plans were for the building's exterior, and whether there was a logical sequence to the interior and exterior work.

Art Cabral noted that City capital planning was starting up again in a new way, but he was not sure when the results would be available from that new process. The Public Buildings Dept. is also thinking of re-activating and advocating, via the Executive Dept., for the overall assessment of all public buildings mentioned by Ingerson. Finally, he noted that the Commissioner of Public Works has no plans in the immediate future to use the space proposed for the museum collections storage module.

Larry Bauer and Art Cabral noted that there had been plans a few years ago to rehabilitate this building, but those plans had not been implemented.

Jonathan Kantar explained that Cindy Stone and Susan Abele had explored alternative storage options, and found that renting appropriate space would cost \$60,000 a year. Historic Newton is assuming there will be no charge from the City for use of this space in the Crafts Street Stable.

In response to a question from Nancy Grissom, Cindy Stone and Jonathan Kantar explained that Historic Newton did not anticipate paying the City either utilities costs or rent for the proposed storage space; or if such payments were made, they expected them to be minimal.

In response to a question from Alice Ingerson, Cindy Stone clarified that, within Historic Newton as a public-private partnership, the collections to be stored belong to the Jackson Homestead as a City department, and not to the private Newton Historical Society.

Larry Bauer noted that this space was formerly used to store traffic lights, which are by definition weatherproof. The building has never been repaired before because there were no uses in it that required such repairs.

Zack Blake agreed with Joel Feinberg that changes to the exterior and interior of the Stable building should be wrapped together into one project, to meet the needs of the City as a whole.

Cindy Stone acknowledged that this would be ideal, but quoted a point sometimes made by Historic Newton Board member and architect Russ Feldman that "the perfect can be the enemy of the good." Historic Newton needs an immediate solution to its collections storage problem, which it has had for a long time.

Wally Bernheimer proposed that the Committee make the expenditure of CP funds for this project contingent on approval from the City of Newton for this use of the Stable space.

Steve Fauteux asked that any funding recommendation also include the Committee's other concerns as conditions for the release of funds.

Leslie Burg felt that Bernheimer's suggestion was useful, and noted that the request was for a relatively small amount of money.

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Nancy Grissom hoped that a Committee funding recommendation, by giving the proposed project some life, might move the City to make decisions about the overall future of this building.

Dan Green did not see the two proposed uses of this structure as compatible, with road salt, sand, snow plows, and gasoline on the first floor and Museum storage on the second floor.

Nancy Grissom reiterated her earlier question about whether the Committee could see the previous long-range plan for the Museum's space needs. Larry Bauer acknowledged that the ideal solution would still be to acquire property next door from the school or another owner. Cindy Stone believed that the Catholic order that owns much of the abutting property is not interested in selling any of that property.

Green asked whether it would not be possible to do something on the property the City already owns at this site. He would like any planning study using CP funds to compare the currently proposed option to an option for a solution using the City property at the current Jackson Homestead site.

Bauer believed there had been an issue with expanding the building footprint at that site. Historic Newton Board member Russ Feldman noted that the Museum's back yard is a historic landscape and is used for public programs such as concerts. He also believed that accessibility and other issues made the backyard option unworkable.

In response to a question from Michael Clarke, Bauer stated that the second floor of the Crafts Street Stable was structurally sound.

In response to a question from Wally Bernheimer, Bauer estimated that this floor contained approximately 8,000 square feet of space. Leslie Burg noted that this space was currently empty.

Bernheimer was familiar with the design of other museum storage facilities, and noted that they could be amazingly efficient. He proposed that the release of any recommended CP funds be made contingent on a full commitment by the City of Newton to allowing Historic Newton to use this space in the Crafts Street Stable for at least 20 years.

VOTE Steve Fauteux moves recommending \$30,000 of CP funding for the proposed project, but making release of such funds contingent on receiving that full commitment.

Bernheimer seconded the motion.

Art Cabral agreed to begin asking what would constitute such a commitment, and how it could be made.

The motion was unanimously approved by a vote of 9-0.

WORKING SESSION on VETERAN HOUSE (2148 Commonwealth Avenue; revised request)

CAN-DO director Josephine McNeill noted that the original proposal submitted in October 2009 had listed a number of funding sources in addition to CP funds. Since then, the CCC Legacy Fund had declined to provide the requested funding of \$25,000 listed in the original proposal.

However, Charlesbank Homes had agreed to provide \$50,000 rather than the \$40,000 listed in that proposal. The representative of Charlesbank Homes was impressed by their site visit, and chose to recommend their maximum \$50,000 grant. As a result, although she had submitted a written supplemental request for \$25,000 of additional CP funds, she was now revising that to \$15,000.

Nancy Grissom noted that the external consultant's report on accessibility requirements commissioned by the Committee had explained that CAN-DO needed to have a written policy for reasonable accommodation and reasonable modification (RA/RM). As conditions for the release of CP funds for this project, Grissom recommended having approved RA/RM policies and procedures in place. McNeill said she had a draft RA/RM policy that would be submitted for final approval by the CAN-DO Board of directors in March

McNeill noted that the current funding priorities of the Committee encourage the use of existing housing stock to preserve and create affordable housing, which to some extent conflicts with finding and being able to provide full access without having to obtain a Comprehensive Permit. In a recent project CAN-DO had

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aimed to create a fully handicapped accessible unit, but it had not been financially feasible to meet the Fire Departments' requirements and satisfy the neighbors' preferences.

Joel Feinberg felt that if the CPC funded mostly projects in small, 2-family houses, it could end up creating very little if any fully accessible affordable housing. He supported this project, but in the future, urged the Committee to make accessibility a key consideration going forward, since it would be easy to lose sight of that goal if funding decisions were made reactively, one project at a time. Running the entire CP-funded housing program that way could produce a cumulative result that did not meet fair housing goals.

Nancy Grissom noted that the 10-unit, new-construction home ownership project recently funded at 192 Lexington Street would have one fully accessible unit.

Leslie Burg pointed out that federal funding required that 5% of the total units be accessible for a project that size. She agreed with Feinberg that accessibility should be "on the Committee's radar," and frequently was not.

Alice Ingerson pointed out that, although the Board of Aldermen often urged the Committee to support projects to preserve the relative affordability of existing housing, through projects that would not alter existing streetscapes, it was often easier to provide accessibility with new construction. Projects involving new construction might be worth supporting for that reason, even if it took more effort to get them approved and funded.

Wally Bernheimer pointed out that the current request before the Committee was simply to revise the total funding amount for this project from \$362,500, including \$2,500 for the Newton Law Dept., to a total of \$375,000, without any funding for the Law Dept.

VOTE Leslie Burg moved recommending total funding for this project of \$375,000.

Joel Feinberg seconded the motion, with a condition for the release of funds that CAN-DO submit a completed RA/RM policy that had been reviewed and approved by the Housing Program staff in the Planning and Development Department.

The motion was unanimously approved by a vote of 9-0.

Nancy Grissom noted that, as the Committee had been informed by email, the Planning & Development Board would be conducting a review of CAN-DO's overall finances at its meeting on 1 March 2010. Members of the CPC were welcome to attend. Josephine McNeill noted that she would make a presentation to that meeting, although her accountant might not be able to attend.

Grissom pointed out that the basic information distributed to the CPC by email simply described the background and goals of the Planning & Development Board review. The chairman of that Board had asked that the CPC not receive and discuss materials submitted in advance for the Board's 1 March 2010 meeting before that meeting took place. The CPC agreed to this request, just as it hoped that any other board or committee would not discuss materials sent to CPC before the CPC itself could discuss them.

Leslie Burg offered to email the Planning & Development Board's agenda for 1 March 2010 to any interested CPC members, so they could decide whether they wished to attend that meeting.

COMMITTEE BUSINESS

The Committee discussed the tentative agenda for its 17 March 2010 meeting.

Alice Ingerson summarized the materials for the Charles River Lower Falls Bridge proposal received slightly after the original February 19th deadline. As she read them, these materials indicated that Wellesley had not yet committed any of its CP or other town funds to the project, but that the project sponsors planned to request funds through the Wellesley CPC in October 2010. In response to a suggestion from Wally Bernheimer, the sense of the meeting was to ask the sponsors of this proposal to return for further discussion with the Newton CPC at the same time they next submitted the project to Wellesley's CPC.

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Ingerson noted that she expected to receive the updates requested by the CPC from the City Clerk as sponsor of the City Hall - Historic Artwork proposal in time to schedule a working session for that proposal on March 17th.

Wally Bernheimer suggested inviting Stuart Saginor, Executive Director of the Community Preservation Coalition, to the March 17th meeting to talk about: the amendment to the CPA currently pending in the state legislature, how categories were set for dues, and where Newton's assessed dues of \$7,500 fit into that structure; and provide more detail on how Coalition members' dues were spent. The Committee asked Alice Ingerson to extend this invitation to Saginor.

The Committee then discussed the proposed fiscal 2011 budget for program administration. Ingerson noted that the proposal in their pre-meeting packet was for about \$10,000 less than the maximum 5 percent of anticipated fy11 revenues, even assuming only a 20 percent state match for fy10 revenues.

Ingerson explained that the proposal reduced funding for assistance from other departments, including Planning and Development, Engineering, and Law, to only \$15,000 from a high of over \$80,000 in fiscal 2008. The proposed fy11 budget did allocate \$20,000 for consultant services, however, in case the Committee found it needed more assistance than had been budgeted on the staff lines. Ingerson explained that administrative funds not spent in one year could not be rolled over for administrative expenses in another year, but were returned to the Community Preservation Fund and could be used for grants.

Steve Fauteux could not stay for the vote, but recommended increasing the consultant line to \$30,000.

VOTE Wally Bernheimer moved the proposed fiscal 2011 budget as amended by Fauteux's suggestion.

Michael Clarke and Leslie Burg seconded the motion.

The proposed fiscal 2011 administrative budget was adopted as amended by a vote of 8-0.

Leslie Burg noted a missing word on page 4 of the draft 20 January 2010 minutes.

VOTE Dan Green moved approval of the minutes as corrected.

Michael Clarke seconded the motion.

The minutes were approved by a vote of 8-0 with the noted correction.

The Committee then discussed whether the next deadline for funding proposals. The sense of the meeting was to retain the currently projected deadline of 15 October 2010.

Leslie Burg indicated that she had been told by some observers that the Committee used to move proposals faster, from receipt to recommendation, than it has recently. Alice Ingerson clarified that in the first 2 years of the program, the Committee had experimented with having two funding deadlines a year, but had maintained a single annual funding round since then.

Wally Bernheimer felt the CPC moved proposals along fairly quickly, given the quality and completeness of what was received. Nancy Grissom felt it sometimes took proposal sponsors a long time to compile a complete proposal, or to submit additional information requested by the Committee.

Alice Ingerson asked whether the Committee had any comments or revisions to suggest to her memo summarizing her current roles in this process, as their staff person. Wally Bernheimer noted that he felt the memo had summarized those roles well.

UPDATES on PENDING PROPOSALS & ACTIVE PROJECTS

Alice Ingerson noted that at its March 18th meeting the Aldermanic Committee on Community Preservation had endorsed the CPC's funding recommendations for the Angino Farm Barn and the City Archives – Combined project. These projects would now move on to the Board's Public Facilities Committee (barn proposal only) and Finance Committee (both proposals.).

With unanimous agreement, Chair Nancy Grissom adjourned the meeting at 9:15 pm.

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