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Community Preservation Committee Funding Recommendation for Newton Cemetery – Whipple-Beal Cast Iron Fence

date: 4 December 2017
from: Community Preservation Committee
to: The Honorable City Council



PROJECT GOALS & ELIGIBILITY

This project will restore and rehabilitate Newton Cemetery's last remaining decorative cast iron fence (detail at right), which surrounds the cemetery's first burial (1856), in the Whipple-Beal family lot. The project's CPA eligibility was established by the Newton Historical Commission's unanimous 28 September 2017 vote finding the fence significant in the history and culture of Newton.

RECOMMENDED FUNDING

On 16 November 2017 by a vote of 5-1 (members Beryl Gilfix and Susan Lunin absent, Jim Robertson opposed, Parks & Recreation appointment vacant) the Community Preservation Committee recommended appropriating the requested \$60,000 for this project from the Community Preservation Fund's current reserve and fund balance for historic resources, to the Planning & Development Department for a grant to Newton Cemetery for any CPA-eligible purpose stated or implied in this summary budget :

Newton Cemetery Whipple-Beal Fence Restoration	
Uses	
3D Laser Scan (Feldman Land Surveyors, est. value), Newton Cemetery staff time & materials *	\$9,500
Soft Costs: Design & Specifications (consultant estimate)	\$5,000
Hard Costs: Restoration (including 10% contingency)	\$55,000
Interpretive Signage (not CPA-eligible)	\$5,000
Total:	\$74,500
Sources	
CPA funds	\$60,000
Donated services & materials (see * above)	\$9,500
Friends of Newton Cemetery (Note: Mr. Eliot Beal has committed a donation of 10% of total costs, or \$7,450. The Friends will put the difference between this and the amount at right toward future maintenance.)	\$5,000
Total:	\$74,500

website www.newtonma.gov/cpa

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SPECIAL ISSUES CONSIDERED BY THE CPC

Public benefits & funding leverage Newton Cemetery, founded in 1855, is open to the public at no charge every day from dawn to dusk, on the same schedule as Newton's public parks. The cemetery is Newton's only accredited arboretum and sponsors or hosts numerous free walking tours, often in collaboration with Historic Newton, the Newton Conservators and the Newton Senior Center. The Whipple-Beal fence and lot are often featured on history walks. Mr. Eliot Beal has committed to cover 10 percent of the cost to restore the decorative cast iron fence around his family's lot and, in collaboration with the cemetery, to grant the City of Newton a permanent historic preservation restriction on the restored fence.

Future potential CPA requests Private owners are responsible for the maintenance of their own lots and monuments in Newton Cemetery. Not surprisingly, however, the cemetery itself must occasionally assume responsibility for private monuments that are many decades old, as families disperse or their circumstances change. The cemetery was unable to provide the rough cost estimate and funding plan requested by the CPC for the cumulative scope of these potential future responsibilities. CPC member Jim Robertson saw the current project as worthwhile but opposed the current request because he felt it set a precedent for an unknown total of future requests for primarily CPA funding of other private projects within the cemetery.

ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS (*funding conditions*)

1. The CPC assumes all recommended funds will be appropriated within 6 months, and the project will be completed within 24 months, after the date of this recommendation. If either deadline cannot be met, Newton Cemetery should request an extension in writing from the CPC.
2. The phased release of CPA funds will be governed by a detailed grant agreement that includes but is not limited to these provisions: initial release of CPA funds contingent on final commitment of all non-CPA funding listed in the submitted proposal; procurement of services through the City of Newton Purchasing Dept; compliance throughout the project with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the restoration, rehabilitation and reconstruction of historic properties; and release of the final 10 percent of CPA funding contingent on recording a permanent preservation restriction for the Whipple-Beal Fence, to be held by the Newton Historical Commission, as well as presentation of a final report to the CPC.
3. Any CPA funds appropriated but 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 how well it meets the conditions numbered 1 and 2 above.

ATTACHMENTS

(delivered to the clerks of the Programs & Services Committee and Finance Committee)

- Proposal submitted to the CPC (selected sections; full submission available on webpage below)
- Slide presentation to the CPC on 16 November 2017
- Copy of the CPC's project webpage, with links to additional information:

www.newtonma.gov/gov/planning/cpa/projects/newton_cemetery.asp#Whipple-Beal

Please note that, other than letters of support solicited by the proposal sponsor, the only written comments received on this proposal were from the League of Women Voters, which supported the request. Those comments are included on the webpage above but are not included with this recommendation.