

City of Newton



David B. Cohen
Mayor

City of Newton, Massachusetts
Community Preservation Committee

MEMORANDUM
REVISED 4/7/03 and 6/11/03

TO: Honorable Board of Aldermen
FROM: Community Preservation Committee (CPC)
DATE: 19 February 2003
RE: **CPC Recommendation For CPA Funding**

PROJECT TITLE: MEMORIAL-SPAULDING OUTDOOR CLASSROOM "KAYLA'S GARDEN"

CPA CATEGORY: Recreation

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The applicants, Memorial-Spauldung Elementary School and PTO, request \$100,718 to continue improvements to an 8,000 sf unimproved area of land in order to create Kayla's Garden. The Garden will include native plants, shrubs, and trees and hardscape items and will be used by teachers, school staff, and students to enhance classroom curriculum and by the neighborhood to enjoy passive recreation. The proposal (as amended through a letter from Sara Pozner dated 12/20/02) also includes the purchase of one of three alternative statues priced at \$73,000 (original proposal), \$8,300, and \$4,500. The two alternative statues would reduce the requested cost to \$34,518, or \$30,718 respectively.

FINDINGS

Community Preservation Act

This proposal, in part, meets the criteria established under MGL c.44B because:

1. A portion of this project appears to comply with §5(b)(2) which allows the CPA to fund the creation of land for recreational use, since the project will transform an unused portion of land into a garden, creating passive recreational opportunities.
2. However, the statue and curriculum development aspects of the proposal do not fall directly under any of the funding categories (open space, recreation, historic preservation, and community housing), since the statue is considered public art and the curriculum development would consist of educational materials for students.

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.	See below
4. Leverage other public and/or private funds.	Yes, see below
5. Preserve a resource or opportunity that would otherwise be lost.	No
6. Create incentives for other private projects to occur.	Yes

7. Show that a project is the most reasonable available option to achieve the objective.	Yes
8. Demonstrate strong community support.	Yes, see below
9. Serve to equitably distribute CPA funds throughout the City.	See below

Additional comments on selected goals:

Goal #3: Projects received during this funding round include a high CPA cost of \$850,000 and a low CPA cost of \$24,780. This CPA cost for this project is \$100,718 (or, as amended, the alternative costs of \$35,518, or \$31,718). The relative benefit for this project is building upon substantial neighborhood support and commitment to ensure the successful completion of a new outdoor classroom and garden space with wheelchair accessible garden features. In addition to serving the 340 families with children in Memorial-Spaulding Elementary School, the direct linkage to the neighborhood through the path from Brookline Street and Clifton Road opens the garden to the greater neighborhood and the ball fields at the school will attract families attending ball games.

Goal #4: This project includes substantial donations from private fundraising, PTO support, a grant from the Newton Schools Foundation, and a fifth grade graduation gift. The project also includes generous donations of material and volunteer labor, as detailed in the application.

Goal #8: The project has strong community support as detailed and documented in the application. The League of Women Voters, in a letter dated 1/15/03, to the CPC expressed opposition to funding the project due in part to concerns that only a limited range of people might benefit from the project.

Goal #9: As presented at a recent CPC meeting, this round of applications is geographically distributed throughout the City; this project is located in Oak Hill.

Recreation Goals

1. Address the needs targeted in the <i>Recreation and Open Space Plan</i> and take advantage of other opportunities to meet the recreation needs of the residents of the City.	Yes, see below
2. Meet the recreation needs of the greatest number of residents possible.	No
3. Meet the greatest variety of recreation needs possible.	Yes, see below
4. Serve passive as well as active uses. Finding ways to balance the range of recreational opportunities and serve the diverse recreation needs of the community is a priority of the CPC.	Yes
5. Preserve sight lines consistent with open space. . . . Decisions about scale and placement should be made with the objective of enhancing or enabling open views.	NA
6. Access for disabled residents should be included in plans wherever possible.	Yes, see below

Additional comments on selected goals:

Goal #1: Although the project is not specifically mentioned in the updated *Recreation and Open Space Plan*, the project will help meet the passive recreation needs of the neighborhood and will enhance accessibility for people with disabilities.

Goal #3: Since this project will add a passive recreation element to a schoolyard with mostly active recreation facilities, it will create greater variety of recreation facilities in this area.

Goal #6: This project will enhance access for disabled residents with the installation of accessible garden features.

CPC RECOMMENDATION

This project, in part, is consistent with the CPA criteria and many of the Plan's goals, as described above. Although the statue and curriculum development portions of the proposal could add valuable amenities to this project, the Committee does not believe these elements are consistent with the CPA criteria. Therefore, the Community Preservation Committee, in a 6-0 vote with one abstention, recommends funding this application to create an outdoor community classroom/park called "Kayla's Garden" at Memorial-Spaulding Elementary School by appropriating and transferring \$23,718 to be expended under the direction and control of the School Committee for purposes of funding a portion of the costs for creating Kayla's Garden as detailed in the application budget (submitted on 1 November 2002), but not including costs for the proposed statue, playground safety surfacing (under the statue), or curriculum support, with the following conditions:

1. Work shall commence no later than 31 December 2003 and shall be completed no later than 31 December 2004 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.
2. Any portion of the grant not used for the purposes stated herein shall be returned to the Newton Community Preservation Fund.