

CITY OF NEWTON

IN BOARD OF ALDERMEN

FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT
SPECIAL JOINT MEETING WITH COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY
PRESERVATION

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 11, 2006

Present: Ald. Coletti (Chair), Lennon, Linsky, Salvucci, Parker, Schnipper and Lipof

Absent: Ald. Gentile

CCP Members Present: Ald. Linsky (Chair), Lennon, Hess-Mahan, Sangiolo, Yates, Parker, Vance and Lappin

Also Present: Ald. Burg and Danberg; David Wilkinson (Comptroller), Mike Kruse (Director, Planning and Development), Nick Parnell (Public Buildings Commissioner), Sandy Pooler (Chief Administrative Officer), Jayne Colino (Director, Newton Senior Center), Dave Tannozi (Public Buildings Dept.); Bob DeRubeis (Deputy Commissioner of Parks and Recreation)

ITEM RECOMMENDED BY FULL BOARD ON 7/10/06:

REFERRED TO CMTE. ON COMM. PRES. AND FINANCE COMMITTEE

#458-05 **COMMUNITY PRESERVATION COMMITTEE** recommending that the sum of \$55,675 be appropriated from the Community Preservation Fund for purposes of studying and planning the restoration of the Crafts Street Stable Exterior Building Historic Preservation Study.

CMTE ON COMM.PRES. APPROVED AS AMENDED @ \$30,000 FOR SPECS 5-0-3 (Ald. Linsky, Sangiolo and Parker abstaining)

ACTION: **APPROVED AS AMENDED @\$30,000 FOR SPECS 5-0-2 (Ald. Linsky and Parker abstaining)**

NOTE: Nick Parnell, Public Buildings Commissioner, was present this evening. He proposes to perform a restoration of the Crafts Street Stable building (construction cost is estimated at \$500,000-\$600,000). Over the past few months, these two Committees have reviewed this request, and, since there is no adaptive reuse of this property, the Board has been reluctant to authorize the expenditure of \$600,000 in capital improvement funds for this building when there are so many other city-owned parcels and buildings for which such funds could be used to make repairs/improvements.

Commissioner Parnell has continued to impress upon the Committees that the building is listed on the National Register of Historical Buildings, which requires that the City continue to maintain the appearance of the exterior of this building. He explained that the

roof, exterior brickwork and windows all need work. The *original* proposal made to the Community Preservation Committee was for approximately \$90,000 for the study, but that amount had been amended down to \$55,675 before the recommendation came to the Board of Aldermen for approval.

Subsequently, the Finance Committee had recommended that this request be further amended to \$30,000 to cover the cost for specs for this project; these funds include the architectural study, contingency funds, and the remainder to go towards construction costs. There was still some lack of support for this appropriation, therefore, it is possible that the item will be placed on Second Call on the floor of the Board on September 18th.

The Finance Committee ultimately voted 5-0-2, with Ald. Linsky and Parker abstaining, to approve this item as amended @ \$30,000.

The Committee on Community Preservation voted 5-0-3, with Ald. Linsky, Parker and Sangiolo abstaining, to approve this request as amended @\$30,000.

REFERRED TO CMTE. ON COMM. PRESERV. AND FINANCE COMMITTEE

#279-06 **DIRECTOR OF PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT and COMMUNITY PRESERVATION COMMITTEE** proposing an increase in the FY07 CPA Administrative Budget from a total of \$176,326 to \$185,468 in order to implement several changes in the administration of the CPA program.
CMTE ON COMM.PRES. APPROVED 7-0-1 (Ald. Parker abstaining)

ACTION: FINANCE APPROVED 5-0-1 (Ald. Parker abstaining; Ald. Schnipper not voting)

NOTE: Mike Kruse, Director of Planning and Development, was present this evening. He indicated that the Community Preservation administrative budget is being increased in order to cover the shift in the position of the CPA Program Manager. That position is currently a .6 fte position, but due to demands placed on that individual by the workload for the Community Preservation Committee, it is necessary to change the CPA Program Manager position to a full-time position. The Cost of this increase is \$25,545. The proposal also seeks to eliminate the (currently funded) CPA Planner position. The proposed overall savings will be in excess of \$51,00 (with this change, the individual who currently holds that position will be allowed to apply for the newly created Manager position. It is also requested that the sum of \$30,000 be transfer of \$30,000 to the DPW Engineering Division to ensure that there is a proper level of support provided to the CPC on these petitions that must be handled (these funds will come from the excess funds created by the elimination of the CPA Planner position.

Both Committees understood the need for the \$30,000 transfer to the DPW Engineering division as a means to ensure that proper support will be provided by that department in

the CPC administration function (similar to how funds get appropriated for Law Department support in administration of the CPC). Both Committees were in support of this action and the Finance Committee voted 5-0-1, with Ald. Parker abstaining and Ald. Schnipper not voting, to approve this overall request for change in the Planning Department FY07 budget.

The Committee on Community Preservation voted 7-0-1, with Ald. Parker abstaining, to approve this request.

THE FINANCE COMMITTEE THEN WENT ON TO DISCUSS THE FOLLOWING ITEMS:

#300-06 HIS HONOR THE MAYOR requesting acceptance of and authorization to expend a total of \$39,423, received as grant funds for installation of solar panels at the Oak Hill Middle School.

ACTION: **APPROVED 5-2 (Ald. Coletti and Salvucci opposed)**

NOTE: Nick Parnell and Dave Tannozi from the Public Buildings Department presented this item to the Committee. A letter dated August 7th was presented from the Mayor indicating that these funds were received from three sources as grant funds (the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection, Massachusetts Technology Collaborative, and the Massachusetts Renewable Energy Trust). These funds will allow for installation for solar roof panels at the Oak Hill Middle School as well as monitoring equipment that will allow the students to study the operation of the panels and monitor local weather conditions.

Also attached to the agenda this evening was a letter from Mr. Parnell dated August 1st indicating exactly how much money was coming from each of the three grant sources and what that money will be used for. According to Mr. Parnell, these solar panels will produce enough energy to power two homes and will be used as an educational tool for students to track the energy produced by these panels as well as monitoring of weather systems.

The Committee discussion this evening focused on the fact that there is a proposal to install these panels, but that the final location of the panels has not yet been determined (i.e. whether they will be affixed to an exterior wall or to the roof of the gymnasium. The concern that the Chairman and other members of the Committee had was that this is a new school building, and the building is not conducive to the installation of these panels. There was concern that the panels are proposed to be installed in close proximity to the ball fields of the school, which might leave them open for damage unnecessarily (if they are affixed to an exterior wall of the building or on the roof of the gym).

Chair Coletti suggested that the better location for this installation would be the roof at the Brown Middle School, because that building is sturdy enough to handle the installation, and it is not directly in the vicinity of playing fields.

The Committee vote on this item was 5-2, with Ald. Coletti and Parker opposed, to approve this item. It is expected that this item will be placed on Second Call on the floor of the Board on September 18th for further discussion.

REFERRED TO PUBLIC FACILITIES AND FINANCE COMMITTEES

#303-06 HIS HONOR THE MAYOR requesting an appropriation in the amount of \$70,425 from FY07 estimated revenue for the purpose of restoring FY07 budget cuts to the Public Buildings Department building maintenance supply and outside contractor accounts.

PUBLIC FACILITIES APPROVED 7-0 ON 9/6/06

ACTION: APPROVED 7-0

NOTE: Sandy Pooler, Chief Administrative Officer, presented this item to the Committee. He explained that this item was docketed in response to the budget resolution passed by the Board of Aldermen in May of this year which requested that these funds be restored to the Public Buildings Department budget.

The Committee was pleased that Mayor Cohen had agreed to restore these funds to the budget and, without debate, voted 7-0 to approve this item.

#298-06 HIS HONOR THE MAYOR requesting an appropriation in the amount of \$8,092 from the Capital Stabilization Fund for the purpose of supplementing the funds that the Senior Center has available to paint the exterior of its building.

ACTION: APPROVED 7-0

NOTE: Commissioner Parnell presented this item to the Committee. He was joined by Jayne Colino, Director of the Senior Center.

Chair Coletti indicated that his one concern with this project was that the existing paint be properly removed from the building first and that appropriate ground coverings be used in order to catch paint chips, which are estimated to contain at least some lead paint particles. He urged that, if the paint does in fact contain lead, it should be properly disposed of.

Commissioner Parnell and Ms. Colino assured the Committee that proper precautions will be taken and proper disposal will be carried out for this project.

With that understanding, the Committee voted 7-0 to approve this item.

#299-06 HIS HONOR THE MAYOR requesting authorization to increase the annual expenditure limit on the Department of Senior Services Senior Memorial Revolving fund to \$40,000. Donations received will enable the Senior Center to complete the Park at the Senior Center.

ACTION: **APPROVED 7-0**

NOTE: The City has received Community Preservation funds towards this project. This project has been sent out to bid twice; the first round of bids were over-budget. After scaling back some of the original plans, the project was re-bid. Ms. Colino explained that an additional \$30,000 has been contributed to the Senior Memorial Revolving Fund in an effort to make up the gap between what was received thusfar for funding and what the bid for the project came in at. Therefore, since there is an annual expenditure limit of \$10,000 on the fund, and these funds would exceed the annual expenditure limit, it is necessary to request authorization to expend those funds for this purpose.

The Committee was pleased that these additional funds were received, and was in support of increasing the authorized expenditure limit for this purpose for this year; the fund will be reviewed again next year if needed. Therefore, the Committee voted 7-0 to approve this request.

REFERRED TO PROGRAMS & SERVICES AND FINANCE COMMITTEES

#301-06 HIS HONOR THE MAYOR requesting an appropriation in the amount of \$25,000 from Marathon Receipts for the purpose of funding park improvements and repairs at the Charlesbank and Bowen playgrounds.

PROG. & SERV. APPROVED 5-0 ON 9/5/06

ACTION: **APPROVED 7-0**

NOTE: Bob DeRubeis, Deputy Commissioner of Parks and Recreation, was present this evening. He explained that, each year, Marathon funds are received from the BAA and then they are appropriated for use in making repairs and improvements to playgrounds. There is a list of locations to be bettered, and each year, these funds are used on those areas on the list on a rotating basis. Last year, the City also used approximately \$35,000 in BAA Marathon receipts to purchase Fibar (a safety surface to line the play areas with).

The Committee was in support of this continuing program for the upkeep of its playgrounds, and voted 7-0 to approve this request.

#322-06 HIS HONOR THE MAYOR requesting acceptance of the provisions of Chapter 55 of the Acts of 2006 and Section 3 of Chapter 64 of the Acts of 2006 (related to employee retirement benefits) to allow for an increase in the accidental death benefit for surviving children to an amount equal to the benefit provided for in MGL Chapter 32, Section 7(2)(a)(iii).

ACTION: **APPROVED 7-0**

NOTE: The Committee reviewed the information provided by the Newton Retirement Board (which was attached to this evening's agenda) that explains that acceptance of this provision would mean that annual benefits would increase by \$200 per year; there are currently two individuals in the Newton Retirement system that would qualify to receive this benefit (for their dependents – one for which the eligibility would run out early in 2007, and the other who would be eligible over her lifetime due to disability), so the overall annual allowance would not have a great impact.

The Committee agreed to go along with the action of the Retirement Board and voted 7-0 to approve the acceptance of the provisions of Chapter 55 and Section 3 of Chapter 64 of the Acts of 2006.

REFERRED TO PROGRAMS & SERVICES AND FINANCE COMMITTEES

#302-06 HIS HONOR THE MAYOR requesting an appropriation in the amount of \$350,000 from FY07 Revenue for the purpose of supplementing the FY07 School Department budget. This sum represents 70% of the new state aid given to the City of Newton by the Massachusetts General Court in the final conference committee budget passed by the Legislature and signed into law by the Governor.

PROG. & SERV. APPROVED 5-0 ON 9/5/06

ACTION: **APPROVED 7-0**

NOTE: Sandy Pooler was present this evening. He explained that this amount, along with an additional approximate \$150,000 received for health insurance benefits for the school department, will be utilized to re-hire some teachers at the high school level.

The Committee reviewed the accounts into which these funds are proposed to be transferred, and voted 7-0 to approve this item.

His Honor the Mayor

#297-06 DAVID LESCOHIER, 93 Adena Road, reappointed as a member of the Newton Taxation Aid Committee for a term to expire on May 1, 2009. (60-day Board action date: 10-13-06)

ACTION: **APPROVED 7-0**

NOTE: This is a re-appointment to the Taxation Aid Committee. Since this was a re-appointment and all proper paperwork was attached to the agenda this evening, it was not necessary for Mr. Lescohier to be present for the meeting.

The Committee reviewed the backup information provided and voted 7-0 to approve this item.

All other items were held. The Committee adjourned at approximately 8:45 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Paul E. Coletti, Chairman