

Funding Proposal for Taft Avenue (housing)

Community Letters & Petitions



Staff note: Phone numbers and email addresses originally included on the copy of the attached petition have been omitted in all versions posted on the Newton CPC website.

The Eliot Church of Newton, UCC

474 Centre Street, Newton, Massachusetts 02458
617-244-3639 | office@eliotchurch.org
www.eliotchurch.org

December 8, 2014

CAN-DO
1075 Washington Street
West Newton, MA 02465

Dear Josephine:

The Eliot Church of Newton and its members have been strong supporters of the work of CAN-DO since its beginnings over 20 years ago. Many of Eliot's congregants have and continue to serve on the Board of Directors of CAN-DO, as well as serve on the Event Committee for your annual YIMBY Celebration.

Over the years, we have seen CAN-DO take on affordable housing projects that others considered impossible or unfeasible. Today, because of CAN-DO approximately 93 adults and 300 children who otherwise might be homeless not only have safe, attractive and affordable homes, but a community that cares about them and their well-being.

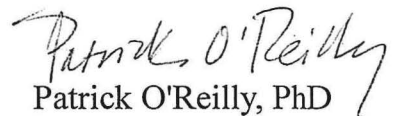
At this time, we want to lend our wholehearted support to CAN-DO for the development of its proposed housing project on Taft Street in West Newton. To show our support, the Mission and Social Justice Commission of Eliot Church have set aside funding for the project and are committed to working with CAN-DO, to raise up to \$15,000 in order to reduce the amount of public funds needed for the project. We are hopeful that this commitment will enable CAN-DO to gain approval of the project by the Newton Housing Partnership.

We not only hope, but we expect, that by this time next year, there will be two more families living in this new CAN-DO residence who can say – perhaps for the first time – that they, too, are home for the holidays.

Thank you for helping to make Newton a city we can all be proud to call home.



Diane Price
Co-Chairs of the Mission and Social Justice Commission



Patrick O'Reilly, PhD

PRISCILLA M. LEITH, MBA
162 Islington Road
Newton MA 02466-1012
617-969-6837
islpris@verizon.net

January 14, 2015

Alice Ingerson, Ph.D.
Community Preservation Committee
Newton Planning Department
1000 Commonwealth Avenue
Newton Centre MA 02459

To the Community Preservation Committee:

Please approve funding from CDBG funds and Newton's Community Preservation Fund for the affordable housing proposal at 54 Taft Avenue, West Newton submitted by CAN-DO and Josephine McNeil, Executive, Director.

CAN-DO is requesting \$360,000 from CDBG; \$584,029 from CPA funds; and, \$125,000 from HOME funds. The CPA amount will help to comply with requirements that 10% of each year's CPA grants go toward affordable housing. The CDBG amount should be used toward housing, vs. other possible uses in Newton's CDBG-certified neighborhoods.

I have turned from being an advocate for low-income and moderate-income housing in Newton to opposing many projects filed under that label, because instead of being small, scattered site projects that fit into most of Newton's family-oriented neighborhoods, they seem now to be huge apartment buildings that are totally out of whack with the existing neighborhood.

I believe we in Newton have to be a lot more selective – choosing to spend a bit more money, as we can find it, to assist such non-profit efforts as those of CAN-DO instead of developers who aim to make as much money as possible out of a lot in Newton where they might be able to build luxury units in tandem with low or moderate-income units.

For a long time, well-heeled developers have been able to beat out small, worthy non-profits like CAN-DO by paying cash up front. CAN-DO has to spend months searching for grants and loans to meet current prices of housing here.

CAN-DO has completed many excellent two-family, three-family and four-family projects in West Newton, Auburndale, Newton Upper Falls and a few other places. We should help it along.

Please approve funding for the project at 54 Taft Avenue, West Newton 02465.

Sincerely yours,

Priscilla M. Leith

Michael Lepie
P.O. Box 157
Waban, MA 02468
bikerml@aol.com

1/20/15

CAN-DO's TAFT AVENUE PROJECT

Please find attached Can-Do's July 8 2009 letter to the City of Newton.
Explaining what they are going to do to improve their business practices .
After the City of Newton forgave one million dollars of their debt.
Can-Do has done none of what they said they would do.
They have developed three more projects since 2009 with a total of seven units.
None of the seven units at a cost of over five hundred thousand a unit, have been able
to be included in the City of Newton Substized Housing Inventory.
The reason for this, Can-Do does not use a lottery system to choose their tenants.
The Taft Avenue project is another overpriced Can -Do project.
There is a developer fee of over eighty thousand dollars, paid for with CPA funds.
In order for this project to work they will have go 40B, in order to change the
zoning on this small single family lot.
The last time Can-Do used 40B the city had to forgive over a million dollars of their
debt.
The city already has surpassed their need for 40B projects.
Can-Do's business plan is similar to a ponzi scheme.
They need a new project every year with large developer fees to continue paying old
debt.
I believe Can-Do has more debt than assets.
It is not a question of whether or not they will fail
Only when they will fail and who will be left to clean up the mess.
Stop throwing away tax payers money to support a corporation without a realistic
business plan.
Does Can-Do even have control of the site ?

Thank You,



Michael Lepie
Senior Citizen & Tax Payer

CAN-DO



1075 Washington Street
West Newton, MA 02465
Phone: 617-964-3527
Fax: 617-964-3593

E-mail: jam_cando@msn.com
Website: www.newtoncando.org
Josephine McNeil, Executive Director

Development Organization, Inc.

July 8, 2009

Mr. Michael Kruse
Newton Housing Office
Newton City Hall
1000 Commonwealth Avenue
Newton, MA 02459

RE: Direct Loan Debt Forgiveness - \$529,817.24

Dear Mr. Kruse:

First, I want to thank you for your support of our request for debt forgiveness. The need for debt forgiveness was due to the significant loss the organization experienced on the Millhouse Commons project. We lost approximately \$450,000 due to (1) the extended permitting process despite the project being a Ch. 40B development and (2) the multi month process for the approval of CPA funding. These delays resulted in the units coming on line just as the market began to fall. We had no problem selling the 4 affordable units. In retrospect our decision to create 4 affordable units in a 6 unit project or 67% of the units instead of the usual 20% while laudable was not financially wise. As we closed the project with an outstanding construction and did not earn our expected developer fee of approximately \$150,000.

As set forth in your recommendation to the Planning and Development Board, I am submitting the following information.

I. PLAN TO ACHIEVE LONG-TERM FINANCIAL STABILITY

The City of Newton recommended to the Planning and Development Board that NHRF loans in the amount of \$529,817.24 be forgiven and the recommendation was approved. Thus, we will have an additional \$32,377.00 in income. Those funds will be used to offset the payments associated with the restructuring outline below:

- A. The need to payoff the \$198,276.16 outstanding construction loan from the 1101 Chestnut Street project (Millhouse Commons). Restructures loan- 3.5% fixed for three years through March 31, 2012; re-priced at 250 bps over the 3 year FHLB rate for years 4-6 and 6-9. The current monthly payment is \$890.35 or \$10,684.00 annually.
- B. The need to develop a long-term plan to make principle and interest payments on an existing line of credit, which has a \$20,000 balance with an interest rate of 6.0%, and an interest-only loan in the amount of \$57,000 with an interest rate of 7.25% with The Village Bank, collectively "TVB Unsecured Obligations". Request that The Village Bank add this debt to the refinanced mortgage of \$160,000 on 11-13 Cambria Road, The cost would be approximately \$397.00 per month or \$4764.00 annually.
- C. The need to eliminate CAN-DO's current credit card debt which is \$75,000.

Seek a lender to consolidate these into one loan with a lower interest rate of 9% and plan to pay it off in 5 years. The cost will be approximately \$18,900 per year.

D. The need to sell 29 Coyne Road in order to pay off the TVB mortgage. We have executed a Purchase and Sale Agreement to sell the property to an income eligible first time homebuyer for \$195,000.00. This will enable us to payoff the mortgage of \$185,316.

Under separate cover, I have submitted CAN-DO's actual FY09 and a projected 2010 budget which reflects the funds generated by the elimination of the payments.

II. ONE TO THREE YEAR STRATEGY FOR STRENGTHENING FINANCIAL EXISTENCE

A. Reducing Financial Risk when Planning Projects:

Over next three years focus primarily on "as of right" rental projects with a pre-development period, construction period and occupancy of less than 18 months. In addition, we will try to obtain predevelopment funds in order to limit the expenses which must be paid from our operating budget. A possible source of such funds is CEDAC and possibly LISC. We will also build in the maximum allowed developer fee. Funders determine the percentage of a project's total development costs they will allow for a developer fee, DHCD usually allows 15%, Masshousing up to 20% and the Federal Home Loan Bank of Boston up to 15%.

B. Pursue opportunities to increase income by providing fees for services to other nonprofits in Newton and elsewhere. The board revisited the idea of CAN-DO either collaborating with or acting as a consultant for other area nonprofits interested in developing housing. I have had discussions with at least one group who approached us to ask if we would be interested in acting as the developer for a property they would own and operate.

C. Working with Newton Housing Partnership and others to pursue City of Newton building and construction fee waivers.

D. Increase in Fundraising Activities -- The Board of Directors has made a commitment to engage in additional small fundraising events, as well as a second major fundraiser. The board is exploring several activities for the fall and winter to raise approximately \$10,000 including a craft fair (\$4000-\$5000); a clam bake excursion (\$1000); a house party with a sports personality; (\$2000); fall newsletter and annual appeals (\$1500). Of course these plans are as rational and will present a significant challenge given the current economic environment. We will also continue to pursue grants from new and old sources.

E. In 2010, Board will explore a Capital Campaign. It has been suggested that despite the difficult financial times; this might be an opportune to engage in a multi-year capital campaign. We will engage a consultant to provide guidance to undertake a campaign of between 300 to 400 thousand dollars. Most of which will be used to establish an endowment to support our operating expenses. If our consultant thinks it is feasible we will some portion (up to \$50,000) to reduce our Cambridge Savings Bank loan.

III. STRATEGY FOR ENHANCING ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

Since its birth in 1994, CAN-DO's focus has been primarily on the development of affordable units rather than the growth of the organization. Fourteen years later it still has only one paid staff person even though it has assets in excess of \$8 million. One of the strengths of the organization is that it has had very consistent board members who are committed to the mission of the organization. However, it is not a "high-powered" board; none of the board members are wealthy or have access to great wealth. Our efforts to recruit new board members are hampered by federal statute. One third of the board members must have family incomes that fall within the low-moderate income ranges as established by HUD. While the aim is worthy it has been problematic to identify such candidates.

The board and the executive director are in the process of identifying potential candidates for board membership with specific skills not included among the current board members including housing development, legal and organizational management. In addition we are seeking suggestions for potential low-moderate income individuals

with the interest and the time to serve. It is our hope that with the restructuring of our financial position, we will be able to attract individuals willing to take on the challenge of making us a stronger and more viable organization.

The Board has also determined that it is necessary to revisit its prior efforts to develop a 3-5 year strategic plan which includes:

- Identifying techniques to strengthen the role of board members
- Develop a 5-year succession plan for Executive Director
- Identify ways to increase support for Executive Director for day to day operation until such time as there are funds to do so.

IV. OPERATING RESERVES

One of the items raised at the last months meeting with the Planning and Development Board was concern about the lack of reserve for each property. While it is certainly desirable to have a reserve for each property; that has not been possible especially for our 2-family properties. It is important to note that all of our 2-family properties are over 100 years old. Each underwent modest rehabs at the time of purchase. Our first priority has been to ensure that ongoing and immediate repairs are made and that the properties are maintained so that they are not visibly unattractive. While costs, especially taxes and water and sewer, have increased, the Section 8 voucher rents have not. So it is not unusual in any given month for the expenses to exceed the income for a given property. We cover that shortfall by moving funds from another property and sometimes we have to transfer funds from the organizational operating budget. Thus placing further strain on our budget. At those properties with more than two units we fund a reserve with excess income at the end of the year, if there is any.

V. POSSIBLE COST-CUTTING OPTIONS

We were also asked to examine our budget to see if there were any opportunities for cost-cutting options. As we consider the current budget, we did not identify any specific reductions. The major expenses in the budget are related to staff, rent and accounting.

The only staff person, the Executive Director, has not had a salary increase in 4 years, professional conference and associated travel expenses were eliminated from the budget last year. We just renewed our current lease, with no increase. However, we are exploring opportunities to collaborate with other nonprofits on shared services. It is possible that some of accounting expenses could be reduced by such an endeavor.

I have attempted to address all the issues set forth in the recommendation and raised in the meeting. Again, I would remind you that the position that CAN-DO finds itself in at this moment is not entirely of its making. I would also ask that you look at our circumstances as not unique for a nonprofit developer of affordable housing; there are other nonprofits that have been in existence much longer, and with more depth in staff and financial resources who have also been impacted by the market. The approved debt forgiveness of the NHRF loans is the foundation for the financial restructuring with other lenders.

In closing, I want to emphasize that CAN-DO's future is dependent upon our moving forward with a new project as soon as possible. We look forward to working with you and others interested in our success to fulfilling our mission to develop affordable housing in Newton.

Sincerely,


Josephine McNeil
Executive Director

PETITION

We, the undersigned residents of the City of Newton do hereby declare that:

We support CAN-DO'S application for Community Development Block Grant Funds (\$485,000) and community housing funds from the Community Preservation Committee (\$584,029) for its 54 Taft Avenue Project. The project will create 2 rental units to provide housing for low-moderate income families. We recognize that it is necessary to provide this amount of public funds in order to set rents at an amount affordable to families without rental subsidies. Given the current housing market in Newton, in order to preserve the economic diversity of Newton it is necessary to expend this level of public funding..

<u>Name</u>	<u>Address</u>	<u>Zip Code</u>	<u>Phone #</u>	<u>E-mail</u>
Caroline Schwarzwald	153 Oak St, Newton	02464		
Ded Linn	101 Parker St.	02459		
Jane D. ...	24 Bridge St	02458		
Jan McHatch	1617 Washington St	02465		
Christina Hardy ...	365 Cherry St	02465		
Martina Jackson	115 Lowell Avenue	02460		
Carl Felton	8 Mount Ida St., Apt. 6	02458		
Bryan Barash	47 Gardner St	02458		
Robert Fitzpatrick	167 Lowell Av.	02460		
Holly Ryan	21 Avery Path	02459		
P. Bertelli	31 Locke Road	02468		

Phone numbers and email addresses have been omitted in the version posted on the Newton CPC website.

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<u>Name</u>	<u>Address</u>	<u>Zip Code</u>	<u>Phone #</u>	<u>E-mail</u>
Jim Thompson	307 AUGUST ST NUBURDLE	02460		
ANNA H	22 GAY ST NEWTONVILLE	02460		
W. B. ...	65 Taft Ave, Newton	02465		
Jim ...	84 Brookside Ave Newton	02460		

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<u>Name</u>	<u>Address</u>	<u>Zip Code</u>	<u>Phone #</u>	<u>E-mail</u>
Barbara Halpern	66 Taft Ave W. Newton	02465		
Janice H. Weisil	53 Taft Ave.	02465		
Dusan Wolfson	47 Taft Ave	02465		
Clancy Schell	36 Taft Ave	02465		
Emily Cagwin	50 Taft Ave	02465		
Monty Cagwin	50 Taft Ave	02465		

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3

11/15

<u>Name</u>	<u>Address</u>	<u>Zip Code</u>	<u>Phone #</u>	<u>E-mail</u>
Doris Q. Sweet	281 Lexington St.	02466		
DANA DORNBSCH	233 GROVE ST	02466		
Sandilo L. Mhlabi	27 Owsatonna St	02466		
Hyoungh Jun Kim	288 Grove St. #6	02466		
Rich Frantz	12 Glastonbury Oval	02468		
Martha Sweet	14 Stamford St	02466		
Austen Herlihy	14 Stamford St.	02466		
Kelly Leve	288 Grove St.	02466		
David Herlihy	14 Stamford St	02466		
Alice Sweet	40 Bennet St.	02458		
James Foster	40 Bennet St.	02458		

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<u>Name</u>	<u>Address</u>	<u>Zip Code</u>	<u>Phone #</u>	<u>E-mail</u>
Jane Egan	35 Holman Rd	02466		
Clayton Simon	131 Farwell St	02460		
EILEEN SIMONS	131 FARWELL ST	02460		
Janet Conway	2049 COMM Ave Auburndale	02466		
Don H Roush	256 Auburndale AVE	02466		
William Hoch	275 Islington Rd	02466		
Ellen D. Miller	67 Bourne St.	02466		
Carol R. Grand	250 Flemmond Pkwy # 1704W	02467		
Ed Roush	28 Clearwater Rd	02462		
Carol Roush	"	02462		

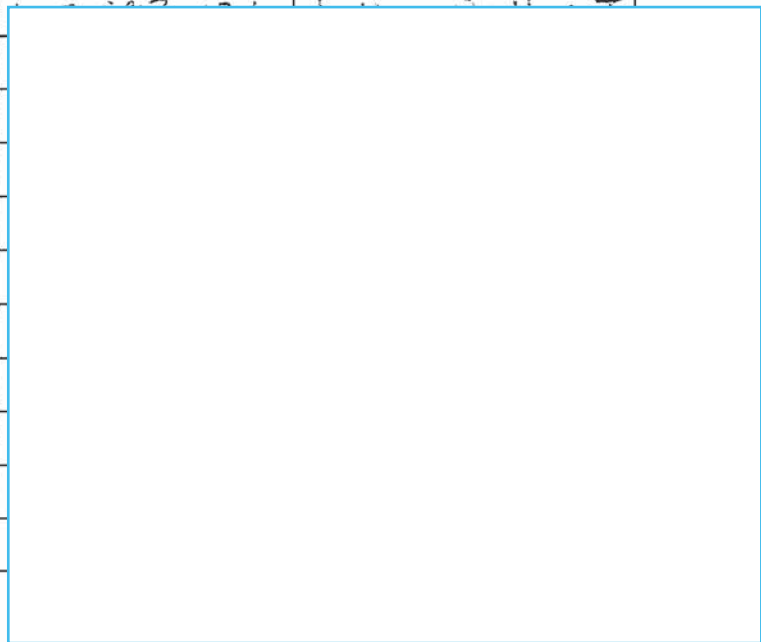


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<u>Name</u>	<u>Address</u>	<u>Zip Code</u>	<u>Phone #</u>	<u>E-mail</u>
Brian Bean	78 Greylock Rd	02465		
Marilyn Morris	336 Woodward St	02465		
Granville Harris	" "	" "		



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<u>Name</u>	<u>Address</u>	<u>Zip Code</u>	<u>Phone #</u>	<u>E-mail</u>
Sua Parsons	172 Washington St.	02458		
Dans Tennant	14 Churchill Terrace	02460		
Lynn Weissberg	5 Alden Street	02459		
Marc Sittnick	97 Parker Street	02459		
Tatjana Meschede	221 Langley Rd.	02459		
Kathleen Hobson	128 Dorset Rd.	02468		
Marion Lipsen	69 Neharden Rd	02468		
James Rutenbeck	106 Oliver Rd.	02468		

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<u>Name</u>	<u>Address</u>	<u>Zip Code</u>	<u>Phone #</u>	<u>E-mail</u>
Deborah Acevedo-Garcia	129 Pine Ridge Road	02468		
Kathleen Hobson	128 Dorset Road	02468		
Fran Godine	19 Crofton Road	02468		
Kevin McCormick	52 Madison Ave.	02460		
Andrea W. Kelley	28 Putnam St.	02465		
Susan R. Heyman	70 Varick Rd.	02468		
Merian L. Knapp	250 Hammond Pond Pkwy. 706N	02467		
Marion Hipson	69 Nehoiden Rd.	02468		
Susan Paley	1575 Commonwealth Ave.	02465		
William Holland	223 Webster St.	02465		
Meg Holland	223 Webster St.	02465		

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Name	Address	Zip Code	Phone #	E-mail
Betsy Harper	19 Fairmont Ave, Newton	02458		
Leslie Creedy	3 Vernon St, Newton, Ma	02458		
AARON McPHERSON	56 NEWTONVILLE AVE	02458		
Carm Brown	49 Clark St	02459		
Amy McMahon	1224 Boylston St.	02464		
CAROLYN CLARK	36 GARDEN RD.	02458		

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Myrtha Tollen	16 Belmont St.	02458		
Nadja Young	28 Cabot St.	02458		
Margaret H. Kelly	18 Feltee St	02464		
Milane Price	15 Avondale Rd.	02459		
Susan Brechtel	47 Whittemore Rd.	02458		
Robert A. Young	178 Cabot St.	02458		
Susan Nason	78 Roosevelt Rd	02459		
M. Schoonover	9 Mt Ida St	02458		
Caroline Duffell	76 Benton Rd	02459		
Margaret Shue	29 Lewis St	02458		
John Clark	36 Garden Rd	02458		

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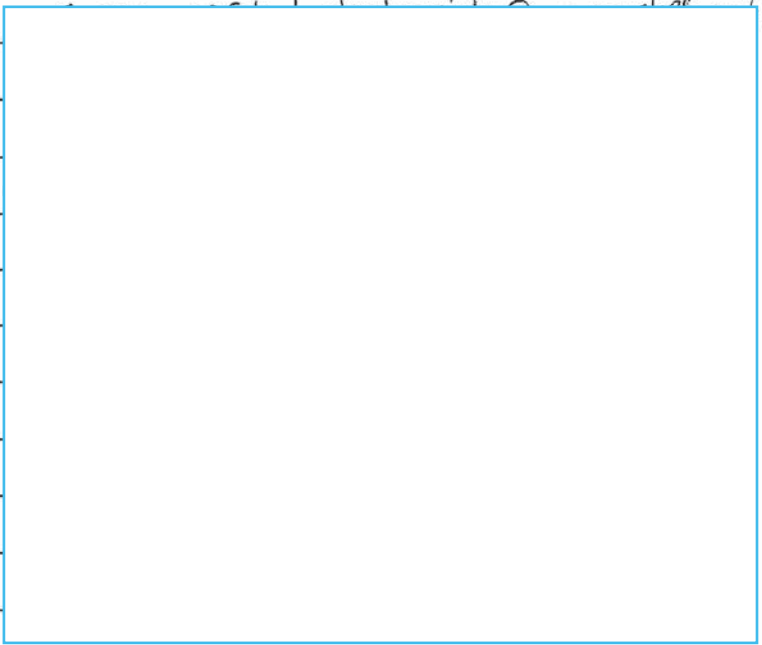
<u>Name</u>	<u>Address</u>	<u>Zip Code</u>	<u>Phone #</u>	<u>E-mail</u>
Caroline Schwarzwald	153 Oak St. Newton	02464		
Ted Snow	171 Palmer St.	02459		
Jane D. Sussman	24 Bridge St	02458		
Jan McKeath	1617 Washington St	02465		
Janice Hardy	365 Cherry St	02465		
Marlene Jackson	115 Lowell Avenue	02460		
Coal Felton	8 Mount Ida St., Apt. 6	02458		
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Amy Yullasz	154 Waltham St	02465		
Carel Ann Shee	24 Milo St.	02465		
Judy Jacobson	289 Cypress St.	02459		
Nancy Zollers	154 Oliver Rd.	02468		



12

From: Doris Ann Sweet [mailto:dasweet3@gmail.com]
Sent: Thursday, January 22, 2015 9:48 PM
To: Alice Ingerson
Cc: David A. Olson
Subject: **Vote CPA funding for 54 Taft Ave.**

Dear Ms. Ingerson and Aldermen:

I wish to convey my support for use of CPA funds for the CAN-DO affordable housing project at 54 Taft Ave. Not only does the project have strong community support, but any affordable housing we can produce in Newton is sorely needed. With all the opposition to larger developments we are seeing in the city at this time, it seems so logical to support the funding that will make this small-scale project possible. CAN-DO has a long record of developing successful small-scale affordable housing projects in the city, and I especially appreciate that one of the rental units in this project is targeted for tenants with 50% AMI. I cannot think of a better use of CPA funds, and I am aware that there have been very few, if any, affordable housing applications for CPA funding in the last 2-3 years.

I strongly urge a positive vote for CPA funding at the CPC meeting on February 12.

Doris Ann Sweet
281 Lexington St.
Auburndale, MA 02466
617 821-3400
Sent from my iPad

From: Kathleen Hobson <kathleen.hobson@verizon.net>
Sent: Friday, January 23, 2015 8:57 PM
To: Alice Ingerson
Cc: David A. Olson; Fran Godine; Betsy Harper; Nancy Zollers; Nanci Ginty Butler; Pia Bertelli
Subject: **Please approve requested CPA funds for 54 Taft Avenue.**

Dear Members of the Community Preservation Committee:

We are writing in support of the CAN-DO housing proposal for 54 Taft Avenue. We hope you will vote to approve CAN-DO's request for \$584,029 in CPA funds at your meeting on February 12.

As you know, the Planning Board voted 4-1-1 to approve federal funding for the project, following the unanimous recommendation of the Newton Housing Partnership and despite the Planning Department's non-recommendation. Planning staff, in their memo and in their presentation at the January 5 hearing, argued that 54 Taft Avenue was an inefficient use of scarce public housing money, and out of step with a new plan by the Mayor to produce over 800 new units of affordable housing in the next six years. The Board countered that this new plan was still little more than a concept, and very uncertain, given the scarcity of available land and the current zoning environment, especially now that we may have met a Chapter 40B minimum threshold. In any event, the new plan should not be pursued to the exclusion of smaller-scale development, which neighbors tend to prefer. The Board also questioned staff assertions concerning the project's financial feasibility, finding the Partnership's evaluation more persuasive.

We hope you will agree that the 54 Taft Avenue project--a small-scale, high-quality, low-impact development that would rehabilitate and improve an attractive existing structure, increasing housing affordability and neighborhood diversity with little to no increase in traffic or density--is a judicious use of our CPA funds. We understand that housing proposals should ideally receive 25 to 40 percent of the total available, and that 54 Taft Avenue is the only one in the pipeline. It's costs are realistic and reasonable, given the current Newton market. It conforms to a key principle in our Comprehensive Plan: when possible, increase the affordability of our existing housing stock. It also serves a "priority" population--families at risk of homelessness--who will not only be getting a new home in a wonderful neighborhood, but also supportive services to help them toward economic self-sufficiency.

We need to continue to support the valiant work of small-scale nonprofit developers like CAN-DO. Please approve the CPA funds requested for 54 Taft Avenue.

Sincerely yours,

Pia Bertelli
31 Locke Road

Nanci Ginty Butler
38 Wyman Street

Fran Godine
19 Crofton Road

Betsy Harper
19 Fairmont Avenue

Kathleen Hobson
128 Dorset Road

Nancy Zollers
154 Oliver Road

From: Patrick Dober <patrick.dober@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, January 25, 2015 3:47 PM
To: Alice Ingerson; David A. Olson
Subject: **In support of 54 Taft Avenue**

Dear CPC and Newton Board of Aldermen,

I write to ask you to support CAN-DO's proposed two-unit housing development on Taft Avenue and to encourage the City of Newton to provide the needed funding.

I was exceedingly disappointed in the Engine Six situation. I hope that the City will show its support for affordable housing this time around.

Very truly yours,

Patrick Dober
82 Oxford Road
Newton, MA 02459

54 Taft St Project

Eileen Freiberg-Dale <efreiberg@rcn.com>

Sun 1/25/2015 1:15 PM

Inbox

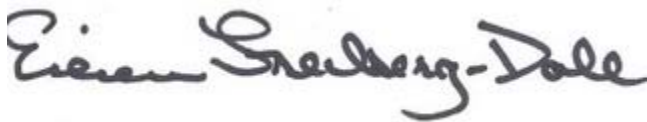
To:Alice Ingerson <aingerson@newtonma.gov>;

Cc:David A. Olson <dolson@newtonma.gov>;

Alice,

I am writing to ask that the Community Preservation Committee grant \$584,029 in CPA funds to the 54 Taft Street Project. Although there are not a large number of units in this project, it will still assist 2 families who would not otherwise be able to live in Newton or in any home at all. CAN-DO is a wonderful organization and I support their work.

Sincerely,



Eileen Freiberg-Dale, LICSW



From: Judy Jacobson <judyjacobson@rcn.com>
Sent: Tuesday, January 27, 2015 8:27 PM
To: Alice Ingerson; David A. Olson
Subject: **Affordable housing on Taft Avenue**

Dear Community Preservation Committee and Board of Aldermen/women –

I hope you will support the funding needed for the 2-unit affordable housing project proposed by CAN-DO on Taft Avenue. For over 20 years CAN-DO has done an excellent job providing housing for vulnerable families in Newton. While the small scale of this project makes the need for public funds high, the housing will provide a significant public benefit. Other than another small CAN-DO project (Eddy St) no affordable rental housing has come on line in Newton for several years. I hope that you will support this project.

Regards,

Judy Jacobson

From: Michael Lepie <bikerml@aol.com>
Sent: Friday, February 6, 2015 5:28 PM
To: Setti D. Warren
Cc: James Freas; Robert Muollo; Alice Ingerson
Subject: **64002 Can-Do**
[Housing staff memo to CPC re: Taft Avenue housing proposal]

Mr. Mayor,

Sound like they got to you.

This final copy is a lot nicer to can-do.

You and I both know Can-Do will fail, just a question of when.

I hope I am not the only one that will talk against this origination

I hope I won't be too abused at to CPA meeting

Seems like if one speaks out about the waste abuse is the answer

Can-Do has proven over and over again that their development helps the developer .

Not the city subsidize housing inventory, no lottery .

Not the tax payers, overpriced cost with large debt.

Do something to stop this continue waste.

I keep trying

Maybe you could lend hand

Stop the waste.

Thanks,

Michael Lepie

Tax Payer & Senior Citizen

<http://www.newtonma.gov/civicax/filebank/documents/64002>

filename: 15Feb3-TaftAve-Housing-staff-to-CPC.pdf

League of Women Voters of Newton (LWVN) COMMENTS

Project Name: Taft Avenue

Category: Community (Affordable) Housing

Location: 54 Taft Avenue, Ward 3

CPA Request: \$ 584,029 Total Project Cost: \$1,144,029

Comments:

The LWV of Newton appreciates the opportunity to review and comment on proposals before your committee. Know that we appreciate the hard work you do to weigh each proposal and all proposals fairly and with an eye to benefit all Newton residents within the CPA guidelines.

This proposal fits CPA guidelines, Comprehensive Plan and Newton's Housing and Community Development Plans. Newton needs more affordable housing. The LWVN appreciates that these units will be permanently affordable.

CAN-DO is a well-known and highly regarded organization that has already successfully completed many affordable housing projects. In fact, LWV readers noted that CAN-DO's **Eddy Street** project, also funded with CPA money, came in under budget, ahead of time and was overall an excellent result.

Questions (for developer—do not need to be read):

1. CAN-DO anticipates providing services through volunteers. Please clarify these support services and who will provide them.
2. What is CAN-DO's plan for predictive maintenance and operating funds?
3. Sometimes a high efficiency boiler is listed as part of the renovation (required responses) other times it is not (scope of work). The residential appraisal lists 2010 water heater and boiler. Would the CAN-DO explain what the intention is for the boiler?
4. The application included no letters of support from the neighbors—it would be good to see those in the proposal.

Suggestions:

The cash flow for this development could become an issue. The developer's fee has regularly come in very low. We recommend raising that closer to a traditional developer's fee to support operations and support services. Failing that, the CPC should work with CAN-DO to develop a fund for predictive maintenance, which could come out of utility savings or CPC funds, to ensure the sustainability of this and future projects.

CAN-DO could perhaps ask local environmental groups (Green Decade) or builders to fund additional green features (timed thermostats, solar panels).

Recommendation:

Affordable housing is urgently needed in Newton, and LWVN strongly supports adding units of permanently affordable housing, particularly scattered-site, small, in-fill development of this kind. Our readers were unanimous in strongly supporting this proposal.

Newton's CPA has, according to its own reports, spent just 31% of its funds on community housing through 2012. We are disappointed that more affordable housing applications have not been submitted in recent years.

The CPA itself is in good shape--even were this proposal and other FY15 proposals funded at asking levels, the fund would have a balance of \$6 million before FY16 requests are submitted.

Therefore, the LWVN supports this proposal.

From: Lynn Weissberg <lweissberg@sswg.com>
Sent: Tuesday, February 10, 2015 11:24 AM
To: Alice Ingerson
Subject: **54 Taft Av.**

To Members of the Community Preservation Committee:

I am writing to strongly support CAN-DO's request for CPC funding for the development of two affordable housing units at 54 Taft Av. for families at risk of homelessness. As both the Newton Housing Partnership and the Planning Board concluded after very careful review, this is an excellent use of government funds and one that is totally aligned with the goals of the CPA. I am very concerned about the lack of affordable housing in Newton and the paucity of housing-related projects seeking CPC funding. Support for this project is wide-spread, not only do advocates for affordable housing support it, but the neighbors, including those on Taft Av. do as well.

I urge you to approve CAN-DO's request.

Thank you for your consideration.

Lynn Weissberg
5 Alden St.
Newton Centre

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