



Ruthanne Fuller,  
Mayor

**City of Newton, Massachusetts**  
Department of Planning and Development  
1000 Commonwealth Avenue Newton, Massachusetts 02459

Telephone  
(617) 796-1120  
Telefax  
(617) 796-1142  
TDD/TTY  
(617) 796-1089  
[www.newtonma.gov](http://www.newtonma.gov)  
Barney S. Heath  
Director

---

**Community Preservation Committee**

MINUTES

September 15, 2020

The virtual meeting was held online on Tuesday, September 15, 2020 beginning at 7:00 pm. Community Preservation Committee (CPC) members present included Mark Armstrong, Dan Brody, Byron Dunker, Rick Kronish, Susan Lunin, Robert Maloney, and Jennifer Molinsky. Community Preservation Program Manager Lara Kritzer were also present and served as recorder.

Mr. Armstrong opened the CPC meeting at this time and the CPC members introduced themselves.

**Proposals & Projects**

**Public Hearing on Commonwealth Avenue Carriageway Redesign Proposal**

Nicole Freeman, Director of Transportation Planning, presented the City's proposal for CPA Recreation funding to complete the 100% design plans for the Commonwealth Avenue Carriageway Redesign. Ms. Freedman explained that this work was proposed for between the Marriott Hotel and Lyons Field in Auburndale, which is an atypical section of Commonwealth Avenue as it is in the only section with the primary driving land in the north carriageway. Their proposal would restore the parklike character of the rest of Commonwealth Avenue to this section of the City by creating a bike and pedestrian lane in place of the northern carriageway which will link together the surrounding trail system. The City will receive \$5.9 million from the state for the construction of the project, and Ms. Freedman noted that the City and Solomon Foundation had already funded the conceptual and 25% design.

Ms. Freedman showed a map of the area and the proposed pedestrian and biking paths. She explained how the area would be reconstructed and how the work will improve the condition of the area. The new paths will connect Newton to Weston's new pathway which will run the length of Route 20 and will also link into new pathways under development in the area and surrounding the Riverside development. She also presented the 25% design plans which broke the redesigned carriageway into three sections – Marriot Hotel to Woodbine Street, Woodbine Street to Lyons Field/Islington Road, and along Lyons Field. Ms. Freedman reviewed the existing conditions of the area, which is currently characterized by wide lanes with wide and noted that the pathway would end at Lyons Field where the reduced use carriageway currently begins. Ms. Freedman next reviewed the plans for the new pedestrian and bike paths as well as the amenities which would be added along the Commonwealth Avenue roadway. She explained that a flashing beacon would be installed at the cross walk to allow for safer and easier access across Commonwealth Avenue and that the signal would be retained at Ash Street. The new bike path would be 12 feet wide with a 5-8 foot wide sidewalk. During their public hearings, residents had expressed concern with turning left from

*website* [www.newtonma.gov/cpa](http://www.newtonma.gov/cpa)

*staff contact* Lara Kritzer, Community Preservation Program Manager

*email* [lkritzer@newtonma.gov](mailto:lkritzer@newtonma.gov), *phone* 617.796.1144

Islington Road onto Commonwealth Avenue, so they had decided to continue to allow driving along the park in this area. Other areas of the design had also been updated to reflect the concerns of the neighborhood and to return the area to a human scale.

Ms. Freedman explained that they were currently in the middle of the 25% design process and were working on the design in tandem with the MassDOT. They planned to have the design complete by 2023 to allow for construction in 2025.

Mr. Brody asked if the trail would just end for anyone biking east. Ms. Freedman stated that a plan to make a two-way bike lane in the existing Commonwealth Avenue carriageway was now docketed with the City Council for review. Ms. Molinsky asked about the process of taking the design from 25% to 100%. Ms. Freedman explained that once they reached the 25% design, they were no longer making major changes to the design of the bike and driving lane locations. From 25% to 100% design involved looking at the details of how the design would be constructed, such as signal timing, etc. Project engineer Matthew Jasmin added that once they had addressed the public engagement issues, they could begin working on the environmental permitting for the project, as this phase of work also included completing all of the state and City project reviews. Ms. Molinsky noted that the public meeting had already happened and wondered whether there were any more changes expected in the project. Ms. Freedman and Mr. Jasmin explained that a public meeting was required as part of the MassDOT process when a project reached 20% design.

Ms. Lunin noted that they would be losing some trees as part of the new design and asked about the proposed landscaping of the new recreation area. Mr. Jasmin stated that they would be working with a landscape architect during the upcoming phase and that their plan was to enhance the existing greenspace for the public's use and access. Mr. Armstrong thought that the project was nicely designed but wondered if there would still be a missing link to any trails on Route 30. Ms. Freedman answered yes that there was still a need for a connection in this area and stressed that they were working closely with MassDOT to address this. She explained that this was still a big question mark in the project's design but that they were working on both long- and short-range solutions to the problem. Mr. Brody noted that a concern had been raised prior to the meeting about removing the utility poles through this area. Ms. Freedman stated that they had asked consultants HSH to give the City a ballpark cost for that work. The base price for burying the utilities was \$1.2 million but the exact amount would not be known until they had talked with the utilities. Ms. Freedman added that MassDOT would not pay for undergrounding the wires.

Mr. Kronish noted that the western end of the project would still need a dedicated lane for bicyclists as the existing area was frightening to ride through. Ms. Freedman stated that they were in the planning stages for a two-way protected lane along the southern side of the road leading into this project. She asked Mr. Jasmin of HSH what MassDOT's options were for this area. Mr. Jasmin stated that they were developing a design for a future public hearing with the goal of separating the uses in this area but still needed to talk with MassDOT on what happens at the Charles River Bridge. Mr. Maloney asked whether the State funding was certain for this project. Ms. Freedman answered that the project was programmed into the state's bicycle and pedestrian program budget. The funding has already been allocated and is not in question. Mr. Maloney noted that these types of project were often pushed back and wondered if that was possible here. Ms. Freedman explained that this project as funded through a separate fund available only to bicycle and pedestrian projects. She stated that

this fund was much more streamlined and secure, and that there was less pressure on this funding source than on other available state funds.

The public hearing was opened for public comment at this time. Ted Chapman, Riverside Working Group, emphasized that this project is part of a larger path system stretching from Lyons Field into Wellesley. He noted that MassDOT was also planning to reconstruct the bridge near the Lasell College boathouse and was working on drawings for the hared path along Route 30 which will connect into Newton's infrastructure. Mr. Chapman noted that the project will also provide access to Norumbega Road and the commuter rail, and that it would tie into multiple existing trails and serve as an important connection.

Councilor Alison Leary thought that this one of the most fantastic projects in recent years and noted that it had brought a lot of state funding to the City. She appreciated all of the hard work involved and thought that it was important to create more opportunities for people to walk and bike through the City. She also noted that people pulled over the curb around the corner of Auburn Street and Commonwealth Avenue and asked if there were any plans to stop the erosion that this caused. Mr. Jasmin stated that the project ended at the Marriot Hotel but will compress the corridor to focus the driving area and that they would be installing vertical curbing where possible. Councilor Leary asked if more trees would be installed as part of the project. Mr. Jasmin stated that the project's landscape architect would look at this and that trees would be added where possible. He noted that they wanted to see an adaptive design here that considered the need for sight lines and the uses of the area.

Ms. Lunin moved to recommend that \$390,000 in CPA Recreation funds be allocated to the Commonwealth Avenue Carriageway Redesign. Mr. Kronish seconded the motion which was unanimously passed by a roll call vote. The public hearing was closed at this time.

### **Public Hearing on Grace Episcopal Tower Restoration Proposal**

Mr. Kronish requested guidance on how the Committee should proceed with this project. It was noted that the Committee had received additional information prior to the meeting. Mr. Armstrong thought that the Applicant's should move forward with their presentation. Mr. Kronish suggested that the applicant be asked to withdraw their proposal and rework it in a way that might meet the objections raised. He did not think that it would be fair to continue the discussion of the existing application at this time. Mr. Brody thought that the Committee should go ahead with the public hearing and allow those present to speak to the project. He stated that he did not think that he would be ready to move forward with any recommendations at this meeting but that that this was an opportunity to learn more about the proposal and thought the Committee should take advantage of it. Mr. Armstrong agreed, and Mr. Kronish asked if the Committee should share the information received with the applicant as he did not think that it would be fair to hold a discussion without sharing it. Mr. Brody stated that he would agree if the Committee was planning to make a decision at this meeting but thought that there would be plenty of time to discuss all of these issues before that happened.

Jean Papalia, chair of the governing board, was present with Austin Stewart and architect Scott Aquilina to present Grace Episcopal's Tower Restoration funding proposal. Their presentation began

with a recording of the carillon bells playing “Lift Every Voice and Sing” followed by a summary of the history of the property and its close ties to the community. The applicants noted the rich history of the congregation in the development of Newton Corner and how places of worship were noted to be important to the community in both the 2007 Newton Comprehensive Plan and 2010 Landscape Report. Mr. Stewart suggested that this project could be seen as a test of the community’s ability to work together on a project and argued that the preservation of the tower would undeniably serve the public good. He briefly noted the importance of its architect, Alexander Esty, and how Grace Episcopal was one of the best examples of its architectural style. Mr. Stewart explained how other communities had chosen to use their CPA funds for similar purposes and noted that the Eldridge chimes defined the soundscape of the neighborhood which had developed around the church. He also noted that the construction of the church and tower had inspired the donation and design of Farlow Park across the street. An 1878 birds eye view of Newton Corner was included in the presentation, and Mr. Stewart noted both the prominence of Grace Episcopal to the community even then, and how many of the local landmarks in 1878 had since been demolished.

Mr. Stewart stated that Grace Episcopal’s congregation had been faithful stewards of the campus and that they have been monitoring the condition of the tower for the last ten years. Last year, they had discovered that the structure was deteriorating much faster than they had anticipated, and that the base of the tower was structurally insufficient to carry the load of the stone structure. Photos of the cracked stones and plans mapping the damage to the tower were presented to explain the extent of the current damage. The tower was now at risk of collapsing and the area surrounding it was roped off and the tower itself inaccessible.

The applicants next reviewed their plans for the stabilization of the structure. They had created the project budget while working with experts in the field and had double checked the cost of the work with Shawmut Construction. Their funding plan proposed to have half of the funding come from CPA funds, with the rest to be raised through fundraising and grants. The applicants noted that CPA funding was the only funding source of this scale available to the project, and Mr. Stewart reiterated that 91 CPA communities had previously funded this type of work.

Ms. Papalia stated that the proposal was about preserving an iconic historic landmark which served as an anchor to Newton Corner. She noted that their congregation was growing and that they had made partnerships with other nonprofits throughout the community. For the last 28 years, the rectory has been rented to Riverside Community Care and the property was a well-used community meeting space, polling location, and concert venue. Ms. Papalia explained that the congregation does not feel that the tower defines what Grace Episcopal is, but that it does define the surrounding neighborhood.

Mr. Armstrong agreed that Grace Episcopal is a stunning and beautiful building. He noted that it was a big ask despite the leveraging to complete major construction on such a delicate project. Mr. Maloney thanked the applicants for the presentation and stated that he also loved the building but wanted to know what other options were available to the applicants if CPA funding could not be used here. Ms. Papalia stated that the CPA funding was necessary to fix the structure and that they were not sure that they could complete the project without it. Their attorney, Ryan McManus, state that there were no alternative funding sources available to step in on this project. He asked that the applicants be provided with any information on why this could not be funded.

Mr. Maloney asked what the cost would be to remove the tower if all of the funding sources failed. Mr. Aquilina stated that they had estimated that it would cost \$650,000 to remove the tower and noted that they would then need to replace something in that area, so the overall removal and replacement cost was anticipated to be over \$1 million, which they assumed would rest on the congregation alone. Mr. Kronish stated that the funding of religious institutions was an issue but that even without the religious issue, he was concerned with funding private institutions where public use and access is limited. He wanted to know what the public benefit was of the project as the CPC would want to see a public benefit for any non-religious structure in private ownership.

Ms. Papalia stated that they are a public institution with an architecturally significant structure which is an appendage of their main building. She noted that the bells impacted the whole neighborhood and that they were trying to save the tower which was no longer safe. Mr. Aquilina stated that he was a newly appointed member of the Upper Falls Historic District Commission and was concerned with historic preservation in Newton and the level of support for preservation in the community. He explained that there are restrictions requiring preservation but very few sources to help property owners with this work. He noted used to be more funding available but that there were now very few options for helping to preserve these structures. He thought that if CPA funding was going to support historic preservation projects, then he was not sure how it could turn its back on the City's nineteenth century buildings.

Mr. McManus noted that the tower structure was very limited as to its other potential uses and reiterated that the City's churches and religious institutions had been called out for preservation in its planning documents. He also noted that this was a common use for CP funding and that the majority of other CPA communities had done these types of projects. Mr. McManus stated that in the Acton case, the Supreme Judicial Court had confirmed that communities cannot categorically exclude churches from public benefits and that the proposal had included a letter addressing the three-part test required for the Anti-Aid Amendment determination. He noted that every project was different, that funding could not be used for religious imagery or the sanctuary itself but that CPA funding could be used for projects which were entirely historic preservation. He stated that there was no intent to provide aid to the church in this application and that they would be happy to discuss that point further with the Committee, adding that the CPC could not deny funding to the project solely because the property owner is a church.

Mr. Brody asked to discuss the funding in more detail. He asked the applicants to explain the level of detail that they had received for their project commitments. Mr. Stewart responded that they had a verbal commitment for \$450,000 so far and had a good understanding of how much could be raised. Mr. Stewart was fairly confident of the funding numbers and explained how they had developed their plan and understanding of how to finance the project. The National Fund for Sacred Places was reviewing their funding application and they planned to apply to the Mass. Historical Commission (MHC) for two rounds of Mass. Preservation Projects Fund (MPPF) grants and for Emergency Funding. Mr. Brody asked if they would have heard back about any of these funding options by October 1. Mr. Stewart stated that they were not sure of the dates at present but expected to hear back before the end of 2020. They had had extensive conversations with the MHC about both of their funding programs as well. Mr. Brody asked about the likelihood of reaching their funding goal and Mr. Stewart answered that they thought it was likely and that they had been encouraged to apply. He

noted, however, that at least some of this funding might hinge on the use of CPA funding. In terms of private foundations, they were working with a finance and campaign consultant to help identify these funding sources.

Mr. Brody asked about the timing of the funding, asking if all of the funding would need to be released at once if the City Council approved the project. Mr. Aquilina stated that if the CPA funding was approved, they had assumed that it would be released in pieces. They hoped to have half of the funding available at the end of this calendar year and would use those funding along with silent contributions, a bridge loan, and MHC funding to get the project started in the spring. Mr. Brody asked about the timeframe for member payments. It was noted that a number of the proposed funding sources relied on matching funds. Mr. Aquilina thought that a CPA funding commitment could help them to leverage other funding sources. He added that they would need to resolve the future of the tower within the next twelve months, and that a commitment of CPA funding would make everything else possible.

Keith Jones, 109 Vernon Street, stated that he was the president of the Friends of Farlow Park and supported this project. In terms of the question of whether the tower was a public or private resource, he stated that as a photographer he was concerned with aesthetics and thought that there was significant structural beauty in the tower. He was not a member of the church but wanted to make the point that the sculptural beauty of the tower and the sounds of the bells were resources that were shared by everyone in the community. He added that most major cities took care of and supported their major historical and architectural structures.

Jay Walter, 83 Pembroke Street, stated that he was a member of Historic Newton, the Upper Falls Local Historic District Commission, and the Friends of Farlow Park. He thought that Grace Episcopal was an excellent example of nineteenth century ecclesiastical architecture. He noted that the tower was located at the foot of Farlow Park, the restoration of which had been funded with CPA funds and thought that it was clearly an important element of the City and Newton Corner. He also noted that the park was anchored by three churches and that Farlow Park is the oldest park in the City. He stated that historic preservation of the tower had a public benefit in and of itself and he thought that the Community Preservation Act recognized this by including preservation as a potential use. Mr. Walter also questioned the impact on this unique neighborhood of removing the tower.

Councilor Alison Leary stated that this was one of her favorite parks and that she believed that historic preservation was a clear public benefit. She noted that this would be a first for the City if the Committee recommended using public CPA funding for a religious institution. She noted that there were many other demands on the City for CPA funding and suggested that any funding for the project should be restricted to only what is already in the Historic Resource reserve account. Ms. Papalia stated that they were only applying for historic resource funding and noted that they had received 525 signatures on their petition to save the tower. Councilor Leary suggested that only the 10% of CPA funding that is required to be spent on Historic Resource projects should be used for this project and explained her concerns with the amount of funding requested.

Mr. Brody noted that Councilor Leary was correct that 10% of the City's CPA funding was set aside for historic preservation projects but noted that the Committee had a practice of spending more than that on each of the allowed categories. Mr. McManus stated that creating additional requirements

for this project because the applicant was a church was legally problematic. Councilor Leary stated that she would like to see a letter from the Law Department addressing the use of CPA funding on religious institutions.

Mr. Brody stated that he would like to continue this discussion to the next meeting in order to provide time for the applicants to submit additional details to answer questions about the funding proposal. He asked that the Applicants put together financial information including a detailed phasing showing what funding would be coming in when. He thought that this information would be necessary in developing any future funding conditions. He also stated that he would like to see more specific information on when funding would be confirmed and for the administration to provide guidance on the funding of this project, including whether or not the Mayor supports it. Mr. Kronish stated that he also wanted to note the public issue.

The public hearing was closed at this time. The Applicants requested that the discussion be continued to the next meeting to allow time for further discussion. A question was raised about the preservation restriction and what it covered, and the applicant was also asked to provide information on their maintenance budget for the property. Ms. Papalia stated that they did have a financial plan and budget outline that they could provide. Mr. Stewart stated that they could put together the budget numbers specific to the tower, but that in general the congregation spent \$50,000 each year to meet general site preservation requirements.

Mr. McManus asked to clarify that the proposed work was required because of a design flaw rather than any maintenance issues. Mr. Aquilina explained that this was a design flaw issue and that once fixed, was unlikely to happen again. The Applicants also noted that the option to remove the tower from the site was less expensive than the proposed restoration. Mr. Maloney thought that it was helpful to have this information and noted that if the CPC recommended this use of the funding, that the congregation would be saved from spending the funds to remove the tower. Mr. Armstrong thanked the Applicants for the preservation and noted that he believed in this project. Further discussion was continued to the October 13 meeting.

### **Potential Modifications to Covid-19 Emergency Housing Relief Program**

Barney Heath, Director of Planning and Development, and Amanda Berman, Director of Housing and Community Development, were both present to discuss the proposed amendments to the existing Covid-19 Emergency Housing Relief Program. Ms. Berman reviewed the programs structure, noting that it was intended to provide short term housing assistance for those negatively impacted by Covid-19. The program was originally designed to provide three months of assistance to those with household incomes below 80% Area Median Income (AMI), with a preference that the funding assist as many lower income households as possible. The CPC had approved the use of \$2 million in community housing funds for this project, which was matched with \$500,000 from the City's CDBG funds. Ms. Berman noted that the CDBG funding would be fully used by the end of September and reviewed the requirements for households applying for the funds.

Ms. Berman reviewed the outreach and marketing for the program, explaining that 240 households had responded to the program by the June 10 lottery deadline. Metro West Collaborative Development (MWCD) had contracted with the City to run the program and provided funding to 180

households (533 individuals) by the end of August. These numbers represented 106 households that received assistance in July and an additional 74 more that were funded in August. Ms. Berman noted that one of the households had decided to not continue with the program and only received one month of funding, and that five of the recipients were owners of deed restricted affordable units. The program was also serving a deeper level of affordability than had been originally planned, with many of the recipients below 60% AMI. Ms. Berman reviewed the income levels and ethnic diversity of the applicants as well.

It was noted that the program had spent \$425,193 on rental assistance in July and August and expected that number to go up to \$697,632 by the end of September. Approximately 30% of the overall project funds had been used to date, and Ms. Berman explained that the City would like to extend the length of time that the program can provide rental assistance from three to six months. She explained that they were confident that they were helping the target groups of program recipients with their marketing and believed that there was a clear need for an extension of benefits. The program had originally been designed with the assumptions that they would help approximately 300 households with up to \$7,500 in rental assistance over three months. To date they had helped 180 households with an average rent of \$1,841. The average assistance provided was \$1,280 per household, which is significant less than the maximum amount the program was designed for. Looking forward, they anticipated helping 25 new households in September and future months, spending an average of \$1,300 per household.

Ms. Berman explained that extending the program to six months would allow them to assist approximately 299 households through July 2021. Existing program participants would be given the option of extending their assistance by providing continued evidence of negative financial impacts. MWCD will handle reviewing the documents submitted and will also take care of renewing the landlord participation agreements as needed. Ms. Berman noted that some households might be back to work but still have arrearages to pay, and that this funding could help with that as well.

Mr. Armstrong stated his agreement with the idea as he would like to see the existing funding spent further and wider. Ms. Molinsky asked about the difference between the number of households funded and the 240 initial applicants had received funding. Ms. Berman explained that some were ineligible for the program or had stopped communicating with MWCD, and that there were also some household that were still working to pull together the necessary documentation. Mr. Kronish asked about the difference between the average monthly household assistance and the average rent of \$1,800. Ms. Berman explained that the program paid up to 70% of the monthly rent and it was noted that many households had difficulty paying these rents even without the Covid-19 crisis.

Mr. Armstrong asked if extending the time period to six months would still let them keep the program open to others in need. Ms. Berman answered yes that the program would continue to accept new applications and that the City is planning to renew its marketing efforts to announce the expanded program. Mr. Kronish moved that the CPC approve amending the Covid-19 Emergency Housing Relief Program to provide monthly housing assistance for up to six months for eligible households. Ms. Lunin seconded the motion.

Councilor Malakie expressed surprise that the City Council would not get a chance to vote on this change and stated that she did not believe that anyone thought that the Covid-19 crisis would be



gone by the end of the program. She asked what the plan was for those recipients who still needed assistance once the additional three months had passed and was concerned that this program would become a permanent operating expense. Ms. Molinsky stated that she fully anticipated that in six months there would still be lots of housing problems. She noted that the program would help participants to keep up with these expenses and that the change allowed the same pot of funding to be stretched further. Councilor Malakie asked if the CPC was not curious about what would be done in six months. Members agreed that they were curious but comfortable with the proposed changes to the program at this time.

Mr. Kronish stated that these problems could not be fixed by just the CPC and suggested that the City Council could raise the minimum wage in the City. Ms. Lunin stated that they were hoping for the best and planning for the worst. She was happy to hear that more households did not need the funding at this time. Ms. Molinsky asked what would be achieved by not expanding the program and thought that it was reasonable to approve this change as the funding was already allocated for this use. Mr. Armstrong stated that he was pleased that the program was being used and was surprised that there were not more applicants. The motion was called and passed by a unanimous roll call vote.

#### **Durant-Kenrick Gutter and Window Repairs Pre-Proposal Review**

Historic Newton Director Lisa Dady was present to review their pre-proposal for CPA funding for the Durant-Kenrick Gutter and Window Repair project. Ms. Dady stated that Historic Newton maintains two museums and serve the public with programs and tours. Their sites had received thousands of visitors before the Covid-19 crisis and both are listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Durant-Kenrick was also noted to be a local landmark and had retained much of its original historic fabric on both the interior and exterior of the house. Ms. Dady explained that the window sash on the rear façade had suffered from water damage on both the interior and exterior of the sash and that it had taken months to determine the causes and stop the problem. On the inside, the damage had been caused by a leak in the fire suppression system while on the outside, the damage had been caused by a leaking gutter.

Ms. Dady stated that the 2012 restoration had been well done and that they did not want to lose any ground with the building. The wood gutter had been installed with a gap about one-third of the way across the cause which had caused the damage to the façade and windows. The gutter needed to be replaced and they were considering both a new wood gutter and a potential change in material to fiberglass. Ms. Dady stated that they would use whatever material the Newton Historical Commission approved for this area. In addition to the new gutter, the work would include re-glazing and painting the damaged sashes of the six windows on the rear façade. She stated that the wood appeared to still be in good shape but that it was critical that the windows be repaired soon to prevent further damage. Historic Newton had received one quote for the proposed work and would be reaching out to other companies for more estimates. They had also received a matching grant of \$10,000 from the 1772 Foundation to complete the repairs.

Mr. Armstrong asked for more information on the material specifications from the gutter manufacturer and for information on how the new gutter would be connected with the joint of the existing wood gutters on the rest of the house. He stated that he was concerned with how the

installation of a fiberglass gutter would be done but was otherwise supportive of the project. Other members agreed that this was an important historic resource that needed to be preserved. Ms. Lunin moved to invite the applicants to submit a full proposal for the repairs to the gutter and windows at the Durant-Kenrick Homestead. Mr. Maloney seconded the motion which passed unanimously by roll call vote.

### **Jackson Homestead Fence Replacement Pre-Proposal Review**

Ms. Dady continued her presentation with the second proposal from Historic Newton for replacement fencing at the Jackson Homestead. Ms. Dady explained that a wood picket fence runs down the west side of the property along Jackson Road. This fence has been patched and repaired many times over the years but was now badly deteriorated with many of its pickets and posts now rotted. They had received a quote from Steelco, a City contractor, for a new wood picket fence and it appeared to be a very straight forward job that would only take a few days to complete. Ms. Dady explained that the existing fence enclosed the side and rear yards of the property and that the deteriorated fencing sometimes fell into the sidewalk and at other times fell into the yard. The Museum's accessible entrance was located along this fence and group programs used this entrance as well.

Mr. Armstrong asked if there was a more permanent solution to the program that cost more. He was concerned that a new cedar picket fence would be deteriorated again in 15-20 years. He asked if crushed stone could be used in the installation to keep the fence dry, which might extend its life to 30 years. He suggested that these details be reflected in the bid. Josh Morse, Public Buildings Commissioner, explained that Steelco did a lot of work with the City. Nicole Banks, Parks, Recreation and Culture Commissioner agreed with the concerns for the longevity of the fence and agreed that that could be added to the project.

Ms. Molinsky stated that she would like to better understand the line between maintenance and major repair. She stated that she would also like to better understand the scope of the available funds and the reasons for requesting CPA funding for this work. Ms. Dady stated that a full fence replacement was not typically in Historic Newton's available budget, and that the City had only a small budget for fencing city-wide. She was not sure where the funding could otherwise come from at this time due to the limits of their staff time and budget.

Mr. Brody asked if they knew the age of the existing fence. Ms. Dady thought that this fence dated back to at least the 1980s but that while they had clear documentation for the front yard fence, little was known about this one which had probably changed more often over the years. Mr. Brody asked if there was much history to be preserved with this fence. Ms. Dady answered that this is the type of fence that historically would have been installed in this location. There was documentation from a 1930s site plan that there was a fence installed in this location, and there appears to have been a fence here throughout the twentieth century. Although they were not sure of the fence design, it was reasonable to assume that a picket fence was consistent with this use and location. A question was raised about the function of the fence. It was noted that the Jackson Homestead was City property located on a busy corner and that the fence provided a visual barrier that was helpful for the preservation of the property. Ms. Dady reiterated that it made sense historically for this type of fence

to have been installed here. It was noted that a tree had recently fallen on the site and Ms. Dady confirmed that it had not further damaged the fence.

Mr. Armstrong expressed concern with the design of the proposed new fence. He was not sure why Historic Newton was asking for CPA funding with no consideration for the design. Ms. Dady stated that since they did not have documentation of another design, they had thought it would be better to replace the fence in kind. She explained that they did not want to make up the history of the site and that picking a design out of the blue was not historic preservation. She added that it was historically correct to have an elaborate fence across the front of a property and a simpler one along the sides. She thought that the picket fence was historically appropriate and that using another design would just be speculation. Mr. Armstrong stated that he was bothered by the pedestrian nature of the design and would like to see more consideration for the design of the fence and what it is made of. Ms. Dady noted their thought process for reviewing the colors and designs used on the site.

Mr. Brody moved to invite the applicants to submit a full proposal for the fence replacement at the Jackson Homestead. Ms. Lunin seconded the motion. A roll call vote was then taken, and the motion passed 6 to 0 with Mr. Kronish abstaining from the vote.

### **Update on Crescent Street Housing and Playground Proposal**

Public Buildings Commissioner Josh Morse and Parks, Recreation and Culture Commissioner Nicole Banks were present with Mr. Heath and Open Space Coordinator Luis Demorizi to provide an update to the CPC on the status of the Crescent Street Housing and Playground Proposal. The discussion began with a review of the CPC's past funding allocations for design work on the project. Mr. Morse stated that the City had spent \$41,000 of the \$100,000 allocated for site assessments and \$11,000 of the \$156,000 allocated for the feasibility and design of a playground on the site. Additional City funds have also spent on remediation for the property.

The project has been on hold since 2018 and the City was now ready to move forward with developing a park at this location. They had recently reconnected with the adjacent Myrtle Baptist Church and were working with them to get a project off the ground that reflected the neighborhood's wants and needs. Mr. Demorizi reviewed the ideas for the potential design of the park and noted that the project as now proposed would not include housing. Instead, the site would include more park and natural playscape features. Mr. Heath noted that this project still had to complete a separate process with the City Council's property reuse committee to change the project to be entirely park space and that they planned to keep a lot of what had already been worked out with the Myrtle Baptist Church community.

Members discussed the change from housing and park to just park space with the representatives and reviewed the next steps for the project. Nancy Zollers, 154 Oliver Road, thought that the City should continue to look at the site for housing.

### **Other Business**

There was no other business at this time. Mr. Kronish moved to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Maloney seconded the motion and all voted in favor.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:00 P.M.