

From: [Janet Sterman](#)
To: [Lara Kritzer](#)
Cc: [Alicia Bowman](#); [Alison M. Leary](#); [Andrea W. Kelley](#); [Bill Humphrey](#); [Brenda Noel](#); [Christopher J. Markiewicz](#); [David Kalis](#); [Deborah J. Crossley](#); [Emily Norton](#); [Holly Ryan](#); [Allan Ciccone Jr.](#); [Joshua Krintzman](#); [Julia Malakie](#); [Leonard J. Gentile](#); [R. Lisle Baker](#); [Marc C. Laredo](#); [Maria Scibelli Greenberg](#); [Pamela Wright](#); [Rebecca Walker Grossman](#); [Richard Lipof](#); [Susan Albright](#); [Victoria Danberg](#); [Jacob D. Auchincloss](#); [Andreae Downs](#)
Subject: Grace Church's CPA proposal for funding the Grace Bell Tower
Date: Wednesday, September 16, 2020 1:19:17 PM
Attachments: [GraceChurch Deed of sale 06_09.pdf](#)

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Lara,

I am sorry I was unable to attend last night's CPC meeting via Zoom. Please send me a link so that I may view/listen to the recorded conference.

Additionally, will you please forward my message below to the current members of Newton's Community Preservation Committee.

Thank you.

Janet Sterman

I have lived diagonally across the street from Grace Church since 1989. It is a beautiful property and has a well-attended congregation.

The last time that I recall the church had a big need for a capital infusion for repair work, they sold off a parcel of land on Church Street/Wellington Terrace. The buyer of the property built residential care home, essentially a non-profit. The city of Newton receives no revenue from the Grace Church as it is a religious institution paying no real estate property taxes. Their most recent cash windfall resulted in the building of a facility that also does not pay Newton any real estate taxes.

There are many exceptionally beautiful churches in Newton all historic properties and likely in need of major repairs.

I worked with a group of neighbors for **fourteen years** until we finally got CPA spending approval for the Farlow Park Restoration. Farlow Park is not only Newton's first public park, it is publicly-owned by the City of Newton, and not a **private entity** as it is with Grace Church.

I one-hundred percent oppose any city funding for the proposed CPA Grace Church bell-tower project with ANY taxpayer dollars (CPA or other). Funding this **proposal sets an improper precedent** for the future use of Newton CPA funding.

Thank you.

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If everyone is thinking alike, then someone isn't thinking." - George S. Patton

Lara Kritzer

From: Scott Aquilina <sbaquilina@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, September 22, 2020 10:58 PM
To: Scott.Aquilina1@jacobs.com
Cc: Lara Kritzer
Subject: Fwd: Grace Church Community Outreach

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To City of Newton Councilors,

(in response to a negative email we saw circulating to you all and to share some information which should be of interest)

We have received 550 signatures for our petition Call to Action - Save the Tower - with over 300 from 02468. We greatly appreciate the support to date. More to come.

We are proud of our 9/15/20 presentation to the Newton CPC despite the irregularities we experienced. The recording is available here: <https://vimeo.com/458333162>. Grace's presentation begins at 44:00. Watching this again reminds us how healthy the discussion was and how much support there is on the committee. We look forward to returning to the CPC on October 13 and responding to questions from the committee which Lara Kritzer has collated for us.

I wanted to share an excerpt from a letter the Tower Restoration Committee recently sent to the League of Women Voters in Newton in response to questions they emailed us regarding the community outreach initiatives that Grace Church has been proud to sponsor for over 147 years, and to share a clarification regarding the Till House project that we enabled in 2009 by selling an undeveloped lot within our property for under market value.

September 7, 2020

As our grant application details, we are applying to the Newton CPP as part of a comprehensive funding strategy for the urgent structural stabilization and masonry restoration of the 1873 tower at Grace Church, home to the historic Eldredge Chime. The City of Newton identified the tower as an important historic feature of the Farlow and Kenrick Parks National Historic District in 1982 and our appeal rests primarily on the need to safeguard a local landmark. That being said, in recent planning reports the city has recognized the important contributions synagogues and churches make to the quality of our neighborhood fabric and community life:

Churches, synagogues and other places of worship help to define Newton's villages and neighborhoods. Many are prominent located landmarks with attractive surroundings, have distinctive architectural styles and serve as community gathering places. Some also provide important public functions by housing various social services.

Residents emphasized the importance of preserving these buildings.

Heritage Landscape Report for Newton, 2010



We are proud that Grace Church has served not only as a local architectural landmark but also as a community and social service resource since opening in the fall of 1873. In 2009, we entered into a partnership with TILL, Inc. (Toward Independent Living) a nonprofit group focused on providing independent living for cognitively challenged adults. We subdivided an undeveloped lot within our property to create a setting for a new group home while preserving a substantial open space with mature trees along Church Street, an important extension of the Farlow Park landscape. For the last 28 years, our Rectory has been an outpatient service center for Riverside Community Care which serves thousands of individuals annually and works closely with Newton Schools and the Newton Health Department taking referrals and doing rapid intakes as part of Newton’s Mental Health initiative. Additionally, Grace Church has created community partnerships with a variety of social services by offering space at below market rate rents and accommodating at-risk groups that have been turned away at other locations. A sampling of the partnerships we have built over the years includes:

- Groups which meet on a weekly basis in our Parish Hall include four 12-Step programs and Still Dancing which provides chair dancing for elders.
- Community groups which have used our facilities on a regular basis include the Social Science Club (at Grace Church since 1886) and Zdravets, a traditional Bulgarian Dance group.
- In the 15 months just prior to the Covid outbreak, we hosted 3 meetings of Retired Social Workers, 5 meetings of Kids4Peace (an Interfaith Peace Leader Program), and 8 community piano recitals.
- A team of Grace members continue to work with B-Safe, hosting annual outings for this inner-city summer program for children and teens.
- Since 2016, Grace Church has served as a polling station to approximately 2,000 residents in Ward 1.

As our sanctuary is blessed with exceptional acoustics, we host a variety of musical events every year. Over the past several years, these have included a Tanglewood Festival Chorus member solo recital, a choral concert with the choir of King's College London, Blue Heron Renaissance choir, a Folk and World Music Concert with Four Shillings Short, Buckingham Browne & Nichols Orchestra, and various organ recitals offered by our music director on our restored Hook & Hastings organ.

And finally, the historic Eldredge Chime, unique and irreplaceable, continues to be an important feature of the neighborhood. This June, NNHS asked us to play the bells as part of a city-wide celebration for the Class of 2020. We were also happy to do so and also to participate in Newton's observance of BLM by playing the civil rights anthem "Lift Every Voice and Sing" in July.

We have the support of both the Massachusetts and Newton Historical Commissions, Historic Newton (Newton History Museum-Jackson Homestead), community leaders such as Brooke Lipsitt, Anne Larner, Jay Walter and Keith Jones, as well as many Newton Corner neighbors. We want to earn your support too.

My best regards,

Scott

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