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**Community Preservation Committee**

MINUTES

November 10, 2020

Barney S. Heath  
Director

The virtual meeting was held online on Tuesday, November 10, 2020 beginning at 7:00 pm. Community Preservation Committee (CPC) members present included Mark Armstrong, Eliza Datta, Byron Dunker, Susan Lunin, Robert Maloney, and Jennifer Molinsky. Members Dan Brody, Rick Kronish, and Martin Smargiassi were not present for this meeting. Community Preservation Program Manager Lara Kritzer were also present and served as recorder.

Mr. Armstrong opened the CPC meeting and asked the CPC members to introduce themselves at this time.

**Proposals & Projects**

**Durant-Kenrick Gutter and Window Repairs Proposal Public Hearing**

Historic Newton Executive Director Lisa Dady presented their proposal for \$16,884 in CPA historic resource funding for the Durant-Kenrick Gutter and Window Repair Project. Ms. Dady explained that since their pre-proposal presentation, the Newton Historical Commission (NHC) had approved the use of the fiberglass gutters on the east façade, and additional information on that material had been submitted with the full proposal materials. She explained that the project proposed to replace the wood gutters on the rear (east) façade of the original building, which have failed, and to repair the damaged window sashes on that façade. The wood gutter had had an insufficient capacity to deal with the amount of water in that area. In addition, a leak in the fire suppression system inside the house had caused further water damage to the windows. The project would replace one length of gutters and a downspout. By using fiberglass, Ms. Dady explained that they could exactly match the appearance of the wood gutter but would have a new gutter with a much larger water capacity. She noted that the middle of the gutter had also begun to bow out from the building, explaining that there were several reasons to replace the wood gutter at this time. The six wood window sashes were also believed to retain original fabric. Ms. Dady concluded by noting that the project had received a matching grant from the 1772 Foundation of \$10,000. The grant is administered through Preservation Massachusetts and they hoped to have the CPA funding approved so that the work could begin asap.

Mr. Armstrong opened the hearing to public comment. There was no public comment at this time.

Ms. Datta asked for more information on the 1772 Foundation. Ms. Dady explained that the 1772 Foundation is a national organization which partners with state preservation organizations to fund historic preservation projects. It was a great resource for historic house museums this was the first

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time that Historic Newton had received this grant funding. Mr. Maloney asked about the material of the roof. Ms. Dady responded that the house had a wood shingle roof. Mr. Maloney stated that he had been concerned that the roof was slate and that there could be other water shedding issues on the building.

Mr. Armstrong asked where the project stood in terms of contract documents. Ms. Dady explained that they needed to get three quotes for work for a project of this size. They were working from a quote from Classic Construction, which had recently completed work on the Allen House as well as the Jackson Homestead. Ms. Dady explained that they were looking for a contractor that could replace the gutters who was also qualified to do the window restoration work, and that Classic Construction could do both. They had also considered the North Bennett Street School, which allowed the City to combine the work with education as well but found that the School was not able to do this project at this time. Ms. Dady had also received a third quote for both elements of the project from Essex Restoration. Ms. Dady presented a fiberglass cross section of the gutter and explained that they had chosen a material and manufacturer which was allotted in area local historic districts. She added that the Durant-Kenrick Homestead was owned by Historic Newton, a local non-profit, and that the different material would both better preserve the building and reduce maintenance costs.

Ms. Molinsky noted that the CPC liked to see projects leveraged to 50% of the costs. She noted that this project did not include that high of a match, and that the Jackson Homestead fence project had no match at all. She was concerned by this but also recognized that these were smaller projects as well. Ms. Lunin agreed that a 50% match was the Committee's preference but thought that they also needed to look at each project thoughtfully and individually, and that the project guidelines allowed for more flexibility as well. Mr. Armstrong noted that significant CPA funding had been used to restore the house and felt that the current proposal was a continuation of that work. Ms. Dady thought that the 1772 Foundation was a good example of the type of match available for this scale of project.

Mr. Maloney moved to recommend the full funding of the proposal to replace the rear façade gutter and restore six wood windows at the Durant-Kenrick Homestead as presented. Ms. Lunin seconded the motion which passed by unanimous roll call vote.

Mr. Armstrong thought that the applicant and Committee were all on the same page and liked the proposed use of fiberglass. He asked how they planned to coordinate the increased size of the new gutters with the size of the existing ones. Ms. Dady explained that the project also included widening the connection to the downspout to address that issue.

### **Jackson Homestead Fence Replacement Project Public Hearing**

Ms. Dady next presented the proposal to use \$18,244 in CPA historic resource funds to replace the wood picket fence along the Jackson Road border of the Jackson Homestead property. She explained that since the pre-proposal discussion, they had located a 1925 HABS (Historic American Building Survey) site plan showing an earlier picket fence in the same location as the existing one. Ms. Dady explained that this showed that the project would be replacing in-kind a fence that had been located in the same location since at least the 1920s, and that she would not be surprised to learn that there had been a picket fence here for even longer. The posts and pickets of the existing fence were rotted

and none of it could be reasonably salvaged. The fence needed to be completely replaced and Historic Newton would be partnering with the Parks, Recreation and Culture Department, which was in charge of overseeing the grounds of the Jackson Homestead, to complete this project. Ms. Dady stated that they had based their funding request on a quote from Steelco Fencing, which was an existing City Contractor.

Ms. Dady showed photos of the 1935 site plan and explained that it showed gates in the same locations as the existing fence. There was no documentation on when the fence was installed, but they had also found a ca. 1940s photo of the property which showed the picket fence. Based on this photo, which showed the pickets installed in front of the posts, they now planned to revise the design of the new fence to replicate the 1940s era fences. The new fence was already roughly the same size as the 1940s fence and shared its scalloped upper edge but would now have its picket location changed to match the photo. They had also discovered a 1997 photo of the site showing the picket fence, which Ms. Dady thought was a remnant of the 1940s fence and not the current fence on the property.

Mr. Armstrong agreed with the idea of replicating the 1940s fence and noted that the posts only came up to the top rail in that design. Ms. Dady stated that Steelco had also recommended that the new fence use steel sleeves around the posts which would better preserve the fence and would be a more long-term solution. The new posts would also be set into concrete for a longer lasting, more attractive appearance. Mr. Armstrong stated that he had been concerned at the last meeting with the history of the fence and agreed that the new photos supported the restoration of the ca. 1940s fence. He still questioned, though, whether the CPC was being asked to fund maintenance for the City. He noted that this was not a distinctive design and was similar to many other fences in the community. Ms. Lunin thought that there was a difference between the intricate fencing across the front of the property and a fence along a side street/side yard. She thought that the front deserved a more elaborate design and did not think that a fence along the side yard warranted that much attention.

Ms. Dady noted that part of the purpose of this fence was also to preserve and protect the property. She thought that the Jackson Homestead was a special place and explained how the fence marked the property and created a boundary for the public. She had also been advised by local architects Russ Feldman and Larry Bauer, who had really scrutinized the design and elements of the replacement fence. She explained that they both thought that the 1940s photo showed a fancier fence than was there now and had encouraged her to revise the design to better replicate that earlier fence. She thought that this advice had made this a better historic preservation project as it had raised the level of the work from just installing a new picket fence to replicating the early twentieth century design of an earlier fence on the site. By relying on primary source documents to inform the design of the new fence, she thought this was now more of an historic preservation project.

Ms. Molinsky asked Ms. Dady to explain the relationship between Historic Newton and the Parks and Rec Department, and how the City would maintain the fence if CPA funding was not available for its replacement. Ms. Dady stated that the effects of the ongoing Covid-19 situation on the City's finances made it a hard time to consider how else the City could pay for this work. She thought that they would have to leave the existing fence in place for even longer, and hope that it did not fail. Historic Newton was a City Department at this site and partnered with the Public Buildings Department to complete work on the building itself, while the Parks and Rec Department was

responsible for the grounds. She explained that this situation was similar to the one at the Burying Grounds, where Historic Newton oversaw the historic and preservation issues for the sites but was not responsible for its day to day maintenance. Mr. Dunker noted that the Parks and Rec Department was responsible for maintaining the grounds on all of City-owned sites. Ms. Molinsky asked if the Parks and Rec Department could have done a better job maintaining the fence. Ms. Dady answered that they had painted and repaired the fence many times over the years, but that it was now past its useful life. Mr. Dunker thought that this was an issue for the whole property and not just the fence, and that if it was possible to restore the element in question, then it was important to do so.

Mr. Armstrong thought that this was an ordinary design for a fence and did not think that he could see this work as historic preservation. He did not think the project as proposed was appropriate for CPA funding. He thought that if this was really a significant element of the property, then it might need more design consideration and that the City had better uses for its historic preservation funding than a backyard fence. Ms. Dady answered that the fence was an important aspect of the overall site.

Mr. Armstrong opened the discussion to public comment and there was none at this time.

Ms. Molinsky moved to recommend the approval of historic resource CPA funding to replace the picket fence along the west/Jackson Road property line of the Jackson Homestead site as proposed. Ms. Lunin seconded the motion. The motion passed by a roll call vote of 5-1, with Mr. Armstrong voting in the negative.

Mr. Armstrong stated that it would be good to have more details on the design of the fence post foundations, and asked Ms. Dady to submit those to Ms. Kritzer for review. Ms. Dady agreed, and explained that the current funding request of \$18,244 reflected a prior quote and not the current project cost. With the changes of the design to match the 1940s photo, the project cost was now approximately \$22,000. Members agreed that the project funding amount should be amended to reflect the current quote, and asked Mr. Armstrong to review and approve the corrected quote when it was ready along with the revised posts designs. Ms. Lunin moved to approve the revision to the project as discussion. Mr. Armstrong seconded the motion which passed unanimously by voice vote.

## **OTHER BUSINESS**

### **Zoning Redesign Discussion**

Community Engagement Planner Nevena Pilipovic-Wengler stated that she was reaching out to stake holders to make them aware of the upcoming meetings and public discussion on the zoning redesign process. She noted the previous historic preservation discussion and its connections with zoning redesign and neighborhoods. She then made a brief presentation to the CPC explaining the zoning redesign process, which had been on hold over the last year but was restarting in December. She explained how zoning impacted the character of Newton and their Community Engagement Plans for 2021. She reviewed Newton's zoning and explained the multi-year effort to update and rewrite it. Some of Newton's zoning had been updated in the 1980s, but much of it dated back to the 1950s and was out of date with the current needs of the City. She noted that zoning had significant impacts on sustainability, housing and the feel of the City.

Ms. Pilipovic-Wengler stated that she wanted to hear from the Committee on how best to engage with them moving forward. Staff had asked Planning staff to complete research, which would be presented at a future ZAP meeting, and they were working on the zoning redesign on an article by article basis. She reviewed the timeline for the project and explained that they would be holding two zoom events in December to restart the process. She wanted the process to be as accessible as possible as many people found it to be a very personal issue. Both of the December zoom events would include a staff presentation followed by break out groups to discuss resident's zoning concerns and ideas about potential changes. The City would also be releasing a survey for those who were not able to attend the meeting and would have the presentation available on video as well. Ms. Pilipovic-Wengler added that both the meeting and the survey would include options for determining the best ways to engage the public. Lastly, she noted that she had met with High Schoolers on this process who had suggested using Instagram.

Ms. Molinsky stated that she is also a member of the Planning and Development Board and explained that that group was obligated by law to advise on zoning reform. She stated that the Planning Board and City staff were very actively reviewing the zoning bylaws at this time. She thought that this was very exciting and good project which she hoped would make a difference. Ms. Datta stated that she was also a member of the Housing Partnership and hoped to contribute her knowledge of affordable housing to the process. She wanted to see housing become more attainable and the review process more predictable to encourage more affordable development. Mr. Armstrong noted that the process would include a number of challenges. Ms. Pilipovic-Wengler stated that she was hoping to learn which topics were most important and where to focus energy. For example, what was zoning capable of doing in terms of affordable housing, and where was it too restrictive. She explained that they were interested in how these elements could work together to achieve the community's goals.

### **Review of Finances**

Ms. Kritzer briefly reviewed the updated financial documents, noting that the final numbers on the State Match were expected within the next few days.

### **Approval of October 5 and October 13 Minutes**

Ms. Datta noted that her name was missing from the list of attendees at the October 13 meeting. Members had no further changes to either set of draft minutes. Ms. Lunin moved to approve the October 5 minutes as drafted and the October 13 minutes with the noted revision. Mr. Armstrong seconded the motion which unanimously passed by voice vote.

### **Other Business**

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

The meeting was adjourned at 8:00 P.M.