

From: [Candace Havens](#)
To: [City Council](#); [Ruthanne Fuller](#)
Cc: [Barney Heath](#); [Lara Kritzer](#)
Subject: In support of CPA funds to restore Grace Church tower
Date: Tuesday, January 5, 2021 11:53:46 AM

[**DO NOT OPEN** links/attachments unless you are sure the content is safe.]

Dear members of the City Council,

During the nearly 30 years that I've lived in Newton Corner, Farlow Park has been a hub of community life, and the Grace Church has been an integral and distinctive feature of the Farlow and Kenrick Parks National Register Historic District. Its handsome stone steeple can be viewed throughout the area and the sound of the bells chiming on special days has signaled important events over the years for all within earshot to appreciate. In addition, the Grace Church has been a place where community members of all faiths have gathered for a variety of social and cultural activities including some wonderful community musical events.

If the poor condition of the tower were to render the building unsafe, not only would the City witness the decline of a significant and valued structure that is listed on the State and National Register of Historic Places, but it would also forfeit the vibrancy it contributes to the community. The proposed public/private partnership will enable quality restoration of the tower with thoughtful consideration given to its history and original architectural elements and makes it a worthy and appropriate expenditure of CPA funds and a legacy for the City of Newton. I urge you to support this investment of CPA funds.

All the best for a healthy and happy new year,

Candace Havens

Hunnewell Avenue

From: [Alison M. Leary](#)
To: [Candace Havens](#)
Cc: [Barney Heath](#); [Lara Kritzer](#); [Ruthanne Fuller](#)
Subject: Re: In support of CPA funds to restore Grace Church tower
Date: Tuesday, January 5, 2021 7:37:19 PM

Dear Candace,

Thank you for letter.

I attended the CPC meeting discussing the Grace Church Bell Tower and I have had several phone conversations with Scott Aqualina. I was impressed with their presentation and the thoroughness of the CPC proposal. I was at first concerned about the possibility that it would take away CPA funds for affordable housing and for our significant recreation needs, but my understanding is that only funds dedicated for historic preservation will be allocated for this project over a 2–3-year period.

I am not concerned about funding going specifically to a church. Here in New England, we have much history tied up in our churches. Surely no would argue that public funds dedicated to historic preservation should not go to Boston's Old North Church? I do believe that each project should be evaluated on an individual basis on its own merits.

I worked for the Community Preservation Coalition in Boston for a couple of years and attended the SJC discussion of Acton versus Caplan. We were very concerned that this legal challenge would have a chilling effect on CPA historic projects, and it likely has made communities more cautious. But I don't think we should rule out funding to private institutions or organizations just because they are houses of worship.

This area is my old neighborhood. I grew up nearby and attended the Underwood and Bigelow Schools. I have walked past Grace Church many times on my way to school and with my mother when we took the Newton Corner Express Downtown to shop at Filene's Basement. Little has changed except for the aging maple tree that stood on the corner near the Pomeroy House which was taken down, and some of the older trees in Farlow Park are gone. The Weeping Beech Tree planted in 1902 still remains. It would be a shame to lose the church tower and have only a stump in its place. It would forever change the historic landscape of Farlow Park, which as you know was recently renovated to reflect its historic past at significant expense. But this is what will happen without community support for this project.

I read Attorney Ryan McManus' letter and it is right on the mark. I will be voting "yes" on CPA funds for the Grace Church Tower restoration Project and encouraging my colleagues to support it as well.

Happy New Year!

Kind regards,

Alison M. Leary
Newton City Council
Ward 1
617-821-5619

From: Candace Havens <chavens@rcn.com>

Sent: Tuesday, January 5, 2021 10:53 AM

To: City Council <citycouncil@newtonma.gov>; Ruthanne Fuller <rfuller@newtonma.gov>

Cc: Barney Heath <bheath@newtonma.gov>; Lara Kritzer <lkritzer@newtonma.gov>

Subject: In support of CPA funds to restore Grace Church tower

[DO NOT OPEN links/attachments unless you are sure the content is safe.]

Dear members of the City Council,

During the nearly 30 years that I've lived in Newton Corner, Farlow Park has been a hub of community life, and the Grace Church has been an integral and distinctive feature of the Farlow and Kenrick Parks National Register Historic District. Its handsome stone steeple can be viewed throughout the area and the sound of the bells chiming on special days has signaled important events over the years for all within earshot to appreciate. In addition, the Grace Church has been a place where community members of all faiths have gathered for a variety of social and cultural activities including some wonderful community musical events.

If the poor condition of the tower were to render the building unsafe, not only would the City witness the decline of a significant and valued structure that is listed on the State and National Register of Historic Places, but it would also forfeit the vibrancy it contributes to the community.

The proposed public/private partnership will enable quality restoration of the tower with thoughtful consideration given to its history and original architectural elements and makes it a worthy and appropriate expenditure of CPA funds and a legacy for the City of Newton. I urge you to support this investment of CPA funds.

All the best for a healthy and happy new year,

Candace Havens

Hunnewell Avenue