

Lara Kritzer

From: Lucia Dolan <dolanlucia@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, July 16, 2020 2:52 PM
To: Lara Kritzer
Subject: Grace Episcopal Church Tower Proposal

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

Dear Ms. Kritzer,

Please forward to the Community Preservation Committee.

Dear Chairman Armstrong and Members of the CPC Committee,

I am writing in regard to the Grace Episcopal Church Tower Repair Proposal. I was disappointed that you approved the pre-proposal. I think it sets a concerning precedent for private groups with old buildings in need of repair. My background, I am currently a member of an Episcopal Church in Newton and on its Building Committee and a decade ago was on the Vestry of another Episcopal Church in Newton, where I co-chaired a financial audit.

My concerns specific to the Grace Church proposal:

- Over half the funding for the project is to come from the CPC. Other funds have been requested, but not committed. The next largest source of funds is from the parishioners and endowment. The proposal does not specify how much from each. It has been my experience that many churches with small congregations lean heavily on their endowment to fund their annual budget. Taking money from the endowment will reduce the Church's ability to draw on the endowment in the future.
- Does the congregation have the ability to raise \$15,000 solely for tower maintenance every year? What is the state of repair - windows, roof, mechanicals - of the rest of the Church. Congregations are shrinking in Episcopalian Churches nationwide (down 16.5% between 2003-2013 in Massachusetts according to church documents). The largest of the 7 Episcopalian Churches in Newton has less than 300 parishioners.
- The Church's architect, Alexander Rice Esty, has 7 buildings listed in the National register of Historic Places, Grace Church is not one of them. We have many, many historic buildings in Newton, is this one a priority?
- Grace Church's public use is minimal, every Church I've belonged to hosts small non-profit meetings, like AA meetings. There are 3 other churches within two blocks of Grace that could perform this service. Plus the Y and the former Newton Corner Library. The other community services Grace provides, such as B-Safe, are not site specific.

I realize there are many requests for limited CPC funds. I believe they should be focused on publicly owned buildings and property that are non-religious and have greater public use.

Sincerely,

Lucia Dolan

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Lara Kritzer

From: John Lovett <johnjlovett3@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, July 16, 2020 3:16 PM
To: Lara Kritzer
Cc: Marcia Johnson; Judith Jaffe; Lucia Dolan
Subject: LWVN--Questions on Grace Church project proposal

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Dear Ms. Kritzer,

My name is Jack Lovett. I'm a Newton resident and a member of the LWVN's CPC review committee. After Tuesday's CPC meeting, the LWVN had a couple questions regarding the Grace Episcopal Church project proposal.

First, during the meeting, it was argued that the Grace Episcopal Church is located in an historic district. Has that been confirmed? We were unable to find evidence that the neighborhood is located in a National Historic District.

Second, would the CPC consider requesting a legal opinion from the City Solicitor regarding whether the project qualifies for CPC funding? Given past litigation in Acton, MA regarding the use of CPC funding on private property and religious institutions, we thought a legal opinion is warranted for this proposal.

Thank you,
Jack Lovett

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John "Jack" Lovett
Northeastern University
Master of Public Administration
Bachelor of Arts in Political Science and History