

January 9, 2022

Ms. Lara Kritzer  
Community Preservation Program Manager  
City of Newton Planning and Development Department  
1000 Commonwealth Avenue  
Newton MA 02459

Dear Ms. Kritzer,

On behalf of the Massachusetts New Church Union (MNCU), I am writing in support of the New Art Center's CPA proposal request for funding to conduct a feasibility study for the Church of the Open Word property located at 19 Highland Avenue in Newtonville.

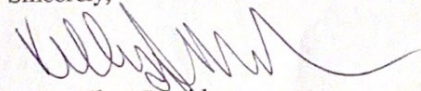
The New Art Center offers everyone, at all levels of ability, exceptional opportunities to make, exhibit, view, think about, and talk about art. Founded in 1977, the New Art Center is the cultural cornerstone for visual art in Newton and the local region. Having enrolled tens of thousands of adults, teens, and children in art making and art education programs, the New Art Center is also an important local employer, with staff of 10 and faculty of 50-plus.

CPA funds would allow the New Art Center to conduct a feasibility study to determine if the Church of the Open Word facility will support much needed organizational growth to serve more residents, students, and community partners. Moreover, rehabilitation, revitalization, and activation of the Church of the Open Word property would enhance Newtonville significantly by preserving an iconic local landmark, reducing vandalism and loitering on the property, and creating a cultural destination that would benefit local businesses as well as residents.

As the current owners of the Church of the Open Word, our hope is that the New Art Center's feasibility study will be successful and that they *will* ultimately decide to purchase the property from the MNCU. We believe this is the best path forward to preserve this prominent and historically significant building and for these facilities to continue serving the community while enhancing the physical environment of Newtonville Center. CPA funding will be an essential part of this process.

Thank you for your consideration of this important and exciting opportunity.

Sincerely,



Kelly Milne, President  
Massachusetts New Church Union  
50 Quincy Street, Cambridge MA 02138