

CITY OF NEWTON

IN BOARD OF ALDERMEN

COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY PRESERVATION REPORT

TUESDAY, MAY 23, 2006

Present: Ald. Linsky (Chair), Hess-Mahan, Sangiolo, Yates, Parker and Vance

Absent: Ald. Lennon and Lappin

Also Present: Ald. Samuelson, Nick Parnell (Public Buildings Commissioner), Charles MacMillen (Community Preservation Committee), Rob Ricchi (Planning Department), John Rice (Board of Directors, Brigham Community House), Robert Staulo (Brigham House)

REFERRED TO CMTE. ON COMM. PRESERV. & FINANCE COMMITTEE

#235-06 COMMUNITY PRESERVATION COMMITTEE recommending that the sum of \$519,700 be appropriated from the Community Preservation Fund for purposes of funding the *Brigham Community House* historic preservation project.

ACTION: APPROVED AS AMENDED @ \$250,700 FOR FY06 6-0

REFERRED TO CMTE. ON COMM. PRESERV. & FINANCE COMMITTEE

#235-06(2) COMMUNITY PRESERVATION COMMITTEE recommending that the sum of \$269,000 be appropriated from the FY2007 Community Preservation Fund for purposes of funding the *Brigham Community House* historic preservation project.

ACTION: APPROVED 6-0

NOTE: Rob Ricchi and Charley McMillan, along with Robert Staulo and John Rice representing the applicants and architect Russell Feldman joined the Committee for its discussion.

Chair Linsky explained that, while the total amount of funding sought for this purpose is \$519,700, and due to the fact that this is the end of the fiscal year funding from the CPA funding, it will be necessary (according to documentation received from Comptroller David Wilkinson and the Planning Department liaison to the Community Preservation Committee) to split this appropriation so that a portion of it is funded using FY06 funds and the remainder will be funded from the FY07 CPA Fund.

Ald. Yates asked for clarification as to whether funding from FY06 has been set aside for other pending projects (i.e. those that have been approved by the CCP but are awaiting Finance Committee approval).

Rob Ricchi indicated that the funding for such projects has already been earmarked for purposes of funding those pending projects. It was also pointed out that there is approximately another \$200,000 available in the CPA Open Space Preservation fund, but that this (Brigham House) project does not fit into that category, therefore, those funds cannot be used for this particular project.

Chair Linsky pointed out that, for purposes of protocol, the Committee would listen to the presentation on the entire funding request and then take proper action to ensure that the FY06 funds get voted now and that a subsequent item be created for allocation of the FY07 funds (which could be voted by this Committee and referred to the Finance Committee for appropriate action at the proper time).

Charley McMillan described the CPC's review and approval process as it related to this application. He noted the applicants came in with a project that entailed less renovation but that, in consultation with Mike Duff of the planning office, the CPC saw this as an opportunity to more thoroughly renovate the building to ensure extended use into the future to ensure the integrity of the building was being maintained (for example, replacing the siding instead of scraping it and repainting it, would be preferred as it would last much longer). Russell Feldman, the architect for the project, indicated that the exterior of this building appears to have been neglected for a number of years. He identified the following list of exterior repairs:

- Elimination of rear porch and stairs and reconfiguration of rear entry to building
- Reduction of construction around rear bulkhead
- Replacement of 85% of clapboard siding
- Replacement of all decorative shingles
- Replacement of entire building soffits
- Replacement of entire flat roof area
- Changing gutters to wood from copper-lined wood
- Additional weather tightening and trim repair on all existing windows to remain

Interior work will include:

- Maintain interior stair to basement
- Create a new MAAB complaint bathroom in the Meeting/Tech Room area
- Replace existing furnace and burner with limited work on system distribution and controls
- Chimney cleanout and repair
- Reduce new interior doors and trim
- Eliminate kitchenette cabinet and sink; plumbing provided to area for future installation

This final list of improvements comes in at a cost of \$100,000 more than the original scope of work.

Ald. Vance noted that the original application indicated that CPA funds were being sought from both Historic Preservation funds and Recreation funds, yet the final recommendation from the CPC was for the project to be funded through the Historic Preservation fund only. He asked how this determination was made.

CPC member McMillan explained that, while there is a teen program which is operated at this site by the Parks and Recreation Department, the CPC determined that the scope of this project was actually more for the Historic Preservation of the building itself and not recreational as was originally thought by the applicants .

In response to Ald. Yates' question as to how the project was being phased, Mr. McMillan stated that there would be no real phasing. While the current fiscal year funds will not allow for funding of this entire project at this time, the applicants will wait to perform the repairs until after July, but in the meantime use the FY06 funds do what needs to be done first in the process.

Ald. Sangiolo asked whether this project would require following the public bid process, since it was a city-owned building under lease. Mr. Feldman responded that it would go out to bid. Ald. Sangiolo also asked if there were any known issues with lead paint in the building (particularly since there was a recent need for additional appropriation at the Angino Farm House for proper removal of lead paint).

John Rice responded on behalf of the applicants that, while there will not be a need to remove lead paint from the premises (due to the nature of the use of the building there will be no programs for small children), the scope of the renovation portion of the project will include testing for lead paint in order to identify potential hazards during the renovation so that workers can take proper precautions. Mr. Feldman added that the potential cost for OSHA compliance is built into the cost estimate for this project.

Ald. Hess-Mahan asked whether it was made clear to the applicant, since this is a public-private project, that the funds for this project will be appropriated to the City Department in charge of operation of the building and not directly to the applicant. He also asked whether that Department has resources available to provide oversight/management of this project.

Rob Ricchi and Robert Staulo administrator for the Community Preservation indicated that the Public Buildings Department will oversee/manage this project and that the project funds will be allocated to the City.

Ald. Vance asked why the recommendation from the CPC specifically states that the project shall commence no later than December 31, 2006 and be completed no later than December 31, 2007.

Mr. McMillan indicated that this language was used in order to ensure that the project gets underway and is completed in a fair amount of time. He pointed out that the applicant can begin the project earlier than December 31, but that the project will need to be completed by December 31, 2007. This could also help to ensure that there will not be a major difference in construction between the estimate and actual cost. Rob Ricchi offered further clarification that this terminology is used as standard language for all CPC recommendations. The Chief purpose is to establish time markers for the use of the CPA funds. Mr. Feldman estimated that the project would take approximately 6 months to complete post-design.

Ald. Parker then addressed the issues between allocation of FY06 funds and FY07 funds for this project. He indicated that he had discussed this issue with the Comptroller today, and Mr. Wilkinson had pointed out that, as long as the Full Board votes the appropriation for FY07 after the FY2007 Municipal Budget is passed, this will not be an issue; it does not necessarily need to wait until July. Ald. Parker suggested that the Committee split the item, create a second item for the FY07 funds, and then vote both items tonight, with the understanding that by the time the Finance Committee votes these items and refers them to the Full Board, the budget review process will have been completed. This action would provide for the FY07 funds to be available at the earliest possible moment after July 1. Ald. Parker then voiced his support of utilizing Community Preservation funds to improve this well-used community building and moved approval of the project.

Ald. Sangiolo then asked where programs would temporarily be affected while the construction is underway. Mr. Staulo indicated that, at this point in time, it was difficult to gauge exactly how long the project will take. Consequently, he expects the Brigham House programs would seek possible space in other areas of Newton Highlands that could accommodate them. This option is still being explored. John Rice anticipated there would be movement of various programs, including the teen, battered women and AA programs between the Hyde Community Center, the Women's Club and the church. Ald. Sangiolo suggested that, with relocation of certain types of programs to areas not used to that type of activity, there is a tendency for neighborhood reaction, so that the groups that use Brigham House should be mindful of the effect (if any) of their (albeit temporary) alternate meeting spaces in the neighborhood. The applicants indicated that all consideration will be given when seeking to relocate programs.

Ald. Sangiolo asked if the Historical Commission had reviewed the proposal for the project. Mr. Feldman stated that the Historical Commission has seen the information for this proposal and has approved the conceptual plans. Prior to the issuance of proper permits for the building improvements, they will review the construction

documents as well. Ald. Sangiolo then questioned the validity of using Historical Preservation funds for all of the items on the list for this project including the landscaping, emergency lighting and other lighting fixtures, kitchen and bathroom fixtures, and the heating burner.

Charley McMillan responded that the CPC believed all of the items on the list are considered to be ancillary to making this project work. In terms of landscaping, Mr. Feldman pointed out that the installation of the handicapped ramp outside of the building will require elimination of some existing landscaping, therefore, there is a line item in the project budget to install landscaping elsewhere on property.

Ald. Sangiolo pointed out that, overall she was in support of this project, she did not see the need for using CPA funds for some of the line items on this list (i.e. emergency lighting, which she sees as the City's responsibility to fund the installation). Chair Linsky agreed with the need to carefully examine these items to ensure that these Community Preservation funds are spent properly. She didn't fault the applicant, she faulted the CPC. Ald. Hess-Mahan noted that drawing a line is sometimes difficult in projects involving historic preservation. Mr. Feldman asserted that the aspects of the budget that had originally related to the perceived recreational uses have been largely eliminated. He added that when looking at the list of supplies that are included in this project, it is important to note that, while some items appear to be insignificant (i.e. bathroom items), they are, in fact, required under the public building code. It is absolutely necessary for this building to be compliant in order to get the certificate of occupancy.

Ald. Samuelson further explained that when the community programs took over the Brigham House, it raised approximately \$100,000 in funding to upgrade it and bring it up to current building code (at the time), which included installation of proper fire alarm system, accessibility improvements, electrical work, etc. She indicated that all of those improvements, while not necessarily historically significant, were reviewed and approved by the Historical Commission because they are part of what this historical building is. She stated that, because it is important to maintain the building's historical character, the community groups did not have enough funds for proper restoration, which is why this item is currently here for appropriation. She also indicated that each year, the Brigham House raises \$30,000 to fund its programs for the year. Ald. Samuelson declared her support for the entire appropriation with the understanding that, while it is important to maintain the historical integrity of the building, the building also needs to be useable for practical purposes. She urged the Committee to support this request.

Ald. Vance questioned whether the City has an audit mechanism to review the list of overall expenditures upon completion of the project to ensure that monies were, in fact, spent for their intended purpose.

Ald. Yates indicated that he was certain that all documents related to expenses on these projects are subject to scrutiny by the outside auditing firm hired by the City to conduct the annual City audit.

Ald. Parker suggested that, when looking at CPA projects, there should be three categories considered; what is desirable, what is legal, and what is realistic. He stated that, while he would tend to support comments made by Ald. Sangiolo and Chair Linsky, the reality is that these ancillary items should be included in this project. He stated that, given the history of limited resources over the past several years for the restoration of City-owned buildings, the reality is that such projects need to be encompassed in this manner in order to get things done. In the case of this project, he believes that this is a more acceptable partnership to be supported because it combines what the city can do legally and what the community group can do for its neighborhood in terms of providing programs and even with the amount of fundraising that they perform each year.

The Committee approved creating a secondary docket item consistent with the additional draft board order that incorporated the \$269,000.00 in monies that will come from the FY'07 budget and then approved both that and what will be an amended Board order representing the \$250,700.00 that will come from the FY' 06 budget by a vote of 6-0 (Ald. Lappin and Lennon not present and voting) .

There being no other Committee business to be discussed this evening, therefore, the Committee adjourned at approximately 8:57 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Stephen M. Linsky, Chair

