

CITY OF NEWTON

IN BOARD OF ALDERMEN

COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY PRESERVATION REPORT

TUESDAY, JANUARY 27, 2009

Present: Ald. Lappin (Chairman), Parker (Vice Chairman), Baker, Hess-Mahan, Linsky, Sangiolo, Vance and Yates

Others Present: Alice Ingerson (Community Preservation Program Manager), Cindy Stone (Director, Jackson Homestead), Russ Feldman (Trustee, Jackson Homestead), Marietta Marchitelli (Trustee, Jackson Homestead), Anne Larner (Newton Historical Society), Joyce Moss (Chairman, Community Preservation Committee), Harry Lohr (President, Trustees of the Jackson Homestead), and Karyn Dean (Committee Clerk)

Ald. Lappin explained that while there were no docketed items to discuss, she felt it was useful to hear project status updates and news from the Community Preservation Committee.

The Jackson Homestead Archives Project Update

Cindy Stone, Director of the Jackson Homestead, presented this status report. She explained that they had money to develop specs for this project. They wrote a preliminary RFQ and sent it to Public Buildings Commissioner, Nick Parnell. She noted that she has had meetings and calls with Mr. Parnell since October. Ms. Stone said the RFQ had not yet been posted. Anne Larner said she ran into Mr. Parnell a week ago and he said he would check on the status of the RFQ. He explained that once the process started, it would take about 6 weeks. He felt he could get the process started in the next week so they could be ready to start the project in March. He also mentioned that it had to go to the Designer Selection Committee first. Mr. Parnell sent word that he could not attend tonight's meeting as he had a previous commitment.

Ms. Stone said that Mr. Parnell offered the services of on his on-call architects. However, Ms. Stone felt that this project was specialized and would prefer a preservation architect who had experience with museums. There were issues specific to museums like water vapor and its effects on the collections. Joyce Moss suggested consulting Larry Bower, who is on the Design Review Committee, on this project. Mr. Bower had suggested that he might be interested.

Ald. Sangiolo suggested writing a letter to Mr. Parnell from this committee letting him know that it is interested in getting this project started.

The Durant-Kenrick Homestead Project Update

Anne Larner spoke to this project as a representative of the steering committee of the capital campaign for the Durant-Kenrick Homestead. She reported that they are working on raising \$900,000 by this summer so that they can then access the \$2.7M that has been appropriated by the Board of Aldermen and the CPC. They have been working on the fundraising over the last 15 months. They hope to raise this money from three different “pots”: the Trustees and the Board of the Historical Society; the Durant descendants who have been very active and who first came forward with this proposal; and a combination of grants and individuals who have been identified with the interest and the capacity to help. This is considered the “quiet phase” of the campaign. They need to be sensitive to potential donors and can not reveal names. The public part of the campaign will not start until the fall.

They have completed the first “pot” of money from the Trustees and the Board of the Historical Society raising in excess of \$300,000. There have been many substantial conversations with the Durant descendants and they anticipate that by the beginning of May, they will have \$300,000 from that source. For the last “pot” of money they have a steering committee of six people working with individuals and foundations to raise \$265,000. They have a grant writer who is working on significant applications and will have more over the next few months. They also have lists of people, some of whom have already been contacted through the feasibility study, who are very interested in donating. She noted that despite the current economic instabilities, they have managed to garner support and donations. Some have given more than expected. The only requests, in some instances, are to stretch out their donations. For instance, instead of donating \$25,000 over 3 years, they would like to extend that to 5 years. Ms. Larner said they are very pleasantly surprised with the responses, pledges and donations and are on target for their goals.

Ald. Parker asked if any donors were asking for naming rights. Ms. Larner said there had been some requests for that. They have put together a list of naming opportunities. The Durant descendants have asked to name the new educational wing that will be added. Another donor asked to name the map section of the archives, which is not at the Durant-Kenrick Homestead, but that would be acceptable. Ald. Sangiolo wondered if it was ok to name something for a private donor in a city building – the Jackson Homestead. It was pointed out that there are areas of the library that are named. Mr. Larner said she would look into that. Of the \$1.9M they hope to raise for this project, \$1.5M will be directly for Durant-Kenrick and the rest for enhancements to the Jackson Homestead. Donors have not earmarked the money, which is helpful.

The Historic Burying Grounds Project Update

Harry Lohr, presented the update on this project. He handed out a list of accomplishments, challenges and the outlook for the project. Please refer to this document for more detailed information. It is attached to this report.

Mr. Lohr explained that they have now restored or repaired more than 300 gravestones including all the contracted work at the West Parish Burying Ground in West Newton, and at the South Burying Ground. At East Parish burying ground, the work had to be suspended when the weather turned very cold. That work will resume in the spring with only a few stones left on the contract. This will next complete the first round of restoration work in all three burying grounds. During the course of the ongoing work, note was taken of stones that were not part of the original assessment. These are stones that will receive attention in a future round. He explained that the learning curve on this project was long. The money has taken some time to spend because of that, but now that they've become more adept, the work is moving more quickly.

The tomb project was the most difficult to get off the ground, but Mr. Lohr expects the same acceleration in work to occur as it did with the gravestones. They worked with several departments in the city to determine how best to deal with the tombs including the Law and Engineering Departments. They are working with Frank Nichols of the Engineering Dept. to send out RFPs for this project. The tombs are more complex to work with than the stones so this collaboration is most helpful. They may wait until the snows melt a little to send out the RFPs as prospective vendors would want to be able to view the sites.

Ald. Parker felt there should be more access for the public via pathways, chained-off areas, and signage to assist in a self-guided tour. Mr. Lohr said that phase 2 would start to address those issues and they all agreed it was necessary. Phase I was about remediation of the site, not just work on the stones, but also to actually make the landscape safe to be in. They endeavor to keep the layout of the burying grounds authentic. There are natural breaks and paths and they would look into utilizing those in the plan.

Ms. Stone said they will also be trying to incorporate the history of the burial grounds into the school curriculum and have students visit. Ald. Yates suggested distributing information about the burial grounds to other City facilities and the Newton Marriott for the benefit of residents and visitors. Mr. Lohr noted that there will be a series of lectures at the Newton Free Library. He is giving one of the lectures on March 12th entitled "Newton's Historic Burying Grounds: 21st Century Outdoor Museums".

Ms. Stone reported that Brian Lever is applying for money for an archeology survey that includes ground penetrating radar. He will be looking for remnants of the East Parish Meeting House which was the first meeting house in Newton.

Role and Funding of Project Managers

Ald. Lappin explained that for some projects that have been stalled or have been taking longer than anticipated, the issue seems to be the limited availability of the project manager. She said that they might need to consider adding money to each project for a project manager, just as they do for the Law Department support. Project Managers are generally staff members of a city department and they may not have the time, due to their primary job responsibilities, to keep up with the project. Alice Ingerson said that all

projects for the last 3 years have been funded with a line for the Project Manager. She felt she might be able to take some of the Community Preservation Committee administrative funds and put that into someone like Frank Nichols for his time. She explained that as the state match is going down, there will be less money. She would, therefore, like to get the funding for the project managers inside the project appropriation. They won't have the cushion in the administrative budget going forward. The CPC generally looks for a line for staff time in proposals and if it's not there, they question it and ultimately require it. Many city departments have been cut substantially, so they may have the funding for the project, but the people don't have the time to manage it. However, the employee or the department head may not be able to admit that, so that judgment would be made by Ms. Ingerson. She said it was a challenge. Ms. Moss noted that the housing and acquisition projects are generally not a problem. However, rehabilitation projects are the ones that experience the most delays and problems of that sort.

Ms. Moss suggested having an on-call person, or persons, that could be brought in as necessary to manage projects. Ms. Ingerson said there could be a pre-qualification process to compile an approved list of people, much like the Public Buildings Commissioner has done with on-call architects. They would not be paid until they were brought on for a funded project. Ald. Parker thought they should make sure they have capable, competent project managers within the City. He felt it was more a matter of time and personnel management than money. Ald. Sangiolo was not in favor of using City staff because staff was already quite stretched.

Ms. Moss said that they CPC had never really thought about how project management issues might influence the projects they decide to approve. She felt it might be something to start considering as money gets tighter. Some projects are easy to manage and implement and some are more complicated.

Community Preservation Overview

Alice Ingerson, Project Manager for the Community Preservation Committee, provided a PowerPoint presentation that was used during the Public Hearings that were held this fall. The presentation is attached to this report for reference. Please visit <http://www.ci.newton.ma.us/cpa/reports/2009/09Jan27NewtonCP-overview-slide-show.pdf> to view the presentation in a more readable form as there is quite a bit of information on some of the slides.

Future Funding Approaches and Priorities

Joyce Moss, Chairman of the Community Preservation Committee, explained that the CPA started in about 33 communities and now 133 communities are involved. They are all looking for the funding. By getting in early, Newton had quit a bit of money, but things will be going down going forward. They held public forums to try to determine priorities. They conducted one each on housing, historic preservation, and open space and recreation. They came up with a list that is attached to this report. Please refer to this list for details. They want to start thinking of projects in the bigger picture so they

might be prepared for some larger projects, particularly open space projects, which may come up in the future.

As noted on the attached list, the CCP was considering requiring some projects to have matching funds. Ald Yates felt it shouldn't be a requirement. Ms. Moss said perhaps they should just make it a very strong urging. She reminded the committee that these were just discussion points and nothing had been decided.

Ms. Moss suggested that they might re-schedule their meetings. As they now stand, the CPC meets the night after the CCP and forces a month's long wait before any recommended items could come before the CCP. There will be ongoing discussions within the CPC on all of these issues as well as all the issues detailed on the attached list.

Ald. Parker asked about the status of the Lower Falls Bridge Conversion proposal. Ms. Moss said the public hearing was still open on that. He asked to be informed when the next meeting would take place.

Motion to adjourn.

Respectfully Submitted,

Cheryl Lappin, Chairman

**Newton Old Burying Grounds Restoration Project
Newton History Museum | Newton Historical Society**

**Accomplishments, Challenges, and Outlook
January 2009**

Project Summary:

To stabilize, secure, restore, preserve, program, and improve access to Newton's historic East Parish Burying Ground, West Parish Burying Ground, and South Burying Ground

Principle Participants:

City department heads and staff; Newton History Museum staff; volunteer members the Joint Board of the The Jackson Homestead and Newton Historical Society; volunteer members of the History Museum's Old Burying Grounds Committee; and other volunteer citizens

Support:

City of Newton

Community Preservation Act | Community Preservation Committee

Other Non-profit Organizations | Volunteers

Additional funding sources to be sought to help support ongoing preservation and programming

Snapshot of Project Accomplishments

- We have made great progress at all three sites—reclaiming and stabilizing the landscape, repairing gravestones, and increasing programming.
- For contracted work, *we have stayed within or under budget.*
- We have addressed major tree-related problems at all three sites, making the burying grounds safe, both for visitors and for the monuments in them.
- We have repaired or restored hundreds of gravestones at the East and West Parish Burying Grounds and South Burying Ground, including *all* of the contracted work at the West Parish Burying Ground and South Burying Ground.
- We have surveyed, tracked, and recorded the results.
- Contracted work for the restoration of the remaining gravestones at the East Parish Burying Ground will be completed this year (Spring 2009).
- We have worked closely with experts in the City's Public Works, Legal, and Purchasing departments to resolve issues related to contracting for tomb restoration and are in the process of issuing an RFP for consulting services for the creation of construction specifications and construction oversight.

- We are proposing to revise the timelines and task allocations associated with approved funding (i.e., what we propose to do when).
- We have clarified the History's Museum's oversight responsibilities and strengthened our relationship with the City's Parks and Recreation department.
- A regular schedule for mowing the lawn at each site is in place.
- The participation of our volunteers remains strong; we have community-supported clean-up days twice a year; and all three sites are part of NewtonServes.
- Over the past several years we have opened up the northwest portion of East Parish and have cleared away all of the dead wood and plant matter from the area along the back fence.
- We have also cleared away all of the debris, trash, and dead wood from the back and sides of the South Burying Ground.
- At the South Burying Ground, we asked its neighbor National Lumber to replace the chain link fence that separates National Lumber's parking lot from the burying ground—which National Lumber agreed to do and erected.
- West Parish is clean, almost completely free of extraneous plant growth, and the gravestones by-and-large are in good or acceptable condition -- making an excellent presentation to the public.
- Since initiating the restoration project, we have increased our programming (walking tours, historic interpretations), with more to come both near- and long-term.
- We have begun to explore ways to use the History Museum's website to advertise the progress we've made at the burying grounds and to encourage interest in visiting them.
- We have begun to think strategically about eliciting and encouraging positive press coverage to raise public awareness
- The Joint Board of The Jackson Homestead and Newton Historical Society has restated its strong commitment to continuing and completing the burying grounds restoration in its recently revised Strategic Plan for the Newton History Museum.

Challenges

- We need to examine closely and realistically the demands of gravestone and tomb repair, both the limited availability of experts in the field and the timeframes that are required for this sort of work.

When we started the current effort to reclaim, restore, preserve, and program the burying grounds, no one could say for sure how much time the gravestone repair work would take, the extent to which new conditions might be discovered (or might have changed since the original Master Plan was written), or the extent to which the weather and other factors might affect our timeline. We definitely did not know the extent to which a limited pool of experts in this field would affect availability. The bottom line: the full scope of the project requires a longer timeline than we could initially predict.

- We need to expand and strengthen the depth and capacity of the Old Burying Grounds Committee; we strongly encourage anyone with an interest in the burying grounds to contact the History Museum and welcome suggestions and recommendations.
- We need to continue our work in the burial grounds in creative and efficient ways to make our resources accomplish as much as possible. We need to find additional community sources to support our work.
- We need to identify free (or low-cost), innovative ways to raise the visibility of the Old Burying Grounds to increase public awareness and interest.
- We need to explore ways of tying these historical resources to the Newton schools' Colonial, Revolutionary War-era, early-to-mid 19th Century, and Civil War-period history curriculum, as well as Newton schools' literature, humanities, and cultural studies.
- We need to explore ways to make these open spaces more accessible to the public.

Outlook

There is much to be done, including the completion of the gravestone repair, the tomb restoration, the installation of new fences, gates, and signage, and the development of new programming. Moving forward, the staff of the Newton History Museum and the volunteer members of the Old Burying Grounds Committee will assess "where we are" relative to the original plan and will amend projections accordingly. The burying grounds have been a part of our community for hundreds of years. They deserve our respect and care. Restoring them will require a few more years, but we are making progress in this important endeavor and once again Newton can be proud of its stewardship of these precious historic sites and open spaces.

Prepared by
Harry O. Lohr, Jr., volunteer
Trustee, The Jackson Homestead
NHM Burying Grounds Committee

This list of ideas for discussion was culled from suggestions made at three public hearings held by Newton's Community Preservation Committee in the fall of 2008, to solicit community input on future funding priorities. By late spring or early summer 2009, the CPC hopes to produce a 2010-11 Community Preservation Plan reflecting the results of this process.

FOR DISCUSSION 25 FEBRUARY 2009

GENERAL APPROACHES

Establish an annual set-aside fund for the following purposes:

- Preserving large parcels of open space
- Acquiring property or parcels for affordable housing

Require specified funding matches* to leverage our funds when:

- a project disproportionately provides benefits to a few residents [betterments]
- a project disproportionately provides benefits to a neighborhood/village [but must consider equity issues-some parts of the city more able to meet this challenge than others]
- a project has an additional source of funding (for city projects-city cap. stabilization)
- funding for post-project maintenance is in doubt [non-city projects]

** Issue of in-kind services: opens big pandora's box- but should be addressed*

ORDER & SCHEDULE of other topics TBA, for CPC meetings March-April 2009

COMMUNITY HOUSING

Shorten the review process-particularly for affordable housing projects, by:

- Supporting, where possible, program initiatives (fund programs rather than projects; model: Newton Homebuyer Assistance Program)
- Improving alignment of meeting dates; and coordinating to anticipate questions most likely to be asked by BoA committees
- "Vetting" proposals before submission through one pagers or letters of inquiry .

Define project priorities where possible and support proposals that implement them

- **Village Center locations** above existing uses; next to transit
- issue RFPs for housing in village center with grant funds specified for defraying preconstruction costs: front end design; permitting, "other costly hurdles"
- **Other locations targeted in comprehensive plan or identified through HAPI's exploratory effort** (by Jim Miller, e.g.)
-issue RFP to further support creative exploratory efforts at inventory of sites

- **Preserve affordability of smaller, older homes; and 2 -5 family homes:** buy-down programs; affordability restrictions in exchange for historic preservation grants; other devices (*also under historic resources, below*)
- **Mixed-income affordable projects** with even market-rate units kept smaller to be more affordable
- **Grant support for regulatory initiatives coming from HAPI;** for discussion; may not be possible

HISTORIC RESOURCES

Require proposals to meet basic Secretary of the Interior's Standards.

- **Proposals** [ideally with joint funding] **for restoration/preservation/ rehabilitation or adaptive reuse of historic public buildings** prioritized by citizen-led Public Buildings Task Force; if no proposals submitted for high-priority projects, consider issuing RFPs
- **Preservation revolving fund**, with income limitations (*related to "smaller, older homes" under community housing, above*)
- **Proposals for restoration/preservation/rehabilitation of historic parks**, particularly in parts of the city where recreation land is scarce

OPEN SPACE & RECREATION

Open Space

- **Large parcels:** less than full fee interest where possible, especially those that have habitat value
- **Open space paths and connecting linkages** that provide non-auto traveling opportunities
- **Open space bordering other municipalities or state land** that can leverage additional CPA funds [Waltham, Wellesley, Weston, Needham] or funds from state, other agencies
- **Grant support for updating** *Open Space and Recreation Plan*
- **Preservation of open space**-through invasive species management plans and implementation program; pond deepening [????], native tree planting

Recreation Land

- **Recreational facilities on acquired land** [be careful!; will require match]
- **Support CPA amendment that allows recreation projects on land NOT acquired with CPA funds** [and then set guidelines]