

# Newsletter

## 2007 CPA Applications Show Increased Interest in Historic Preservation

For Fiscal Year 2007, the Community Preservation Committee received nine applications totaling \$6.36 million. The funds available for applications, after paying for long-term commitments such as Angino Farm, administration and legal costs, is roughly \$2.7 million. LWVN reader have made the following assessments of the applications and shared their results with the members of the Community Preservation Committee and attendees at the LWVN Topic Meeting.

*Submitted by: Newton Historical Society, Newton History Museum*

*Category: Historic Preservation and Open Space*

*Location: 286 Waverley Ave. Newton Corner, Ward 7*

*Cost: Funding Request is \$2,710,000. Total cost of project is \$3,600,00 to \$4,560,000*

**Description:** The Durant Kenrick Homestead (the Homestead) was built in 1732 and is one of only a few pre-Revolutionary houses left in Newton. The Homestead has been in the Durant and Kenrick families for over 200 years. In 1985 the Durant Homestead Foundation was established to steward the property. When the foundation approached the Newton Historical Society to take it over, the Society was delighted to do so and requested a grant from the CPC for \$77,500 to complete a needs assessment and a capital improvement plan. This proposal meets the CPC's guidelines regarding acquisition and preservation of historic resources.

The Newton Historical Society is now requesting the \$2,710,000 to acquire, restore, and maintain the homestead

### Durant Kenrick Homestead

and provide educational programs for students of the Newton Public Schools. Full handicapped accessibility improvements will be added along with other capital improvements with help from other sources of funding. By providing disabled access to the 1st and 2nd floors of the building, it would be opening an historic site to more viewers and it would be unique in that most historic buildings do not have accessibility above the 1st floor.

The property has an additional buildable lot, which the Society would like to maintain, preserving a small part of the large land holdings of the early Homestead. There are fine trees and horticultural specimens representing the research work of Durant Kenrick family members who were well-known horticulturalists of the period.

Ample community support is indicated by many letters from neighborhood groups and the school department.

**Comments/Questions:** This seems to be the kind of one-time opportunity for which the Community Preservation Act was designed. The proposal appears quite thorough with history and descriptions of the property, legal docu-

ments, assessments, and lists of the property's unique and historic contents.

That said, \$2.7 million more than this year's available CPA fund (the official estimate is \$2.68 million).

Further, despite the length and heft of this application, the League of Women Voters of Newton feels that it is still missing important supporting materials that would strengthen it, to wit:

A plan for how the building would be used: Who would be visiting the museum? In what numbers?

Would there be an admission fee? How would that affect the proposed operating budget?

How does the NPS Social Studies Curriculum Coordinator anticipate using the homestead to support the 3rd grade social studies curriculum?

Once we have a better idea of the building's proposed usage, is the parking plan reasonable?

**Financing:** Two financing scenarios are presented. Both require a capital campaign and this is appropriate.

Our readers found the proposal's expla-

## LWVN Officers and Directors 2006-2007

### OFFICERS

President	Sue Rosenbaum	617-332-0306
Vice President Organization	Bonnie Carter	617-969-0686
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### NEWSLETTER

Editor Ann Grantham 617-964-0333

The LWVN Newsletter is published nine times per year. The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan political organization open to all citizens of voting age. For more information about the League of Women Voters, call 617-964-0014.

PO Box 610207  
Newton, MA 02461  
617-964-0014

<http://www.lwvn.ma.lwvnet.org>

# News and Views

*From Our President*

In this season of Thanksgiving I would like to thank all of my fellow members of the Newton League for the incredible amount of time and energy spent in the effort to promote democracy and assist in the dissemination of impartial information in our city. Our CPA readers that have reviewed the recently submitted applications have provided the CPC committee with important insights. Our Observers kept us apprised of the important issues being debated across the city.

The voter service chair did not have to run any candidates' forums this year, however, she did provide many rides to the polls, including one ride for a poll worker who asked to be picked up at 5:30 am! In addition, board members have worked with other groups in the city to arrange informational forums on the upcoming vote on the Newton North plan. They have invited a diverse group of people to present an array of opinions regarding this complex issue.

Several new members have been organizing the cable television show co-produced by the League and NewTV called Legislative Roundtable. Be sure and watch the results! And thanks to the members who have donated their homes for our meetings. Thanks to those who have worked diligently on our environmental committee. Our clerk has been recording the discussions at our board meetings. Thank you.

Our monthly informational meetings have been informative and well attended. I am grateful for this. I would also like to thank our newsletter editor for her ability to create an informative publication in a deceptively effortless manner.

I purposely haven't listed names at the risk of forgetting someone, however I want to express a big thank you to all of you and let you know how much I appreciate the time I spend with smart, dedicated women and men. I look forward to the months ahead in continuing to promote democracy in Newton.

*Sue Rosenbaum*

## Dialing for Dollars

The LWVMA phonathon was held in Newton on Tuesday, October 24 and Monday, October 30. We wish to thank the volunteers who spent the evening dialing for dollars. Some even had a great time chatting with League members! Sharalyn Arntz, Pat Acton, Barbara Herson, Sharyn Roberts, Tami Roberts and Bonnie Carter. Also, Sue Rosenbaum pre-empted the Newton dates by going to her hometown of Beverly and making phone calls from there. Thanks to all for helping fund-raise for the state and local League!

*Bonnie Carter* ■

# Together Let's Plan!

## Introduction to Program Planning

The League of Women Voters is truly a grassroots organization, especially when it comes to its positions on issues. League positions on issues are developed by studying the issue in depth and reaching a consensus at the grassroots level.

Every two years local Leagues participate in the LWVM program planning process by reviewing existing positions and making recommendations for the future.

### What is League program?

Program is the keystone of the League organization, the basis for both education and action efforts. League program consists of those governmental issues that League members choose for concerted study and action. It includes adopted positions, upon which action is taken, and issues for study that will lead to a position and action (from In League, LWVUS).

### Why is program planning necessary?

Every two years at the state and national levels of the League and every year at the local level, members review the current program and recommend changes, deletions, proposed new studies and priorities for action. By doing this the League can focus its efforts on those issues that are most current and relevant.

### How is program planning accomplished?

- Our Newton League will hold a discussion on State Program Planning prior to our Board Meeting on January 25 at 7:30 p.m. All members are welcome (see calendar.) We anticipate coming to agreement on state program suggestions for the upcoming biennium.
- Local Leagues send their responses to LWVM (this year, by February 16, 2007).
- Based on this information, the LWVM board makes recommendations for the upcoming biennium's program. These recommendations are sent to local Leagues six weeks before the LWVM convention (by April 20 this year).
- Local Leagues can submit recommendations for changes to the LWVM board-recommended program (by May 11).
- At convention (June 1-2, 2007), delegates vote to adopt the LWVM program for the next two years. Board-recommended items require a majority vote for adoption; items suggested by local Leagues during the program planning process but not recommended by the LWVM board require a two-thirds vote.

The program planning process allows and encourages the participation of all members of the Massachusetts League. Together, let's plan a program that helps create enthusiasm for the work of the League at both the local and state levels.

LWVMA Program in Brief can be found on Pages 26-28 of the 2006 LWVN Handbook and on [www.LWVMA.org](http://www.LWVMA.org) ■

# Waste Not, Want Not

*Newton Reusable  
Materials Exchange*

The City of Newton Reusable Materials Exchange was developed by the City of Newton Department of Public Works to reduce the amount of waste going into our trash barrels.

It is a webservice, WasteNotNewton.com, which provides residents with a convenient way to sell, trade or give away used or surplus items that would otherwise be disposed of.

You can post listings of items and materials you wish to dispose of or browse for those currently available in your area. Each listing contains a description of the material or item, contact information, and in some cases cost and delivery information. The actual exchange transactions are carried out directly between the interested parties.

For more info: Visit Resources on the city web page, or contact LWVN's Barbara Herson. ■



## THIS HOLIDAY SEASON GIVE THE GIFT OF LEAGUE MEMBERSHIP!

The gift of League membership to your friends and family is a wonderful way to bring them joy and introduce them to a life-long commitment to strengthening democracy.

For more information,  
please contact the  
LWVM office  
at 617-523-2999 or  
[lwwma@lwwma.org](mailto:lwwma@lwwma.org).

# CPA Applications

*Durant Kenrick Homestead continued from page 1*

nation of easement financing unclear. Why does the project require \$2.21 million in CPC money to pay for conservation easements? Since we will hardly be the only readers of this proposal, it would behoove the applicants to make the issue of easements easy for a layperson to understand. Why are easements being proposed instead of another method for keeping the property free of development in perpetuity? Could others purchase these easements?

We would like to see a statement within the proposal of any testing of such a capital campaign among potential donors.

There are statements about pursuing grants. We would like to see documentation that grants can and have been developed in addition to this CPC grant proposal.

We would also like to see evidence of effort that grant writing is and will be accomplished. Does the History Museum have a grant writer? All that is provided is that they will be doing this with a list of grantors. We would like that list included in the grant proposal.

The League readers also had a number of questions for the applicants and the CPC about this proposal:

The structural evaluation by John Wathne includes only what can be observed without removal of interior or exterior finishes. His report suggests that the building envelope is not weather tight and the interior supports are to some degree not sound. However, repairs can only be accurately assessed

when one knows the full extent and nature of the damage.

How can the city be assured that the restoration budget is adequate?

A generous contingency should be assumed for structural repairs not evident. A complimentary architectural assessment of repairs to interior finishes, either relating to structural repairs or otherwise, is not clear, and not evident in the budget.

Regarding energy use in public facilities, the CPC 2006-07 Plan supports investment of CPA funds in durable and sustainable capital projects. City-wide, we note growing municipal concern and public support for comprehensive energy auditing and upgrading of public facilities to control operating costs. If the History Museum plans to acquire another house museum which requires carefully controlled conditioning to best preserve its contents, there should be a plan to control such operating costs.

To what extent is there a plan inherent in this proposal to insulate and supply high efficiency mechanical systems to this historic structure?

Also, can the addition be planned so as to exceed energy codes? We would like to see such plans in this proposal.

One of the financing scenarios suggests placing an assessment on neighbors' properties to fund operations.

Is this a realistic idea, given the sensitivity of the neighbors to tax increases? (Note that NtxA president's property is

one house behind the homestead!)

What work has been done to raise awareness among neighbors about the homestead and its needs? Have they been approached about the assessment option?

Further, this part of the proposal would be stronger if it demonstrated that having the Durant/Kenrick homestead in the neighborhood improves property values. Some statement should be developed on this if the group wants to pursue an assessment strategy.

The appraised value for the land/buildings is \$2.51 million yet there is no statement made that any debt is on the property, nor was debt financing proposed or any statement made that this was analyzed. Given the value of the property, have the applicants analyzed debt financing, especially as one of the strategies to cover needs while the capital campaign and grant funding are being developed?

The operating budget's annual rate of increase is estimated at 3%. Is this realistic?

When we reviewed the 2006 proposal to assess this property for City acquisition, we asked about the trees on the buildable lot—not just what is there, but how healthy the trees are and what kind of care they might need. We suggested that the City's tree warden might be able to undertake this work. Has such an assessment been completed? If so, it should be part of this application.

## City Hall & War Memorial Grounds Historic Landscape Preservation Master Plan

*Submitted by: Parks & Recreation Department*

*Category: Historic Preservation*

*Location: Newton Centre, Ward 6*

*Cost: \$1,154,000 requested*

*\$3,082,943 total project cost*

**Description:** This Olmstead-designed park is listed on the National Historic

Register (along with the City Hall building). This is the first of three phases outlined in a master plan by Pressley Associates. After restoring the ponds and parkland, phase two addresses City Hall and Memorial Drives and city sidewalks; phase three addresses City Hall grounds and the West Memorial Lawn. Phase I would finish with a 6 month

construction period from spring to fall, 2008.

Phase I's budget is \$1,153,748, all from CPA funds. Silt removal and disposal to improve their storm water holding capacity (\$142,500 with 25% contingency; additional \$500 for design fee) will come from the Public Works Department.

*Continued on page 5*

# CPA Applications

*City Hall & War Memorial Grounds continued from page 4*

Phase II's budget will be \$1,116,749 (includes both 25% contingency and design fees); Phase III \$813,446.

**Comments/Questions:** The project is a good fit for the CPA historic preservation category – the park is on the National Historic Register and improvements will make the park ADA compliant. It also appears to improve Newton's waterways and reduce flooding.

The allocation of a large sum of

money—in this case almost half of FY07 available CPA funds—suggests that the project must be tremendously important. City Hall is centrally located, and is one of the most visible open spaces in the city. But does it really rise to the level of something that will eventually cost the city more than the acquisition and rehabilitation of Angino Farm (appx. \$2.5 million)?

One of the goals of the CPC is to leverage outside/private funds where possi-

ble. Could the applicants find no other source of funding for this proposal?

Given the location, maintenance of the site will probably be better than most, both by city staff and volunteer groups. But the city's record on maintaining parks and open spaces is weak and getting weaker. At what point does the CPC determine that the likelihood of inadequate maintenance so imperils a capital investment as to make it unwise?

*Submitted by: Newton Community Development Foundation*

*Capital needs assessment: by Gale Associates*

*Category: Community Housing*

*Location: 1600 Washington Street, Newton*

*CPA Request: \$750,898 (total city funding requested: \$900,898.)*

*Total Estimated Development cost: 1,040,898.*

**Description:** The 80 year old city-owned former Warren Junior High school building is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The building was converted in 1990-1992 to 59 mixed income apartments and a day care center, including 21 units available to persons earning less than 50% area median income (AMI).

The current proposal is for exterior restoration work that was not part of the 1992 restoration (although the dete-

## Warren House Renovations

rioration was evident), and which is essential to waterproofing and preserving the exterior envelope.

A detailed analysis by Gale Associates "Exterior Facade Analysis of the Warren House" August 2005, provides detailed assessments of brick masonry replacement, repointing, cast stone repair and/or replacement, replacement of failed sealants, exterior painting of window units. The assessment also advocates power washing of the exterior to fully reveal the extent of repairs. A contingency of 15% is assumed in the cost estimates.

### Comments/Questions:

**Funds Requested:** It is unclear how much money is being requested or is appropriate for historic restoration vs. community housing.

**Community Need:** The work is necessary to preserve the integrity of the structure and therefore to protect the continued viability of existing and

potential future affordable housing units.

Fifteen of the units were provided in the original proposal to remain affordable in perpetuity. Another six were provided as affordable for 15 years, which will soon be expiring. (Board Order 4/17/1990) To receive CPA community housing funds, these additional units should be deed restricted in perpetuity. In this way the project meets the goal of the Newton framework for Planning quoted in the proposal: "It also makes it imperative that, 'at minimum, there be no net loss of affordable or subsidized housing in the city.' emphasizing the need to preserve existing affordable housing units"

**Community Support:** There is no evidence of community awareness or support of this additional investment in Warren House included in the proposal. Has the Newton Historical Commission been contacted to seek their support? Two old letters supporting the 1992

*Continued on page 6*

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## Membership Application

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

My email address may be shared with State and National LWV

- I would like to join the League of Women Voters of Newton. Enclosed is my check for \$55 payable to LWVN.
- Lifetime membership \$1000**
- I would like to receive materials about the League.
- I would like to be contacted by a League member to talk about LWVN.

**Mail this form (and your check, if joining) to:  
Andrea Kozinetz Holtz at 8 Stony Brae Road,  
Newton Highlands, MA 02461**

# CPA Applications

*Warren House Renovations continued from page 5*

renovation, and conversion to affordable housing by the city planning director and Newton housing Coalition are attached.

**Scope of Work:** The scope of work seems to stop short of historic restoration, limited to needed repairs to the envelope.

Recommended by the consultant, (but not included/proposed by the petitioner) is a complete re-pointing of the building exterior so as to prevent a spotty appearance to the repairs, and assure a long term investment in the soundness of the remaining masonry. Are we confident that the scope of repairs—identified as critical—will not require additional repair in the near future? At minimum, we think that the power washing recommendation to fully reveal all envelope failures should be required at the outset of the work.

Further research into the condition of the interior of the building (interviews with former tenants of the market-rate units) reveals that windows are not tight and that either the distribution of heat is unbalanced and/or temperatures are set unusually high. As this is a structure that the city hopes to keep in perpetuity, the managers should explore measures to make these apartments more energy-efficient, and thus cheaper to operate. Further, the lack of screens on windows poses both a health and security hazard that should be addressed in some

form—whether as part of this proposal or part of the city's oversight of this property. Again, the question of whether the scope of this work is sufficient to guarantee the investment is raised.

**Historic Standards:** Does this proposal belong in historic restoration, when the nature of the work described is more about repairing the envelope, and to a great extent doing maintenance work on recent renovations?

Former repairs have been done in a patchwork way, sometimes unsightly. In addition, some of the stucco work on the penthouse units is not original but needs repair. The proposed work requests funds under both the historic preservation and community housing categories, but proposes only similar spotty repairs. As this building is on the national historic register, and in keeping with the requirements to date of the CPC that historic restoration comply with DOI standards, – is this a good fit for historic restoration?

**Investment and Maintenance:** CPA funds may not be used for routine maintenance. Where is the line drawn between routine maintenance and long term investment on this project? For example, should painting of windows and replacing of failed sealants (all part of the 1990 restoration) be considered maintenance?

**Maintenance Planning:** This building contains many market-rate apartments, and it is reasonable to assume that income from those rents is used for operating costs and long-term maintenance. This request raises the question: has there been regular maintenance of the other significant elements and systems in the building? Is there a facilities maintenance plan that shows that rents and city funding resources can reasonably cover expected maintenance and parts replacements into the future?

**Recommendation:** If CPA funding is used, it should trigger the requirement for the six expiring units remaining affordable in perpetuity. Thus the City gains housing units, 'creating community housing' via the CPA investment.

This work is important to preserve the integrity of the building, though much of it ought to have been done with the initial renovation. Like the argument that prevailed in the case of historic restorations to City Hall and the Claflin Library, some of this work could be seen as a long term investment in the property, rather than maintenance.

However, we do not see a convincing argument for using CPA historic preservation funds to do this work as presented, both because the real restoration work needs to be more carefully delineated, and because the scope is insufficient to achieve a true restoration.

## Newton Centre Playground Access Improvements Phase One

**Submitted by:** Parks and Recreation  
**Category:** Historic Preservation, Recreation

**Location:** Ward 6

**Cost:** \$616,000, eventually \$2,480,000

**Description:** Improve park access with unobstructed, connected, ADA compliant pathways wide enough for service vehicles to use. Pathways will increase safety by eliminating current service vehicle routes behind, through,

and over playfields. There is strong community support demonstrated in the application form. However, strong neighborhood opposition is also evident at hearings.

**Comments/Questions:** This application is complete and well documented, with the exception of a detailed budget. The applicants should be commended for doing their homework.

This is a highly-visible site in the center

of Newton, heavily used by neighbors and community groups. But it is not high on the Parks & Recreation Department's own assessment of the most-needy parks. The League supports developing a Master Plan to encompass all parks, and the parks' Needs Assessment was a good starting point. We would like to see how all the city's park improvement proposals would fit into a Master Plan for the city. This proposal came out of a desire to accept a

*Continued on page 7*

# CPA Applications

*Newton Centre Playground continued from page 6*

\$350,000 private donation for a handi-cap accessible playground. The CPC's goals include leveraging outside funds. The CPA supports increasing accessibility for our public spaces. But is this the best fit for our recreation dollars?

Further, our readers saw no evidence that the improvements are based on original Olmstead plans. Unless the proponents can produce such evidence, is this really a fit for historic preservation?

From hearings with Parks & Recreation, we understand the proposal is to pave the paths. Our observers understood that the material proposed was chip seal (aka "bituminous concrete"). A non-permeable surface will increase runoff. Is this desirable? Is this surface appropriate for an historic park? Is there something that is ADA compliant and easy to maintain that would also conform with historic standards and the city's preference that drainage issues not be exacerbated?

Elevation plans would also strengthen this proposal.

One reader noted that she regularly sees maintenance trucks driving through park and over playing fields, wrecking them for play. Are these paths to be used for vehicular access, and if so, can the department be sure that fields will not be damaged by maintenance vehicles in the future?

## Farlow & Chaffin Parks – Historic Preservation and Restoration for Recreation

*Submitted by: Parks & Recreation Department; Friends of Farlow Park*

*Category: Historic Preservation/ Recreation*

*Location: Newton Corner historic district, Ward 1*

*Cost: \$472,000 requested for phase I  
\$512,000 phase I cost  
\$1,140,000 total project cost*

**Description:** These Newton Corner parks are historically important to Newton for a number of reasons, including Farlow's place as Newton's first public open space, and because landscaper Meacham also designed such places as the Boston Public Garden. The parks are listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Significant deterioration of the park includes loss of the original pond, deterioration of the bridge, and overgrowth.

A master plan was done in 1983, but not acted upon. Phase I would restore the bridge and plantings, and investigate pond restoration. This phase would also unify the parks, the furnishings, preserve & prune older trees, recreate flowerbeds at entrances, make walkways more accessible, and add historic signage. Later phases would install ornamental fencing, improve accessibility, and possibly restore the pond.

The proponents have received support from all abutters, including two

preschools, the Underwood PTO, three churches, the Historic Commission and History Museum, the Mayor and the ward aldermen. They are relying on volunteers and the city for maintenance. They have secured CDBG funding and plan to raise another \$10,000 privately.

**Comments & Questions:** The applicants have done a commendable job of marshalling allies and knitting together the 2-3 parcels into a cohesive whole. These parks are clearly well-used by the neighborhood and its schools. It appears further that a number of proposed elements were deleted from the project. If this is the case, it suggest that the applicants are thinking critically about what money is really necessary to make the project succeed.

However, the League has a number of remaining concerns:

The ponds, if they are feasible, are a drowning concern, especially with two preschools, two playgrounds and an elementary school nearby. This is one of the few parks serving this neighborhood. What kind of precautions have been explored to keep the city free of such liabilities?

A large part of the phase I costs will go to destroying the current bridge and building a new one. However, the state of the current bridge suggests that maintenance and/or misuse may be an issue. Does preserving the historic bridge

make economic or aesthetic sense, especially if there are no ponds?

Annual maintenance is planned at \$500. Is that amount sufficient? The Friends of Farlow Park would raise funds for any costs above \$500/yr. How can the Friends or others ensure that private funds will cover maintenance into the future? Could the funding of maintenance be made more secure with an endowment?

Granted that the neighborhood is funding several playgrounds in the park, a total private contribution of \$10,000 still seems low, considering the demographics of the surrounding area. Have the proponents adequately plumbed the neighborhood's fundraising capacities?

The construction contingency of 25% seems excessive, given that a master plan should have eliminated the possibility of at least some cost overruns. The CPC usually budgets between 10-15% contingency, and 10% seems reasonable given the level of planning already completed. Why is this line item so high?

The CPC has already allocated a large sum for the restoration of Stearns & Pellegrini parks in this ward. Does this allocation meet the committee's goals to distribute CPA benefits throughout the city?

*Continued on page 8*

# CPA Applications

## Cheesecake Brook Greenway

*Submitted by: Newton DPW, CDBG  
West Newton Advisory Committee  
(Dan Demeo, Chair)*

*Category: Open Space*

*Location: West Newton and  
Newtonville, from Eddy St. northeast to  
Albemarle Rd. then to Charles River  
Pathway at Blue Heron Bridge.*

*Cost: \$393,673 of CPA funding;  
\$156,620 from CDBG for a total of  
\$550,293.*

**Description:** This 1.7 acre parcel runs from Eddy Street to Watertown Street. It is currently owned by the City, under jurisdiction of DPW with Parks and Recreation mowing the grassy slopes. The section near Eddy St. is channeled by badly crumbling stone & cement walls, has chain link fencing and locked gates. Trash, overgrown saplings, rampant vegetation clutter this section. The more open section in the center green strip of Albemarle Rd. has no paths alongside. There is no formal drainage system, and existing catch basins do not function. Erosion has cut channels in several places.

Just up Albemarle Road are F.A. Day Middle School, Fessenden School, and Horace Mann Elementary School. The area is heavily populated, and has little open space.

**Proposal:** Create pedestrian-bike pathway. Prune or remove 60 trees, repair retaining walls, remove weeds, clean up trash, remove chain link fence.

Transform Cheesecake Brook into an asset and passive recreation area for neighborhood and general public, and use neighborhood resident volunteers to maintain it once it has been improved.

The project manager would be Bob Rooney, or his designee, from DPW; the West Newton CDBG Advisory Board will assist in overseeing project, and oversee volunteer maintenance on project completion. There is strong community support.

**Comments/Questions:** The League commends the authors of this project for looking at how our waterways are connected. The channeling of Cheesecake Brook may be part of the reason for flooding (documented in last year's Albemarle proposal) further downstream. This proposal starts to undo that channeling, creating small marshy areas where water can collect during storms. It also opens up the brook to passive recreation.

One thing our reviewers did not see in the proposal was an engineering study—we would expect some retaining walls were built alongside the roadways as well as along the water, and the proposal notes that some of the latter are crumbling. It would be good to know the condition of the roadway retaining walls, if they indeed exist.

It is not clear where the bike/walkways would be located, nor how they would be surfaced. We are not sure whether the walkway around this little park

would be built on what is currently green, or on the current roadway. We hope it is the latter, leaving maximum space for plant life and for flood waters.

We are also concerned about the surface of the paths on the existing grassy areas of the brook. Would they be crushed gravel/stone dust or a harder material such as asphalt or brick? If the latter, can the proposed structures contain storm water with these additions? Is this a sustainable drainage structure?

Despite these reservations, this proposal meets the majority of the goals in the CPC's 2007 Plan:

- It improves the quality of life for area residents.
- It links to an existing CPA project (Albemarle Central Corridor, FY06).
- It creates linear greenspace for passive recreation.
- It demonstrates high cost/benefit value, as the city already owns the land and volunteer maintenance services are offered.
- It leverages CDBG funds.
- It demonstrates strong community support.

We hope the proposal can be improved or clarified to meet the CPC's goals of sustainability, and to ensure that it will not imperil investments made in parkland further down stream.

*Submitted by: David Olson, City Clerk,*

## City Archive Preservation Project

*City of Newton Engineering  
Department*

*Category: Historic Preservation*

*Location: Newton City Hall, Ward 6*

*Cost: \$150,000*

**Description:** The goal of this project is to preserve the paper archival material which is currently stored in the City Clerk's office and in the basement of

City Hall. The material includes Vital Records, records which relate to the governing of the city and historical documents from 1679 to the present. Some of the documents are already in poor condition and need preservation; others are used frequently and may begin to deteriorate unless a better means of access is available.

The city clerk proposes to install rolling

compact shelving in the vault in the City Clerk's office and install fireproof cabinetry in the City Clerk's office to protect material not housed in vaults. Historical documents will be scanned while they are being preserved so that digital images will be available for web access. Records which are in poor condition will be preserved following current professional standards.

# CPA Applications

*City Archive Preservation Project continued from page 8*

The project is supported by the Newton Historical Commission, the Veterans Office of the City of Newton and the Newton Free Library.

The project is expected to be completed within one year of the allocation of the funds.

**LWVN Reviewer Comments/Questions:** The project will allow the city to preserve documents which are of national and local significance to historians and genealogists as well as those which are an important resource for city departments. Various city agencies are working together so that all of the city's historical documents will be available to the public on a searchable database. This project is also being funded by a grant from the National Historical Publications and Records Commission.

Much of the work will be performed by the City Archivist once that position, which has been funded, is filled. The city will be responsible for maintaining the records and will fund the cost of the archival storage materials.

The goal of preserving the documents is of significance for the future as well as the present.

That said, a 2004 Library Science study noted humidity damage on items stored in the basement vault. It recommends regular building inspection & maintenance to keep the basement dry, which gives "adequate although not optimum" conditions. The report notes that the City Clerk Office Vault is also not controlled for temperature and humidity. It is essential that the city's investment in the archives be adequately ensured. The proposal does not seem to address issues of environmental control. How will the applicants deal with heat and humidity in the vault and in the clerk's office? Is this adequate to protect the archives, or should the city consider transferring its papers to the better-controlled Library sites?

**Recommendation:** Well-preserved and accessible archives are an important resource for supporting open and effective government. If the issue of humidity and heat can be addressed, the League feels this is otherwise a complete application that fully meets the requirements of the CPC and the CPA.

## Jefferson Square Historic Lighting Project

*Submitted by: Jefferson Square Neighborhood Association, Newton Department of Public Works*

*Category: Historic Preservation*

*Location: Jefferson and William Streets, Ward 1*

*Cost: \$119,790 total cost, \$117,790 requested*

**Description:** To add 6 high-pressure sodium (very efficient) street lights that appear historic, modeled after those chosen for Washington Park lighting last year, to Jefferson Square, defined as the intersection of Jefferson & William streets in Ward 1. The project is proposed to contribute to revitalization of an isolated low-income neighborhood, cut off from Newton Corner by the turnpike and bordered by two major roads, Galen St. and Nonantum Rd. Houses on Jefferson St. date to the mid-to late-1800s and encompass a variety of architectural styles, including Italianate, mansard, and Queen Anne. JSNA members maintain a garden on the traffic island, and recently won

Newton Pride awards for the plantings. A sign connoting Jefferson Square was recently installed. The neighborhood is one of several access points to the Charles River walkway, and currently has no working street lights.

The plan is for lights to be installed in less than a year after funding is secured. The neighbors hope to raise additional funding from Galen/Washington street businesses.

**LWVN Comments/Questions:** While this is a creative improvement project, the historic significance of the neighborhood is not documented. The CPA considers a historic resource as property listed or eligible for listing on the state historic register or deemed significant by the local historic commission. Have the Newton Historical Commission and the Newton Historical Society been contacted for supporting letters? Is the area eligible for the state historic register?

There is no indication in the application that neighborhood had this kind of

lighting historically. If it doesn't, how would this be historic restoration?

If this were a park, it might qualify under CPA for recreation improvements and access improvements. However, this area comprises a traffic island and sidewalks, so does not qualify.

That said, lighting in the area appears insufficient for public safety. The closest streetlight is hidden by a tree. Does the area meet Newton lighting and public safety requirements?

**Recommendation:** The League does not see how this expenditure, however worthy and valuable, can be funded with CPA. However, we hope that the city will soon be re-lamping its current street light system to high-pressure sodium. We think the applicants should approach the Traffic & Safety Committee and city Traffic Engineer Clint Shuckel about the lighting of their square. This proposal might be eligible to be funded along with the re-lighting of all of Newton's streets.

*Continued on page 10*

## Committees - in - Action

### Observers

Coordinator: Andrea Kelley  
617-964-4609

ELECTION COMMISSION Nancy Criscitiello

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES Deb Crossley

NEWTON FREE LIBRARY BOARD Mary Adelstein

NEWTON PARKS AND RECREATION Priscilla Leith

### Representatives

NEWTON CITIZEN COMMISSION ON ENERGY  
Deb Crossley, LWVN Representative

SUSTAINABLE NEWTON COMMITTEE  
Sharyn Roberts, LWVN Representative

### Committees

#### LOCAL ACTION

Contact Jennifer Stoner, Chair 617-283-5687

Focus *Community Preservation Act*

#### Members

Anna Maria Abernathy Andrea Kelley  
Deb Crossley Amelia Koch  
Lucia Dolan Priscilla Leith  
Andreae Downs Roberta Leviton  
George Foord Myra Tattenbaum

#### ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES COMMITTEE

Contact Deb Crossley 617-244-7597

Focus *Promoting resource efficiency and energy conservation in public facilities*

#### Members

Carol Bock Beth Lowd  
Halina Brown Martha Richmond  
Lucia Dolan Sharyn Roberts  
Katherine Gekas Jennifer Stoner  
Barbara Herson Heather Tausig

•••

Feel free to call committee contacts or a Board officer or director to learn more.

# CPA Applications

## Bronze Door & Lamp Post Restoration

*Submitted by: Newton Fire Department, Newton Public Buildings Department*

*Category: Historic Preservation*

*Location: Newton Fire Headquarters, Ward 6*

*Cost: \$8,030*

**Description:** The brass doors and lampposts of this 1928 brick building are discolored and tarnished. The fire department is requesting the above funds to polish these fixtures, the door frame, transom, and window grates. They would then be preserved with a clear synthetic coating, so re-polishing would not become necessary.

No community support solicited yet, but it will be taken to the Historical Commission for review. It could be complete within two weeks of funding.

**LWVN Reviewer Comments/Questions:** The green patina on copper is often considered worth preserving on antiques in the open market. Is there value lost in having the antique brass furnishings polished?

Is polishing, even when a synthetic coating is added to preserve the job, really capital rather than maintenance?

The League would like to see community support solicited before an application is considered complete—in this case, not just from the Historical Commission, but also perhaps from the citizens working on the Newton Centre Renaissance Task Force, which the applicants reference in the application. ■

## Judges wanted for our 8th Annual ONLINE STUDENT ESSAY CONTEST

NO MEETINGS • NO MAILINGS • ON YOUR SCHEDULE

Contest runs November 2006 through March 2007

All judging and communications happen via email

*Please email the State League at [judges@lwmva.org](mailto:judges@lwmva.org) to indicate your interest in participating.*

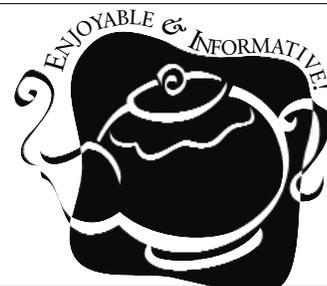
## MEMBERSHIP TEA

*Welcome New and Prospective Members*

Sunday • January 21 • 4-6 p.m.

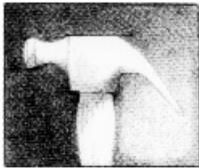
Take this opportunity to bring a friend to this Sunday afternoon gathering at the home of Vicky Danberg.

Contact Ann Grantham at 617-964-0333 for information.



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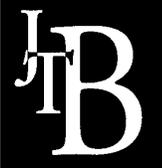
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## LWVN CALENDAR

### *December*

- 5 Tuesday, 7:15 p.m., **Legislative Roundtable Taping**, NewTV Studio, Lucia Dolan, 617-332-1893
- 6 Wednesday, 7:30 p.m., **Local Action Committee Meeting**, at the home of Lucia Dolan, 20 Devon Rd., Newton Centre, 617-332-1893.
- 7 Thursday, 6:30 p.m., **Working Board Potluck/Meeting**, at the home of Ann Grantham, 46 EastSide Pkwy, 617-964-0333.
- 21 Thursday, 7:15 p.m., **Board Meeting** at the home of Andrea Kozinetz, 8 Stony Brae Rd., Newton Highlands, 617-964-6490.
- 9 Tuesday, 7:30 p.m. **Conversations about Newton North #2 – Financing**. Lasker Auditorium, Newton North High School, co-sponsored by LWVN, the Newton Schools Foundation and the PTO Council, Terry Yoffie, 617-956-1796.
- 10 Wednesday 11:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m. **Topic Meeting Pedestrian Safety in Winter**. Guests – Alderman Christine Samuelson and Officer Dawn Hough; at the home of Pat Acton, 48 Miller Rd. 02458, 617-965-5572. Brown Bagging Encouraged!
- 11 Thursday, 7:10 p.m., **Local Action Committee** meeting at the home of Andrea Downs, 854 Chestnut, Waban, 617-378-8972.

### *January*

- 2 Tuesday, 7:15 p.m., **Legislative Roundtable Taping**, NewTV Studio, Lucia Dolan, 617-332-1893
- 4 Thursday, 6:30 **Working Board Meeting/ Potluck** at the home of Ann Grantham, 46 East Side Parkway, 617-964-0333.
- 18 Thursday, 7:15 p.m. **State Program Planning Meeting** followed by LWVN Board Meeting at the home of Bonnie Carter, 177 Homer Street, Newton Centre, 617-969-0686.
- 21 Sunday, 4-6, **Membership Tea** for new and prospective members at the home of Vicki Danberg, 30 Chase St, Newton Centre, Contact: Ann Grantham, 617-964-0333.
- 23 Tuesday, **Special Election Day**, Polls Open 7:00 a.m.- 8:00 p.m.

### Legislative Roundtable



For current schedule log on to [www.nwvtv.org](http://www.nwvtv.org)

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*Suggested donation is \$20.*

## *Welcome New Members!*

ADDRESS CORRECTION FROM LAST MONTH'S ISSUE:

ENA A. LORANT  
21 Walden Street, Newton, MA  
02460  
617-332-6293

## League of Women Voters of Newton

PO Box 610207

Newton, MA 02461

617-964-0014

[www.lwvn.ma.lwvnet.org](http://www.lwvn.ma.lwvnet.org)

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