



Town of Lexington

Community Preservation Committee

Report to

2015 November Special Town Meeting #2

Article 5: Property Improvements- 241 Grove Street

Submitted by:

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Released October 29, 2015

ARTICLE 5

Project:	Renovations to the Farmhouse at 241 Grove Street- Wright Farm Property
CPA Category:	Community Housing
Amount Requested:	\$200,000
Amount Recommended:	\$200,000
CPC Vote:	(9-0)

At the 2012 Annual Town Meeting, voters approved the purchase of a significant portion of the Wright Farm, a 13.6 acre parcel of land located on Grove Street. The Wright Family retained one lot of approximately .99 acres, including a house, garage and barn on which there was granted an option of later purchase by the Town. The purchase price of the open space parcel was \$3,072,000, funded from the Community Preservation Fund unbudgeted reserves (\$122,000) and borrowing (\$2,950,000). At the 2015 Annual Town Meeting, voters approved \$618,000 to fund the purchase of the remaining parcel of land by the Town, including the existing farmhouse and barn, and authorized conveyance of the farmhouse and a portion of the parcel to LexHAB for affordable housing purposes. LexHAB has subsequently submitted a request for CPA funds to rehabilitate and restore the farmhouse in order to convert into community housing. This project has been evaluated by the CPC in light of the articulated criteria for eligibility and appropriateness under the Community Preservation Act and has been vetted by Town Counsel.

The house on the property, built in 1843, is one of only three side-gabled Greek Revival cottages with wall dormers in Lexington and has the most elaborate finishes. The house, with garage and barn, is located on a portion of land purchased by Daniel Cummings, a local tanner in 1826. It remained in the Cummings family until 1890 when it was sold for use as a sheep farm. The Wright family purchased the property in 1936 and has owned it since that time. The Wright Farm represents one of the few surviving farm properties in Lexington. LexHAB has determined that the house is appropriate for rehabilitation and restoration to convert into affordable housing. Notably, the house has four bedrooms; LexHAB has more requests for three and four bedroom houses than are currently available.

Project Goals and Objectives:

- To preserve an historic farmhouse while creating a unit of affordable housing to meet a need for a larger family in Lexington; and
- To rehabilitate and restore an important local historic resource.

Project Benefit:

- The rehabilitated house will preserve an important Lexington historic resource and provide much-needed affordable housing for a larger family.

Funding Request:

This project requests a total of \$200,000 to be appropriated from the community housing reserve fund for affordable housing purposes. This cost represents repairs and rehabilitation to the interior (\$98,000), exterior (\$54,000- includes possible demolition/movement of stand-alone garage), permit fees (\$2,000) and contingency funds (\$46,000).

Guidelines for the Use of CPA Funding by LexHAB

The following are guidelines agreed upon by the Community Preservation Committee, LexHAB and the Board of Selectmen for the acquisition of affordable units with Town CPA funds.

- 1.) All units purchased with CPA funds shall be submitted for inclusion on the Subsidized Housing Inventory (SHI).
- 2.) Each acquisition shall increase the affordable housing stock. Monies shall be spent only on acquisition or rehabilitation of a unit that results in an addition to the pool of affordable units.
- 3.) Dwellings to be purchased shall be one or two family (single, duplex or condominium unit).
- 4.) The size of the units may be up to 1,500 square feet of habitable space.
- 5.) If LexHAB builds the unit, the size may be 3 bedrooms, expandable to 4.
- 6.) LexHAB shall try to purchase dwellings on public bus routes, including Lexpress Routes.
- 7.) Total CPA funds expended for a unit of housing, including legal and professional services, whether built new on purchased land or purchased and renovated, shall not exceed \$525,000.
- 8.) Efforts shall be made to maximize energy efficiency in each unit.
- 9.) As a general policy, CPA funds shall not be expended for the demolition of any houses listed on the Cultural Resources Inventory.
- 10.) When LexHAB identifies a housing unit or land for acquisition, it shall submit a proposal to the CPC and the Capital Expenditures Committee for comment prior to submittal to the Board of Selectmen. Approval by the Board of Selectmen is required for any LexHAB purchase of a unit or of land.
- 11.) Any property or properties acquired by LexHAB for the creation, preservation or support of community housing with total or partial funding from the CPA shall be subject to a permanent deed restriction limiting its use to the stated acquisition purpose. Such deed restrictions shall be in a form approved by the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development and shall be timely recorded at the appropriate Registry of Deeds.
- 12.) CPA funds appropriated to LexHAB by Town Meeting shall be identified in a specific MUNIS account. Expenditures against the account shall be submitted to the Town Manager, with a copy to the CPC Administrative Assistant.
- 13.) Funds remaining in the LexHAB account may be carried over from year to year for subsequent acquisitions of affordable housing units.

(Approved February 17, 2011; amended February 20, 2013)