



**League of Women Voters of Newton
PO Box 610207
Newton, MA 02461**

Joyce Moss, Chair
Community Preservation Committee
1000 Commonwealth Ave.
Newton, MA 02459

Dear Ms. Moss:

The League of Women Voters of Newton is grateful for the opportunity to weigh in on your program again this year. The Committee is to be congratulated for its hard work and foresight in gathering public comment and working to refine and clarify its grant-making priorities.

Our Local Action Committee and our Board have developed the following suggestions for your consideration.

First, since the state-provided portion of annual CPA income is anticipated to shrink in coming years, we encourage the CPC to put debt service payments first, as it has to date, and incur no new bond obligations whose payments, along with current debt service, will exceed the funds from the 1% surcharge in Newton.

Second, we propose “banking” some percentage of CPC funds annually so that there are monies available for one-time, large, and urgent projects. Many of our signature CPA projects are big-ticket items, and having the funds set aside would reduce interest costs to the CPA fund.

Third, we believe that funding for city-wide planning has been the most useful money the CPA has spent over the years, with a wonderful example being the Heritage Landscape Inventory. Please continue to encourage other departments to plan for the future in anticipation of possible opportunities.

As guiding principles in all funding questions, we heartily endorse the CPC’s vigilance in requiring the applicants to explain how their projects fit in with existing plans and priority documents.

Most importantly, the League applauds the CPC for asking that all projects be sustainable in the long term: not just efficient to run (energy, water, etc.), but durable, and with a maintenance endowment for projects that will need regular care.

Our comments would never be complete without letting the CPC know how much we appreciate the work of your volunteer committee. Particularly as resources become scarcer, your careful deliberations and thoughtful questions are critical to the success of the CPA in Newton.

Yours,

Terry Yoffie, President
December 15, 2008