

## **2016 CPA Town Hall Document Funding Request**

Whately Town Hall is central to the fabric of our downtown and as an 1844 building it is precisely what CPC funds for historic preservation should go toward. Without CPA funding the future of Town Hall cannot be guaranteed. We need a vibrant town hall as a community gathering place that promotes social functions and the arts, and is a place for civic groups to meet and thrive. The Historical Society needs an energy-efficient and climate controlled space to house its collection. The Historical Commission and Municipal Building Committee are requesting \$84,000 in CPA funds for the preparation of bid-ready documents to start this process.

### **Background**

In 2015, the Mass. Office of Public Collaboration facilitation process found that 80% of those in Whately favor restoring town hall. MOPC's recommendation was that Whately purchase the regional library building for town offices and rehabilitate Town Hall for use as a Community Center. A community space needs survey by Susan Baron (summary attached) found that there was a substantial need for such a facility in town. Town meeting voted funds to develop plans for using Town Hall as a community center along with plans for Town Offices at the library building.

Jones Whitsett Architects worked with the Building Committee and the Historical Society to develop these plans. They include space for the Historical Society, a community meeting room, fully accessible rest rooms, and a small kitchen on the first floor. The auditorium on the second floor would be retained and rehabilitated and a small addition built on the rear to house a rear staircase and a platform lift that would provide accessible access to both the auditorium and the stage.

The building would be stabilized and the windows and sills repaired. All systems would be brought up to code, the building would be well insulated, and energy-efficient heating and cooling systems installed. A new septic system would be installed with the leaching field behind the library. The work would be done in accordance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Historic Preservation. If necessary, construction could be done in phases as finances permit.

All the construction for the rehabilitation project will be eligible for CPA financing. In addition, the project is eligible for historic preservation, cultural, and accessibility grants as well as subsidized, long-term financing. Private donations will also be sought.

### **Current Request**

The condition of Town Hall continues to deteriorate, as the broken window on the front façade indicates. The Historical Society is anxious to move its collection to a climate controlled space that is cheaper to heat. Whately continues to need accessible space for community meetings and year-round community and cultural events. Now that town offices have moved to Sandy Lane, it is important to start the process for the building's rehabilitation. The first step in this process is the preparation of bid-ready documents.

The Building Committee and Historical Commission are requesting that the CPA fund \$84,000 for the preparation of these documents by an architectural firm with historic preservation experience well acquainted with the requirements of the Secretary's Standards of Historic Preservation. The Friends of Town Hall will contribute an additional \$10,000. This will fund plans for the full restoration project. This approach is recommended because it is the most cost-effective means of enabling informed decision making on the implementation of the rehabilitation and because bid-ready documents are required for the grant applications being pursued.