

# **CHURCH ON THE HILL LENOX, MASSACHUSETTS**



## **OUTLINE FOR HISTORIC RESTORATION AND PARTIAL ADAPTIVE REUSE**

**Prepared by Eileen Mahoney**

## **Introduction**

Religious buildings play a fundamental role in their communities: their architecture define and articulate local history; they are an important source of cultural heritage and can provide vital space for many local social services, in addition to their religious mission. Yet these historic buildings are increasingly vulnerable to deterioration and loss.

For those religious properties that remain open, pressures continue to be placed on strained budgets to address the maintenance, restoration and renovation of these older, historic buildings. These buildings tell the story of the history of New England. These churches must retain their architectural integrity and re-imagine their role in the community so as to continue to explore new ways of preserving the past and contribute to the future of the community.

The Church on the Hill in Lenox, MA. Is one of the important historical icons of the town of Lenox. Begun in 1769, the church was built on its current site in 1805. It consists of the Church proper and the Chapel in the center of town.

The Church is currently seeking to restore its buildings and develop adaptive mixed - use programs to complement its religious mission so as to preserve this icon of architectural beauty, and history. In so doing they intend to create a space that builds on the past, and enlivens the present to re-vision the future. Interestingly enough, Church on the Hill was originally built to be a church and a meeting hall so in a sense it wishes to return to its roots. This “re-turn” will offer future residents and visitors to Lenox a space for renewed cultural conversations, performances, inter-spiritual dialogues of all faiths, a forum for discussion of social responsibility and environmental parity of all communities.

## **Current Environment**

I would be remiss if I did not include a preliminary discussion of our current economic environment and its potential impact on any efforts to secure funding and raise additional funds for buildings or programming. Due to the corona pandemic, this is a time of contracted financial resources. While this is a time of great uncertainty, it also holds great possibility. I do believe that there is opportunity because of Church on the Hill’s iconic position in Lenox and the Town’s inevitable return to a thriving cultural mecca. Cultural events in Lenox will

revive and Church on the Hill can be positioned to meet the needs of residents and visitors alike.

While it may seem counter-intuitive to undertake a project such as this at this time, “Prior preparation prevents poor performance.” Preparing for the future, including preservation of historic structures is important.

Prepare now for the future so that when the timing is right, the church can refresh its plan and move ahead. Also, this “downtime” when many are still reeling from the effects of the economic impact of the virus is a rich time to brainstorm and prepare.

## **Goals**

The Church on the Hill seeks to:

- Restore the Church buildings.
- Create additional and more attractive parking adjacent to the cemetery.
- Develop an Adaptive mixed -use community program.

In order to accomplish these goals, the Church must undertake the following research and subsequent actions:

### A) Create Vision, develop plans, explore program direction

- Congregation support and consensus
- Community Stakeholder support

### B) Determine the scope and need

- Comprehensive Site Plan and current Building Conditions Report
- Boundary Survey to delineate cemetery/church boundary in preparation for parking expansion
- Prioritize urgent needs
- Creation of long-term stewardship of properties

### C) Narrative Creation

- The detailed exploration of the following must be undertaken as part of the building blocks of any grant application and/or case statement for a capital campaign solicitation. This will include research, compilation/coordination of written materials:
  - National Register designation,
  - Architectural significance and Chapel,
  - History of the Church, and Chapel

- How the church meets the goals of Lenox Master and Historic Master Plan
- Significance of the Church to the community
- How the Church benefits the Community

#### D) Funding of Projects

##### Capital Campaign

- 1) Community engagement
  - Focus groups
  - Feasibility Study
  - Active Leadership Committee
  
- 2) Research potential grant opportunities for capacity and building grants:
  - Identify matching funds
  - Community Preservation Funds
  - Massachusetts Historical Commission
  - Private Foundations w/ historic preservation mission
  
- 3) Community Capital Campaign- multi-year
  - Combination of Major donor and grass roots efforts
  - Legacy Gifts- legacy + History = remembering
  
- 4) Community Program Development
  - Create vision
  - Stakeholder engagement
  - Develop programs
  
- 5) Building Congregational and community support- word of mouth is the best marketing!

#### E) Timeline

Most of the narrative pieces are integral to any grant application or case statement that would support funding requests.

These building blocks, Visioning, Narrative writing, Building Survey and Plan should be undertaken as soon as possible so that there is time for

reflection, consensus building, voting and writing well before grant application submissions are due:

Comprehensive Site Plan

May 2020 – August 2020

Negotiation with Town regarding parking/ site enhancement

July 2020 - ongoing

Visioning/consensus building with committees

May- ongoing

Consensus building with Congregation

May - ongoing

Select Stakeholder informational sessions

June – ongoing

*Lenox Community Preservation Grant request process for grant cycle 2021-2022 as follows:*

Early November 2020- Step I application submitted

Early January 2021 - If approved in Step I, Step II more detailed application submitted

Late January- Hearing with Committee

February- March- Application review

Early March- Committee recommends projects to Selectman

May- Town vote for approval

*Massachusetts Historical Commission Grant request process for grant cycle Round 27: 2021-2022 as follows:*

January - February- Meetings with MHC representatives regarding application requirements

March- Applications deadline

Award selection- June

Mandatory awardees workshop- July

Project completion date- June 30, 2022

\*Excludes any easements or restrictions discovered during the course of this process.

## **Deliverables**

1. All Preparatory Work up to and including grant application submission
2. Prepare and manage all preparatory work for grant applications

3. Identify, evaluate and retain architectural firm to conduct comprehensive Site Plan
4. Identify, evaluate and retain landscape architect for site plan for parking lot expansion
5. Facilitate visioning and consensus building process
6. Facilitate compilation of historic documents, photos, project and operational budgets and other relevant background information
7. Draft narrative pieces cited above with assistance from the committee
8. Represent the Church at meetings with Stakeholders, MA. Historic Commission, Lenox Historic Commission, Lenox CPC as required
9. Draft and manage Lenox CPC and Massachusetts Historic Commission grant applications for submission

Grant management implementation - TBD separately

- Manage relationships with funding partners
- Manage with selected architects of contractors including bidding process
- Overall project management- architects, site work, periodic reports, photo documentation
- Completion report for securing funds

Capital Campaign direction - TBD separately

**Compensation**

The deliverables outlined above will be provided for a lump sum of \$21,000.00 for services provided from on or about May 15, 2020 through June 30, 2021. If this proposal is acceptable, please sign where indicated and forward the requested retainer of \$3,000.00.

Invoices will be sent on a bi-monthly basis, payable within 10 business days. Should a need arise for additional we will discuss, and a separate proposal will be submitted.

Submitted by: \_\_\_\_\_  
Eileen Mahoney

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Accepted by: \_\_\_\_\_  
Rev. Elizabeth Goodman

Date: \_\_\_\_\_