

Friends of the 1836 Meeting House
North Andover Community Planning Act Grant Proposal



FOMH Project Description

The Friends of the 1836 Meeting House (FOMH) are seeking North Andover Community Preservation funds in the amount of \$480,000 to support the costs of much needed preservation and restoration of the town's iconic Gothic style New England Meeting House. With its steeple and bell tower serving as a welcoming beacon day and at night, the meeting house is one of the most well-known and photographed historic structures in New England. Perched majestically in the heart of the Old Center of North Andover, the Meeting House is included in the national Historic Register and the local Historic District Register. The historic working bell is one of 23 remaining bells cast by Paul Revere during his tenure with the Foundry.

The Friends of the 1836 Meeting House of North Andover, Inc. was created in 2019 by a group of local residents to inform, share and support the ongoing preservation efforts of this historic building with the entire community.

As the custodian of this historic structure, the North Parish Unitarian Universalist Congregation has kept up the property and invested many funds and much work to preserve this historic treasure and maintain its importance in the community over the centuries. Alas, we are now at a time where considerable exterior deterioration has taken place in the steeples, windows, and siding. The deterioration has resulted in water damage in many areas of the meeting house that, if not addressed, will destabilize other areas on the property. It's a massive undertaking and incredibly expensive with today's costs.

How does this project align with the Community Preservation Committee goals?

The preservation of the 1836 Meeting House, North Andover's National and local historic landmark, aligns with the town's Community Preservation goals to preserve our historic buildings and heritage and ensure public access. The proposed project will address much needed exterior stabilization work to preserve this great structure into the next decades.

The FOMH and North Parish promote community access to the Meeting House by offering the facilities to community related organizations, and by programming a variety of cultural and musical events and charitable activities on a regular basis. In addition, visitors are welcome during office hours or may schedule a time with the office for tours and rentals. See the Public Access Guarantee section below for more information.

Construction Description and Timeline

The project management for the current preservation project began over a year ago when a donor committed to paying for sustainable energy efficiency systems of the sanctuary. Issues with the exterior walls, spires and bell towers were identified in the process so the project management team determined that the project would focus on overhauling the exterior shell prior to installing the energy efficiency systems.

The building committee has identified and met with specialized preservation contractors to help understand the scope of the work required, and to get bids. The preservation project, as itemized in the attached Construction Budget and contractor bids, includes replacing the siding and insulating two façades and the Bell Tower, repairing exterior trim, repairing window glazing, and painting the entire exterior. Eight finials and spires, and the bell tower have experienced major deterioration causing water damage to the interior. The finials need to be replaced and the spires need to be rebuilt. Although all 10 sanctuary windows have been removed and repaired over the last few years with period glass where possible, the current project includes the fabrication and installation of 10 Gothic storm windows combinations to preserve and protect the windows from the elements.

Enclosed are two bids that were solicited and selected to address the required preservation work and the associated insulation that needs to be done at the same time as the preservation work. The first estimate is from Howell Custom Building Group out of Lawrence and has a summary of the of the project with an estimated cost of \$734,298. Since receiving the quote, we have learned more about the extent of the deteriorated spires and steeple. Therefore, the project scope requires the rebuilding of the finials and spires vs. patching holes. The cost of replacing the spires is likely to be more than the \$50,000 allowance for repair. The second quote from American Steeple and Tower in the amount of \$18,995 refers to the fabrication of just the 9 finial tops of the spires. Therefore, a line item for cost over-runs and a sign were included in the attached construction budget.

The cost of the project is \$780,000 and North Parish has raised \$300,000. Our CPA grant request is \$480,000. If the CPA grant is awarded, the work will begin in the Spring. All work needs to be done simultaneously as staging and other site preparation work add a great deal of expense to the project, so we hope to incur the cost just once. Depending on when the project commences, it will take 6 months to complete.

Attached: Howell Construction Estimate & American Steeple Finial Estimate

1836 Meeting House Exterior Restoration Project Budget				
Expenses		Total Costs	Energy Efficiency Costs	Restoration Costs
Howell	South Façade (Great Pond Road)	\$ 130,733.00	\$ 10,677.00	\$ 120,056.00
Howell	West Façade (Front Entry and Bell Tow	\$ r)193,517.00	\$ 24,424.00	\$ 169,093.00
Howell	North Façade (Meditation	\$ 53,211.00	\$ 9,935.00	\$ 43,276.00
Howell	East Façade (Back of Sanctuary)	\$ 42,584.00	\$ 7,288.00	\$ 35,296.00
Howell	Sanctuary Roof Insulation	\$ 65,202.00	\$ 65,202.00	\$ -
Howell	Attic Clean-out	\$ 16,394.00	\$ 16,394.00	\$ -
Howell	Sanctuary Storm Windows	\$ 132,657.00		\$ 132,657.00
Howell	Exterior Trim Rot Repair	\$ 50,000.00		\$ 50,000.00
Howell	Staging and Painting of 9 spires	\$ 50,000.00		\$ 50,000.00
American Steeple	Finial fabrication and Installation	\$ 18,995.00		\$ 18,995.00
	10% Contingency/Cost Over-runs	\$ 25,000.00	\$ 4,000.00	\$ 21,000.00
	CPC Sign Option 1	\$ 1,650.00		
	TOTAL Project Cost	\$ 779,943.00	\$ 137,920.00	\$ 642,023.00
Revenues				
	NP fundraising	\$ 300,000.00		
	CPA Funds (if approved)	\$ 480,000.00		
	TOTAL	\$ 780,000.00		

Public Access Guarantee

Public access is always welcomed and available by dropping in during office hours, by appointment, or attending one of our many public cultural and music events and assistance activities. We continue to outreach to community groups to bring music, yoga, bell ringing, religious organizations, and writer’s groups to fill the meeting house with cultural and support programs for the entire community. Most days, there are always community groups at the church preparing or running numerous activities that take place in the meeting house. The Meeting House is home to the North Parish Unitarian Universalist congregation as well as People’s Pantry food assistance, the state funded McVagley Community LGBTQ Youth Support Group, the Great Pond Sangha Buddhist meditation group, and the monthly CrossRoads Music Series. The meeting house also offers its space to many community-related organizations, including Bread & Roses meal preparation, Essex Chamber Music Players, Merrimack Valley People for Peace, ALANON addiction recovery support groups, Congregation Ahavat Olam, and Community InRoads. Local organizations and non-profits like the YMCA and Ipswich River Watershed Association have rented the Meeting House for their annual meetings and special events. Non-church members rent the sanctuary for weddings, memorial services, and child dedications.

This February, the town’s Black History Month Celebration at the meeting house is offering two musical events with a Gospel Fest and a concert with Musician, James Dargan.