

**Town of Leverett
Community Preservation Committee
Application for Community Preservation Funding**

PROJECT NAME AND ADDRESS

Project Name: GROWING PRESERVATION PARTNERSHIPS

Property Address: Within town borders

PROJECT PROPONENT

Project Proponent Organization. Leverett Historical Commission

Contact Name: Susan Mareneck

Address: P.O. Box 300 Leverett, MA 01054

E-Mail Address: leveretthistoryinfo@gmail.com

Date: October 1, 2023

Requested CPA funds: \$37,800

COMMUNITY PRESERVATION CATEGORY (Check All That Apply)

☐ Open Space

☒ Historic Resource

☐ Community Housing

☐ Recreation

1. Project Summary

1. The Leverett Historical Commission (LHC) seeks \$37,800 to partner with the Community Preservation Commission to build out the LHC's mandated process of regular review of CPA funded historic assets, then to apply the elaborated review process in the upcoming year to 8 previously funded properties as well as an investigative review of an immanently endangered historic property in one of Leverett's National Register Historic Districts. This effort to

investigate a specific individual property builds on the mandate for the Historic Commission to create and maintain contacts and dialogue with private owners of historic assets in order to advise town bodies on preservation issues.

2. The Historical Commission would also continue its support for the Town Clerk in her management/preservation of Historic Records while working with her and others to improve accessibility of historic artifacts on the town website and in other digital archives.

3. Through researching and sharing how other towns have funded historic preservation, combined with strategic advice and information about government and private funding and governance tools available to towns comparable to Leverett, the Historical Commission would deliver a report useful to all town committees and bodies. Learning diverse strategies for preserving historic assets for future community benefit could assist the Planning Board in its current Comprehensive Planning investigation, the Field Memorial Library/Museum Ad hoc Committee, the Leverett Historical Society, Friends of the North Leverett Sawmill and other preservation focused entities in town, such as the Rattlesnake Gutter Trust, who work with the Historical Commission on preservation issues.

The 2024-2025 work builds upon the highly successful program “A Sense of Where You Are, Investigating Leverett’s Industrial Heritage and Historic Landscape”, which collected and disseminated historical information through an oral history program, a signage program, and support for the work of the committee to participate in town preservation planning. As we know from our 2018 Historic Assets Survey and from experience, local residents are interested in the archaeological sites/mill sites, and our approach engaged them in thinking about their (the sites’) future as well as that of the town. These programs were attended by people from almost two hundred Leverett households.

The proposed program will serve to broaden and deepen the partnership practices and procedures of the Historical Commission with the Community Preservation Commission, while at the same time providing research and focus on celebrating Leverett’s 250th anniversary commemoration in 2024 and looking towards the nation’s 250th in 2026.

Project Description

Through the “Growing Preservation Partnerships” initiative, the Leverett Historical Commission will continue its effort to introduce the community to historic resources and to possibilities for protecting and preserving them, as a way to increase interest in the town for developing a comprehensive community-wide preservation plan, which is our ultimate goal. Our belief has been, and remains, that raising awareness of and preserving our historic assets will support the town’s fiscal and civic sustainability in the long term. In addition, as the 250th anniversary — and its attendant commemoration— is upon us, the project creates materials to use for any video or program that educates residents on Leverett’s history.

Our strategy is multi-pronged:

1. We seek to build out the LHC's mandated process of regular review of CPA funded historic assets. On the one hand, this involves elaborating the current, required review to be more broad and deep, incorporating professional expertise in the evaluation of each property, including the issues for historic properties from climate change and extreme weather and on the other it involves designing a process that would make it possible for the LHC to initiate investigation of historic assets that have immediate potential or need for preservation attention.

The more in-depth process includes concrete activities ranging from title research to enhanced conditions assessments -- to support the Community Preservation Commission, the Comprehensive Planning initiative of the Planning Board, The Ad Hoc Committee on the Bradford M. Field Library/Tavern, the Town Meeting, Council on Aging, Conservation Commission, Affordable Housing and other town and private bodies, in their assessment of and efforts to affect historic preservation.

Applying that elaborated investigative review process which would include a professional Site Report/Conditions Assessment methodology, in the upcoming year to 8 previously funded historic properties including the Moore's Corner Schoolhouse, Moore's Corner Cemetery, Chestnut Hill/Mt. Hope Cemetery, North Leverett (Slarrow) Sawmill, Jackson Hill Cemetery, North Cemetery, Leverett Town Hall (see attached list) and potentially the Field Tavern. Instituting a 5-year cycle of professional review and an evaluative process for support and follow-up on actions deemed "Urgent".

2. Create and maintain contacts and dialogue with private owners of historic assets. Research from previous programming by the LHC, combined with the ongoing public conversation, has allowed us to support preservation opportunities as they arise, and we plan to continue that effort.

For example, our research has given us insight into the sites on the Sawmill River below the Slarrow Mill as well as put the LHC, CPC and town in a better position to engage in a conversation about preservation of the abutting land which was shaped as part of the mill operations. The knowledge gained through the "Sense of Where You Are" project helped to encourage the ownership of the Mill by a new non-profit whose objective is to preserve the mill and utilize the surrounding historic landscape to benefit the community. As other opportunities present themselves, having the knowledge base to be of assistance with preservation gives the Historical Commission the ability and resources to create informational events and advocacy around them.

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3. Research and share how other towns have funded historic preservation, combined with strategic advice and information about government and private funding and governance tools. Deliverable is a report useful to all town committees and bodies. It is one of the primary Historical Commission roles to inform Leverett's various governmental bodies

and committees on strategies that our town can utilize to create a regulatory environment that is conducive to tax-neutral or tax-positive historic preservation.

4. Support the Town Clerk in her management/preservation of Historic Records while working with her and others to improve accessibility of historic artifacts on the town website and in other digital archives. The task to maintain and preserve the historic records of the town, which is part of the Town Clerk's portfolio, is largely unfunded in the general budgets and cannot be expected to be within her field of expertise.

Specifically, our proposal for the coming year includes funding to:

1. In partnership with the Community Preservation Commission, develop a process for the mandated review by the LHC of historic properties that the town has invested CPA funding in to keep up with current issues. It is the goal of the Historical Commission that the new procedure will produce a professional document that can guide both grantor and grantee in achieving successful preservation activities and outcomes.
 - a. To execute professional condition assessments/ historic site or structure reports, as is appropriate, on previously CPA-funded sites which have not been professionally reviewed for over 5 years. (8 +/- such sites exist; see attached list)
2. Research and share how other towns have funded historic preservation, combined with strategic advice and information about government and private funding and governance tools. Deliverable is a report useful to all town committees and bodies.
3. Support the Town Clerk in her management/preservation of Historic Records while working with her and others to improve accessibility of historic artifacts on the town website and in other digital archives through grant-writing/ consultation.

2. Applications must include at least two estimates (three are preferred) from suppliers of work to be done. * (More research needed. This is just one expert's <ericgradoia.com> estimate for the "Conditions Assessment/Historic Structures Report" work)

Growing Preservation Partnerships - \$37,800

The estimated budget includes 8 professional Conditions Assessments (Historic Structure or Site Reports) plus expert research from consultant on comparable community's

preservation strategies/ report and sources for funding and phasing of Leverett's Town Clerk's efforts to begin digitizing the town's historical record.

8 conditions assessment @ \$3,500 ea \$28,000

Consultation/Research - 110 hours (25 for Town Digital Vault project; 35 for Comparable Communities Preservation strategies research and report, 40 for structure and guidance in creating the review process, 10 for general support of the committee in negotiating preservation issues @ \$80/hr.)

Pleun Bouricius/ Swift River Press & Communications
\$8,800

Public Hearing Expense (in case of Demo Delay) \$1,000

3. How Will the Project Benefit Leverett?

Most of Leverett's boards and committees run on the energy and good will of volunteers. Administering or advocating for the preservation of antique properties often involves areas of expertise not available amongst volunteers. However, engaging local professionals in helping to establish complete evaluations of historic assets and prescriptions for a phased set of actions that can successfully stabilize and create conditions for future community benefit of the property in question is in all parties' best interest. From an elaborated system of requirements for approval can also evolve a system of support for accountability even beyond the Historic Preservation Restriction format, to ensure that properties will be maintained in an appropriate manner into the future.

This proposal for a partnership would help the town make informed decisions for projects involving historic properties. It could also serve as motivation for other assessments for recreational, open space and affordable housing projects.

Reduce/Reuse/Recycle - By preserving, repurposing and reusing historic buildings, we minimize carbon release of material disposal and new construction.

Encourages Local Efforts to Address Critical Problems - Real Estate investments are a prime mover of making housing less affordable. Properties like the Field Tavern and its footprint could offer a unique opportunity for the town to create affordable housing, community space, meeting rooms, small business spaces and more. Historic Structures Reports can help inform decisions for uses that fit community needs at given times.

This assessment process would help maximize the number of residents who could benefit from the use of the buildings. It is the homework that should be done before any decisions are made about renovating, repurposing and reusing older buildings.

4. Precedent or Comparison to Other Similar Projects

As the Community Preservation Commission has cited innumerable times, having a Historic Structures Report/ Conditions Assessment, has enabled the former Beaman-Marvel Box Shop, now the Leverett Crafts & Arts, to chart its rehabilitation course with confidence. Many other towns with CPA funds to invest in historic preservation are now in similar situations with regard to the need to increase the depth and breadth of their review process... (insert other towns' questions and conversations from MHA)

All around us, Massachusetts communities are marking significant anniversaries, and many are taking the opportunity to pay more attention to their historic landscape — create a new museum, plant trees, or restore a significant building. Compared to fifty or a hundred years ago, anniversaries are no longer simple celebrations of the hardy souls who settled the town and the first families who led it. For instance, land was not uninhabited or unused when first encountered by Europeans, and so settlement also meant displacement or cultural merging. In addition, with the advent of the internet, history has come within the reach of most families. A marking of a milestone thus asks us to consider what our specific history was, and what role it plays today. Much of the industrial history of towns like Leverett is written on the landscape that our antecedents walked. The 250th anniversary in Leverett affords the town an opportunity to collectively take stock of its heritage. This project enables such reflection.

4. Control of Site

These areas of endeavor are the purview of the Historical Commission and the Community Preservation Commission, as well as other town boards, local non-profits and other interested parties. LHC will work with other boards and committees, including the Emergency Management planner to implement best practices.

<<https://www.achp.gov/initiatives/sustainability-climate-resilience/climate-adaptation-resilience>>

6. Feasibility

Success of the project depends on voluntary partnership between town boards and committees.

Residents are not used to thinking about their own land or the future of their town in terms of history, but uncertainties are generating interest in ways to live that diverge from the pattern of prosperity set in the twentieth century (suburbs). In addition, the upcoming 250th anniversary affords an opportunity for the community to come together around its history. This project is geared to help the community feel confident about the investments it makes to preserve its

history and to help Leverett residents find ways in which to incorporate the town's past into the future.

7. Project Timeline

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8. Funding

CPC funding will be generously -- and we think be exceeded by -- a match from the work of LHC volunteers.

9. Attachments

Include the following Attachments with ALL applications:

Assessors' map showing location of the project

NA

Include the following if applicable and available:

Deeds of property NA

**Plans and specifications for new construction or rehabilitation
Maps, renderings, etc. NA**

Evidence of Historic Eligibility (National Register of Historic Places)

Leverett has four National Historic Districts:

- Leverett Center National Historic District (12/5/2008)
 - <https://www.nps.gov/nr/feature/places/pdfs/13001131.pdf>
- East Leverett National Historic District (1/29/2014)
 - <https://www.nps.gov/nr/feature/places/pdfs/13001131.pdf>
- Moore's Corner National Historic District (5/19/2014)

- <https://www.nps.gov/nr/feature/places/pdfs/14000215.pdf>
- North Leverett National Historic District (6/13/2014)
 - <https://www.nps.gov/nr/feature/places/pdfs/14000326.pdf>

Names and addresses of project architects, contractors, and consultants

Advice sought from and participation commitments from:

- Pleun Bouricius, PhD, LHC Public History Consultant, PO Box 41, Plainfield, MA 01070, pleunbouricius@gmail.com
- Eric Gradoia Architectural Conservator/Historian
Mesick • Cohen • Wilson • Baker Architects, Albany, New York. April 2022 - Present, March 2004 to September 2017; <ericgradoia.com>

Other information useful to the committee in considering the project.

Significant Historic Sites in Leverett, MA (sans private homes)

1. Moore's Corner Schoolhouse*
2. Moore's Corner Cemetery*
3. Moore's Corner Church
4. Patrick Cemetery
5. Gardner Cemetery
6. Plainview Cemetery
7. LaClaire's Store
8. Howard Charcoal Kilns
9. Former Coke Kiln School (now private home)
10. Brushy Mountain Cellar Holes
11. Rattlesnake Gutter
12. North Leverett Baptist Church
13. North Leverett Baptist Parish Hall (former North Leverett School)
14. Chestnut Hill/ Mt. Hope Cemetery*
15. Bucket Shop (83 NL Road)
16. North Leverett (Slarrow) Sawmill*
17. Graves' Ironworks
18. Graves & Colton Pail Shop 29 NL Road)

19. Jackson Hill Cemetery*
20. Marvel Cemetery
21. Town Farm (now a private home - Emerson, 53 Cave Hill Road)
22. Nipponzan-Myōhōji New England Peace Pagoda (37 years)
23. Mt. Toby Cemetery
24. Mt. Toby Quaker Meeting House (1964)
25. Rattlesnake Gutter Tomb
26. North Cemetery*
27. Old Highway Building*
28. Leverett Town Pound
29. Leverett Elementary School (1950)
30. Leverett Crafts & Arts (former Beaman-Marvel Box Shop)*
31. Leverett Town Hall*
32. Leverett Post Office
33. First Congregational Church
34. Bradford M. Field Memorial Library*
35. Long Plain/Hillsdale Cemetery
36. East Leverett School
37. East Leverett Cemetery