



Town of Lexington
Town Manager's Office

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September 19, 2008

Norman P. Cohen, Chairman
Trustees of Cary Memorial Library
C/o Director's Office
Cary Memorial Library
1874 Massachusetts Avenue
Lexington, MA 02420

Dear Mr. Cohen,

It is with great pleasure and excitement that, on behalf of the Town of Lexington, in collaboration with public and private boards, committees, societies, and groups, we submit this Letter of Interest to the Trustees of Cary Memorial Library for its consideration in the reuse of the historic Stone Building situated at 735 Massachusetts Avenue.

We believe to be proposing the reuse of the building in a manner that respects the historic and architectural significance of the building. In so doing, the Lexington Heritage Center concept also furthers the collaboration of many entities critical in furthering the experience of Lexington's history well beyond that of the 'Birthplace of America'. The proposed reuse concept celebrates the building in a way Ellen Stone could not have imagined but is truly in the spirit of her will.

We look forward to an opportunity to further present this concept to the Trustees of Cary Memorial Library.

Very truly yours,

Carl F. Valente
Town Manager

Donna M. Hooper
Town Clerk

Stone Building Reuse Proposal

1. Name of organization:

Town of Lexington/Lexington Heritage Center

2. Contact name, address, phone number and email address:

Town of Lexington/Lexington Heritage Center

1625 Massachusetts Avenue, Lexington, MA 02420

Carl F. Valente, Town Manager, 862-0500 ext. 275, townmanager@ci.lexington.ma.us;

Donna Hooper, Town Clerk, 862-0500 ext. 273, townclerk@ci.lexington.ma.us.

In collaboration with organizations including Lexington Historical Commission, Tourism Committee, Economic Development Office, Cary Memorial Library, Lexington Historical Society, Lexington Chamber of Commerce, Follen Community Church.

3. What is your Legal Status: e.g., not for profit, 501 (c) (3), educational.

Municipal government will be the initial governing authority, with research made to determine whether a private nonprofit or quasi-public structure may be best as the long-term governing authority.

4. Please describe your intended use of the building or part of the building and how that fits within the deed restrictions.

The Stone Building is a prominent physical presence in East Village and an important community-based resource for the entire Town of Lexington. The Lexington Heritage Center will maintain the intent of the deed and the integrity and historical significance of the Stone Building, specifically its historic architecture and interior features.

The mission of the Lexington Heritage Center will be to engage the public in a vibrant collaboration that promotes historical preservation, education and research related to Lexington. The Center seeks to inspire residents and visitors to make a connection with the past through historical exhibits and programs that enable everyone to appreciate Lexington's past, present and future.

As the Lexington Heritage Center, the Stone Building will be a destination for residents, businesses, tourists and visitors. It will offer space for small-sized meetings and functions. It will also provide a home for Lexington Heritage Center activities, which will include permanent and rotating exhibits on aspects of both East Lexington and Lexington, and electronic connectivity to shared collections. The Center will house a permanent display dedicated to the history of the Stone Building and aspects of life in the "East Village" days, as well as exhibition space for the celebration of Lexington's 300th anniversary.

The Heritage Center will be open to the public and staffed initially by volunteers. Governing oversight will represent a broad spectrum of caretakers of Lexington's heritage. Center-affiliated groups such as Town Clerk & Town Archives, Cary Library, Historical Society, Historical Commission, and Follen Church are invited to collaborate.

The Center will be set-up to accommodate small functions (e.g., lectures, recitals, receptions) and meetings. Part-time staff/Director will be hired to provide management of the Center. Facility user fee and appropriate guidelines will be established.

5. How would the Lexington community benefit from this use?

The entire community, and East Lexington residents in particular, values the Stone Building property. Establishment of the Lexington Heritage Center establishes a collaboration of key groups to promote Lexington's heritage, and creates a public space that honors the building's historic past as a small lecture hall in the spirit of the Lexington Lyceum movement. Maintaining the historic structure and integrity of the building the Lexington Heritage Center provides the community with a facility that will:

- Promote and coordinate the documentation of Lexington's history
- Provide a venue for a collaboration to develop and exhibit research initiatives on Lexington families and Lexington history, including creation of historical programs on East Lexington, the Stone Building, the Stone and Robbins Families.
- Serve as a reading room where interested browsers, researchers and tourists can discover holdings and resources on local and family history.
- Provide a hard-wired or a WIFI hotspot where users could access online resources that we would develop (e.g., full electronic connectivity (catalog, inventories, etc.) of Cary Library/Lexington Historical Society/Town of Lexington collections & resources, as well as other historical, genealogical and research links
- Serve as an anchor for Lexington 300 (2013), providing a venue for planning and implementation of celebrations of community, civic and cultural events and lyceum movement history.
- Offer meeting and function space

6. Who would be the intended users?

Primary users include Lexington residents, members of Lexington's boards and committees dedicated to the preservation, promotion and celebration of Lexington, students, tourists and researchers.

7. **Would the facility be open to the public? By appointment? With regularly scheduled hours? How many hours would it be open to the public?**

The building will be open to the public during regularly scheduled hours, to be determined as plans become more specific, and by-appointment-only functions and meetings.

A walking tour of the East Village will be developed to enhance the attractiveness of the Stone Building as a major destination. Tours of the building interior will be conducted to showcase the historic construction and explain the many uses the building has served during its history.

8. **How would the facility and proposed use be staffed?**

A group of volunteers will be developed for the staffing. Part-time paid staff will be hired to provide oversight of the building and its operations. Options for independent oversight of volunteers and staffing, including participating members of the collaborative assuming possible oversight responsibility will be pursued.

9. **What kind of parking would your facility require for the proposed use?**

Parking requirements are anticipated to be minimal and in no way interfere with surrounding building usage. Town owned space along the circular drive and immediate areas is anticipated to fully meet parking needs. The building is easily accessible via public transportation and the Minuteman Bikeway.

10. **What physical renovations, appropriate to a building in an historic district, do you anticipate would be needed?**

The building renovations outlined in the building study, 'Option 1' with a goal to maintain as much of the building character, to also provide amenities including small kitchen space, restrooms, air conditioning, appropriate lighting, etc.

The first and second floors will be restored to their original character to include interior details (stairs, fireplaces, door and windows) and provide open space for reading room and small gathering rooms.

11. **What furnishings do you anticipate would be needed for the proposed use?**

Reference room type tables and chairs, a collection of chairs for the speakers' forums, exhibit equipment, some office furnishings, and a kitchen.

12. Briefly describe the financial/business plan for operating the building for the proposed use. Please explain.

Costs for the opening of the Lexington Heritage Center are projected as follows:

1. **Building Restoration** – as outlined in HKT report – ‘Option 1’
Community Preservation Act funding will be requested

2. **Capital Outlay** – **\$50,000 additional to HKT report**
Community Preservation Act funding will be requested
 - Interior restoration & equipment furnishing
 - Security Monitoring System
 - Computer Systems/WIFI
 - Kitchen area
 - Appropriate lighting and environmental Controls

3. **Operating:** (estimated annual costs)
 - Part-Time Director \$25,000
 - Building Utilities \$10,000

Initial allocation for operating costs from municipal operating budget is required, likely beginning in FY2012. Additional revenue will be sought to cover costs to the fullest extent possible, including grants, fees, fundraising, and promotion of Lexington ephemera.

13. Please explain your group’s affiliation, if any, with the Town.

The Lexington Heritage Center will be a collaboration of several Town entities, including the Town Clerk/Archives, Cary Memorial Library, Economic Development Office, Historical Commission, Tourism Committee, as well as non-public entities such as the Lexington Historical Society, the neighboring Follen Community Church, and Lexington Chamber of Commerce; Representatives from the collaborating entities will constitute the Center’s governing board.

14. Please add any further information in support of your proposal that has not been addressed.

The concept presented in this proposal is the first phase in developing a comprehensive plan for a Lexington Heritage Center at the Stone Building. The additional work to identify the scope of services and organizational structure will be completed during the building’s rehabilitation and restoration. This concept strives to feature and promote the historical integrity of the Stone Building, its role in Lexington’s history, as an anchor property in East Lexington.

We envision no better use of this historic structure and East Lexington focal point that would honor the integrity of the building.

This reuse concept is true to the building and celebrates the building as a structure, truly in the spirit of Ellen Stone's will, in a way Ellen Stone could not have imagined when she gifted the building to the town.

The attached article, '*Asher Benjamin in East Lexington, Massachusetts*' co-authored by Lexington resident Anne Grady, provides a great overview of the Stone building's history and architectural significance, that which this proposal seeks to honor.