

## Community Preservation Act Committee- Proposal Request Form for FY 2018

**Project Title:** West Cemetery Headstone restoration – 1870 Section

**CPA funding category:** Check all that apply

<input type="checkbox"/>	Community Housing
<input type="checkbox"/>	Open Space
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Historic Preservation
<input type="checkbox"/>	Recreation

**Amount of CPA Funds Requested:** \$ 50,000

**Submitting Entity:** Amherst Historical Commission

**Contact Person:** Jonathan Tucker, Senior Planner

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**Please complete this form in its entirety and include the following in your proposal.**

**Overview of Proposal:** Please describe your project and your feasibility analysis.

This request seeks funds for the restoration of a minimum of 40-60 badly-damaged (hazardous or fractured) headstones, out of approximately 264 headstones that need restoration in the 1870 section of West Cemetery. This would be the first of three requests for FY18, FY19, and FY20, the amounts of which would vary.

West Cemetery is Amherst's oldest and most historic burying ground, having been established in 1730 for the British colonial settlers of the East District of the settlement of Hadley. An earlier project, begun in 2005 and completed in 2009, conserved and restored over 260 headstones in the oldest sections of the cemetery at a cost of \$150,000 in CPA funds.

This proposed headstone restoration project would encompass the 1870 section of the cemetery, whose permanent residents include a full mix of the community's population, including prominent individuals like William Smith Clark, civic leaders, merchants, industrialists, African-American families, early Irish Catholic residents, and others.

The geographic extent of the 1870 section is indicated on the enclosed map. The geographic scope of the project does not include the Emily Dickinson family plot, which has received separate attention and funding.

The scope of the eventual headstone restoration project would involve the following tasks:

1. Repair, resetting, restoration, conservation, and/or appropriate *in situ* burial of broken or damaged headstones and monuments, and
2. Resetting and righting all tilted headstones.
3. Other cleaning and conservation work to protect vulnerable headstones.

**Describe how your request meets the CPA criteria:**

This project involves the direct preservation and restoration of existing historic resources, as defined under the provisions of MGL Ch. 44B, Section 2, being "real property . . . listed on the state register of historic places" and

“determined by the local historic preservation commission” (Amherst Historical Commission) “to be significant in the history, archeology, architecture or culture” of the town of Amherst.

1. Description of funding needed, including:

a. Documentation of cost estimates, budget.

The estimate of \$50,000 for this project was derived from a larger project estimate (attached) for the entire 1870 area provided by Monument Conservation Collaborative LLC, a professional restoration firm that has previously restored 269 headstones in the oldest part of West Cemetery, and that cleaned, conserved, and securely crated Amherst’s Civil War tablets.

b. Other sources of funding, e.g., grants, self-funding, fund-raising.

There are no other sources of funds for preservation work of this kind that provide sufficient project funding for the amount of bureaucratic effort required.

c. Timeline on how CPA funds would be spent, including over multiple years.

This headstone restoration project is projected to take three (3) years, given the number of damaged stones involved, the variety and complexity of the work, and the seasonality of the work, which can only be performed in warm weather. The contract would allow for payments based on the amount of work satisfactorily completed.

2. Urgency of the Project, if any.

A significant number of headstones have been damaged in this section of the cemetery, including by vandalism. The longer they remain unrestored, the more damage they sustain from weathering and potential further vandalism. Damage begets damage. The headstones in the restored sections of the cemetery do not suffer from similar vandalism. This first project will focus only on the most damaged and endangered of the headstones, and will address other headstones in need of restoration in subsequent years.

3. Estimated timeline from receipt of funds to project completion.

This project would begin in summer/fall 2017 and would be completed by June 2018.

4. Acquisition or preservation of threatened resources.

As noted, vandalized headstones, left alone for any period of time, convey a setting of neglect and provoke further vandalism. The 1870 section of the cemetery includes a wide variety of types of headstones, including relatively fragile marble stones and very large and heavy obelisk monuments. Their restoration requires special methodologies and in the case of large monuments, heavy equipment.

5. Population(s) to be served by the Project.

Amherst residents, visitors, descendants of those buried here, and all of those who visit West Cemetery and are interested in Amherst’s history.

6. How will the CPA investment in your property, facility or project be maintained over time?

Maintenance of West Cemetery is the responsibility of the Town of Amherst, specifically the Parks and Grounds division of DPW.

7. Which relevant Town committees and/or commissions are you working with?

As noted, this is a project of the Amherst Historical Commission, which will work with the Parks and Grounds division of DPW, the Amherst Select Board, and interested citizens.

8. Other information regarding the Project deemed necessary for CPAC

See attached.



**1870 SECTION**

Horizontal Datum: MA Stateplane Coordinate System, Zone 4151, NAD83, Feet; Vertical Datum: NAVD86, FT  
 Planimetric & topographic basemap compiled at 1"=40' scale from April, 2009 Aerial Photography. Parcels compiled to match the basemap; revisions are ongoing.

The information depicted on this map is for planning purposes only. It may not be adequate for legal boundary definition, regulatory interpretation, or property conveyance purposes. Utility structures & underground utility locations are approximate & require field verification.

The Town of Amherst makes no warranties, expressed or implied, concerning the accuracy, completeness, reliability, or suitability of these data, & does not assume any liability associated with the use or misuse of these data.

- Property M
  - Property Lines
    - - Easements
    - Adjacent Towns Parcels
- Basemap
  - - Trails
- Streets
  - Local Roads
  - Major Roads
  - State Routes
- MassDOT Roads
  - Limited Access Highway
  - Multi-lane Hwy, not limited a
  - Other Numbered Highway
  - Major Road, Collector
  - Minor Road, Arterial
  - Ramp



1" = 80 ft





*Preserving the substance and significance of gravestones*

IRVING SLAVID *Conservator*  
MARTIN JOHNSON *Conservator*  
PROF. NORMAN R. WEISS *Consultant*

Jonathan Tucker  
Senior Planner  
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July 22, 2016

Re: Headstone restoration estimate 1870 section

I inspected the 1870 section of the West Cemetery on July 21 and found the following conditions:

Hazardous. Markers which are upright, but extremely unstable and at risk of falling either on themselves, on adjacent markers or on passerby's. There are approximately 40 markers which can be easily toppled by a child climbing on them. These should be stabilized as soon as possible

There are numerous markers and/or fragments which are out of the ground and leaning on each other which are an obvious hazard and are grouped into the "resetting" category.

Resetting onto or into existing bases. This was by far, the most prevalent condition. Either fallen completely off their base/s, or loose. Many of these are very large and will require mechanical assistance for resetting. There are approximately 120 markers of varying size that should be reset.

Fractured Approximately 25 markers are fragmented and can be restored, some of these are also tilted or loose on their base/s.

Resetting into or onto a new below base. Only after excavating fallen markers can one accurately determine how many below grade new concrete bases are required, I counted approximately 25 markers requiring new bases for resetting.

Tilted. Markers and monuments which are tilted 15 degrees or more are at risk of toppling due to the change of center of gravity. While this category is somewhat judgmental we feel there are at least 45 markers that would benefit from resetting plumb. Resetting plumb every stone in an old cemetery diminishes its historic character. Some of these will require a new below grade base which is only determined by excavation.

Monuments/Obelisks 7 monuments require scaffolding for restoration- for either resetting or resetting and stabilizing finials. An additional 2 brownstone monuments are seriously delaminating.

Cleaning Markers which are fractured usually have to be cleaned for a successful repair and this work is included in that category. In a historic cemetery all the stones never existed clean at the same time and we do not recommend general cleaning. While some sandstone monuments would benefit from having the biological growth removed it is relatively minimal.

Summary (all numbers approximate)

Hazardous	40
Resetting onto or into existing bases.	120
Fractured	25
Resetting into or onto a new below base.	25
Tilted.	45
Monuments/Obelisks	9
Total:	<u>264</u>

This is a substantial number. With varying conditions, i.e. size, location, fragility etc., individual estimates for each category are unrealistic.

For a professional restoration by a qualified conservator experienced with historic gravestones an estimate for the complete restoration, including documentation is \$225,000. While this work could be done over a long work season the Town may want to do the work over 2 or 3 years.

2 year plan: (\$112,500 /year)

1<sup>st</sup> year: Stabilization of the 40 hazardous markers plus 2/3 (80) of the markers requiring resetting. Total 120 markers

2<sup>nd</sup> year: Resetting the remaining 1/3 (40 markers) plus the remaining 104 markers. Total 144 markers.

3 year plan: (\$75,000 /year)

1<sup>st</sup> year: stabilization of the 40 hazardous markers plus 1/3 (40) of the markers requiring resetting. Total 80 markers

2<sup>nd</sup> year: Resetting the remaining 2/3 (80 markers).

3<sup>rd</sup> year: Restoring the remaining 104 markers

Sincerely,



Irving Slavid, Vice President