

NARRATIVE

1. PROJECT AREA DESCRIPTION AND PLANS FOR REVITALIZATION

a. Target Area and Brownfields

i. Background and Description of Target Area

Newtown is in Fairfield County, Connecticut. The town is 57.66 sq miles in size, making it the fifth largest town, area-wise, in the state. It is part of the greater Danbury metropolitan area as well as the New York metropolitan area. Newtown was founded in 1705, and later incorporated in 1711. It consists of many “neighborhoods”, some of which date back to the 1700’s and others that are new. Many areas of the town still have that rural character of yesteryear, with horse farms, and other working farms scattered throughout the town. Local industry has included The Taunton Press and the manufacture of various items such as furniture, tea bags, combs, fire hoses, folding boxes, buttons, and hats. There were many dairy farms, which are now gone, but some farming continues.

Huntingtown Road, where the building sits, and the surrounding streets began with the immigration of several families from Russia, Poland, Austria, Hungary and Germany. Orthodox Jewish immigrants fleeing poverty and persecution in Eastern Europe were encouraged to become farmers in Connecticut. One sponsor of this program was the Jewish Agricultural and Industrial Aid Society, which was a subsidiary of the Baron de Hirsch Fund. Beginning in 1891, Baron Maurice de Hirsch, a Jewish German philanthropist, helped finance several of the immigrant communities in Connecticut and throughout the world. The families spoke different languages, but soon found what they all had in common was the desire to worship freely. They started a small congregation and were ultimately able to erect a building to serve as a house of worship, which became Congregation Adath Israel.

The country road has mostly small houses built in the early to mid-20th century; it has a couple of horse properties, and a few newer as well as some renovated houses. The area has no commercial property, no industrial buildings or recreational green space. There is undeveloped forest land across the street.

ii. Description of the Proposed Brownfield Site

In 1914 ground was broken on farmland donated by Israel Nezvesky, one of the first immigrants to arrive in the area. The building was completed in 1919 by this small community of farmers. It was a basic house of worship and eventually was expanded to meet the needs of a growing congregation. In the 1950’s, the building was raised up to add a basement with a social hall, classroom space and indoor plumbing for a small kitchen and bathroom. As the 20th century progressed, more modern Jewish practices were introduced, and in the late 1960’s, the decision was made that the synagogue change from practicing Orthodox to Conservative Judaism. Although this produced some conflict among members, this change was ultimately well received in the community. The membership grew to include young families, and a religious school became an important part of the community.

The proposed Brownfield site building, the old synagogue, is currently 2,900 square feet and sits on a parcel of land that is 8,000 square feet on a country road. The building shares the land with three small houses, which are owned by one of the founding families. Those houses are used as rental properties.

Several descendants of the founding families remain a part of the congregation, and most recently, there are young children who are attending the same religious school that their ancestors attended, now called the Nezvesky Religious School. The school is named for the founding family who donated the land on which the synagogue was built. Another descendent was married in the synagogue in October of this year.

It was a dream of the congregation to build a new building to accommodate our growing community. The discussion and planning took almost 10 years. We used a consultant to ensure our plans were realistic, and we were given the go ahead to proceed. The Nezvesky family again donated land which was a field adjacent to the property. It was the area the community used for outdoor picnics and recreation. One of our members is a builder and offered to build the building for cost. We procured financing, and the new building was constructed in 2007. By this time, it was realized that the old building could not be sold, nor could it have any other use because it did not satisfy the town's code requirements. The building has been unused since 2007 and has been showing continuing signs of distress. The roof has a large hole which is increasing in size, windows are broken, and overall maintenance has been suspended for financial reasons. Our insurance carrier told us it was no longer insurable under our current policy, and a new temporary policy needed to be drawn up. When we spoke to contractors about demolishing the building, an asbestos assessment was suggested. The assessment was completed, and asbestos was found throughout the building. Upon learning this and knowing that there is an oil tank which is still in the ground, it became apparent that we needed the help of the EPA. The Pootatuck river runs behind the building (it is a stream), and any hazardous material that comes from the building and/or surrounding property could affect that water. If it is found that oil has leached from the underground tank into the soil, this might affect the neighboring properties if not abated properly, as all properties in this area have individual wells for water.

b. Revitalization of the Target Area

i. Reuse Strategy & Alignment with Revitalization Plans

We envision replacing the building with green space. The green space which was used by the community before the new synagogue was built on it, has left the community with no area for recreation. The Nezvesky religious school next door has 20 children who would benefit from a play space between classes. If there are children in the adjacent houses, they would be welcome to use the space when the school is not in session (anytime except Wednesday late afternoon and Sunday mornings). The work of planting shrubs, building benches, and creating a refuge for birds would be done by the congregation. The plantings would be donated by or purchased from the local nursery owned by one of our founding families.

ii. Outcomes and Benefits of Reuse Strategy

This reuse plan brings potential economic and social benefits to the community. Getting rid of a dilapidated building, which is unsafe and an eyesore, will make the neighborhood a more attractive place to live and might increase property values. The property will be owned by a non-profit which will share the open space with its neighbors. Creating a bird refuge with a bluebird house, a bird bath and possibly bird feeders, will create a great place for the community to watch wildlife, enjoy the space and improve quality of life for residents in the neighborhood. This will be of particular value to the homes nearby where low-income workers live.

c. **Strategy for Leveraging Resources**

i. Resources Needed for Site Reuse

Strategy for leveraging resources for this endeavor will be through donations by congregants, in addition to the designated funds in our limited budget for this clean up, demolition, and creation of the green space.

ii. Use of Existing Infrastructure

The current infrastructure of the building will be destroyed in the course of demolition which will follow the abatements to prepare the land for the establishment of green space.

2. **Community Need & Community Engagement**

a. **Community Need**

i. The Community's Need for Funding

The community need and engagement is defined and limited by the size of the synagogue congregation. We are a group of 70 families, 20 of which have children, many of whom are senior citizens, and several of whom are financially unstable at the moment. As a result of these size and socioeconomic status realities, there is significant community engagement as a means of staying connected and an effort to ensure the survival of the community. Funding this project would require us to obtain a larger mortgage or loan on the new synagogue building, which would not be easily affordable to the community and as a result, not a viable option. The grant will meet the needs of the community by providing a portion of the funds to clean up the environmental hazards of the building, enabling us to raze it and prepare it to become the open green space we have envisioned.

ii. Threats to Sensitive Populations

1. Health & Welfare of Sensitive Populations

For the health and welfare of the community, there is risk associated with this abandoned property, due to its vulnerability to vandalism. In addition, getting rid of asbestos, which is a known carcinogen, and likely trigger for anyone with asthma, benefits anyone with any contact with the building. Removing the underground oil tank eliminates the possibility of oil leaching into the soil and potentially contaminating the wells in the neighborhood.

2. Greater Than Normal Incidence of Disease & Adverse Health Conditions
Our community is fortunate in that we do not have environmental health issues beyond other communities, nor differing among various populations.
3. Promoting Environmental Justice
Environmental justice is a big problem in the world; this grant request barely touches on that, but it will help us improve property values and the abatements will ensure that no oil contaminants will leach into wells in the surrounding properties and contaminate the ground water.

b. Community Engagement

i. Project Involvement

The project involves all stake holders, starting with the synagogue congregation, the surrounding houses and property owners, and the broader Newtown community. With their help in applying for this grant, guidance and assistance for what needs to be done has been provided by Dr. Nefeli Bompoti, environmental consultant and professor at the University of Connecticut, and James Byrne at the EPA. Our initial contractor has outlined the steps needed to remediate the asbestos, as has the oil tank removal company.

ii. Project Roles

The project director and the executive director will be responsible for the paperwork associated with the grant, the obtaining of bids for the work for the abatements of the asbestos and the oil tank and overseeing the execution of the work. They will report directly to the Board of Directors and be responsible for communicating quarterly to the stake holders and seeking their feedback. The contractors will be responsible for doing the work in compliance with the EPA guidelines and reporting their progress. The reuse of the land is planned to be green space. We plan to engage the community on this subject and accommodate their suggestions/requests if possible.

iii. Incorporating Community Input

For community engagement we see two communities to engage, that of our congregation and that of the surrounding neighborhood. At the start of this process, we held a meeting with the congregation to present the issues related to the old building. After discussing alternatives, razing the building was agreed to be the best option. We then engaged the town and neighborhood by placing an ad in the public notices section of our local weekly newspaper. We announced our plans on our website where people can post questions or comments. We announced our intention to our immediate neighbors by certified letters, inviting them to join a public meeting where we presented and discussed our plans, and fielded questions. The meeting options were to attend in person or to attend remotely.

At the time of the public meeting, we obtained email contact information for attendees, both those in person and remote. We will send out quarterly notifications and progress reports on the project, or more often if indicated, to all stakeholders, including our

synagogue congregation. We will request submission of questions or input at each interval.

3. TASK DESCRIPTIONS, COST ESTIMATES, AND MEASURING PROGRESS

a. Proposed Cleanup Plan

Our plan for the proposed cleanup is as follows:

Hire a contractor (and subcontractor if necessary) to perform all tasks associated with the safe removal of ACM (asbestos containing material). As stated in our ABCA, asbestos is regulated by the Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA), the Clean Air Act (CAA), the National Emission Standards for Hazardous Air Pollutants (NESHAPs), and Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies (RCSA), Sections 19a-14, 19a-17, 19a-332 to 19a-333, 20-435 to 20-442.

To protect asbestos abatement workers, all asbestos abatement work will be performed in accordance with OSHA asbestos regulations. The abatement work practices will be followed as required:

- Prepare abatement specifications by a Connecticut Department of Public Health licensed Asbestos Designer.
- Notify the Connecticut Department of Public Health of intention to demolish/renovate by the required notification form and receive approval for abatement activities.
- Remove all ACM from facility being demolished or renovated before any disruptive activity begins.
- Handle and dispose of all asbestos-containing materials in an approved manner (EPA, 2006a; Asbestos/NESHAP Regulated Asbestos-Containing Materials Guidance).
- Monitor asbestos abatement activities by a Connecticut Licensed Asbestos Project Monitor and Abatement Supervisor.
- Perform air clearance testing upon completion of ACM abatement; and
- Prepare an asbestos abatement Compliance Report.

In addition, the contractor (or subcontractor, if necessary) will remove the oil tank and dispose of it by the standard methods required by the EPA. Soil testing will be performed, and if contaminated, will be removed and replaced with clean topsoil.

b. Description of Tasks/Activities and Outputs

Task 1 - Cooperative Agreement Oversight
i. Project Implementation - The Project Director and Executive Director of CAI will be responsible for the overall execution and management of the project. They will track project tasks, schedule and budget; procure and oversee the QEP, the asbestos abatement contractor, oil tank removal contractor; and report on project activities and accomplishments to stakeholders. The QEP will support reporting activities and will develop a Final Cleanup Report and submit to the CT DEEP to document all project activities.

<p>ii. Anticipated Project Schedule – QEP to be procured soon after grant is awarded. Remaining project management work will take place throughout the grant period until the work is complete. Our goal is to have all the work completed within the first year of the 3 year grant period.</p>
<p>iii.Task/Activity Lead – CAI Project Director, CAI Executive Director, QEP</p>
<p>iv.Outputs – Quarterly Reports, Asbestos Remediation Report, Oil Tank Remediation Report (if required), Final Clean-up Report</p>
<p>Task 2 - Community Outreach & Engagement</p>
<p>i. Project Implementation - Ensuring the local and wider community feel they are informed and have a voice in the plans and progress.</p>
<p>ii. Anticipated Project Schedule – Communication with the community will start with notification of grant receipt then quarterly thereafter. Email notification will be used.</p>
<p>iii.Task/Activity Lead - Project Director in conjunction with Executive Director.</p>
<p>iv.Outputs - Quarterly communication to synagogue community via newsletter and to the wider community by website postings and email notifications.</p>
<p>Task 3 - Site-Specific Activities</p>
<p>i. Project Implementation - procuring a Qualified Environmental Professional to lead the cleanup.</p>
<p>ii. Anticipated Project Schedule - within 2 months of the grant’s receipt we plan to have a QEP identified, and a schedule of work established.</p>
<p>iii.Task/Activity Lead - Project Director and Executive Director to assist QEP</p>
<p>iv.Outputs - 1) Final ABCA; 2) abatement and safe removal of asbestos from the building 2) the safe removal and disposal of the oil tank 3) the import of topsoil if needed.</p>
<p>Task 4 - Oversee Site Cleanup</p>
<p>i. Project Implementation - Enrollment of the site in the State’s Voluntary Cleanup Program. Follow up with QEP to obtain final cleanup report.</p>
<p>ii. Anticipated Project Schedule – Project Director and Executive Director will be following up with the QEP until the project is complete. Anticipated to be within a year of the start of the project.</p>

iii.Task/Activity Lead - QEP and any sub-contractors to report to the project director and executive director.
iv.Outputs - Certification that the cleanup is complete.

c. Cost Estimates

Task 1 – Cooperative Agreement Oversight:

Personnel Costs:

Contractual Costs:

Task 2 – Community Outreach and Engagement

No costs involved.

Task 3 – Site-Specific Activities

Contractual Costs:

Task 4 – Oversee Site Cleanup

Contractual Costs:

Budget Categories	Task 1	Task 2	Task 3	Task 4	Total
Personnel	Reports –				
Travel	n/a				
Equipment					
Supplies					
Contractual	QEP		Final ABCA	Abatement Costs; Certification	
Other					
Total Direct Costs					
Indirect Costs					
Total Federal Funding					
Cost Share					
Total Budget					

d. Measuring Environmental Results

To track, measure and evaluate progress, the Project Director and Executive Director will obtain monthly updates from the QEP. At the start, we will work with the QEP to obtain a schedule for each phase of the abatement and create a timeline to completion within 1 year or less. The project outputs of quarterly reports to the community and

the EPA will include an update of project expenditures and will track activities and expenses against the project's schedule. If necessary, corrective actions will be taken to ensure the project remains on schedule and within budget. The project team will review and insure that all reporting requirements are being met and that the project continues to comply with all the terms and conditions of the grant. **(Additionally, site specific information will be routinely entered and tracked in the online ACRES data base)**. The outputs to be tracked are the final ABCA, the quarterly reports, the asbestos remediation report, the oil tank removal and disposal report, and the final clean up report.

4. Programmatic Capability & Past Performance

a. Programmatic Capability

i. Organizational Structure

Congregation Adath Israel has the capacity to administer the EPA grant funds. Our two key staff members for this project are overseen by a Board of Directors comprised of members of the community who come from a varied number of backgrounds.

ii. Description of Key Staff:

Amy Greenfield, Vice President of Adath Israel, will lead this effort as Project Director. She has led many initiatives with the congregation and was on the committee for the previous grant application. Her career as a physician has provided her with experiences that contribute to leadership skills, the ability to research and follow through on projects, and recruit help where needed.

Susan Rubin, Executive Director for Adath Israel will be the co-lead on writing the grant, researching questions as they arise, and be instrumental in the implementation of the EPA cleanup grant. She served a vital role in all aspects of the institution's acquisition, then implementation of a security grant which we received in 2019. She aided in the application itself, then obtaining bids for the work, then the hiring of the contractors. She was responsible for all the paperwork associated with the grant, and all the reports which were an ongoing requirement. She has over 16 years of experience in the administrative field. Because of her thoroughness and high reliability, she is regarded by the Board as a critical member of our community and will be instrumental in accomplishing our goals for the use of this grant.

iii. Acquiring Additional Resources

Adath Israel will follow the procedures detailed in 2 CFR 200 to procure a QEP and any additional experts and resources when the grant is awarded. Adath Israel will release a competitive, public Request for Bid by June of 2022 and select the company deemed most qualified by July 2022. The selected QEP will provide support for all aspects of the proposed project.

b. Past Performance & Accomplishments

i. Currently Has or Previously Received an EPA Brownfields Grant - Not applicable

ii. Has Not Received an EPA Brownfields Grant but has Received Other Federal or Non-Federal Assistance Agreements - Congregation Adath Israel has not previously received an EPA Brownfields Grant but in 2019 we applied to the Nonprofit Security Grant Program with the CT Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection, a division of Emergency Management and Homeland Security. We were awarded a \$50,000. grant in October 2019.

1) Purpose and Accomplishments:

The purpose of this grant was to assist us in providing updated security measures both inside and outside of our building in a time where attacks were happening in religious institutions throughout the country. We had already had an incident with anti-Semitic vandalism to the exterior of our new building. We formed a committee and had the Newtown police provide us with a safety and security assessment. With that assessment, we determined what our most beneficial needs were and did research on window films, outdoor security cameras, contracting with a security guard company, exterior lighting, video doorbells and inside security such as panic alarms, cameras, and an intercom system.

All appropriate paperwork was then filed with the State and were able to begin some upgrades in January 2020. Covid slowed us down a bit, but we continued throughout the pandemic with having the upgrades done in the building. The last of our upgrades should be completed by the end of this year. The grant period ends in February 2022. The upgrade project was successful as it provides a better sense of security to all those who work in the building, and for members and guests who attend classes, services and events.

2) Compliance with Grant Requirements:

We worked on a timely basis of researching and hiring contractors for each type of security project. We filed all quarterly reports with the State to show progress and expenditures. We had one slight setback with our exterior lighting as our original plan was not approved by the town, so we had to go back and revise our plan. We informed the State of the change in plan we were making to conform with town guidelines. We are currently on track to complete this project on time and within the budget awarded.

iii. Never Received Any Type of Federal or Non-Federal Assistance Agreements – Not Applicable