



President Linda Morad and Honorable Members
of the New Bedford City Council
City Hall
133 William Street
New Bedford, MA 02740

10 April 2023

Dear President Morad and Members of the City Council:

This letter is in support of continuing the present Community Preservation Act (CPA) protocols.

In 1821 James and Sarah Rotch Arnold built a mansion at 427 County Street. It was a place to see and, as a gathering place, many friends, visitors, and guests wrote of events attended there and of the Arnolds' Garden. In 1868 Wm. Rotch, a nephew, inherited the property and added a 3rd floor with a new roof. When his wife died in 1919, there was neither family nor city interest in the building or its site. In 1920 the Wamsutta Club bought the property making changes while preserving the Arnold core character. In 2016, the James Arnold Mansion, Inc. (JAMI) acquired the property and in 2017 was certified a 501(c)(3).

James and Sarah Rotch Arnold were one of New Bedford's most prominent couples. James was active in mercantile and municipal business and was considered a "First Citizen" who used power obtained from wealth, social standing, and success for the welfare of society. James and Sarah's generosity helped shape New Bedford during the 19th century. William Rotch was the Second Mayor of New Bedford and helped establish the Glass Industry in the city. Since its founding in 1866, the Wamsutta Club provides an important meeting venue for city leaders.

JAMI's mission is to preserve, restore and maintain the James and Sarah Arnold Mansion and Grounds for the public's enjoyment; to educate the public about the history of the Mansion and the Arnold and Rotch families' and the Wamsutta Club's roles in the history of New Bedford; and to invite the public to explore history, culture, landscape, architecture, arts, etc. through educational programming, exhibits, performances, and other activities. JAMI's initiative reflects three citywide goals: enhancement of the downtown historic district, promotion of public engagement and education, and preservation and rehabilitative re-use of our historic buildings.

Currently, the mansion provides meeting space at no charge to many civic groups. It also houses the New Bedford Museum of Glass and the Wamsutta Club.

We believe that the Community Preservation Act aligns seamlessly with the mission and goals which have guided us in all our activities. CPA creates local construction jobs by spurring development, eliminates blight, promotes sustainability, supports affordable housing options, and increases the values of neighborhoods and commercial districts throughout the City.

While our mission and its reach target a broad audience and our doors are open to many, our memberships and constituency are modest. As a result, fund-raising for maintenance (too frequently deferred) and needed repairs is extremely limited. And so, grants and public funds are critically important to the proper upkeep of the building and our grounds.



Awards received to date from the New Bedford Community Preservation Act Committee have been timely and most appreciated in enabling JAMI to stabilize the exterior of the building and learning more about the physical characteristics of its grounds.

Additionally, without CPA funds supporting the projects that they have enabled in our City, New Bedford would not be the exciting and vigorous place we know and love.

JAMI respectfully asks that you recognize the widespread benefits of CPA and not override the Mayor's veto on the non-binding referenda to repeal the Community Preservation Act.

For a Greener New Bedford,

Sincerely yours,



Richard T. Porteus, Jr.

President of the Board of Directors of the James Arnold Mansion, Inc.