Letter of Interest to the John Hancock Corporation

The Middlesex Canal Association was started in 1962 as a teaching tool to tell people of all ages the story of the Middlesex Canal (1803-1853) and to preserve those portions still visible. Our Canal was dug by hand when George Washington was in his second term of his presidency. Governor John Hancock signed the legislative Act which officially made the Middlesex Canal Corporation with rights of eminent domain the first in the United States. At that time it was considered to be the greatest work of its kind. Eight hundred shares were sold to initially finance this endeavor and of course John Hancock was a shareholder. It operated for 50 years and played a major role in the development of Boston and the Merrimack corridor from Lowell to Charlestown and as far north as Concord,NH. Today we have approximately 10 miles of canal remaining which we use for parks and walking trails.

We have a good educational program for both adults and children. Recently we had ~ 160 third graders, parents and teachers over a period of several days. When they leave they know how a lock operates, how an aqueduct works, and engineering concepts. A student recently said to me “ This is the best field trip I have ever had”. It put a smile on our faces.

We have operated a free museum in the Faulkner Mill in North Billerica since July 2001. This site is the high point of the Canal and its primary water source the Concord River. To escape being a renter and have more space, we have wanted our own place for some time. We were recently given an old brick cloth warehouse by Pace Industries which we plan to develop into our permanent new museum. This building needs considerable renovation and of course the money to accomplish that. We have an initial budget for the project of five hundred thousand dollars

The entire Middlesex Canal is on the National Historic Registry of Historic Places. The Shawsheen Aqueduct, one of eight along the canal, is a National Civil Engineering Landmark and the Bulfinch Triangle is designated a Boston Historic District.

Few people realize that Canal Street in Boston which runs perpendicular to Causeway Street at the TD North Garden was once a canal. We have recently signed a contract with AIMCO (Apartment Investment and Management Company) to have a large (7’by20’) painting of “The Canal that Bisected Boston”, a bronze plaque of the map of the Middlesex Canal in the atrium and an etched glass map surround in the lobby of their 1 Canal Street entrance – completion in late 2015/early 2016.

We began a fundraising campaign in June of this year. We have had good interest and just a few days ago a commitment of $100,000.00. Last week we had an architect and a structural engineer visit the building and expect a plan of operation to begin.

We appreciate the backing of John Hancock’s historic efforts and we hope they will continue to the present. Can you match the one hundred thousand dollar commitment? We would be pleased to discuss this further and schedule a private tour of our museum at a time suitable to you.

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