



Town of Orleans

Community Preservation Committee
9 School Road Orleans MA 02653-3699
Telephone (508) 240-3700 – Fax (508) 240-3388

FY26 COMMUNITY PRESERVATION PROJECT APPLICATION

SECTION A

Project Title: Lifeboat House Building Project

Submission Date: September 20, 2024

Applicant (note if Town, individual or non-profit): **Centers for Culture and History in Orleans (a.k.a. Orleans Historical Society) Non-Profit**

Mailing Address: PO Box 353 Orleans, MA 02653

Co-Applicant, if any (note if Town, individual or non-profit):

Mailing Address:

Project Contact Person: Cristina Harter

Telephone: 203-219-7913

E-mail: cmhcmhcmh@comcast.net

Federal Tax Identification Number (if non-profit): **04-6168175**

Project purpose (Check all that apply):

Open Space Historic Preservation Community Housing Recreation

Project Location/Address: Corner of School Road and River Road, Orleans, MA

Community Preservation Funding Request: \$ 245,000 (with \$55K already received, total is 10% of total estimated project cost)

Brief Project Summary, including justification of project category checked above:

Overall Objective & Goals

Honor, Respect and Devotion to Duty. These are the core values of the U.S. Coast Guard that are embodied in the “never quit” history of the CG36500 motor lifeboat and the *Pendleton* rescue. The overall objective of this project is to permanently preserve and protect this national treasure indoors and keep its story alive for generations to come.

This project design and site are unchanged from those presented to the CPC in the 2025 cycle, including building modifications requested by the Orleans Historical Commission. The CHO assumes that any site conflict related to the Orleans Library state grant application is resolved, and negotiations are successful with the town for a lease change involving a small

portion of 139 Main Street land, prior to the May, 2025 Town Meeting and voter approval of the lease change and 2026 CPC funding.

Goals for the new building (in priority order):

1. Protect, preserve and respectfully display the CG36500 (Listed on the National Register of Historic Places).
2. Make the boat and its story accessible to all, year-round.
3. For context, exhibit the nearly 400-year history of lifesaving on the Outer Cape.
4. Honor the finest traditions of the U.S. Coast Guard
5. Establish a revenue stream by charging an admission fee to see the boat and other events/activities at the entire CHO campus. (In return, leased town land provides a 99-year revenue source for Orleans.)

Our stated objective is to permanently preserve and protect a national treasure because the CG36500 is now 78 years old and it is not practical for it to stay in the water much longer due to rising costs, fewer experienced crew members and increasingly severe weather related to climate change. To be seaworthy, a wooden boat must stay in the water all year to prevent shrinkage of the hull planks and subsequent leaks. Yet continuing to do so—well beyond its originally intended lifespan—is more and more detrimental to its permanent protection. There is deep concern that we will not be able to meet the increasing maintenance needs of the boat as well as we have for the past 43 years.

To maintain a listing on the National Register of Historic Places there are two requirements that must be met: 1. Preserve and maintain the integrity and longevity of the subject artifact, and 2. Provide access to the artifact for public exposure and education. The proposed Lifeboat House Building Project will completely satisfy these two requirements.

Lifeboat House Building Project Support Justification

1. The CPC generously supported a request from The CHO in the 2024 fiscal year for architectural design and engineering services in support of the Lifeboat House Building Project (\$55,000). Concerns raised at that time about the use of CPC funds for new construction were addressed by Town Counsel, Michael Ford, who provided an opinion in Support of the project. [*“...if the CPC determines that the construction of the new building is necessary for the preservation of the historic boat house, then the project would be a permissible use of CPA funds. The CPA funds could only be used for funding the structure that is necessary to preserve the boat and could not be used for the construction of office space, etc.”*]

In response to Mr. Ford’s opinion, Historical Commission and CPC member Charles Ellis in a subsequent email to The CHO wrote: “Fundamentally, I think this allows consideration of the project.”

The CHO will ensure that CPA funds will be used in support of the preservation of the CG36500 Motor Lifeboat and only for that purpose. No CPA funds will be used for the construction of office space or other expenditures not related to the preservation of this iconic artifact. It is anticipated that no more than 10% of the project will be funded by the CPC.

2. The Orleans Historical Commission, in a meeting on December 13, 2023, reaffirmed that the CHO's Hurd Chapel is "historically significant" and reviewed the proposed Lifeboat House addition to it. It supported the project but suggested some building changes to better integrate with the Hurd and proposed site.

On January 10, 2024, the CHO met again with the Orleans Historical Commission to show revised project drawings that reflected all the changes previously requested. Those changes were accepted and the Commission voted to approve the project for CPC funding consideration.

3. The CHO presented its Lifeboat House funding request to the CPC on January 18, 2024. Questions were addressed and the issue of a possible site conflict with an Orleans Library state grant request was raised.

The CHO attended a second CPC funding meeting on February 8, 2024, at which time partial funding options were discussed. However, the committee determined that while the Lifeboat House project was important and viable, no funding would be provided in this CPC cycle due to the risk of jeopardizing the library grant's requirement for an alternative building site at 139 Main Street (a small fraction of which is involved in the Lifeboat House project). It was emphasized that the funding denial was not due to a lack of merit for the CHO project, but rather because of the library grant. The CPC urged the CHO to reapply in the 2026 cycle after the site issue had been resolved.

4. CHO presented plans for the Lifeboat House project to the Orleans Select Board on April 4, 2024. The board voiced support of the need for, and importance of the project to the town, and was willing to discuss a change of lease for a portion of the 139 Main Street property once the library grant was decided by the state in the October/November 2024 time frame.

So, at the urging of the CPC and Select Board, the CHO is resubmitting its grant request for the CG36500 Lifeboat House project in the 2026 CPC cycle.

