

**Community Preservation Committee
Town of Needham, Massachusetts**

**Report to Town Meeting
Annual Town Meeting – May 2015**

Introduction

In November 2004, the voters of Needham adopted the legislation known as the Massachusetts Community Preservation Act. Since November 2005, the Needham Community Preservation Committee (CPC) has forwarded numerous projects to Town Meeting for final approval, the largest of which is the preservation and reconstruction of Town Hall.

The committee membership is defined by the requirements of the CPA as adopted by Needham. The nine member committee consists of a member of each of the following boards or committees; Planning Board, Conservation Commission, Park Recreation Commission, Historical Commission, Housing Authority, and two members each appointed by the Town Moderator and Board of Selectmen.

A summary of the CPC's FY 2015 activities follows. The members of the CPC welcome input, questions, and attendance at all meetings and public hearings. The Committee generally meets on the 2nd Wednesday of each month, and agendas, minutes and the Needham Community Preservation Plan are available on the Town's website at www.needhamma.gov/CPC

Sources of Available Funds

Tax Surcharge Receipts

Needham residents are currently billed a 2% surcharge on property taxes after the first \$100,000 valuation, as a result of town-wide vote accepting CPA. In FY 2016, it is estimated that Needham will receive \$2,093,312 in property tax surcharges dedicated to CPA, equivalent to the average collected in previous years. The CPA fund also generates revenue from penalties and interest assessed on overdue CPA charges and investment income on the CPA funds in the bank

State Community Preservation Fund

Needham receives a distribution from the Massachusetts Community Preservation Fund, and to date, has received \$6,634,740 from this fund. The most recent distribution, in December 2014 was \$566,099, a 31.5% match to local collections. In October 2006 and 2007, Needham received a 100% match to its local collections, with a combined distribution of \$2,557,108. From October 2008 through December 2014, the distributions ranged from a high of 67.62% to a low of 26.64%. The fund has a complex distribution formula based upon the number of communities participating and their respective local surcharges with 158 communities now participating in CPA.

Fund Balances

State law mandates that, annually, at least 10% of surcharges plus state distribution funds be spent on actual projects, or be allocated for future projects in three specific CPA reserves; Community Housing, Open Space, and Historic Resources. The remainder of the funds, minus funds allocated for administrative expenses, is placed in an Annual Reserve fund, which can only be used for projects in these three areas and/or qualifying recreational projects.

Needham's CPC has elected to target 11% of the estimated receipts for each special reserve. This action is taken to assure that should the MA CPA Trust Fund distribution or the local tax surcharge receipts exceed estimates, Needham remains in compliance with the state mandate.

As a result of previous appropriations, the reserve balances available for appropriation at the May 2015 Annual Town Meeting are as follows:

Community Housing:	\$ 956,520
Open Space:	\$ 271,901
Historic Resources:	\$ 15,820
2015 Annual Reserve:	\$ 1,272,117
Free Cash:	\$5,257,019 (note this balance closes out at the end of the fiscal year)

The unspent 2015 Annual Reserve, and remaining administrative funds and interest must go through the free cash certification process before being returned to the CPA Fund.

The CPC is recommending appropriation of seven (7) projects, to be funded through the existing "buckets" listed above. After subtracting the appropriations for the seven projects, and adding the FY'16 appropriations from Article 37, the balances in the respective funds would be:

Community Housing:	\$ 1,237,873
Open Space:	\$ 543,254
Historic Resources:	\$ 15,820
2015 Annual Reserve:	\$1,448,606
TOTAL	\$3,245,553 as of July 1, 2015

Please note the figures above assume that \$82,000 has been appropriated for the FY 2016 administrative expenses. It does not include the eventual Free Cash funds that will be finalized in late 2015, estimated to be more than \$3,000,000.

Administrative Expenses

The CPC Administrative Funds may be used to pay for the expenses related to the work of the committee, including office supplies, mailings, legal notices, appraisals, consultant

fees, property deposits, as well as the recording secretary's salary and three hours per week for the Staff Liaison's weekly salary. The funds were recently utilized to pay for the addition of conservation restrictions on properties purchased with CPA funds. The Needham CPC is a member of the Massachusetts Community Preservation Coalition and pays annual dues to the association, currently \$4,350. The Coalition provides regular consultation services to the CPC, and monitors and informs member communities on state legislative activity related to the Community Preservation Act.

Requested Project Funding

Article 30: Appropriate for Rosemary Pool

The Park and Recreation Commission, in conjunction with the Permanent Public Building Committee, requests \$450,000 in design funds from CPA Free Cash. This is a partial request for design funds, and a second request will need to be made in May 2016 in order to complete the design process. After a year-long feasibility study, with input from residents throughout the process, the Park and Recreation Commission voted to move forward with a new pool at the Rosemary site. The first phase of design will help choose the exact location, as well as schematic design, design development and estimates. Surveys, field investigations, and preparation for permitting will be done in this phase of design.

Article 31: Appropriate for Newman Athletic Fields

The School Committee, in conjunction with DPW and Park and Recreation, requests \$1,527,000 for construction funds from CPA Free Cash. The two 60' diamonds and the multi-purpose field will be reconstructed with soil amendments and a proper drainage system, to resolve a long-standing issue with the retention of water due to poor soils. A walking path will be added for school activities, personal fitness and special events. The site will have ADA accessibility.

Article 32: Appropriate for Eastman Conservation Area

The School Committee, in conjunction with DPW and Park and Recreation, requests \$800,000 for construction funds from CPA Free Cash. The trail system will be reconstructed to allow for increased utilization by the Needham Science Center. The area includes wetlands, swamp, upland, rock outcroppings, a pond and a meadow. The trail will have ADA accessibility.

Article 33: Appropriate for Mills Field

The Park and Recreation Commission requests \$510,000 for construction funds from CPA Free Cash. The funds would construct additional parking and improve other parking areas. It will also include the re-sodding of the 60' diamond, a renovation of the basketball court, and the addition of a modular restroom building.

Article 34: Appropriate for Ridge Hill/Student Conservation Association

The Conservation Commission request \$10,000 for trail improvements, from the Open Space Reserve. The funds would allow the Conservation Commission to work with the Student Conservation Association for a ten day session, with the group building a small bridge and making improvements to trails. The funds will cover the fee for the group and supplies.

Article 35: Appropriate for Boat Launch

The Park and Recreation Commission, in conjunction with the Board of Selectmen, requests \$30,000 for design funds from CPA Free Cash. Park and Recreation has an existing boat launch area on the Charles River, located on South Street near the Dedham Avenue intersection. The intention is to keep an informal launch area, but one that has better access for canoes, kayaks and other small boats, and also be pedestrian-friendly. The appropriation would cover design and permitting costs.

Article 36: Appropriate for Rail Trail

The Board of Selectmen and Town Manager request up to \$100,000 for construction of the rail trail from CPA Free Cash. The Town is overseeing the construction of the rail trail. Bay Colony Rail Trail Association (BCRTA) has donated \$115,000, to date, and the state has contributed \$70,000. The first phase of construction began in mid-April with the removal of the rails and the ties, expected to be completed by early June. The second phase will be the construction of the stone dust surface, addition of safety fencing, and improvements to the two road crossings

Article 37: Appropriate to Community Preservation Fund

This article appropriates the estimated FY 2016 CPA receipts.

Administration	\$ 82,000
Annual Reserve	\$1,448,606
Community Housing Reserve	\$ 281,353
Historic Resources Reserve*	\$ 0
Open Space Reserve	\$ 281,353

* The required annual funding or appropriation for Historic Resources is the \$464,438 payment of the debt service, voted on within Article 16.

Legislation and CPA Fund

In July of 2012, the Legislature passed, and Governor Patrick signed, the FY2013 budget that also included changes to the CPA Act legislation. The existing regulations allowed improvements to open space or recreation facilities only on land that was previously purchased with CPA funding. The Act was amended to allow CPA funds to be used to

renovate, improve, or develop recreation facilities on existing Town owned properties. This change was a benefit to Needham and other towns with little open space available for purchase, but with existing recreation facilities in need of renovation, and little ability in the Town budget to accomplish this need. This change permitted Town Meeting to approve funding in November 2012 for the renovation of Greene's Field, including the new playgrounds. Open Space funds, held in a required reserve, may also be spent on Recreation projects.

The State budget also included an appropriation to the CPA fund of up to \$25 million from any budget surplus at the end of Fiscal Year 2013. Needham received almost \$450,000 additional funds over last year's state contribution, for a percentage of 52.23% match. The current state budget discussions also include the provision of appropriating up to \$25 million from a possible FY'15 budget surplus. Without the additional funds, Needham anticipates receiving an 18% match. The Community Preservation Coalition is working with the legislature for a permanent solution to the state fund contributions.

Conclusion

Needham is fortunate to have the use of CPA funds which have funded numerous successful projects for the community. Appreciation is extended to the citizens of Needham and specifically Needham's Town Meeting members for their support. The Committee thanks Janet Carter Bernardo and Sam Bass Warner for their service. The Committee looks forward to FY 2016 and new requests and interest from the residents of the community.

Lita Young , Chairman
Gary Crossen, Vice Chairman
Robert Boder
Reg Foster

Mark Gluesing
Peter Oehlkers
Mike Retzky
Sam Bass Warner