

COMMUNITY PRESERVATION COMMITTEE

The Community Preservation Committee is pleased to submit its annual report of activities for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2012.

The Community Preservation Process in Wellesley

In 2002, Wellesley accepted the Community Preservation Act (CPA) and formed a Community Preservation Committee (CPC). Pursuant to the CPA, Wellesley established a surcharge of 1% on the local property tax and began to set aside the proceeds of the surcharge to support Community Preservation activities, encompassing four purposes -- open space, historic resources, recreational uses and community housing. Funds raised through the local surcharge are partially matched annually by monies from the Massachusetts Community Preservation Trust Fund, which is made up of revenues from Land Court and Land Registry fees.

As an early adopter of the CPA, Wellesley received a 100% match for the first five years (FY2004-2008). With the decline in the real estate market and an increase in the number of communities adopting the CPA, the State match has declined substantially since 2008. In October, 2011 Wellesley received \$236,724, representing a 26.64% match to the FY2011 local levy of \$888,636. The expected October 2012 state match will be \$251,176, which is 26.83% of the FY12 local levy of \$936,256. Starting in November 2013, the state match is expected to increase as the result of revisions to the CPA adopted on July 8, 2012. Since 2004, the town has received a total of \$4.26 Million in state matches as the result of adopting the CPA.

The Town's Community Preservation fund continues to be financially strong, despite the decline in state matches. Please see the Community Preservation columns of the Non Major Governmental Funds Combining Balance Sheet and Non Major Governmental Funds Combining Statement of Revenues, Expenditures, and Changes in Fund Balances in the Town's Comprehensive Annual Financial Report for detailed information.

The membership of Wellesley's CPC is determined by Town Bylaw. There are nine members, including representatives from five designated boards (Natural Resources Commission, Planning Board, Recreation Commission, Housing Authority and Historical Commission) plus four additional members appointed by the Moderator. In practice, one of the four Moderator appointed members is appointed on the recommendation of the Wellesley Housing Development Corporation.

Each year, the CPC must appropriate a minimum of 10% of all revenues for each of three primary purposes: open space (excluding recreation), community housing and historic resources. These appropriations can be for specific projects or they can be allocated to dedicated reserves for future use. The remaining Community Preservation revenues may be appropriated for any CPA allowable use or retained in undesignated funds for future appropriation. The CPC is also allowed to appropriate a maximum of 5% of all revenues for administrative purposes. These administrative funds are sometimes used to provide initial funding money to plan a larger project.

The CPA legislation provides language and guidelines defining allowable uses of CPC funds. In addition the Department of Revenue Division of Local Services and the non-profit Community Preservation Coalition provide additional resources to guide communities like Wellesley. The July, 2012 revisions to the CPA include new allowable uses and some new restrictions. The CPC will be studying these changes to determine how to adapt its long range plan.

Each year the CPC studies the needs of the community and reviews funding proposals submitted by Town Boards and other eligible parties. The CPC will hold one or more public hearings to receive input from the community. The output of this process is a Five Year Plan for future projects plus a determination of which proposals will be supported with appropriation requests at the Annual Town Meeting. Frequently projects will be tentatively added to the Plan without a firm commitment. This helps the committee view its long term commitments and plan appropriately.

Community Preservation funding proposals generally consist of capital expenditures for the purposes permitted by the CPA. Maintenance and ordinary operating expenses are not eligible. All appropriations from the Community Preservation fund must be approved by the Wellesley CPC and then subsequently be approved at a Wellesley Annual or Special Town Meeting.

In the past, capital funding of improvements to recreational and open space resources has been limited to property acquired with CPC funds. However, the changes in affect starting FY2013 allow the use of CPC funds to develop or improve recreation resources acquired in other ways.

An Overview of Community Preservation Activities

The Committee operates pursuant to a Community Preservation Plan for the Town, including specific Decision Guidelines and Goals which are used in reaching decisions about whether and to what extent to recommend funding for the proposals submitted to the Committee. A copy of the Community Preservation Plan as well as other materials, including reports by the Committee to Town Meeting can be found at the Committee's link on the Town's website at www.wellesleyma.gov.

To date, the Committee has funded a total of 41 projects or portions of projects. The complete list can be viewed the state CPA project website at the following link (pick Wellesley): http://maps.massgis.state.ma.us/cpa_town_pick.htm It is also available on the Community Preservation Coalition website at the following link: <http://www.communitypreservation.org/projects/report?town=Wellesley>

Including FY12 appropriations, the CPC has appropriated \$9,614,854 for these projects. Of this total, \$2,965,500 (30.8%) has been appropriated for Community Housing; \$3,691,750 (38.4%) for Recreation, \$1,554,344 (16.2%) for Historic Resources, and \$1,403,260 (14.6%) for Open Space. FY 2012 was a record year in terms of CPC activity. As discussed below, a total of \$3,995,000 was appropriated for four projects.

Projects Funded at the Special Town Meeting held in November 2011

Fuller Brook Park Phase 3 Final Design (Historic Preservation)

Sponsor: Fuller Brook Park Coordinating Committee

Description of the Project: Funds for Additional Final design and study work for the design phase of the Fuller Brook Park rehabilitation

Amount: \$665,000

The CPC continues to support the phased approach to preserve and rehabilitate the structural, environmental and aesthetic integrity of the 100-year-old Fuller Brook Park. This appropriation is expected to be the final design phase and will be followed by a multi-year activity to execute the plan. The CPC has supported this project since its inception and expects to contribute to the ongoing funding. The CPC long range plan includes a projected \$3.6 million for the implementation phase.

Projects Funded at the 2012 Annual Town Meeting

Grant to the Wellesley Housing Development Corporation (Community Housing)

Sponsor: Wellesley Housing Development Corporation

Description of the Project: Additional capital to invest in the creation or preservation of affordable housing

Amount: \$330,000

The CPC continued its support for Community Housing by recommending further appropriation of funds to allow the Wellesley Housing Development Corporation to have the capital it needs to respond quickly when an opportunity occurs to buy new housing units or preserve a housing unit or units that are part of the Town's affordable housing stock. The CPC believes that providing affordable housing is important to strengthening and preserving the culture of the Town. The Wellesley Housing Development Corporation was created by the Board of Selectmen and Town Meeting for that purpose.

Projects Funded at the Special Town Meeting held in June 2012

900-910 Worcester Street Acquisition (Open Space and Recreation)

Sponsor: Board of Selectmen

Description of the Project: Appropriation for the acquisition and preparation of a portion of the property at 900-910 Worcester Street for open space and recreation (pursuant to the land being fit for purchase). The land purchased with CPC funds represents 62.5% (5 acres) of the total property and will be placed under a conservation restriction as required by the CPA.

Amount: \$2,600,000

Since 2004, the Town has been aware of the possible sale of the Property. As it is a large parcel of land in a key location at the west gateway to Wellesley, the Town has worked to gather information, conduct studies and review options in preparation should the property become available. Similarly, the CPC viewed the parcel for its potential as open space and recreation land and started early to investigate the feasibility of supporting the acquisition. As other Town boards studied the potential uses of the property, the CPC projected a figure of \$3.5 Million for the project in its Long Range Plan. Once the purchase and sale agreement was signed, the CPC reexamined its commitment to the project. The CPC concluded this is an allowable use of CPC funds, an appropriate share of the parcel will be protected by a conservation restriction, and the expenditure would not adversely affect the CPC's ability to support other projects. At the close of the fiscal year, the acquisition process was not yet complete.

Morses Pond Preservation (Preservation of Open Space)

Sponsor: Department of Public Works

Description of the Project: Completion of the final phase of the restoration and preservation of Morses Pond with the dredging of the North Basin.

Amount: \$400,000

This is the final stage in the restoration of Morses Pond. Dredging the North Basin of the Pond will restore the detention capacity so that particulate matter can settle out before reaching the main part of the pond. By removing soft sediment, plants, roots, seeds, and other plant stages, dredging will help preserve the overall health and clarity of the Pond and will prevent that portion of the Pond from becoming an emergent wetland. The CPC supported the earlier phases of Pond preservation and restoration. This important final phase will prevent the loss of this important Town resource.

Looking Forward

During the coming year, the Community Preservation Committee will continue to work diligently with Town Boards and community organizations to successfully implement already approved projects, consider new projects, and in particular to advance the process of generating long term strategic plans for historic resources, open space, recreation and community housing.

Respectfully Submitted,

Allan Port, Chair
Theodore Parker, Vice-Chair
James Conlin
Jeanne Conroy
Kathy Egan
Joan Gaughan
Dwight Leuth
Barbara McMahon
Susan Troy