

Report of the Community Preservation Committee

The Community Preservation Committee is pleased to submit its annual report of activities for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2009.

The Community Preservation Process in Wellesley

In 2002, Wellesley accepted the Community Preservation Act ("CPA") and formed a Community Preservation Committee. 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 in order to pursue Community Preservation activities, encompassing four purposes -- open space, historic resources, recreational uses and community housing. Funds raised through the local surcharge are "matched" annually by monies from a Massachusetts Community Preservation Trust Fund, which is made up of revenues from Land Court and Land Registry fees. As a direct result of the decline in the real estate market and the increase in the number of communities adopting the CPA, the State match has declined substantially. In October, 2008 Wellesley received \$510,994 representing a 67.6% match. It is expected that the payment the Town will receive in October, 2009 will be approximately \$235,000 reflecting a match of some 30% of local collections. There is some optimism that with the real estate market stabilizing the state match may stabilize or increase. In addition, legislation is under consideration by the General Court which would increase funding and establish a floor level of match. The Community Preservation Committee is supporting this legislation through the Community Preservation Coalition and directly through the Town's elected legislators.

The Town's Community Preservation fund continues to be financially strong, despite the decline in revenues. 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.

In each year, a required minimum of 10% of all revenues collected by a CPA community from its surcharge and from the State match must be expended (or "banked" in dedicated reserves for future use) for each of the statute's three primary purposes of open space (excluding recreation), community housing and historic resources. The remaining 70% of all Community Preservation funds raised annually by a community which are not so earmarked may be used currently or retained for future appropriation, at the municipality's discretion, for any of those three primary statutory purposes or for the fourth purpose of recreation.

Community Preservation funding proposals generally consist of capital expenditures for the purposes permitted by the CPA -- maintenance and ordinary operating expenses are not eligible and even capital spending related to recreational and open space properties not acquired with CPA funds are constrained. All expenditures from a local Community Preservation fund are subject to two basic requirements: (1) they may be made only upon appropriation adopted in the usual manner (in Wellesley's case, by vote at an Annual or Special Town Meeting), and (2) only those projects or proposals which receive the affirmative support of the local Community Preservation Committee are eligible for appropriation.

In response to the requirements of the statute, Wellesley's Bylaw provides that the Committee have representatives from five designated boards – Natural Resources Commission, Planning Board, Recreation Commission, Housing Authority and Historical Commission -- and the permitted maximum of four additional members appointed by the Moderator (one of which is, in practice, appointed from the Wellesley Housing Development Corporation).

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 29 projects or portions of projects as detailed on the state CPA project website by picking Wellesley from the list on http://maps.massgis.state.ma.us/cpa_town_pick.htm

\$4,459,854 dollars have been appropriated for these projects. Of this total, \$1,805,500 (40.5%) has been appropriated for Affordable Housing, \$1,791,740 (40.2%) has been appropriated for Recreation, \$564,344 (12.7%) for Historic Resources and \$298,260 (6.7%) for Open Space.

Projects Funded at the 2009 Annual Town Meeting

1. Renovation of Waldo Court Complex (Community Housing)

Sponsor: Wellesley Housing Authority

Description of the Project: Renovation of the 12 units at Waldo Court to restore them to use.

Amount: \$700,000

This funding supplements State grants totaling \$1.65 million and will allow the WHA to renovate all three buildings at the Waldo Court complex at 50 Linden Street. Currently nine of the units are vacant and uninhabitable. These vacancies have existed since 2001.

The scope of work includes:

- building envelope repairs and improvements;
- kitchen and bathroom modernization;
- interior refurbishment of walls, ceilings, floors, and finishes ;
- reconfiguring of interior for greater livability;
- heating, plumbing, electrical and life and safety upgrades;
- site drainage, site and parking improvements;
- lead and asbestos abatement, and
- accessibility upgrades if required by code.

The WHA had previously received a grant of \$782,805 from the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) to modernize the kitchens/baths and improve the site work at Waldo Court/Linden Street. After an extensive survey was completed by DHCD, the report noted that this property required a comprehensive modernization. The WHA approached DHCD to increase the grant to do a comprehensive work plan on the site and all building components and systems. The State agreed and increased the prior construction grant to \$1,500,000 and \$150,000 for Architect/Engineering services, which is double the amount previously awarded for work at this site but would be sufficient to renovate only two of the three buildings.

As this development is located in an area of town that has convenient access to transportation, shopping, churches, library, schools, etc. it qualifies as one of the State's "smart growth" developments. DHCD has committed this additional money because this site needed a more comprehensive work program to get the units back on-line. These same factors lead the CPC and Town Meeting to appropriate \$700,000 to allow all three buildings to be renovated at the same time as part of one, cost efficient project.

2. 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 stock.

Amount: \$350,000

The 2006 ATM approved an appropriation of \$450,000 for the WHDC to invest in housing which could be used as affordable housing. The WHDC used \$361,697.83 of the CPC grant to purchase a house and make minor renovations to it. The house has since been sold as an affordable unit to an income qualified family. The balance along with the \$350,000 requested at this 2009 ATM will provide the WHDC with over \$433,000 in funds available to respond quickly to opportunities as they arise, subject to the approval of the Board of Selectmen. The CPC and Town Meeting believe 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.

3. Sprague Clock Tower Preservation (Historic Resources)

Sponsor: Department of Public Works

Description of the Project: Work to preserve the structural and aesthetic integrity of the Tower

Amount: \$65,000

The Department of Public Works originally requested \$63,500 for this work on the Isaac Sprague Memorial Clock Tower located in Elm Park. The tower was built in 1928 and was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2007. It does not appear that any major structural work has been performed in the past 80 years. The tower has been carefully inspected by both a Town engineer and a consultant retained using \$2,000 of Administrative funds of the CPC. There is general agreement on the overall scope of the work required, although certain details remain to be defined (for instance whether to repair or replace the wood door and stone surrounds at the ground level). \$65,000 was

appropriated to the DPW contingent on the concurrence of the CPC and the Wellesley Historical Commission on the final Request for Proposal and work plan of the selected bidder.

Looking Forward

During the coming year, the Community Preservation Committee will continue to work diligently with other Town Boards and community organization 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 affordable housing to guide a pro-active program to best utilize the substantial resources generated by the CPA surcharge and State matching funds.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jack Morgan, Chair
Theodore Parker, Vice-Chair
Kara Cicchetti
James Conlin
Rose Mary Donahue
Joan Gaughan
Robert Goldkamp
Allan Port