

## **ARTICLE 17 – COMMUNITY PRESERVATION COMMITTEE**

The purpose of this Article is to consider the proposed appropriations of the Community Preservation Committee (CPC), as presented in that Committee's report to Town Meeting included in the Reports section at the end of this book.

### **Background**

The Community Preservation Act (CPA) was enacted by the Commonwealth in December 2000 for the purpose of promoting the acquisition and retention of open space, the acquisition and preservation of historic resources, and the acquisition and development of community housing, as well as for recreation. To enable such projects in each participating city or town, the Act provided for the establishment of a Community Preservation Fund (Fund) that is funded by an annual surcharge on the property tax bills of the community and by an annual matching contribution from the State, subject to availability. The Town accepted the provisions of the CPA at the 2002 Annual Town Meeting and through the affirmative vote of Town residents at the November 2002 election, enacting a 1% surcharge. The State match has been close to 100% each year.

By the end of the current fiscal year concluding on June 30, 2007, the Town will have raised approximately \$3,028,000 from the surcharge, and the State match received for all fiscal years through FY 2007 is expected to total approximately \$2,978,000 (the annual State match is actually received 3-4 months after the close of the fiscal year to which the match relates). This will result in total CPA receipts of about \$6,006,000 through FY 2007. Assuming the granting of the requested funds for the FY08 projects described below, the uncommitted balance of all funds held (or shortly to be received via the anticipated State match for FY 2007) by the CPC as of June 30, 2007, including earned interest, will be about \$3.9 million which will be available in future years to fund major opportunities in the three main Community Preservation categories of open space (including recreation), historic resources, and community housing.

The Community Preservation Committee (CPC) report, which is included in the Reports section of this book, reviews the background of the CPA and the nine-member Committee, the requirements for allocating the funds, and outlines the criteria used by the CPC in evaluating requests for funds presented to it. Reference should be made to this report for a more complete understanding of this information and the two proposals that are to be recommended by the CPC.

Under the provisions of the CPA, only those projects that are recommended to Town Meeting by the CPC and then approved by Town Meeting may receive monies from the Fund. Town Meeting may accept or reject items proposed and amounts of funds to carry out those proposed projects. Town Meeting is not authorized to substitute different projects or to change the amounts of funding unless recommended by the CPC.

### **FY08 Recommendations**

The two projects recommended by the CPC, totaling \$798,000, are as follows:

***Morses Pond Proposal: \$153,000 for the Phosphorus/Sedimentation Inactivation (PSI) System that is a component of the Morses Pond Comprehensive Management Plan, a 5-year program of capital and operating expenditures to improve the recreational and environmental conditions of Morses Pond (the "Project").***

- Sponsors: Jointly sponsored by the Board of Public Works, Natural Resources Commission, and Recreation Commission

- CPA Categories: Open Space and Recreation

The sponsors requested a contribution by the CPC toward the capital costs of the Project for FY08 and will request CPC support for other components of the Project in future years when those components are actually ready to be undertaken. CPC funding reduces, dollar-for-dollar, any approved Town debt for the Project.

The CPC Committee voted unanimously to fund the full \$153,000 cost of the PSI System from CPC funds, believing that, working in tandem with the weed harvesting system, the PSI System can make a major contribution toward improving water clarity at the Pond and thus improving its value as a major recreational and open space resource. Fifty percent of the funding is designated as coming from the Open Space funds account and 50% from the undesignated account, reflecting the contribution to Recreational uses under the CPC statute.

This is the CPC's third funding of the Project, beginning with a \$75,000 grant in FY06 which enabled the three sponsoring boards to undertake the consultant's study for the development of the Morses Pond Comprehensive Management Plan. For FY07 the CPC funded the purchase of a new weed harvester to better manage weed control. With the addition of this newest recommendation for the PSI System in FY 08, the CPC contribution to Morses Pond to date will be approximately \$475,000.

Advisory voted favorable action on Article 21 which funds the multi-year capital request for the Morses Pond Management Plan and also voted favorable action for the FY08 operating costs associated with the Plan. The funding for the phosphorus/sedimentation program for this year is an integral part of the overall Plan. Advisory is pleased to see that CPC continues to view the Morses Pond project as an important Town infrastructure project. Advisory would like to see continued support for this project from CPC in the future.

#### **Advisory recommends favorable action 11-0**

*Sprague Field Proposal: \$645,000 toward the capital costs of undertaking preservation of two athletic fields (Fields 1 and 2) at the Sprague Fields Complex. The project would involve the excavation of the fields and the screening and removal of hazardous debris, followed by the installation of two replacement fields which will include an in-filled synthetic turf surface and an underlying geotextile fabric and a gravel/stone base which would serve as a barrier against further migrating materials.*

- Sponsors : The project is sponsored by the School Committee which controls the fields, and the Playing Fields Task Force, whose members include representatives from:

- Board of Selectmen
- Board of Public Works
- School Committee
- Recreation Commission
- Natural Resources Commission
- Wellesley Little League/Wellesley Girls Softball
- Wellesley United Soccer Club
- Wellesley Youth Lacrosse Club

The project is also being coordinated with the Board of Health.

- CPC Category: Recreation

The sponsors requested a \$650,000 contribution by the Wellesley CPC toward the capital costs of the Project for FY08. The capital costs for the synthetic turf alternative appear in a Cost Estimate prepared by

Gale Associates, the Town's consultant, , which shows a total construction cost, including a 10% contingency, of \$1,850,000. The PFTF has proposed a plan of financing for the project, under which:

(i) CPC has been requested to make a contribution of \$650,000 through a recommended appropriation of CPC funds at the 2007 Annual Town Meeting;

(ii) The Town would appropriate the remaining \$1,205,000 at the 2007 Annual Town Meeting, to be raised by borrowing. The Town's funding would be contingent upon the exclusion of such borrowing from the limits of Prop. 2½ pursuant to the passage of a ballot question at a special election following the 2007 Annual Town Meeting; and

(iii) the Recreation Commission, with the approval and cooperation of the field user groups, would undertake increases in field user fees for the purpose of raising sufficient funds (a) to cover one-half of the debt service (principal and interest) on the Town's \$1,205,000 borrowing over its anticipated 10-year life, and (b) to pay the estimated \$500,000 cost of installing a replacement synthetic turf surface at the end of its useful life.

The CPC committee voted unanimously to fund \$645,000 for the purpose of funding a portion of the capital costs of preserving the Sprague Fields through remediation activities and the installation of synthetic turf replacement fields, with the recommendation being subject to the following conditions and assumptions:

1. The Town funding portion of the financial plan for the Sprague Fields Proposal is presented to and approved by the 2007 Annual Town Meeting, borrowing to finance the Town's appropriation is made contingent upon passage of a Prop. 2½ debt exclusion ballot question and such question is passed by the voters at a special election following the 2007 Annual Town Meeting.

2. The Recreation Commission and the field user groups formally approve a plan for increased user fees which will assure the requisite funding through such user fee increases of one-half of the debt service on the Town's borrowing for the project as well as the capital costs of ultimate replacement of the synthetic turf fields.

3. If the aggregate amount required to be expended for the Sprague Fields proposal is reduced below \$1.85 million for any reason (i.e., on account of a contract bid award below such amount, or the receipt of private contributions from donors), the CPC anticipates that the respective funding obligation of CPC, the Town and the field user groups (via user fee increases administered through the Recreation Commission) under the project's financial plan would be correspondingly reduced on a proportional basis.

4. All permits and approvals required to be granted under the Town's general and zoning by-laws or under applicable State laws in order to carry out the Sprague Fields proposal will be obtained.

CPC has established restrictions on the proposed funding associated with the Sprague Field project including passage by Town Meeting and passage by the voters of the required debt exclusion. Advisory appreciates the thorough vetting by CPC of this project and their recommendation for funding of a portion of the project that qualifies for CPA funding. If Town Meeting and the voters approve this project Advisory fully supports the CPC funding.

#### **Advisory recommends favorable action 11-0**

#### **Administrative Costs**

Under this Article, the CPC seeks approval for the appropriation of monies from the Community Preservation Fund for these two projects. The CPC also seeks approval for an appropriation of \$50,000 for administrative expenses. This amount is within the statutory allowance for such expenses (up to 5% of

the annual revenues to the Fund). The CPC has typically spent only a portion of this allowance, and any unspent administrative funds will revert to the Fund at the end of the fiscal year.

This amount is within the statutory allowance for such expenses (up to 5% of the annual revenues to the Fund). The CPC has typically spent only a portion of this allowance, and any unspent administrative funds will revert to the Fund at the end of the fiscal year.

**Advisory recommends favorable action 11-0**

.

.

.