

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, 2007.

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. The State's payment to each CPA community is determined by a statutory formula, but in practice the State match to date has been almost 100%.

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. 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, Wellesley Housing Authority and Historical Commission -- and the permitted maximum of four additional members appointed by the Moderator (one of which is, by common understanding, 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 and the CPC Decision

Guidelines can be found at the Committee's link on the Town's website at www.wellesleyma.gov. Interested residents can also visit the CPC webpage to read a comprehensive report prepared by the CPC for the Selectmen in November, 2006, describing in detail all of the CPC's activities over its first five years.

To date, the Committee has supported a total of 16 different projects, or stages of projects. In reviewing the list of projects undertaken, several broad trends are notable:

-- The Committee has had the opportunity to approve and fund at least three proposals within each of the open space, historic resources, community housing and recreation categories recognized by the CPA. The Committee is mindful of the desirability of providing meaningful assistance across the entire spectrum of Community Preservation uses.

-- Many of the applications approved by the Committee have involved close working relationships with and, in some cases, matching funding or donated services from Wellesley residents, citizen groups and nonprofit organizations. This partnering with parties outside of Town government encourages a stronger community consensus about a project's significance and allows the Committee to stretch its own financial resources in support of a greater number of worthy projects.

-- The Committee, on average, has expended slightly more than one-third of each year's Community Preservation Fund revenues for current projects, with the remaining revenues being "banked" for future uses, either as designated category reserves or as general reserves available for any future Community Preservation use. This reflects both the pace at which the Committee receives applications for funding proposals and the Committee's desire to save a significant portion of revenues for major projects which could have significant long-term benefits for the Town.

As of June 30, 2007, the Town's Community Preservation Fund totaled approximately \$4,025,000 in unappropriated funds on hand. These uncommitted funds will remain available in future years to support community preservation opportunities.

The FY08 Recommendations

During the fiscal year just concluded, the Committee recommended that two projects receive appropriations of Community Preservation funds for expenditure:

1. Morses Pond Comprehensive Management Plan (Open Space, Recreation)

The Committee recommended that **\$153,000** be allocated for the full estimated cost of constructing and installing a Phosphorus/sedimentation inactivation system ("PSI System") for Morses Pond, as part of the multi-year Morses Pond Management Plan. This system would be used primarily in the springtime, targeting storm events which bring excess sedimentation and nutrients into the Pond. The funding was appropriated by Town Meeting as requested. With this newest funding for the PSI System in FY 08, the

overall Community Preservation commitment for the Pond to date is approximately \$475,000.

2. Sprague Athletic Fields (Recreation)

The Committee recommended that **\$645,000** be allocated from general Community Preservation funds for the purpose of funding a portion of the capital costs of preserving two existing athletic fields adjacent to the Sprague School through remediation activities and the installation of synthetic turf playing fields. The fields were originally built on top of a former municipal disposal site, which has resulted in solid debris (glass, metal objects) working its way to the surface and posing a safety hazard for field users. The Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) requires remediation of this problem prior to a date in 2009; failure to do so would result in closure of the fields.

The sponsors requested Community Preservation funding as part of a proposed plan of financing by the Town (via borrowing), by user groups and by the CPC to cover the overall costs of remediation and construction of the replacement fields. Because Town Meeting, after extended debate, did not approve the appropriation of Town funds by the requisite two-thirds majority, the CPC did not move forward with its recommendation. Further studies, and a new proposal encompassing remediation of the two Sprague fields, are anticipated in the future.

Respectfully Submitted,

David Dinwoodey, Chair
Jack Morgan
James Conlin
Rose Mary Donahue
Joan Gaughan
Dona Kemp
Kit Bowry
Helen Robertson
John Schuler