

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

**Report to Town Meeting
Annual Town Meeting – May 2019**

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 2019 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 the 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 2019, it is estimated that Needham will receive \$2,590,000 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 Trust Fund, and to date, has received \$8,438,406 from this fund. The most recent distribution, in November 2018 was \$438,305, an 18.93% 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 2016, the distributions ranged from a high of 67.62% to a low of 20.58%. In November 2017, the distribution was a 17.2%, the lowest contribution to date. The Community Preservation Trust Fund has a complex distribution formula based upon the number of communities participating and their respective local surcharges with 175 communities now

participating in CPA, including the City of Boston that approved adoption in November 2016. In the years 2014 through 2016, the Legislature added funding to the Community Preservation Trust Fund in order to provide additional distributions to participating communities. There currently is legislation under review at the State House which if enacted would increase the funding formula of the Community Preservation Trust Fund.

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 to insure staying compliant with the mandate.

As a result of previous appropriations, the reserve balances available for appropriation at the May 2019 Annual Town Meeting, prior to FY2019 contributions, are as follows:

Community Housing:	\$ 2,028,573
Open Space:	\$ 883,954
Historic Resources:	\$ 15,820
2019 Annual Reserve:	\$ 1,025,153
Free Cash:	\$ 499,154 (note this balance closes out at the end of the fiscal year)

The unspent 2019 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 six (6) projects, to be funded at the May 2019 Annual Town Meeting. After subtracting the appropriations for the six (6) projects, and adding the FY'20 appropriations from Article 36, the balances in the respective funds would be:

Community Housing:	\$ 2,194,975
Open Space:	\$ 1,083,356
Historic Resources:	\$ 15,820
2020 Annual Reserve:	\$ 945,546
TOTAL	\$ 4,239,697 as of July 1, 2019

Please note the figures above assume that \$82,000 has been appropriated for the FY 2020 administrative expenses. *It does not include the eventual Free Cash funds that will be finalized in late 2019.*

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 \$7,900. 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 Modernization and Development of Affordable Housing

The Needham Housing Authority (NHA) is requesting \$150,000 funding for consultants to develop the architectural, engineering, survey, financial modeling, legal and related documents necessary for the Authority to obtain State and Federal funding for major modernization and development projects. The NHA will be matching this request with \$150,000 of its own funds, for a total of \$300,000 of consultant funding. The completion of this consulting work is anticipated to result in the submission and approval of a Rental Assistance Demonstration (RAD) Public Housing Program Application to the department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to enable the improvement to NHA properties. As currently estimated, using approximately \$950,000 of additional CPA funds, \$37 million of additional funding would be available via HUD's RAD Program. This would result in the modernization of 76 existing affordable housing units, and the potential development of 61 new affordable units.

Article 31: Appropriate for Fisher St Trailhead Design

The Bay Colony Rail Trail Association (BCRTA), with support from the Town Manager's office is requesting \$15,000 to the design of a trailhead for the 1.3 mile Needham Rail Trail that runs from the Charles River to the Town Forest at High Rock Street. The proposed trailhead includes a driveway, parking area, wood rail fence/guardrail, landscaping, benches, signage, and interpretive elements. The addition of parking and associated amenities will increase and improve public access to this recreational asset. The BCRTA is seeking state grant funding for the construction of this trailhead.

Article 32: Appropriate for Town Common Renovation Design

The Department of Public Works, with support from the Town Manager's office, is requesting \$117,000 to fund the design of the Town Common Renovation Project which

includes the green space and hardscape area of the Common, and is proposed to maximize the current use of space, complement Town Hall, enhance the “blue tree,” and integrate with the new streetscape improvements. The project includes sod, trees, plantings, low maintenance hardscape materials, and improved accessibility. Pathways and landscaping will be adjusted for improved functionality, and electrical and sound capacity will be installed to accommodate community events. This article would fund the final design of the project.

Article 33: Appropriate for Rosemary Lake Trail Project

The Park and Recreation Commission is requesting \$200,000 for improvements to Rosemary Lake including both access and trails. The funding would allow the Town to would replace the more than 30 year old dock at Rosemary Lake with one that can be used for canoes, kayaks, and paddle boats. This dock would be run by Park & Recreation staff during the pool season. In addition, on the camp property side of the Lake, a picnic pavilion will be installed after the existing buildings are demolished to make the trail more attractive and useful to the public.

Article 34: Appropriate for Cricket Field Renovation

The Department of Public Works and the Park and Recreation Commission are requesting \$480,000 to construct improvements to the functionality of Cricket Field. The field does not have a fully-functioning irrigation system, and the grading on the site is inconsistent and leads to localized draining issues. As part of the project, all turf will be stripped and top soil will be removed. The field will be regraded and the soil will be amended to allow for improved drainage. A new irrigation system will be installed and the field will be sodded.

Article 35: Appropriate for Playground Improvements

The Park and Recreation Commission are requesting \$350,000 to improve playgrounds throughout the town. This request is part of the Park & Recreation Commission’s overall plan to improve playgrounds through the Town. This funding would add handicap accessible features at Greene’s Field and Cricket Field, and begin the addition of poured-in-place pathways at other playgrounds. This is part of a two year plan.

Article 36: Appropriate to Community Preservation Fund

This article appropriates the estimated FY 2019 CPA receipts.

Administration	\$ 82,000
Annual Reserve	\$ 945,546
Community Housing Reserve	\$ 312,071
Historic Resources Reserve*	\$ 0
Open Space Reserve	\$ 312,071

* The required annual funding or appropriation for Historic Resources is the \$430,525 payment of the debt service, voted on within Article 18.

Conclusion

Needham is fortunate to have the use of CPA funds which have funded numerous successful projects for the community. Our appreciation is extended to the citizens of Needham and specifically Needham's Town Meeting members for their support. The Committee thanks Gary Crossen, our most recent past Chairman, whose term ended May 31, 2018, for his long-term service. The Committee looks forward to FY 2020 and new requests and interest from the residents of the community.

Peter Pingitore, Chairman
Artie Crocker, Vice Chairman
Chris Gerstel
Joseph Barnes

Bob Dermody
Paul Alpert
Robert Boder
Richard Zimbone