

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

**Report to Town Meeting  
Annual Town Meeting – May 2011**

**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. Residents are encouraged to follow the progress of this major project and watch for its anticipated opening in the fall of 2011.

A summary of the CPC's FY 2011 activities follows. The members of the CPC welcome input, questions, and attendance at all meetings and public hearings. The Committee generally meets on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday of each month, and agendas, minutes and the Needham Community Preservation Plan are available on the Town's website at [www.needhamma.gov/CPC](http://www.needhamma.gov/CPC)

**Sources of Available Funds**

**State Community Preservation Fund**

Needham receives a distribution from the Massachusetts Community Preservation Fund, and to date, has received \$4,327,705 from this fund. In October 2006 and 2007, Needham received a 100% match to its local collections, with a combined distribution of \$2,557,108. In October 2008, the distribution was 67.62% of local collections for a total of \$888,287. In October 2009, the distribution was 34.8% totaling \$481,111. In October 2010, the distribution was 27.2% totaling \$401,199. The fund has a complicated distribution formula based upon the number of communities participating (currently 143) and their respective local surcharges. It is estimated that the October 2011 distribution will be 25% for Needham.

**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 acceptance of CPA. In FY 2012, it is estimated that Needham will receive approximately \$1,625,000 in property tax surcharges dedicated to CPA, equivalent to the average collected in previous years.

**Miscellaneous Receipts**

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. In total, these sources contributed \$278,560 in FY 2009, but earned only \$62,061 in FY 2010 due to the appropriation and spending for the Town Hall project and the lower interest rates being paid on cash balances. As of the *current* reporting data for FY 2011, the total is \$10,621.

## 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. This action is taken to assure that should tax surcharge receipts exceed estimates, Needham remains in compliance with the state mandate.

The debt service for the bonded Town Hall project will begin to be paid in FY 2012. The \$300,000 for the debt service will be voted on during Article 25 as part of the appropriation of the FY 2012 Operating Budget.

As a result of previous appropriations, the reserve balances available for appropriation at the May 2011 Annual Town Meeting are as follows:

Community Housing:	\$401,700
Open Space:	\$213,500
Historic Resources:	\$155,820
2011 Annual Reserve:	\$449,739 (note this balance closes out at the end of the fiscal year)
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$1,220,759</b>

The unspent 2011 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 three projects, to be funded through the existing "buckets," listed above. After subtracting the appropriations for the three projects, and adding the FY'12 appropriations from Article 34, the balances in the respective funds would be:

Community Housing:	\$ 485,100
Open Space:	\$ 426,900
Historic Resources:	\$ 148,320
2011 Annual Reserve:	\$1,131,200
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$2,191,520 as of July 1, 2011</b>

Please note the figures above assume that \$82,000 has been appropriated for the FY 2011 administrative expenses. It does not include the eventual Free Cash funds that were approximately \$980,000 in January 2011.

### **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 two hours per week for the Staff Liaison's weekly salary. The Needham CPC is a member of the Massachusetts Community Preservation Coalition and pays annual dues to the association, currently \$3,750. The Coalition assisted with all the paperwork during the creation of Needham's CPA Fund and provides regular consultation services to the CPC.

## **Requested Project Funding**

### **Article 31: Appropriate for CPA Project – Home Energy Improvements**

This request is for \$80,000. If approved, the Charles River Center will replace windows and doors at the Stott House, Salamone House and Mountain House. In order to replace all of the windows and doors, the Charles River Center would need about \$125,000. The CPC has recommended providing \$80,000 in funds that is the equivalent to completing the project in two homes, though the Charles River Center may choose to prioritize the replacement of the worst units between the three homes. The Charles River Center has applied for two grants to fund the remainder of the project. As of this writing, they did not receive funding from one of the grants, and they still await word on the outcome of their second request. The three group homes, combined, include 25 affordable housing units. The Charles River Center does not receive state or federal funding for capital improvements, and group homes are not eligible for many of the energy grants available to homeowners. A similar project was completed at a Charles River Center group home on Webster Street, and the savings in energy costs has been about 18%.

### **Article 32: Appropriate for CPA Project – Redevelopment and Expansion of Linden/Chambers & High Rock Properties – Feasibility Design**

This request is for \$50,000. If approved, the Needham Housing Authority would match the funds with an alternate funding source of \$50,000. A conceptual plan and design for the phase redevelopment and expansion of the elderly and family housing would be completed. The Housing Authority property is located on Linden Street, Chambers Street, Murphy Road, Yurick Road, Fairview Road, and Sylvan Road. The 152 units for senior citizens and veterans are primarily 400 square foot studio apartments that are not energy efficient, nor do they meet current ADA and zoning codes. The Housing Authority is proud of the improvements made on 20 of the family housing lots, with the creation of twenty duplexes providing 20 rental units and 20 affordable homes. There are still sixty lots remaining with 50+ year old units.

### **Article 33: Appropriate for CPA Project – Preservation of Historic Documents**

This request is for \$7,500. If appropriated, the Town Manager will have the documents from the 1902 Town Hall time capsule preserved for future generations, and for occasional display purposes. The documents include photos, hand printed documents, maps, ink printed lists, brochures, pamphlets and newspapers. The paper items will be

relaxed, flattened, surfaced cleaned, de-acidified, and placed in Mylar envelopes. The small booklets will be treated, re-assembled and placed in envelopes in booklet form. All items will be scanned for electronic storage and viewing.

**Article 34: Appropriate to Community Preservation Fund**

This article appropriates the estimated FY 2012 CPA receipts.

Administration	\$ 82,000
Annual Reserve	\$1,131,200
Community Housing Reserve	\$ 213,400
Historic Resources Reserve*	\$ 0
Open Space Reserve	\$ 213,400

\* The required annual funding or appropriation for Historic Resources is the \$300,000 payment of the debt service, voted on within Article 25.

**Legislation**

Senate Bill 1841/House Bill 765 is a joint bill that recommends some important changes to the current CPA legislation. Of greatest importance to Needham, and other communities that have little land to purchase with CPA funds, is a revision that would allow CPA funds to be used for recreation projects on existing parks and trails. At this time, the funds may only be used for projects that are proposed for properties originally purchased with CPA funds. The CPC, Park & Recreation Commission and Conservation Commission have all written letters of support for passage. Senator Richard Ross and Representative Denise Garlick are co-signers on the proposed legislation, and Memorial Park Trustee Dave DiCicco spoke on behalf of the change at a recent hearing at the State House.

**Conclusion**

Needham is fortunate to have the use of CPA funds which have funded numerous successful projects for the community. Appreciation is extended to the citizens of Needham and specifically Needham’s Town Meeting members for their support. The Committee looks forward to FY 2012 and new requests and interest from the residents of the community. The CPC expresses their gratitude to “retired” members Paul Siegenthaler, John Comando, Jack Cogswell and Brian Nadler!

Jane Howard, Chairman  
Mark Gluesing, Vice Chairman  
Janet Carter Bernardo  
Carol Boulris

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Reg Foster  
Mike Retzky  
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