

Report of the Community Preservation Committee

March 1, 2008

I. The Community Preservation Process in Wellesley

In 2002, Wellesley accepted the Community Preservation Act (“CPA”) and formed a Community Preservation Committee (“CPC”). Pursuant to the CPA, Wellesley established a surcharge of 1% (with an exemption for the first \$100,000 of residential property valuation) 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 Registry and Land Court recording 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% (the match may soon begin to drop substantially, however, as described later).

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 improvements or 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 Historic 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).

II. Community Preservation Activities to Date

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 Decision Guidelines is appended to this report. To date, four annual rounds of Community Preservation funding recommendations and appropriations have been carried out, and the Committee is now in its fifth annual funding cycle, for fiscal year 2009.

Also appended to this report is a brief summary of each of the projects which the Committee has supported during its first four years of active funding. In reviewing the list of projects undertaken to date, several broad trends and achievements 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 assistance to a broad array of worthy projects 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, citizens groups and nonprofit organizations. This partnering with parties outside of Town government encourages the development of a stronger community consensus about a project's significance.

-- Over the first four years of activity, the Committee has expended roughly one-quarter of total Community Preservation Fund revenues for current projects; the remaining revenues have been "banked" for future uses, either as designated category reserves or as general reserves available for any future Community Preservation use. The challenge each year is to weigh the relative value to the Town of present proposals which require current funding and the potential value of significant future opportunities which may require the expenditure of substantial CPC revenues in order to be realized by the Town.

During this current FY08, the Town estimates that it will raise approximately \$762,000 from the 1% CP surcharge. The most recent State match, which was received last October, was about \$711,000. Taking into account these FY08 revenues and estimated interest accruing on all CP balances through June 30, 2008, and before accounting for any new expenditures which may be approved at the 2008 Annual Town Meeting, the Town will have total Community Preservation Fund balances on June 30, 2008 of approximately \$5,655,000. These balances will be spread among the three required reserves for open space, historic preservation and community housing and the larger undesignated reserve account, and will be available for appropriations for FY09 and for subsequent years to support new Community Preservation proposals.

One development which bears watching is a substantial anticipated drop in the percentage of the State match received in upcoming years, beginning in the fall of 2009. (At present, our understanding is that the match to be received in the fall of 2008 will not see a significant decline.) The statewide Community Preservation Coalition, an umbrella group of local CPCs, has estimated that beginning in the fall of 2009, the State match percentage may drop to 60-70% of the local surcharge amount, and may further drop to 30-40% of the local surcharge for the State match to be received in the fall of 2010 and for subsequent years, unless new funding sources are identified and/or real estate activity again picks up and begins to generate increased recording fee revenue.

III. The FY09 CPC Recommendations

The Committee is recommending that the following **four** projects receive appropriations of Community Preservation Funds, as set forth below:

1. Planning Study for Historic and Cultural Resources Inventory (Historic Resources)

Sponsor: Wellesley Historical Commission

Description of Project: To undertake a planning study of historic and cultural resources in the Town to assess current documentation and plan for future protection.

Recommended Amount: \$10,000

The Wellesley Historical Commission (WHC) has for many years maintained an inventory of historic and cultural resources within the Town. The most recent work on this inventory was over fifteen years ago, and the information base is outdated and incomplete in a number of respects. The Massachusetts Historical Commission, whose policies the WHC is charged with implementing, is encouraging all towns to bring their inventories more current.

The WHC has proposed a project to retain a consultant in order to carry out a pre-survey of the existing inventories of historic and cultural resources and determine what information needs to be added to them. The pre-survey will (1) assess the existing condition of properties already listed, (2) determine the accuracy and completeness of the information in the inventories, and what additional information is required, and (3) identify additional properties of historic or cultural significance that have not been surveyed. The WHC believes this information is essential if the Commission is to proceed to the next stage of creating a strategic preservation plan that will be a resource for itself and other Town boards and agencies.

The CPC recommends an appropriation in the full requested amount of **\$10,000** for the hiring of a consultant to perform this work, to be taken from the Historic Resources Account of the Town's Community Preservation Fund. WHC had originally hoped to cover some of these costs through a State Historical Commission grant, but this did not materialize due to limited State funding. The CPC believes that the objectives of the study are consistent with the goals and recommendations of the 2007 Comprehensive Plan for enhancing our historic and cultural resources, and we commend the WHC for undertaking this effort.

2. Historic Register Plaques (Historic Resources)

Sponsor: Wellesley Historical Commission

Description of Project: To provide designation plaques for two Wellesley buildings recently listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Recommended Amount: \$1200

In 2004, the WHC requested and was granted funds by the CPC to apply for listing on the National Register of Historic Places for two Town structures, the Sprague Clock Tower and the Wellesley Hills Branch Library. That effort culminated in success in June of 2007 when both properties were accepted for listing by the U. S. Department of the Interior. They join only ten other National Register properties located in Wellesley.

All Register properties are typically identified with a standard exterior plaque which reflects the honor of being so designated by the Department of the Interior. In the WHC's original application to CPC for funding, the cost of purchasing and installing these plaques was omitted

from the funding request, and the Commission has now asked for funds sufficient to complete this final step in properly recognizing the historic significance of the two properties.

The CPC is pleased that its original funding for this project has yielded a positive result, and recommends that **\$1200** be appropriated from the Historic Resources Account of the Town's Community Preservation Fund to purchase and install the plaques.

3. Town Records Preservation Project (Historic Resources)

Sponsor: Town Clerk

Description of Project: To restore and preserve vital marriage records for permanent retention by the Town.

Recommended Amount: **\$30,000**

The Town Clerk has been engaged in a multi-year project to scan and make available electronically all birth, death and marriage records of the Town. The original written records are required by State law to be retained, and following scanning they must be de-acidified and placed in Mylar sleeves and binders or acid-free archival boxes to protect them from future deterioration.

To date all birth and death records have been treated and stored, and the costs of this work have been covered through an annual appropriation of Town capital funds. The Town Clerk is now requesting CPC funding for the last phase of the project, which is to treat and properly preserve the Town's marriage records from 1881 to 2000 (since 2000 all new vital records have been created in accordance with modern archival standards). The request is to enable the project to be completed in one year and to free general capital resources for other projects not eligible for CPC funding.

Under an amendment to the CPA enacted in 2006, the preservation of "historic resources" permitted to be funded by the CPC can now include documents, so long as the documents in question have been determined by the Town's Historical Commission to be significant to the history of the Town. The Commission unanimously found that these vital records met this standard and constituted an "historic resource" within the meaning of the CPA.

The CPC recommends that the sum of **\$30,000** be appropriated from the Historic Resources Account of the Community Preservation Fund for this project. These marriage records are mandated by State law to be properly maintained, and the Town Clerk has observed that they are important for family research and as supplementary documentation for social security purposes or driver's licenses. The Town Clerk believes that completing the project in one final phase rather than over several further years will yield a lower overall cost to the Town, and that the requested figure will be sufficient to cover all necessary costs.

4. Sprague Field (Recreation)

Sponsors: School Committee, Sprague Field Task Force

Description of Project: Remediation of solid waste contamination at a portion of the existing Sprague Field complex in order to preserve athletic fields, including installation of replacement natural or synthetic turf fields.

Recommended Amounts: \$1,500,000 for Master Plan/ \$700,000 for Basic Plan

Factual Background. Sprague Field is a public athletic field complex adjacent to Sprague Elementary School and Wellesley Middle School, and is the largest and most heavily used of the Town's playing field resources.

Substantial portions of Sprague Field were originally constructed on top of a covered former Town dump site. The two playing fields lying closest to the Elementary School, known as Fields 1 and 2 and presently used for soccer, lacrosse, and football, are located in an area where the soil cover is the thinnest. Solid objects (glass, metal, etc.) from the dump site have been working their way to the surface of Fields 1 and 2 and the immediately adjacent area (the "Remediation Area") due to the freeze/thaw cycle associated with our local climate. The solid waste contamination poses a present safety risk for all regular users of Fields 1 and 2. Field 1 is no longer used for practices or games on account of the poor condition of its surface, and Field 2 is used for practices but not for games. The Town has been ordered by the Department of Environmental Protection ("DEP") to remedy this condition by June, 2009.

The Sprague Proposal. The School Committee, which has jurisdiction over the Sprague Field, with the assistance of a Sprague Field Task Force representing various Town boards, youth sports organizations and citizens groups, has proposed addressing all necessary remediation work within the Remediation Area as part of a broader Plan for the entire Sprague Field complex (the "Master Plan"). The Master Plan calls for realignment of and improvements to various fields, the construction of a new concessions building and restrooms, and internal roadway/pathway improvements, in addition to the work required in the Remediation Area. The total estimated cost of implementing the full Master Plan is approximately \$3.88 Million, and is proposed to be financed through a combination of (a) general Town funds, (b) private fund-raising, and (c) requested CPC funding of \$1.5 Million for those improvements which are CP-eligible (under the CPA, these are limited to the Remediation Area). To the extent that private donations do not meet ambitious benchmarks by the time of the upcoming Town Meeting, the proponents are prepared to offer variations of the Master Plan which would postpone certain improvements to a later date pending further fund-raising, but under each Master Plan alternative the CPC is requested to contribute \$1.5 Million for the Remediation Area.

Under any of the options in the Master Plan, the entire Remediation Area would be fully excavated and remediated in accordance with all applicable DEP standards. This will entail the screening and removal of hazardous debris and soils, and the installation of an underlying geotextile fabric which would serve as a barrier against further migrating materials. One natural grass field (Field 1, immediately adjacent to the Elementary School) and one synthetic turf field (Field 2), each designed to accommodate soccer, lacrosse and similar sports (Field 2 will also accommodate football), would then be installed as replacement fields for the existing Fields 1 and 2. A new regulation softball field would also be built within the Remediation Area. Both the natural grass and the synthetic turf field designs are approved by DEP as acceptable remediation solutions for the environmental harm occurring in the Remediation Area.

If the overall Master Plan, or a substantial portion of that Plan, is for any reason not ready for presentation to the 2008 Annual Town Meeting, or is not approved by the Town Meeting, the School Committee intends in the alternative to request Town Meeting to appropriate funds for a "Basic Plan" which focuses exclusively on work within the Remediation Area. Under this

alternative, both Fields 1 and 2 would be fully remediated in accordance with DEP standards and the replacement Field 1 and the new softball field would similarly be installed with a natural grass surface, but the replacement surface for Field 2 would be natural grass as well, rather than artificial turf, to achieve cost savings. The total estimated costs of this alternative are approximately \$900,000, of which \$700,000 has been requested to come from CPC funding.

The CPC Decision. The Committee recommends that the following appropriations be made (in the alternative) for the following options to be presented by the proponents of the Sprague Field project:

For the various options under the Master Plan -- **\$1,500,000**, to be appropriated from the Undesignated Reserves Account of the Community Preservation Fund

For the “Basic Plan” option (in lieu of the Master Plan) -- **\$700,000**, to be appropriated from the Undesignated Reserves Account of the Community Preservation Fund

Rationale. When an earlier version of the Sprague Field proposal was brought before the 2007 Annual Town Meeting, our Committee recommended an appropriation in support of that proposal and commented in its Report as follows:

“The Committee concluded that the Sprague fields are significant Town recreational resources used by hundreds of Town families; that the ability to use the fields will soon be lost unless appropriate remediation action is taken; and that the preservation of the Sprague fields is accordingly a matter of importance to the Town which merits a substantial appropriation of Community Preservation funds.”

Although the Sprague proposal, and its price tag, have grown substantially in comparison to last year, a substantial majority of our Committee continues to believe that the CPC portion of the new Master Plan is worthy of strong support, for a number of reasons in addition to those recited last year:

-- The Master Plan as a whole provides an opportunity to reconfigure and improve all of the fields, gain two synthetic turf fields for increased play and new regulation-sized softball and baseball fields, and in general to more fully utilize this most important recreational resource. This takes on particular significance in light of the continuing demand for playing field use throughout the Town.

-- Pursuing opportunities to increase the number of playing fields in the Town is one of the Recreation goals of the Committee’s own Community Preservation Plan. Given the considerable difficulties and costs associated with any acquisition of available vacant land for recreational use, the Master Plan may be the best option to add to high-quality playing field capacity in the foreseeable future.

-- If the Committee funds the full requested sum for the CP-eligible costs associated with the Remediation Area, this will (i) tend to lower the need for general Town funds, at a time of difficult financial constraints, and (ii) tend to increase the availability of both general Town funds and private donations to be applied toward costs of other portions of the full Master Plan.

-- Consistent with our Decision Guidelines, the Master Plan proposal has been developed in an unusually collaborative manner by a wide range of interested boards, groups and individuals, and appears to be directly responsive to each of the major concerns expressed at last year's Town Meeting concerning proposed work at Sprague Field. The Master Plan also meets our guideline of offering substantial funding from sources other than the CPC.

-- Although the appropriation to be recommended is substantially larger than any amount previously proposed by the Committee, we feel that the town-wide importance and broad community support of the Master Plan proposal merits this level of unusual support. We also believe that the amount to be recommended will still leave sufficient fund balances, coupled with future growth from revenue sources, to assist other important projects in coming years.

Note: The Committee's recommendations regarding the Sprague proposal are conditioned upon (i) determining, after review and with the advice and assistance of Town Counsel Al Robinson, that the specific project costs to be covered under the CPC appropriation options are eligible for funding under the CPA, (ii) satisfactory evidence that the private funding component being relied upon to help finance any Master Plan alternative is on hand or firmly committed or otherwise assured at the time of Town Meeting action, and (iii) timely receipt of all necessary State and local approvals for the project, including the approvals of the Zoning Board of Appeals and Design Review Board.

IV. Projects Under Consideration

5. Wellesley Country Club Clubhouse (Historic Resources)

Sponsor: Wellesley Historical Commission

Description of Project: To preserve, for adaptive re-use, elements of Wellesley's original Town Hall

Amount Requested: Still to be determined

The original Clubhouse of the Wellesley Country Club, which is to be demolished or removed from its site as part of the Club's construction of a new clubhouse, encompasses the building where the original vote for Wellesley's independence was taken in 1881. The building also apparently incorporates architecturally significant post-and-beam structural elements which date to the early 19th Century, with some elements dating back into the 18th Century.

The Historical Commission has been making a concerted effort to investigate the possibility of preserving the "historic core" of the Clubhouse, or as many of its structural elements as possible, for an appropriate adaptive reuse at another location. The project would involve the disassembly and storage of at least the most historically significant structural elements of the building at an appropriate interim location, followed by the ultimate re-use of those elements in a new structure at a permanent location within the Town.

The Historical Commission has applied to the CPC for funding assistance to accomplish the disassembly, inventory and moving of the building elements to a storage location, but has not yet made a firm request for an amount due to the need to obtain firm estimates for such work. Following the submission of the project application last fall, an ad hoc working group was

formed, chaired by Greg Mills of the Selectmen, to identify what realistic alternatives might be promptly pursued for retention and re-use of portions of the building. That effort has resulted in a working plan under which the Department of Public Works is considering the possibility of incorporating the historic building elements in a new DPW Administration building, if such a structure is approved and commenced within the next three years. In addition to CPC funding, private donations for the project would also be sought.

In order to assist the CPC in its deliberations on this project, a preservationist has been hired to survey and document those components of the building that are believed to be of historical interest to the Town. This inventory will also be of use to the DPW and other potential users of the building in deciding upon materials worth saving and reusing.

Many details of this project remain to be worked out, including the specific amount of any CPC funding request. The Committee is not taking any action regarding its recommendation for the present, and will await further progress which will hopefully occur during the period prior to Town Meeting.

Respectfully Submitted,

David Dinwoodey, Chair
Kit Bowry
James Conlin

Rose Mary Donahue
Joan Gaughan
Dona Kemp

Jack Morgan, Vice Chair
Helen Robertson
John Schuler

CPC Decision Guidelines

- Preservation of a resource or opportunity that would otherwise be lost
- Involvement of two or more of the purposes designated for funding under the CPA
- Preference for large projects that would have a significant long-term benefit to the community
- Involvement of multiple sources of funding, including leveraging other public and/or private funds
- Creation of incentives for other public and/or private projects and/or collaborations to occur
- Demonstration that the proposal is feasible and the most reasonable plan to implement the project
- Provision for cost/funding that is compatible with the Town's long-range financial plan
- Provision for a dedicated source of funding (other than CPA) for ongoing maintenance, if applicable
- Consistency with Town-wide planning efforts/reports that have received broad-based scrutiny and input
- Consideration of recent Town meeting actions, supported by other Town boards and/or by the community
- Compliance with the current or proposed Wellesley zoning by-laws and/or the laws of the Commonwealth

**COMMUNITY PRESERVATION COMMITTEE
SUMMARY OF PROJECTS
FY05 - 08**

Project	Proposer/ Participant	Historic Preservation	Community Housing	Open Space	Recreation
<u>FY05 APPROVED</u>					
Farms Station Preservation	Historical Commission	\$107,500			
Clock Tower Lighting	Rotary Club	\$10,000			
National Historic Registry (Katherine Lee Bates House, Clock Tower)	Historical Commission	\$ 4,500			
4 Marshall Road (Affordable units)	WHDC, Charles River ARC		\$ 80,000 \$ 65,000		
Morses Pond Study (50%)	NRC, Recreation			\$37,500	\$37,500
Warren School Park	NRC, Recreation, DPW, Friends of Warren Park				\$49,000
		<u>\$122,000</u>	<u>\$145,000</u>	<u>\$37,500</u>	<u>\$86,500</u>
<u>FY06 APPROVED</u>					
Dadmun – McNamara House	Wellesley Hist. Society	\$ 32,694			
National Historic Registry (Fuller Brook Park, Hills Branch Library)	Historical Commission	\$ 7,450			
Open Grant to WHDC	WHDC		\$450,000		
Clock Tower Park	DPW, NRC, Hills Garden Club			\$51,110	
WCC Sanctuary Signage	Wellesley Cons. Council			\$ 4,400	
		<u>\$ 40,144</u>	<u>\$450,000</u>	<u>\$55,510</u>	<u>- 0 -</u>

**COMMUNITY PRESERVATION COMMITTEE
SUMMARY OF PROJECTS
FY05 - 08**

Project	Proposer/ Participant	Historic Preservation	Community Housing	Open Space	Recreation
<u>FY07 APPROVED</u>					
Weed Harvester - Morses Pond	NRC, DPW, Recreation			\$125,000	\$125,000
Boulevard Road Two-family House	WHDC		\$125,000		
Affordable Housing Monitoring System	WHDC		\$ 10,500		
WHA Housing Financing Study	WHDC, WHA		\$ 25,000		
		<u>- 0 -</u>	<u>\$160,500</u>	<u>\$125,000</u>	<u>\$125,000</u>
<u>FY08 APPROVED</u>					
Phosphorous/Sediment Inactive System – Morses Pond	NRC, Recreation			\$ 76,500	\$ 76,500
TOTAL FY05 through FY08		<u>\$162,144</u>	<u>\$755,500</u>	<u>\$294,510</u>	<u>\$288,000</u>

CP PROJECT TOTALS BY YEAR:

FY 2005	\$391,000
FY 2006	\$545,654
FY 2007	\$410,500
FY 2008	\$153,000

CPC Administrative Funds:

Each year \$50,000 has been appropriated for CPC administrative expenses, as permitted by the CPA. To date, the major expenditure from this fund took place in FY05 when the CPC allocated \$35,000 for the Tailby Lot Study. \$5,250 of administrative expenditures have also been allocated to two additional smaller land use studies. At the end of each fiscal year, any remaining balance of the annual administrative expenses appropriation is returned to the Town's General Fund.