

## **Community Preservation Committee 2013 Annual Report**

The Community Preservation Committee (CPC) is responsible for the administration of the Community Preservation Fund, the selection of projects for recommendation to Town Meeting for funding, and the monitoring of the progress of funded community preservation projects. By statute, Community Preservation Funds may be allocated to those projects which support the acquisition, creation, and preservation of open space, historic resources, community housing, and land for recreational use.

From the first funding round in 2004 through October 2007 the Town benefited from a 100% State match for all locally raised Community Preservation Funds. Caused by a revenue drop in the Massachusetts Community Preservation Trust Fund and an increasing number of cities and towns adopting the Community Preservation Act (CPA, M.G.L. Ch. 44B), the 2008 State match dropped to 67%, 2009 was 35%, 2010 and 2011 the match was 27%. In 2012 the State match was down a little more to 26.83% (\$208,957). For 2013 the Acton received a 52.23% State match or \$424,035, more than double the previous year's match.

At the beginning of 2013, the Community Preservation Fund balance stood at \$1,215,348.44. In addition, there were \$2,077,537.12 in the Open Space Set-Aside Fund and \$528 in a Historic Preservation Set-Aside Fund.

In April, the Annual Town Meeting appropriated \$953,388 from the Community Preservation Fund for eight projects and items, including:

- \$280,000 for new siding at the Acton Housing Authority's Sachem Way property;
- \$100,000 of supplemental funding for the NARA picnic pavilion;
- \$75,000 for the playground and tennis courts at Elm Street;
- \$300,000 transferred to the Open Space Set-Aside Fund bringing the total in that fund to \$2,598,571.87;
- \$48,696 transferred to the Historic Preservation Set-Aside Fund for a total balance in that fund of \$49,224; and
- \$49,629 to cover the Town's direct and administrative costs for the CPA Program.

In June, Special Town Meeting appropriated \$1,060,000 from the Open Space Set-Aside Fund plus \$50,000 from the Community Preservation Fund to acquire for open space +/-20.7 acres at Arlington Street and Newtown Road (Anderson Property).

Following the actions above, the unallocated Community Preservation Fund balance stood at \$211,960.44, the Open Space Set-Aside Fund balance at \$1,538,571.87, and the Historic Preservation Set-Aside Fund balance at \$49,224.00.

Some community preservation projects that were completed during 2013 were:

- The installation of a chair lift at 468 Main St., which house the Veterans' Affairs Officer and Municipal Properties, thus making this building accessible for meetings;
- The restoration of the West Acton Baptist Church Belfry;

- Replacement of the Wildflower Boardwalk at the Acton Arboretum;
- The Acton Housing Authority's Sachem Way community housing project; and
- The purchase of the Anderson Property at Newtown Road and Arlington Street was completed.

In addition, community preservation monies funded ongoing projects and programs such as:

- An Open Space Acquisition and Preservation Fund to assist with appraisal, legal fees, and other cost related to the land acquisition process.
- The Community Housing Program Fund administered primarily by the Acton Community Housing Corporation (ACHC). Among other things, the fund pays for buy-down assistance, closing cost, and down payment assistance to first time income eligible homebuyers of deed restricted affordable community housing units.
- Acton Housing Authority tenant support services.

CPA funding for the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail helped leverage \$1,431,500 in State design funding, which includes the trail in Concord as well as Acton, and an estimated \$11,088,000 in State and Federal construction funding for the trail in Acton.

Construction in Acton is scheduled to begin in 2014. Likewise, the Assabet River Rail Trail project in Acton and Maynard is well on its way; CPA funding had leveraged a \$1,080,000 Federal transportation earmark used for design, and an estimated \$4,714,000 for construction in Acton and Maynard, with construction scheduled to begin in 2015. To date, CPC funds have supported approximately 73 community preservation projects throughout the community.

As of June 30, 2013, the Town had raised \$808,604.27 from the local CPA surcharge for FY2013 (unaudited) and in November received \$424,035.00 in State matching funds (52.23%). Together with \$211,960.44 that remained unallocated at the 2013 Annual Town Meeting and interest earned in FY2013, Acton's total estimated Community Preservation Fund balance at the end of calendar year 2013 is approximately \$1,468,605.88 plus the \$1,538,571.87 in Set-Aside Funds for open space and \$49,224.00 in Historic Preservation Set-Aside funds. In addition, the CPC expects significant turn backs of leftover funds from prior years' CPA funded projects.

Over the summer of 2013 the CPC updated the annual Community Preservation Plan. This process included soliciting comments from community organizations and Town Committees, a public hearing in September to ascertain the needs, possibilities and resources of the Town regarding community preservation, comments and suggestions from Townspeople and representatives of interest groups eligible for CPC funding. The Final 2014 Plan was published in September 2013 and is posted on the Town website. It contains updated guidelines and information for applicants seeking community preservation funds.

In late September the CPC held a workshop for prospective applicants. This session allowed potential applicants to discuss their potential projects, ask questions about the application process, and gain a better sense about what constitutes a strong CPA funding application.

In November, the Committee received seventeen applications for funding in 2014, for a total request of \$3,071,860.00. The CPC is currently reviewing all project proposals and interviewing each applicant. The CPC will then deliberate and decide which projects and at which funding level to recommend to the 2014 Annual Town Meeting. In its deliberations, the CPC will consider available funding, the applicants' proposals, legal opinions, applicant interviews, input from Town Boards, including the Selectmen and Finance Committee, and comments from the general public.

The Community Preservation Committee generally meets every 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Thursday of the month in either the Acton Memorial Library meeting room or room 204 at Town Hall. All CPC meetings are open to the public and the Committee welcomes public participation throughout our annual process. Townspeople may e-mail the Committee at [cpc@acton-ma.gov](mailto:cpc@acton-ma.gov) or contact the Town Planning office at (978) 929-6631 with questions, comments, and feedback. For additional information and to view the current Community Preservation proposals, townspeople may visit the Community Preservation page on the Town website at [www.acton-ma.gov](http://www.acton-ma.gov).

2013 CPC Members:

Roland Bourdon – Planning Board (Chairman)

Peter K. Ashton – At Large (Vice-Chair)

Amy Green – Conservation Commission (Clerk)

Victoria Beyer – Historical Commission

David Clough – Board of Selectmen

Walter Foster – At Large

Ken Sghia-Hughes – Acton Housing Authority

Joe Will – Recreation Commission

Susan Mitchell-Hardt – At large

Two associate member positions are currently vacant

The Planning Department provides Town staff support