Community Preservation Act in Townsend - Pros and Cons - **Question 6** Ballot Vote Nov. 5th













Community Preservation Act Public Meeting - Agenda
Sep. 26, 2024

Sponsored by the Townsend Affordable Housing Trust, the Recreation Commission, and the Conservation Commission

- Overview of Townsend Community Preservation Act ballot question - Bill Rideout (Townsend)
  - Treasurer, Squannacook Greenways and Townsend Historical Society

- Experience with CPA - Alison Tocci (Shirley)
  - Owner, Bull Run Restaurant

- Public Questions and Answers
  - Committee for the Townsend CPA

Community Preservation Act - Elevator Pitch

- It helps preserve what we love about our community – open space and trails, recreation and youth sports, historic preservation, and affordable housing



- It will allow the rail trail to continue over the trestle into West Townsend, allowing us to use MassTrails grants with a **4 to 1 state match**



- It is a surcharge on your property tax, **but**:
  - If you make less than $80K, **you can opt out**
  - If you make less than $100K and are over 60, **you can opt out**
  - Otherwise, its less than a one percent increase, typically $40-$85 per year.



- The state typically matches 15-30%. So far hundreds of millions of dollars in total have gone to CPA towns, and **not one dime to Townsend!!!**

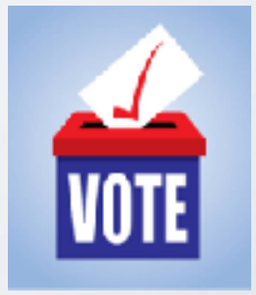


Community Preservation Act - Details

The Community Preservation Act (CPA) is a smart growth tool that helps communities preserve open space and historic sites, create affordable housing, and develop outdoor recreational facilities.

CPA Options	Percentage of property tax: Up to 3%	Low income exemption: Yes, No	First $100,000 of property value excluded: Yes, No
Townsend's selection	1%	Yes	Yes

These options, once passed, **cannot** be increased without another ballot vote



Low income exemption - 2024

- Under 60: $83,384/year
- 60 or over: $104,230/year
- Higher according to number of people in household
- Requires a visit to town assessor's office each year
  - CPA will then add $0 to your tax bill

If you are below these numbers and are burdened by property taxes, you should visit the assessor's office each year to also investigate other tax breaks, not just CPA exemption!



https://www.townsendma.gov/departments/assessing/tax_abatements_exemptions.php

I'm above that income level - what will it cost me?

- $400,000 home: $43/year
- $700,000 home: $86/year

For math nerds/accountants:

CPA yearly tax = (Your home's assessment - $100,000)
* (Tax rate per thousand/1000)
* 0.01

Example with $400,000 home and 2024 rate 14.41/1000:

CPA yearly tax = ($400,000 - $100,000) * (14.41/1000) * 0.01 = $43.23 per year



Resources on www.townsendcpa.org

For the exact numbers, go to https://www.communitypreservation.org/income-limits, and click on the link: **See the CPA low and moderate income guidelines for your community.**

Link to exact income limit for opting out - Updated yearly

Want to calculate your rate if you don't opt out? Fill in your assessed value below:

House price	Tax rate per thousand (Currently 14.41)	CPA cost per year
400000	14.41	43.23

Calculator if you don’t opt out

Demo

What happens if it passes?



- The town appoints a Community Preservation Committee
  - Between 5 and 9 members
  - Required five: Conservation Commission, Planning Board, Historic District Commission, Housing Authority, and Parks and Cemeteries
  - Up to 4 at-large members
- Develop a Community Preservation Plan
- Review and Recommend CPA Projects to town meeting
  - Anyone or any group allowed to submit
- Keep detailed financial records and minutes
- Can spend up to 5% of money on administration

Some more rules on spending CPA money

- 10% of the money raised each year must go to
  - open space and recreation
  - historic preservation
  - affordable housing
- The CPA committee can make the other 70% flexible or allocated to one of the four above.



- Money cannot be spent on on-going operations
- CPA committee and town meeting must <u>both</u> approve all spending
- Any money not spent goes into one of the three buckets or into the flexible bucket to be used in the future.
- No more than 5% on administration costs



CPA as an economic driver in Townsend

- **The 2022 Townsend Master Plan sees the CPA as an economic driver for business growth**

As described in that chapter, Townsend has sites that could draw historical tourism, especially the area around Townsend Harbor and the Reed Homestead. That chapter recommends steps toward preserving and enhancing Townsend's historical appeal, such as passing the Community Preservation Act and creating a Historical Commission.

- The town should enact the Community Preservation Act. The Community Preservation Act (CPA) helps communities preserve open space, historic sites, create affordable housing, and develop outdoor recreational facilities. As such, it could directly help Townsend improve its historical, environmental, and cultural tourism in a cost-effective manner. The CPA is an especially efficient way of achieving these goals, since it leverages state funds that would otherwise be diverted to other municipalities.



Bottom line: How much money will Townsend get?

- Pepperell passed the CPA in 2022 with exactly the same options
- Based on the population ratio, we expect about $190,000 per year based on what they got
- That will vary as the state match varies



Pepperell CPA projects just approved by CPA committee and submitted to town meeting

- **Open Space & Recreation**
  - **Resurfacing and re-line the basketball courts at the Town Field/Community Center - $24K**



- **Historic Preservation**
  - **Refurbish and/or replace historic Lawrence Library portico doors and surrounding moldings - $29K**
  - Repair and/or replace mortar on the historic Lawrence Library outer brickwork walls - $40K



- Community Housing
  - Affordable Housing Trust for community housing purposes - $50K

- Administrative expenses - $2.5K

Recent CPA projects in neighboring towns

What are example projects that other towns funded?

- A new playground and recreation space on land owned by the Town of Dunstable abutting the Swallow Union School that supports multiple active and passive recreational uses to serve a significant number of residents.
- Purchase of the Ferrari Farm in Dunstable, a "keystone" parcel containing five existing protected areas with a historic house and barn.
- Creation of a swimming and boating areas on Sargisson Beach in Groton complete with new docks .
- Restoration of historically significant wooded structures on the grounds of the Groton Cemetery.
- Design, acquisition, and installation of playground equipment, adult exercise stations and dog park in Tyngsborough.
- Creation of four affordable housing units in Tyngsborough.
- Preservation of Lake Masspoag in Groton, Dunstable, and Tyngsborough through removal of invasive weed species.
- Rehabilitation of the well and irrigation system at Later Field in Dunstable. The complex has areas for baseball, softball, volleyball, and soccer. It contains a 1/2 mile walking path, a basket-ball court, and a playground.

State wide listing:

https://www.communitypreservation.org/databank/projectsdatabase/



Ferrari Farm - Dunstable



Groton Cemetery



Sargisson Beach - Groton



Tyngsborough affordable housing

Finally, the good part - what are concrete examples that can be done in Townsend with that money?

Recreation - extend the rail trail into West Townsend

Major funding source:

MassTrails - requires 20% match

One dollar of CPA paid by Townsend would be multiplied by about 20% CPA match, then by 4x by MassTrails grant - Almost 5 dollars of construction for one dollar in!





Finally, the good part - what are concrete examples that can be done in Townsend with that money?

- **Historic preservation: What is presently eligible?**
  - **Buildings within a historic district**
  - If listed on the State Register of Historic Places
  - If determined by the local Historic Commission to be significant in the history, archeology, architecture, or culture of the city or town - we would need to expand Historic District Commission



Finally, the good part - what are concrete examples that can be done in Townsend with that money?

Repurposing of the Hart Library - possibly Arts & Culture Center





CPA would open up the possibility of historic restoration grant, almost all of which require a match

Finally, the good part - what are concrete examples that can be done in Townsend with that money?

Creation of a community garden



Cost would be well within the range of a CPA grant

Finally, the good part - what are concrete examples that can be done in Townsend with that money?

Upgrades to youth sports fields





TAYSA is planning a snack shack, additional fields, increased parking, and improved lightning

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Restoration of the monochrome Rufus Porter mural in Reed Homestead Parlor





Finally, the good part - what are concrete examples that can be done in Townsend with that money?

Habitat for Humanity and CPA: Successful Housing Partnerships



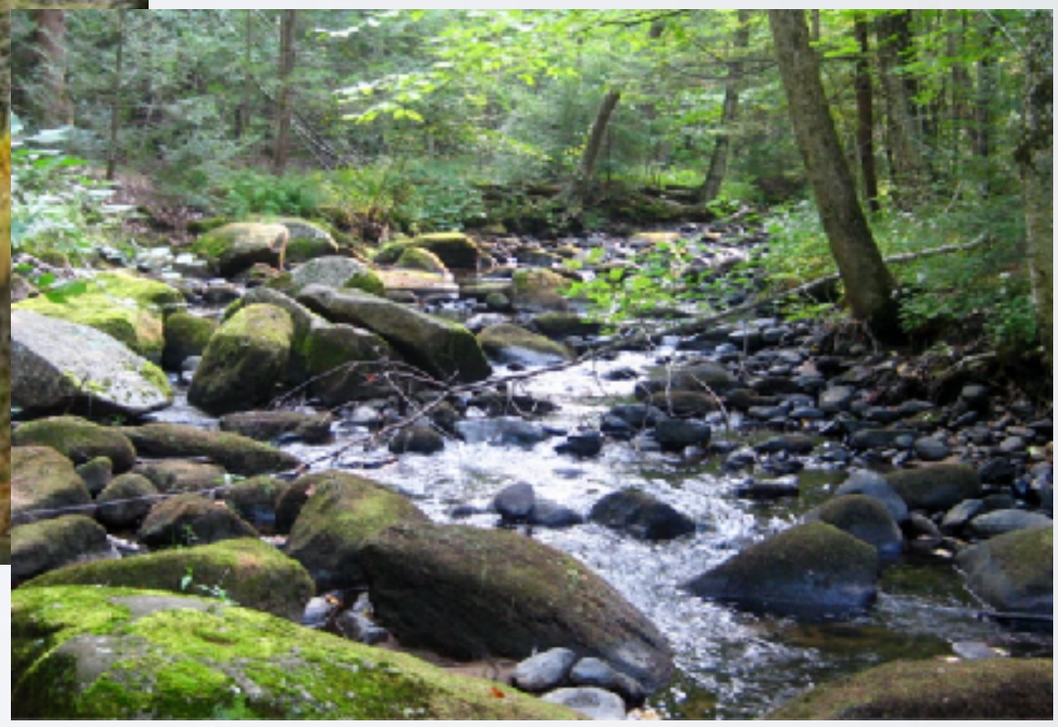
Examples: West Tisbury, Northborough, Barnstable

Finally, the good part - what are concrete examples that can be done in Townsend with that money?

Purchasing conservation land

Conservation Commission, NCLT, etc





Many land purchase grants require a match

Finally, the good part - what are concrete examples that can be done in Townsend with that money?

Old Harbor Village – a destination in Townsend Harbor



CPA could support long-term building repair needs

SUMMARY

- Thank you for learning the details of the Community Preservation Act in Townsend!
- Our goal is to make sure every voter learns the pros and cons and votes based on that knowledge
- Want to support us?
  - Talk to your friends and neighbors
  - Encourage people to go to townsendcpa.org
  - Pick up a yard sign here
  - Post thoughtful and respectful comments on social media
- No matter your decision, **vote November 5th!**











Townsend CPA is Question 6

YES ON #6

COMMUNITY PRESERVATION ACT

www.townsendcpa.org