

Community Preservation Committee Overview

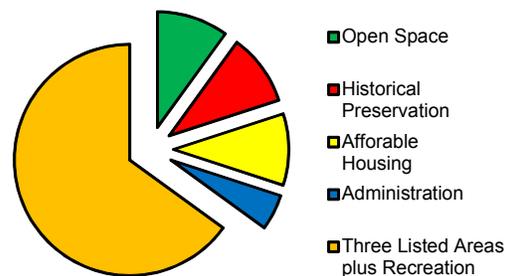
The Community Preservation Act (the CPA, MGL: 44B) allows any city or town in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts to adopt up to a 3% property surcharge with revenues from this surcharge devoted to open space, historic preservation, affordable housing, and recreation. In addition to the revenue generated from the surcharge, the state provides a match, of up to 100% of the prior year surcharge, funded by fees charged by the Registry of Deeds. Together the surcharge and state match make up the Community Preservation Fund for a Town.

The Town of Grafton adopted the CPA in May of 2001. Residents are assessed a 1½% surcharge on their property tax. The surcharge went into effect on July 1, 2002.

According to the terms of the CPA and a bylaw adopted at Grafton's 2001 Semi-Annual Town meeting, a Community Preservation Committee (CPC) was formed. The Committee consists of one representative each from the Town's Conservation Commission, Historical Commission, Housing Authority, Planning Board, and Recreation Commission, and four at-large members appointed by the Board of Selectmen. The committee meets monthly on the fourth Thursday at 7:00 PM.

Community Preservation Funds can only be spent on projects pertaining to: open space, historic preservation, affordable housing, and recreation. At the Fall Town Meeting 10% of the revenues received in the prior fiscal year must be reserved for each of the following areas: open space, historic preservation, and affordable housing. The remaining 70% of the funds can be spent in any of the four areas; however, CPA funds cannot be spent on maintenance or used to supplant funds already earmarked by the Town for existing community preservation projects. Up to 5% of annual revenues can be reserved for operating expenses of the CPC. Funds in this category and any granted funds that are not used return to the general Community Preservation Fund at year end.

How CPA Funds Can Be Spent



Potential projects are brought before the CPC at its monthly meetings. These projects must have a sponsor and meet the criteria as defined in the CPA legislation and implementing guidelines (IGR- 20-02). In addition, the projects are evaluated using the selection criteria as established in the Selection Criteria Guidelines created by the CPC.

If the CPC determines by majority vote that a project meets the CPA criteria and guidelines and there is sufficient funding for the project, the CPC will bring a grant proposal to Town Meeting for approval. There the grant can be passed or voted down as written; amendments on the floor are not allowed. It is the responsibility of the project sponsor to advocate for the merits of the grant proposal at Town Meeting. Similarly, if passed, it is the responsibility of the project sponsor to manage the project and ensure its completion within two years. All grants approved at Town Meeting come from CPA Funds and do not affect the current or future tax rates.

For more detailed information about the CPC, please visit the town website (<http://www.grafton-ma.gov>) and the Community Preservation Committee page under Town Government.