

The Community Preservation Act (CPA) is a law which allows communities to create a local Community Preservation Fund for historic preservation, open space protection (including outdoor recreation), and affordable housing. So far it has been adopted by 148 communities including Royalston, Templeton and Phillipston.

Community preservation money is raised locally through a surcharge of between 1% and 3% on the real estate tax. Many communities exempt the first \$100,000 valuation from the surcharge. Homes of low and moderate income citizens can also be exempted. The state also contributes money raised from fees collected by the registries of deeds.

The town meeting has to vote on all expenditures. It has great discretion as to how to spend the money though 10% of the money is reserved for each of the 3 categories. Money that isn't spent in one year is invested for use in later years. CPA money cannot be used for ordinary maintenance.

Possible projects for Winchendon might be accessibility for Beals Memorial Library, improvements to the Old Murdock Senior Center, a skateboard park, improvements to the "soccer" field at the Millers Run development, and a park on the shores of Whitney Pond. Many other projects are possible.

There is some interest in adopting the program in Winchendon. The first

step is for a group to organize to bring the idea before town meeting.

. If it approved there, the plan goes for a referendum at the next town election .

To get started the Historic Commission and the Planning Board have arranged for a public meeting of everyone interested in the CPA proposal to be held on Tuesday, July 16 at 7 PM. in the town hall auditorium. We expect to have more information about the program and why it will be good for Winchendon. Hopefully a number of people will then step forward to help make CPA a reality in Winchendon.