

## *COMMUNITY PRESERVATION ACT FACT SHEET*

### *Updated September 2020*

- Stow was the **8th town to adopt the CPA** in May 2001. **More than 177 communities are participating statewide.**
- Stow's Community Preservation Committee has **9 members** that represent the following: Open Space Committee, Historic Commission, Housing Authority, Recreation Commission, Finance Committee, Planning Board, Board of Assessors, Council on Aging, and Conservation Commission.
- The **3% surcharge** on an average Stow house is \$245 per year.
- There are **two exemptions to the surcharge**: 1) the first \$100k of a property's value 2) seniors with low income
- Towns that adopt a 3% surcharge are eligible for **multiple rounds of state matching funds**. Stow has received over **\$4.5 million in state matching funds to date.**
- CPA funds can be used to **leverage funds and grants**, such as State and Federal funds for open space and affordable housing.
- **Some recent Stow CPA projects**
  - Pine Bluff Recreation Area Improvements
  - Removal of invasive vegetation at Lake Boon and Captain Sargent conservation area
  - Agricultural Preservation Restriction on 19.65 acres of land on Boon Road
  - Conservation Restriction on small farm and Carver Hill Orchards
  - Pilot Grove Phase 2 affordable housing project
  - Plantation Phase 2 senior housing project
  - Restoration of Historic Cemetery walls and Gravestones at three Town cemeteries
  - Randall Library Historic Preservation
  - Historic Property Inventory
  - Development of the Town Center Park
  - Purchase of the Kunelius Property for affordable housing and open space/conservation
- To date **Town Meeting has appropriated** \$6.4 million to Open Space and Recreation projects, \$3.4 million to Affordable Housing projects and \$1.3 million to Historic Preservation projects.

For **more information** please visit the CPC pages at [www.stow-ma.gov](http://www.stow-ma.gov) or contact our CPC Administrator, Krista Bracci at [communitypreservation@stow-ma.gov](mailto:communitypreservation@stow-ma.gov).

## **Community Preservation Act Background Information**

### **I. General Overview**

The Community Preservation Act (CPA) was passed in 1983 and allows participating cities and towns to adopt a real estate tax surcharge up to 3% in order to fund three key community needs: open space and recreation, historic preservation and affordable housing.

### **II. Expenditure Conditions**

The CPA requires that communities spend, or set aside for future spending, a minimum of 10% of each year's CPA receipts on: open space, historic preservation, and affordable housing. The remaining 70% of funds may be allocated to any one or a combination of the three main uses recommended by the Stow Community Preservation Committee and subject to the approval of Town Meeting.

- **Administrative Costs.** Up to 5% of the annual CPA funds may be spent on the operation and administration costs of the Community Preservation Committee. This includes administrative staff, supplies and consulting costs. In addition, the Committee may use its allowance for legal fees, or technical reviews for its decision-making purposes. Any unspent funds are returned at the end of the budget year to the CPA unreserved fund.
- **Incidental Project Costs.** CPA funds may be used for site surveys, environmental assessments, historic or housing consultants, architectural and engineering fees, permit processing fees, construction consultants, financing consultants, legal and accounting fees, and similar costs associated with and incidental to the development of a CPA project.
- **Multiple Purpose Projects.** Stow Community Preservation Committee encourages the creative combination of allowable uses in their expenditure of CPA funds. For example, a large tract of land can be acquired for open space protection while reserving part of the parcel for the development of community housing. Another example is adaptive re-use of an historic structure to convert a building to a residential or non-residential CPA related use.

**No Maintenance.** CPA funds cannot be used for routine maintenance of existing facilities. For example, communities cannot use CPA funds to maintain a municipal park (such as mowing the lawn, emptying trash barrels or dumpsters, etc.) or to maintain a historic town hall (cleaning the common areas or paying for utilities, etc).

More information can be found at the Community Preservation Coalition website:

[www.communitypreservation.org](http://www.communitypreservation.org)