

# Wrentham Community Preservation Committee

## Special Town Meeting - November 2023

The Wrentham Community Preservation Committee (WCPC) is happy to present the following projects for consideration and vote at the Special Town Meeting. The projects coming to the Special Town Meeting have applied for funds, often on the recommendation of another committee in town, and the WCPC has approved their projects for consideration at Town Meeting. The final approval for any funding is as a result of voter approval at Town Meeting.

- Wrentham Community Preservation Committee

Scott Manchuso, Chair

Mark Cuddy, Vice Chair

Jane D'Amico

Leo Immonen

Bill Harrington

Robin McDonald

Alan Richard

Kim Shipala

Chuck Woodhams

## Background

Wrentham voted in a Community Preservation Surcharge of 1% (of total property tax bill) after an exclusion of the first \$100,000 of a property's value.

The State of Massachusetts gives a partial match to the Town each November based on the previous fiscal year's CPA funds receipts. To date, the state has transferred just over \$437,000 to the town via this system, and in addition, it is estimated to deliver approximately \$60,000 in funds this November. To date, the State has matched our funds at a rate of about 30%.

### “Can we use CPA funds for...?”

Community Preservation Act funds are legally restricted to be spent in three areas:

- 1) Recreation and Open Space
- 2) Historical Preservation
- 3) Community Housing

Further, there are guidelines and restrictions on how the monies can be spent in these areas. The Wrentham Community Preservation Committee has reviewed these projects and have determined that they meet the State guidelines for funding and are expected to benefit the community. Projects can only be funded by a majority vote by townspeople (four projects up for consideration tonight) and by 2/3rds vote if the project is to be bonded (no projects fit this case tonight).

***There are a LOT of expenditures that CPA funds CANNOT be used for; examples include: to pave a street; fix potholes; build sidewalks; hire teachers; firefighters or police officers; or supplemental funds to build school classroom buildings. Regular town funding needs to address these areas, not CPA funds.***

# Projects for Consideration by Wrentham

The Wrentham Community Preservation Committee (WCPC) recommends that voters vote Yes on all projects.

## **Conservation and Recreation Land Acquisition Fund Establishment - \$200,000**

Consistently, residents talk about preserving the rural character of town, including the open spaces. The town has right of first refusal on many undeveloped properties, while others can be considered ready to market properties. The window of time to purchase is typically small, and normally, the Town needs to be nimble in order to perform the appraisal duties, then go to Town Meeting to seek the funding to buy the property, which is all time consuming. In 2022, residents voted to establish this fund, and fund it with \$200,000. Tonight, residents will vote to grow this fund.

How will this fund work? The Community Preservation Committee structured this fund so that money is controlled by a Select Board vote, and must be approved to release the funds to the Conservation Committee to execute the purchase process. Mass State Law allows the Conservation Committee to acquire land if it has funds available without going to Town Meeting, meaning that the Town can be more nimble. The land may be acquired for the purposes of conservation, passive recreation and/or active recreation.

## **Old Fiske Museum Archivist Part Time - for the Historical Commission - \$27,600**

This continues a project that was started with CPA funds two years ago. So far, the archivist has helped implement a new computer system, and cataloged a significant number of the assets owned by the town/Fiske Museum. This grant seeks to continue the work. This funds a part time archivist as well as archival supplies to help preserve a large portion of our collection in possession of the Historical Commission. An archivist would be brought in and would work to catalog, and preserve the significant artifacts in our collection. This work would also help surface, preserve and share interesting artifacts owned by the Town.

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### **Important note regarding the Mirror Lake and Lake Archer Projects**

The WCPC has recommended to the Select Board and Town Administrator that as part of putting the next two projects forward, the Town considers forming a committee and appointing a Lakes Coordinator. This committee and coordinator will be responsible for coordinating care and treatment of Lake Archer, Lake Pearl and Mirror Lake to make sure that the approaches are strategically the best we can do, and that our expenditures are an efficient use of money.

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## **Friends of Mirror Lake - Mirror Lake Preservation - \$38,000**

This is a continuation of the project that the town approved 2 years ago. Mitigation is going well, and there is more work to do. Past work found that runoff from local roadways are feeding weed growth in the lake. Some of the funds will be used to trap nutrient runoff before it enters the lake. Further, this will help

continue to mitigate weeds with minimal herbicide use (2 years of mitigation planned), with an eye to some new species that are becoming an issue after the first phase successes.

**Lake Archer Association - Lake Archer Preservation - \$40,000**

This continues the preservation of Lake Archer, using the CPA funding that the town previously approved. The Lake Archer Association has been using Diver Assisted Suction Harvesting (Dash) for the removal of non native invasive weeds. This method minimizes the impact on native plant growth, specifically the Robbins Pondweed, which is helping to limit the growth of the non-native, invasive weeds. This has been successful at mitigating large swaths of invasive weeds, but has not completely eradicated those weeds.

Suction harvesting will continue, and a new selective herbicidal treatment will be experimented with due to the discovery of a new high spreading species (Milfoil) that urgently needs to be contained. This new herbicide is said to be effective on Milfoil, while not damaging native species. The experimentation would happen in 2024, with results known in the 2025 timeframe, latest.

This will fund treatment and preservation efforts for two years.