



Natick
Community
Preservation
Alliance

Good for Natick NEWS

March 2006

Why Support the Community Preservation Act?

Look around us. Natick is changing. New development threatens to overwhelm our community, putting pressure on schools, roads, public safety, the water supply, open space, and town budgets. At the same time, town finances are stretched. We will struggle in the coming years to properly fund schools, police, fire, public works, senior services, and other essential services – let alone programs to keep Natick affordable, protect our vanishing open space, and preserve the parks and historic landmarks that make Natick special.

Increased development + tightening town budgets directly threaten Natick's quality of life. The time to act is NOW.

The Community Preservation Act will help us solve these problems.

The CPA will:

- Help us pay for projects we already need, like the pier at Dug Pond, courts and rink at the Johnson School, and repairs to the South Natick bridge
- Save us money on these projects: CPA funds are matched by the state, and can be leveraged for grants to double or even triple our investment
- Provide local control, oversight, and accountability: the CPA encourages good planning and makes sure our dollars are spent wisely
- Provide protection to Natick taxpayers who need it: low-income families and low- and moderate-income seniors are exempt from the CPA

How Will the Community Preservation Act Work in Natick?

On March 28, Natick's voters will decide whether to adopt the CPA in Natick.

Question 1 in Natick proposes:

- A surcharge of 1%
- Exemptions for low-income families, low- and moderate-income seniors
- Exemption for the first \$100,000 of assessed residential property value

In the first year, Natick could raise approximately \$460,000 from the CPA.

With the state match at 100%, that would bring in \$920,000 for Natick projects.

The average Natick homeowner will pay approximately \$35 annually.

What is the Community Preservation Act?

Established by the Massachusetts Legislature in 2000, the Community Preservation Act is a way for cities and towns to counter the effects of unchecked development. The CPA lets communities vote to apply a property tax surcharge of 1/2% to 3%, with funds dedicated to the preservation of open space, historic restoration, community housing, and parks and recreation.

Funds are matched by the state through a statewide surcharge on real estate transactions. There is about \$130 million in the fund today. Currently the state provides a 100% match, but that percentage may decrease in the next few years as more communities adopt the CPA. So far, 103 cities and towns have voted to join in.

Decisions about how to spend CPA funds are made locally by a five- to nine-member Community Preservation Committee, which holds public meetings, evaluates proposals, and forwards recommendations to Town Meeting, who has the final say.

“*There is strong support in the legislature for retaining the CPA in its current form. If Natick rejects the CPA, it is leaving money on the table.*”

State Representative
Alice Peisch

Let's protect our heritage, meet today's challenges, and preserve Natick's future. The CPA is responsible, far-sighted, and fair. On March 28, Vote YES on Question 1!

We Should Decide About Natick's Housing and Heritage!

Community Housing: To Keep Families in Town

Natick is in danger of becoming yet another Massachusetts town where housing is affordable only to those with the highest incomes -- a town that increasingly excludes young families, the elderly, and municipal employees such as teachers, police officers, and firefighters.

Today, we have little or no control over housing developments in Natick, and we are paying a price! Pending proposals would add over 400 40B units off Rockland and South Main streets. The CPA is a valuable tool to counter projects that threaten to alter the character of the town and overburden municipal services. Other towns that have passed the CPA have found that it gives them leverage to negotiate the location and nature of proposed housing development.

How Other Towns Have Used CPA Funds to Create Community Housing:

- **The Newton Homebuyer Assistance Program** (\$500,000): Down payment assistance grants to city workers, families with Newton school students, recent Newton HS grads, and new homebuyers with incomes at or under 80% of the area median income.
- **Sudbury** (\$320,000): To build 7 homes with 16 affordable rental units through Sudbury Housing Authority.

Consider the Possibilities for Natick!

- Deed restrictions on existing homes to allow senior citizens to continue to live in their homes
- Loan and grant programs to help young families and town employees become first-time homeowners
- Encourage private developers to invest in the development of appropriate mixed-income community housing

Historic Restoration: To Preserve Our Heritage

From the Praying Indians of John Eliot's day, to the role of Natick citizens in the Revolution, to the conflicts of the 20th Century, there are lessons to be learned from Natick's rich historical past. But this shared heritage is at risk. Only 300 historically significant properties have been registered, with hundreds more remaining unexamined and unprotected, subject to virtually instant demolition at the hands of an owner unconscious of their significance or a developer concerned only with profit. There is also simply no money to repair our Colonial-era graveyards or the Civil War monument on the Natick Common. Not only is this a sorrowful dishonor to our veterans, but failing to protect these memorials weakens the bonds of our community.

How Other Towns Have Used CPA Funds to Preserve Their History:

- **Chelmsford** (\$50,000): To the Garrison House Foundation to restore the Hill Jock House, built in 1756
- **Scituate** (\$40,000): To survey 13 historic burial sites and prepare a preservation plan for each.

Consider the Possibilities for Natick!

- **Johnson School** (\$80,000): Replacement of exterior windows
- **Eliot Bridge** (\$400,000): Re-engineer the roadway and surrounding area and rebuild the bridge itself

“We need to act quickly to appreciate Natick's past, the sacrifices made by its soldiers, workers, and average citizens, before our memory of these slips away entirely.”

Steve Evers

Life-long Resident of Natick, Practicing Architect
Chairman of the Natick Historical Commission

The CPA Makes Our Tax Dollars Go Farther and Work Harder. Now *That's* Responsible!

You've probably heard that Natick has an extensive list of capital improvements, from the High School to a Senior/Community Center to road repairs, as well as a budget crunch. You may have heard about one or more future overrides. Those are reasons to support the CPA, because the community investments we should make using the CPA won't have to compete with our other priorities. A low 1% CPA surcharge was recommended because we have these other needs, and because we can leverage our local CPA funds to make our money work hard for us. Our housing, parks and heritage are complementary, not competitive with schools, safety and town services.

“As a Chief Administrative Officer in Newton, I have seen how effective the CPA can be in helping a city or town finance much-needed projects. And as a long-time Natick resident, I urge you to go to the polls on Tuesday, March 28th and vote for the CPA. I know we will be better off for it.”

Mike Rourke

Former Natick Deputy Town Administrator
Recently Retired Chief Administrative Officer,
Newton

The CPA Helps Us Protect Natick's Great Outdoors, Economically!

Recreation: For a Strong, Healthy Community

CPA funds may be used to acquire, create, and preserve land for active and passive recreational use. In Natick, we could expand and upgrade playing fields, construct trails, and improve parks and playgrounds. Many playing fields suffer from overuse, and both turf and playing surfaces degrade at an alarming rate, increasing maintenance costs. Adding fields lets us rotate use and preserve these assets.

The time has come for us to step forward as generations of Natick citizens have done before us; to invest in new resources to further enhance community development for our children and their children; to preserve the quality of life and community character that truly makes Natick the "Home of Champions."

How Other Towns Have Used CPA Funds for Parks and Recreation Facilities:

- **Cohasset** (\$26,000): For a feasibility study of a pedestrian and bike trail along the Cohasset stretch of the Greenbush rail corridor
- **Norwell** (\$37,500): To preserve a deteriorating playground off of River Street

Consider the Possibilities for Natick!

- **Memorial School** (\$125,000): replace 30-year old lighting system on the softball field
- **Natick High School** (\$60,000): resurface, reseal, and restripe the high school track, and replace fields used to site a new High School
- **Contribute** needed funding to convert the Oak Street gravel pit to playing fields and recreation

Open Space: To Protect the Environment

Natick is blessed with scenic roadways, forests, lakes and waterfront areas. Encroaching development threatens the balance between development and natural spaces that is integral to Natick's character. A great deal of these areas are unprotected and are vulnerable to development for residential or commercial use. Additionally, protecting natural areas will preserve our water quality. While the Open Space fund is receiving a one-time infusion from the Natick Mall expansion, this fund could quickly be depleted by the purchase of a single major parcel of land.

How Other Towns Have Used CPA Funds to Protect Natural Areas:

- **Scituate** (\$150,000): Purchased the 10-acre Appleton Field, abutting the South Swamp.
- **Stockbridge** (\$30,000): Purchased a conservation restriction on 11 acres of wetlands

Consider the Possibilities for Natick!

- **Cochituate Rail Trail**: acquire right of way, design and build a linear greenway from Natick Center to the Natick Mall and the State Park
- **Lease** 3.5 acres of National Guard land adjacent to the J.J. Lane Park on Speen Street; expand and enhance facilities at this neighborhood park and playground

“I urge all of Natick’s voters to support the CPA when they go to the polls on March 28th.”

Rudman Ham
 Founding Member,
 Natick Community Organic Farm

FACT vs. FICTION Natick Voters Need Accurate Information on The CPA

FICTION	FACT
“The CPA is just another tax, and an unnecessary burden on taxpayers struggling with taxes and fees.”	The CPA is less than 1/3 the average annual tax increase, and unlike other taxes it is proven to bring in outside funding. Many taxpayers are exempt.
“Other capital projects are higher priority. Now is not the right time for the CPA.”	The CPA is a way to help pay for many of these capital projects with the benefit of outside funding.
“The state match may go away, or the state may raid the CPA fund.”	The State match may be reduced in a few years. By acting now, we get a 100% match for a longer time. The CPA fund has never been raided.
“CPA funds can’t be used for maintenance of facilities, and will increase the town’s overall operating expenses.”	Many CPA projects can pay for improvements that will reduce operating costs. The CPA has checks and balances plus local oversight.
“These projects should be budgeted through regular town processes and departments”	The regular budget is never adequate for housing, history, open space and recreation. Matching CPA funds make these projects affordable.

On March 28, Vote YES on Question 1! Get the Facts at www.natickcpa.org

Increased Development + Budget pressure

= Threat to Natick's Quality of Life!

What can you do?

Read this newsletter to learn what you can do to keep Natick affordable, healthy, and on the right track!
On March 28th Natick will vote on the Community Preservation Act.

Learn How the CPA Helps Natick...

- Pay for projects we already need
- Offers local control and accountability
- Leverages outside funds — stretches our tax dollars
- Provides protection for seniors and low-income taxpayers

Vote YES on March 28!

“We need to hold on to what we've got before we lose it all. The CPA can help.”

Larry Forstner,
Licensed Electrician and Community
Association Leader



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Reasons to Vote YES on the Community Preservation Act on March 28th!

The CPA makes economic sense for Natick...

- Helps pay for projects that benefit Natick — that we already need to do!
- Offers local control, local accountability and local oversight — we decide!
- Helps leverage matching funds from state and other sources — get more for your money!
- Offers protection for seniors and low-income taxpayers — the CPA is affordable and fair!

The CPA helps preserve Natick's character...

- Create housing that long-time residents can afford
- Save natural areas that protect our water resources and quality of life
- Preserve Natick's rich history
- Improve our recreational facilities

“The Community Preservation Act deserves our support on election day.”

Rabbi Harold Kushner,
Noted Author and Retired Religious Leader

Do we have other priorities that complement the CPA? **YES!**

Does the CPA make economic sense? **YES!**

Does the CPA preserve and protect our community? **YES!**

CPA: Good for Natick! Vote Yes on #1