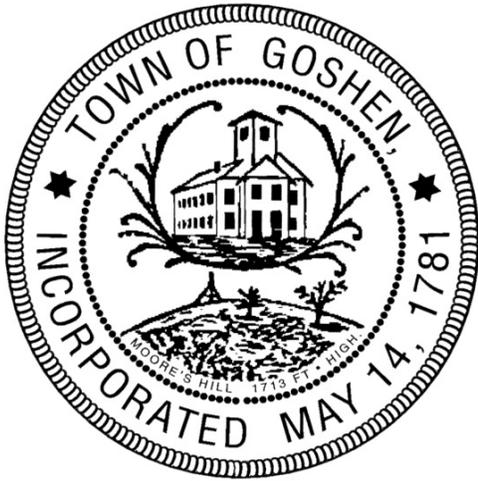


Town of Goshen Community Preservation Plan



OVERVIEW

The Goshen Community Preservation Committee (CPC) is pleased to present the 2013 version of the Goshen Community Preservation Plan (the Plan). The Plan update, which is reviewed and revised periodically, reflects amendments to the Community Preservation Act (CPA) enabling legislation that was passed in July, 2012. This version replaces the previous plan created in July, 2009.

The Plan describes the process for administering the CPA, presents an introduction to the CPA, information about the CPA program areas, and details information about the project application and review process.

This document serves many purposes. First, it functions as an informational document for the citizens of Goshen. Secondly, it establishes guidelines and provides instructions for applicants seeking project funding through the CPA. Lastly, these pages deliver guidance for current and future CPC's when making recommendations to Town Meeting for project funding.

INTRODUCTION

The Plan introduces the reader to the Massachusetts Community Preservation Act and describes the process for administering the act in the Town of Goshen. This is a fluid document that may be modified by future committees in response to changing needs, goals and experiences with the CPA over time.

The CPA (M.G.L., Chapter 44B), which became law in September 2000, allows communities to raise monies through a surcharge of up to 3% of the Town's real estate tax levy with the option of excluding certain properties from that surcharge. Communities that adopt the CPA surcharge are eligible to receive up to 100% matching funds from an independent state trust fund which comes from fees imposed on state Registry of Deeds transactions. Currently, these funds are transferred to communities annually and are kept in interest bearing accounts.

The residents of Goshen voted to adopt the CPA in the May 2007 Town Election. That vote exempted from the surcharge "*property owned and occupied as a domicile by a person who would qualify for low-income housing or low or moderate income senior housing in the town.*" The CPA regulations require a town adopting the CPA to select a CPC of five to nine members and adopt bylaws for that committee. The regulations require that this local committee study and hold at least one public meeting on the "*needs, possibilities and resources*" for community preservation, and to consider proposed projects utilizing the funds raised through the surcharge and the state match ("the CPA funds"). Those applications for proposed uses of the CPA funds that are recommended by the Committee are then presented to Town Meeting for a recorded vote.

The Goshen CPC was established by the town in October, 2007. The bylaws of the Commission were accepted at that time. The CPA specifies five commissions, committees, or areas the CPC members are to represent. In accordance with the CPA, our CPC has seven members appointed by the Select Board with one representative each from the Conservation Commission, Historical Commission, Planning Board, Recreation Commission, Open Space Committee, an affordable housing representative, and a member at large.

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In referring to community preservation, the CPA is referring to *“the acquisition, creation and preservation of open space, the acquisition, rehabilitation, restoration, and preservation of historic resources, and the creation and preservation of community housing.”* The CPA requires that at least 10% of the CPA funds received in each fiscal year be spent or reserved for each of the CPA's three main purposes as they pertain to open space, historic resources, and community housing. CPA funds that are not expended in one year may be “banked” or carried over to subsequent years. However, once CPA funds are banked for a specific purpose, they must ultimately be used for the purpose for which they were banked. From the remaining 70% of the CPA funds available in each fiscal year up to five percent may be used for administrative activities related to the work of the CPC. The remainder are appropriated or banked, according to the Town's discretion, for one or more of four purposes: the three listed above plus active or passive recreational use.

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OPEN SPACE

According to the CPA, funds may be expended for "...the acquisition, creation, and preservation of open space....and for the rehabilitation or restoration of such open space...that is acquired under the CPA."

Open space is defined to include, but is not limited to, the following:

- Agricultural land
- Aquifers, recharge areas and other watershed lands
- Forest lands and fields
- Fresh and salt water marshes and other wetlands
- River, stream, lake and pond frontage
- Scenic vistas
- Land for wildlife habitat, biodiversity or nature preserves

A survey in Goshen's Open Space & Recreation Plan (2012) found that residents cherish the scenic landscape around them and want to maintain the rural character of their community and the quality of life it affords.

Most integral to Goshen's character are the protection and management of forests, protection of water quality, active agriculture and healthy, along with diverse and contiguous wildlife habitats.

Residents also wish to expand on the many forms of outdoor recreation that currently exist in town including trails for hiking, snowmobiling and horseback riding, as well as swimming areas open to the public.

The rural character of Goshen is changing. Housing is being built on areas that were once open or working farms. There is little regulation to prevent loss of open space. As these changes occur, water quality is threatened, as are habitats for native plants and animals, wildlife corridors, scenic vistas, historic areas, and the quality of life for our citizens.

Open Space Goals

- The diversity, continuity and integrity of wildlife habitat and biodiversity are well-established and protected in Goshen.
- Working forests and farms are healthy local resources and a thriving component of Goshen's vibrant rural character.
- Goshen's rivers, lakes, ponds, and aquifers are clean and protected from all sources of pollution.

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Open Space Objectives

- Residents are well-informed about land conservation strategies and resources, including funding and technical assistance, for protecting their land, and able to implement protective measures when opportunities arise.
- Local bylaws and regulations encourage smart growth and the protection of important natural resources.
- A network of trails exists throughout Goshen and connects to the surrounding communities and is accessible to residents.

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HISTORIC PRESERVATION

The CPA states that in addition to other specified purposes CPA funds shall be used for “...*the acquisition, preservation, rehabilitation and restoration of historic resources.*”

The CPA defines an historic resource as a “*building, structure, real property, document or artifact that is listed or eligible for listing on the state register of historic places or has been determined by the local historic preservation commission to be significant in the history, archaeology, architecture or culture of the city or town.*” It defines preservation as “*protection of personal or real property from injury, harm or destruction, but not including maintenance*” and, as it pertains to historic resources, the law defines rehabilitation as “*the remodeling, reconstruction and making of extraordinary repairs to historic resources ... for the purpose of making such historic resources ... functional for their intended use.*”

In allowing CPA funds to be used for the acquisition of an historic resource, where necessary for its preservation, it allows funds to be used for historic preservation of properties owned by the Town and for those owned by private individuals and institutions. If funds are used for the latter, a permanent historic preservation restriction must be granted to the Town.

The historical resources of the town of Goshen take various forms. There are structures that embody the history of the town and its inhabitants in their stones and timbers and location. The cemetery, with stones from 1764 to the present, records the vital records of individuals and families who participated in the creation of this community over the centuries, their relationships, and challenges they faced. The fields, forests, streams, and lakes conjure up the history of the town and are vulnerable to the ravages of development, nature’s wrath and man’s neglect. Documents such as town reports, clerks’ and assessors’ records, cemetery records, public health records, and school and church records document our Goshen history. There are personal diaries and letters that add details and flavor to that history and provide insights into our community over time. Photographs, paintings, maps, and other artifacts present a visual record of the community, showing what once was here. The value of these historical resources is beyond estimate. They simply cannot be replaced once lost.

Historic Preservation Goals & Objectives

- The preservation, restoration, rehabilitation, and enhancement of the significant historical resources of the Town of Goshen.
- Education of citizens regarding the town’s historical resources, their significance, and how they may be preserved, restored, rehabilitated, and enhanced.
- Make these resources more accessible to scholars and to the public.

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COMMUNITY HOUSING

Maintaining a diverse range of adequate and affordable housing opportunities for Goshen residents, especially elderly residents, is an important element in maintaining a healthy and livable community. According to the CPA, the community's CPA funds may be expended for "...the acquisition, creation, preservation, and support of community housing and for the rehabilitation or restoration of such... community housing that is acquired or created" under the Act. Community housing is defined as "low and moderate income housing for individuals and families, including low or moderate income senior housing." Low income housing is defined as "housing for those persons and families whose annual income is less than 80% of the ... median income" for Hampshire County, and moderate income housing as "housing for those persons and families whose annual income is less than 100% of the ... median income" for Hampshire County (the median income is as calculated by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development). Low or moderate senior housing is defined as "housing for those persons having reached the age of 60 or over who would qualify for low or moderate income housing."

Community Housing Goals & Objectives

- Increase the affordable housing options for individuals and families, including low and moderate income senior housing.
- Provide housing that is harmonious in design, scale, setting and materials with the surrounding community.
- Promote long-term sustainability of affordable housing.
- Use existing buildings or construction on previously developed or town-owned sites.
- Use CPA funds to leverage other funding for the development or rehabilitation of affordable rental and owner-occupied housing for local residents

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RECREATION

Funding in this area through the Community Preservation Act is available for the “acquisition, preservation, creation, rehabilitation, and restoration of land for recreational use.” Acquisition is defined as obtaining “*by gift, purchase, devise, rental, rental purchase, lease or otherwise.*” Preservation is defined as “*protection...from injury, harm, or destruction, but not including maintenance.*” Rehabilitation is defined as “*the remodeling, reconstruction and making of extraordinary repairs to recreation resources...for the purpose of making such recreational resources...functional for their intended use*”.

Capital improvements can be funded by CPA monies. Recreational use is to include active or passive recreational use of the land. The uses of the land covered by CPA include, but are not limited to, “*the use of the land for community gardens, trails, and noncommercial youth and adult sports, and the use of the land as a park, playground, or athletic field.*” It cannot be used for “*horse or dog racing or the use of land for a stadium, gymnasium, or similar structure.*”

There is a need in Goshen for the acquisition of open space and the improvement of the town-owned recreational facilities to increase the opportunities for passive and active recreation by residents of the community. This need results in the following goals and objectives for recreational use land:

Recreational Use Land Goals & Objectives

- Preserve, protect, and enhance the recreational resources available to the residents of the town of Goshen.
- Acquire new resources to meet the needs of our town’s present and future generations for passive and active recreation.
- Educate the public about local open space and recreation areas.
- Develop projects and opportunities for strategic alliances among advocates for conservation, open space, recreation, historic preservation and affordable housing in order to maximize the financial benefits to the town from CPA funds, and to enhance project sustainability.

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COMMUNITY PRESERVATION APPLICATION PROCESS

All projects submitted to the CPA will be judged by a pre-established set of State-issued criteria (see Chart 1). Further information on those criteria can be obtained by contacting the CPC, attending a CPC meeting or from the Community Preservation Coalition website (communitypreservation.org).

In order to determine whether a proposed project might be eligible for CPA funding, the CPC has developed a two-step application process:

1. A Community Preservation Eligibility Determination Form is first submitted to the CPC. This is a brief preliminary statement of the proposal.
2. If the project is determined to be eligible, an Application for Community Preservation Act Funding is then submitted.

An applicant may be asked to meet with the CPC regarding the proposal or to submit further information at either stage of the process. If the project is approved, the CPC recommends the project in the form of an article for town meeting. Approval for the use of CPA funds is done at a town meeting.

A copy of the Plan and applications are available at Town Offices, on the Goshen website (www.goshen-ma.us) and from the CPC.

The Goshen CPC meets on the 4th Wednesday of the month at the Goshen Town Offices (40 Main Street). We welcome your questions and feedback.