

Imagine a New Vision for Colrain!

THE COMMUNITY PRESERVATION ACT (CPA)

Join us for an info session on Saturday, March 16th, 2024, at 5pm at the Colrain Elementary School!

The Selectboard has appointed a committee to look into whether adopting the CPA is a good idea for Colrain. This committee has met with many groups in town for feedback and to see what people might be interested in doing if CPA funds were available.

What is CPA?

The Community Preservation Act (CPA) enables Massachusetts towns to create a dedicated funding source for

- recreation projects
- historic preservation
- community housing
- and open space

Possible CPA projects in Colrain:

- Ballfield improvements - batting cage, playground, restrooms
- A swimming area (!) with legal parking
- Improvements to the Library & History of Colrain Museum
- Interest buydown, down-payment assistance; other housing help
- New school playground equipment
- Preserve & repair cemetery headstones, and more -

Towns that adopt the CPA receive matching funding from the Commonwealth's Community Preservation Trust Fund (a dedicated source not dependent on tax revenue) to help fund these projects.

Almost 200 communities in Massachusetts have adopted CPA, including our Franklin County neighbors: Conway, Deerfield, Greenfield, Northfield, Leverett, Shelburne, Shutesbury, Sunderland, and Whately.

Because Colrain has not adopted CPA, we have missed out on opportunities to fund local quality of life projects, and the town has not been receiving these annual CPA distributions from the Commonwealth!

Where Do CPA Funds Come From?

CPA funds are generated through two sources: (1) a surcharge of up to 3 percent on our property tax bills, and (2) Community Preservation Trust Fund distributions from the state.

If Colrain adopts the CPA at the 3% surcharge level, we could very likely receive a 100% match as our rating is the highest available based on our rural nature and demographics. In other words, we could potentially double our money!

How Much Could We Generate and What Would It Cost the Average Homeowner?

If we adopt the CPA surcharge at the 3% level, (including the exemptions discussed below), we'd be able to raise roughly **\$50,000** in local revenue for our local projects. The average property owner would pay **\$68** a year and we could expect a state match approaching 100%, **another \$50,000**, for a total of roughly \$100,000 each year; enough to effect real change.

How Can We Limit the Impact of the Added Tax on Residents?

We propose exempting the first \$100,000 of residential/commercial property value from the surcharge for everyone, and to **fully exempt low income residents and low and moderate income seniors** (age 60 and over) from having to pay the surcharge at all.

What Can We Use Our CPA Funds For?

The CPA requires us to spend (or set aside for future spending) a minimum of 10% of our annual CPA revenues on each of the three core areas:

- 10 percent for open space and outdoor recreation projects
- 10 percent for historic preservation projects
- 10 percent for community housing projects

We can save up for larger projects and, most importantly, **we can also leverage our money to obtain Commonwealth, federal, and other grants that require a match.**

Who Decides Which Projects We Fund?

We do! Town voters exercise local control over our CPA funds through a local Community Preservation Committee (CPC) and our Town Meetings. The CPC's job is to solicit, review, and recommend projects to Town Meeting for approval. **All CPA projects must be approved by Town Meeting to receive CPA funds.**

For Colrain-specific information and a calculator to see what your surcharge would be please visit colraincpa.org. For more detailed information on the CPA please visit the Community Preservation Coalition, a nonprofit that provides a wealth of information on the CPA program, including a full listing of every project every town has done in the entire state since the CPA was first created in 2000: www.communitypreservation.org

Questions or comments? Please contact David Greenberg, david.greenberg3@gmail.com