

This letter appeared on BelmontPatch on October 20, 2010. Written by Jeffrey Roth of Belmont.

To the editor:

I am encouraging voters in Belmont to support the Community Preservation Act (CPA) by voting Yes on Question #4 on Nov. 2. Thanks to the CPA Campaign drive, which placed the item on the ballot with over 1,300 voter signatures, we now have the opportunity to efficiently invest in Belmont's future.

For 10 years, many of us have paid into the state's CPA fund, by either buying a house or simply re-financing our mortgages. However, up to this point, that money has gone to other towns in the Commonwealth. Towns like Lexington, Bedford, Waltham, Concord, and Sudbury. They have all benefited, while Belmont has missed out. In fact, the CPA is such a popular program that no municipality in which it has been adopted has ever voted to repeal it.

If Belmont participates in this popular program, we can help fund projects that Belmont would either have to pay for ourselves, or simply neglect. These projects might include planting trees, renovating playgrounds, building new sports fields, constructing compact housing developments which would allow more teachers and public-safety workers to live and work in Belmont, preserving the Belmont Uplands which would alleviate flooding problems for the Little Pond neighborhoods, renovating Belmont's landmark Underwood Pool, and preserving historical landmarks that help connect us to our roots.

For those of us who advocate for improved quality of life for the elderly, the Community Preservation Act funds can also provide the unique opportunity for senior housing developments in Belmont. We all can appreciate wanting to remain in Belmont when we, too, reach that age.

Since the state would match approximately 30 percent of our funds, it would make the above projects more cost effective. And thanks to this state match, the CPA program would reduce fiscal competition from other projects such as public safety and education.

Control of the CPA is entirely local, meaning Belmont can make local decisions on how and when to invest the funds. If for some unlikely reason the program does not work out, a simple Town Meeting vote can repeal the program for our Town.

To further differentiate it from an override, the tax surcharge is moderate, temporary, and matched approximately 30 percent by the state. Where else can you get this type of return on your investment today?

A community requires balance of many factors to flourish and remain vibrant. The CPA helps to provide this balance to communities. The balance of public amenities with everything else our Town has to offer, gives residents convenient enjoyment within their own Town. Staying local saves costs for residents and in turn increases the likelihood that they will support our local businesses and strengthen our community. Without this balance, residents will eventually seek fulfillment elsewhere, diminishing our community.

The CPA is a unique opportunity to invest in the features of Belmont that you value. Growing numbers of bi-partisan groups in Town are supporting the CPA.

Thank you very much for voting

"Yes" on Nov. 2 for the Community Preservation Act!

Warm regards,

Jeffrey Roth
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Belmont