

TOWN OF BEDFORD
COMMUNITY PRESERVATION COMMITTEE

COMMUNITY PRESERVATION PROGRAM AND PLAN

FALL 2008

DRAFT

Revision 1.0

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I

INTRODUCTION

A BRIEF INTRODUCTION TO THE COMMUNITY PRESERVATION ACT IN BEDFORD

The Community Preservation Act (the “CPA”, MGL 44B) allows any city or town in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts to adopt a property tax surcharge with revenues from this surcharge (and state matching funds) devoted to open space, historic preservation, affordable housing, and recreation. Bedford was the first community to accept the CPA, approving this at a Special Town Meeting in January 2001 and a Town Election in March 2001. The surcharge went into effect with the start of Fiscal Year 2002 on July 1, 2001.

Consistent with the terms of the CPA and with Bedford’s bylaws, a Community Preservation Committee was formed to study and recommend how Bedford’s CPA revenues should be spent. The committee, appointed by the Selectmen, currently consists of two at-large members (Randi Currier and Myles McDonough) and representatives of the Town’s Conservation Commission (Susan Grieb), Historic Preservation Commission (Don Corey), Housing Authority (Steve Hanna), Housing Partnership (Christina Wilgren), Planning Board (Margot Fleischman), Recreation Commission (Suzanne Johnson), and Selectmen (Cathy Cordes, acting as a Parks Commissioner).

This committee has held many meetings to review and analyze the town’s community preservation needs and strengths. After consulting with town residents and committees, the Community Preservation Committee has voted on preliminary recommendations for projects to be funded. These recommendations are listed in section V of this document. They will be discussed at a public hearing on October 2, 2008 and (after possible revision in response to input heard at the public hearing) voted on at the Special Town Meeting in November 2008.

This document, Bedford’s Community Preservation Program and Plan, contains an update on previously funded projects, a plan for future projects, and the recommendations mentioned above. It is available for review at the Town Hall and the Bedford Free Public Library and also on the town’s web site, <http://www.town.bedford.ma.us>. The Committee welcomes comments. Please send them to Community Preservation Committee, c/o Town Manager’s Office, Bedford Town Hall, Bedford, MA 01730.

Section VI of this document includes a form that may be used to submit ideas for new proposals. Citizens are also welcome to attend meetings of the Community Preservation Committee, notices of which are posted on a board in the lobby of the Town Hall.

BEDFORD'S COMMITMENT TO COMMUNITY PRESERVATION

For years, Bedford residents have expressed a strong interest in preserving our small town character. Our Comprehensive Plan (approved in December 2002) includes a Bedford Vision Statement, created through a community-wide visioning process. The vision statement (see below) affirms the Town's priority on open space, historic preservation, affordable housing, and recreational activities. These themes have been repeated many times in the last twenty or more years but urgent needs such as sewers and schools have made it difficult for the town to fund longer-term priorities.

It should be no surprise, then, that Bedford residents moved decisively to adopt the Community Preservation Act. Indeed, since adopting the CPA, Town Meeting has approved many proposals that help fulfill the aims of the Comprehensive Plan. What's more, creative possibilities remain for relying on CPA funds to fulfill specific goals in the Comprehensive Plan. These include purchasing conservation easements and development rights to preserve open space, expanding trails in protected areas, supporting the street tree program (perhaps by inventorying the town's trees), and facilitating the use of bicycles, such as by extending the Minuteman Bikeway.

The members of the Community Preservation Committee are pleased to help the town carry out its long-standing intent of acting to preserve our small town character. The projects and priorities described in this document reflect our best understanding for how to do so. We are heartened by the town's support for community preservation and welcome input on this topic, including specific project proposals.

BEDFORD VISION STATEMENT

The Town of **Bedford** envisions its **small-town character** enhanced over the next twenty years as it moves into the twenty-first century. This character is distinguished by both the historically significant **architectural resources** and the beauty of the **Center of Town**. The Center of Town is a functional area that emanates from the Town Common at First Parish Unitarian and as the central focus of town includes governmental, educational, recreational and public assembly activities supplemented by small shops and businesses. The Town sees its architectural heritage preserved and the Center of Town strengthened as the central community focus, and that in Bedford:

- **Traffic congestion** is alleviated;
- The Great Road is a **linear, pedestrian-friendly environment** with street trees, attractive signage and stores in scale with the environs and close to the street;
- A **system of sidewalks and trails** provides a network within and between neighborhoods, commercial areas, and public facilities;
- Substantial **open space** is preserved supporting small-town character, providing balance to developed areas, and protecting our natural resources;
- A range of **activities for social interaction and services for social needs** is provided, with particular emphasis on specific activities for youth and seniors;
- **Active and passive recreational needs** are met for residents of all age groups and physical capabilities;
- **Superior public education** is provided by a diverse educational program; and
- **Housing choices** for different types of units are available and affordable for all.

II

FUNDED PROJECTS STATUS REPORT

Project Approval Process

Shortly after its formation, the Community Preservation Committee conducted an in-depth study of the Town's community preservation needs, possibilities, and resources (including interviews with interested citizens, committees, and officials). Based on this study, the Committee prepared a Community Preservation Program and Plan, describing the Town's community preservation needs and goals, specific proposals for how CPA funds might be used to address those needs, criteria for evaluating these proposals, and a prioritized list of the proposals. The Program and Plan were circulated widely and the Committee held a Public Hearing where it received many useful comments.

Twice each year, the Committee reviews and updates the Community Preservation Program and Plan. Presentations are heard on the progress of plans in each of the targeted Community Preservation areas. Proposals are solicited and received, using a well-defined process that allows the committee to hear in-depth presentations from architects and proponents of the various projects. Based on the information gathered during this process, the Committee votes on preliminary recommendations for CPA spending and distributes a draft Community Preservation Program and Plan, incorporating the preliminary recommendations. A Public Hearing is held to review the draft Program and Plan and the preliminary recommendations. In response to comments received at the Public Hearing, the Committee revises its recommendations and the Program and Plan. The final recommendations are submitted to the Town Meeting for approval. Only those recommendations approved by the Town Meeting are actually funded.

Project Status Report

Here are status updates on the projects that have been approved for funding with Bedford's Community Preservation Act funds. These updates are organized by area: Open Space, Historic Preservation, Affordable Housing, and Recreation. The first category addresses projects that span several areas.

Projects that Span Multiple Areas

- The Wilson Mill Park near the intersection of route 62 and route 3 includes a pond, waterfall, surrounding lands, and historic ruins. This park includes Open Space, Historic Preservation, and Recreation aspects. A Wilson Mill Park Planning Committee prepared a Five-Year Development Plan with recommendations for improvements to the park. In March 2004, \$112,500 of CPA funding was approved for phase I of the plan, which addressed the most immediate issues. Two years of treatment have greatly reduced invasive aquatic plants in the mill pond. Trees growing in the old mill area have been removed and mill ruins stabilized. Reconstruction of the Park entry area has been temporarily halted due to unfavorable site conditions. Revised plans are being developed. PARTLY COMPLETED
- Widespread development in Bedford has made undeveloped land a rare commodity. Land acquisition and preservation of land for open space, recreation, or other permissible CPA

purposes is a critical issue. Therefore, Town Meetings have appropriated \$2,751,579 to be used for land acquisition. These funds can only be used to purchase properties from the lists of parcels specifically approved by Town Meeting. Several parcels have been purchased: 32A Chelmsford Road, 234R Old Billerica Road, 244 Dudley Road, 14 Battle Flagg Road and 98 Concord Road. PARTLY COMPLETED

- A local developer purchased the historic house at 62 Old Billerica Road, intending to restore the house and convert it to affordable family housing. Community Preservation funding of \$651,000 has been approved this project: \$150,000 categorized as Historic Preservation and focused on the restoration of the historic house, \$1,000 as Open Space for the trail easement, and \$500,000 as Affordable Housing for the main house and townhouses. Unfortunately, state and federal funding was not received. Therefore, this effort has been cancelled. The previously approved Community Preservation funds have been reallocated to other purposes through the normal process (Community Preservation Committee recommendation and Town Meeting vote). TERMINATED
- The Bedford Friends of the Minuteman Bikeway (in consultation with the Bedford DPW and Bicycle Advisory Committee) received \$5,000 in CPA funds to fund a feasibility study for extending the Minuteman Bikeway. The study explored the feasibility of improving the existing dirt rail trail that runs on Town owned land from Railroad Avenue to Concord Road (previously the B&M railbed). This area is adjacent to several Town owned conservation parcels containing networks of trails. The Bikeway Extension would provide access for students and adults to schools, playgrounds, the library, Depot Park, and shopping areas. It would connect at Depot Park to the existing Minuteman Bikeway and Narrow Gauge Rail Trail.

The feasibility study has now been completed. It estimated the options for and costs of improving the Bikeway Extension, examining areas such as wetlands, hazards that will require special attention, and options for paving surfaces to minimize maintenance and effects on adjacent wetlands. The study described three paving options: stone dust, stabilized soil, and asphalt. Stabilized soil looks especially promising but open questions pertaining to this option must be answered so a follow-up study has been suggested, focused on this option. An additional \$15,000 in CPA funds was approved in Spring 2007 to study the stabilized soil option. The results of this study are being reviewed.

This project includes Open Space aspects (improving public access to existing Open Space while ensuring adequate protection for wildlife) as well as Recreation (biking, walking, and greater access to recreational facilities). PARTLY COMPLETED

- At the Fall 2004 Special Town Meeting, \$19,000 in CPA funds were approved to fund a feasibility study and design for building boardwalks in the Hartwell Town Forest. This study has been completed and the results are being considered. Several alternative boardwalk scenarios were studied. One possible boardwalk would connect the two halves of the blue trail, which travels from the main entrance on Hartwell Road across Hartwell Brook to South Road and the Air Force FamCamp. Hartwell Brook is a perennial stream bordered by red maple swamp. Recent beaver activity in the area has made the wetlands impassable in all seasons; inundated areas and unstable soils now form a barrier between the north and south

sections of the Forest. The proposed boardwalk and bridge across the brook would restore important trail connections and provide access into a dynamic wetland system with increasingly varied wildlife habitat, allowing visitors to traverse Bedford's oldest and largest conservation area.

The second boardwalk would connect the orange trail to the South Road side of the forest via the town land and trail easements that have been provided through the Prescott Farms development. This project includes Open Space aspects (improving public access to existing Open Space while ensuring adequate protection for wildlife) as well as Recreation (walking and greater access to recreational facilities). PARTIALLY COMPLETED

Open Space

- For many years, Fawn Lake was filling in with decaying plant matter. To address this, the Town Meeting voted in March 2003 to appropriate \$148,981 as initial funding for a program of hydroraking, spot herbicide application, and other steps. Phase I of this project, chemical treatment of 8-9 acres of submerged vegetation and hydroraking of approximately 6 acres to remove the dense water lily growth, was completed in fall 2003. The lake is now much more open and clear of excessive growth. CPA funding for phase II (\$65,000) was approved in March 2004. Additional hydroraking took place in Fall 2004 to further reduce the plant overgrowth. Further hydroraking and chemical treatment is now required to prevent excessive growth of plant matter. Additional CPA funding of \$26,500 was approved in March 2008 to supplement funds remaining from previous appropriations and allow this important work to continue. PARTLY COMPLETED
- The purchase of 133 and 135A Shawsheen Road was approved with \$150,000 of the \$600,000 total purchase price coming from Community Preservation Act funds. This 16 acre parcel of land had been listed in the town's Open Space & Recreation Plan as a desirable site to acquire. The 4 acre portion purchased with CPA funds is critical to protecting Bedford's only active water source, the Shawsheen Wellfield. Maintaining and protecting this source lessens the Town's dependence on MWRA water. The entire parcel, 16 acres in total, has additional value beyond watershed protection. There are wetlands and trails through rolling upland portions which are contiguous to a large Town-owned parcel adjacent to the old reservoir. The Town completed the purchase of this land in January 2002. COMPLETED
- The Altmann Conservation Area (222 and 269E Dudley Road) was purchased by the Town in 2002. An expenditure of \$300,000 of CPA funds was the Town's contribution toward the purchase price of \$835,000. The Conservation Commission negotiated for the purchase of approximately 16 acres of this parcel off of Dudley Road. This parcel abuts Great Meadows Wildlife Refuge and Huckins Farm. It is adjacent to Two Brothers' Rocks, an historic site. Acquisition and conservation of this property assures a good buffer and improves trail access to Two Brothers' Rocks. The property has a large amount of upland and contains a wide diversity of wildlife habitat, including a certified vernal pool, riverfront area, old stone walls, and cart paths. In this location the width of protected land along the Concord River is extremely narrow; development of this parcel would have been extremely undesirable, as it would have been the only development in Bedford visible from the river and Two Brothers' Rocks.

To cover the remainder of the purchase price, the Conservation Commission pursued a grant from the Route 3 Open Space Acquisitions Grant program, a fund designed to compensate the towns for the loss of open space and wetlands due to the Route 3 construction. Since the grant program was competitive, the Town was at an advantage by contributing some funds to support the acquisition price. The Route 3 grant for \$535,000 was approved in the late spring and the purchase was finalized in August 2002.

Portions of the Altmann Conservation Area are overgrown with non-native, invasive plants. As described in more detail below, CPA funding of \$11,000 has been requested to remove much of this vegetation and restore native species to the area. PARTLY COMPLETED

- Bedford's trail system provides a network of walking trails throughout the community. The Bedford Trails Committee identified several modest projects to substantially increase the accessibility and utility of the trails. These include updated trail markers, destination signs, bog bridges, and information kiosks. Funding for materials has been provided through Community Preservation funding of \$4,100 approved at the Spring 2005 Annual Town Meeting and a matching grant of \$5,000 from the Conservation Commission. Work has already been completed at several sites. More will be coming next year. PARTIALLY COMPLETED
- The opportunity has recently arisen to acquire a parcel of wooded upland adjacent to existing town-owned land near the old reservoir off Page Road. This parcel is the back section of the 2 Page Road property, approximately 58,200 square feet (1.32 acres). Purchasing this parcel will provide greater access to the existing town-owned land through direct access to and from the upper part of Page Road, thus significantly supplement the value of the existing town-owned land as a recreational asset. The Fall 2006 Special Town Meeting approved the purchase of this property using up to \$180,000 in Community Preservation funds. This purchase is complete. PARTIALLY COMPLETED

Historic Preservation

- Rail Diesel Car #6211 is a vintage rail car located adjacent to the Freight House in Bedford's Depot Park. Restoration of RDC #6211 with \$125,000 of CPA funds was approved at the Fall 2003 Town Meeting. The car will contain rail history displays as well as visitor seating sections. This project is nearing completion. PARTLY COMPLETED
- The Massachusetts Historical Commission awarded Bedford a Survey & Planning grant of \$15,000 to match \$10,000 of Town CPA funding for a Townwide Archaeological Reconnaissance Survey. The purpose is to identify areas of potential archaeological sensitivity, based on prehistoric (Native American) and historic (Colonial) patterns of occupation and use, in order to protect and preserve cultural artifacts as much as possible. The project was completed and the final report delivered in October 2004. COMPLETED
- CPA funding totaling \$58,000 has previously been approved at Town Meetings for preservation projects at the Job Lane House (built c.1712). They include replacement of a tie beam that had been cut by a former owner, replacement of the cedar roof on the north side

of the building, restoration of the Rufus Porter murals, and repairs to correct settling of the floor around the central hearth. All of this work has now been completed. COMPLETED

- Town Meetings have approved \$919,000 of CPA Funds for the preservation and rehabilitation of the historic portion of Town Center (the former Union School - built in 1891). This will preserve the building for continued use in serving various community organizations. Construction on the project is complete and the facility is in full and active use. COMPLETED
- A total of just over \$2 million in Community Preservation funding has been approved at Town Meetings in order to preserve the Old Town Hall (built in 1856) and rehabilitate it for productive reuse. The project is now complete, and the ribbon cutting ceremony to celebrate reopening of the building was held in September 2004. The great hall on the top floor, which is now reached by the ceremonial front stairway or by elevator, is available both for public meetings and for private functions. The two lower floors will be used for offices and for various community organizations. This work was financed with bonds which are repaid with annual CPA appropriations. COMPLETED
- The area of Old Billerica Road north from 229 to 301 Old Billerica Road is eligible as a National Register of Historic Places district due to the age and history of that section of road. An application for nomination has been prepared by a preservation consultant documenting the history and architecture of the area. It was funded through \$6,000 in CPA funding and matching funds of \$6,000 from the Massachusetts Historical Commission (MHC). The National Register nomination was approved by the MHC in March 2007 and accepted for listing by the National Park Service in August 2007. COMPLETED
- The Old Burying Ground is a significant contributing element to both the Old Bedford Center National Historic District and the Bedford Historic District. The age and condition of the site requires that some investment be made to preserve it for future generations. Gravestones that have been broken, eroded, covered with lichens so they are illegible or otherwise disturbed need to be repaired. The tombs have had no structural repairs for over 70 years and are in serious disrepair. A Preservation Plan for the Old Burying Ground was recently completed with the help of a matching grant from MHC.

The March 2005 Annual Town Meeting approved \$50,000 in Community Preservation funds to commence the highest priority gravestone and tomb repairs in the Old Burying Ground, in anticipation of a matching grant in an equal amount from MHC. When only \$35,000 of State funding was available for that grant, an additional \$20,000 of Community Preservation funding was approved at the March 2006 Town Meeting. The highest priority repairs of broken gravestones and repairs to the south tombs were completed with those funds. Additional work to repair the north tombs and other badly cracked gravestones will be funded from the Historic Properties Preservation Fund. COMPLETED

- The historic landscape around the Job Lane House has been overgrown with exotic invasive species. Community groups have come forward to assist in reclaiming these fields and meadows. However, Community Preservation funding was needed for some items, and \$5,000 was approved at the March 2005 Town Meeting for the following items: survey and

permanent monuments to mark property boundaries; wetlands delineation by a professional; preparation of a Request For Determination to the Conservation Commission; and eradication of certain persistent invasive species and over-seeding with native grasses to reclaim the landscape. The survey, installation of permanent markers, wetlands flagging and approval of the Conservation Commission are complete. Eradication of the invasive species will be a multi-year program. PARTLY COMPLETED

- The area surrounding Bedford Depot at the end of the Minuteman Bikeway has been revitalized over the past several years. Funding from several State sources and Community Preservation funds approved at earlier Town Meetings have been used to **provide parking, improve the intersection, restore the Freight House**, place Depot Park on the National Register of Historic Places, and restore the Rail Diesel Car. The former passenger depot remains in need of repair and rehabilitation. Community Preservation funds totaling \$16,000 were approved at the March 2006 Town Meeting, which were matched with a \$24,000 grant from MHC (60% State - 40% town), to prepare a Preservation Plan for adaptive re-use of the passenger depot. This Plan was recently completed and it identified priority repairs that are needed, especially roof repairs. The Spring 2007 and Fall 2007 Town Meetings approved \$145,000 for this project. The repairs will begin soon. PARTLY COMPLETED
- Bedford has a number of municipally owned historic properties, including the ancient mill sites (c.1663 and 1675), Old Burying Ground (1729), Old Town Hall, Town Center, Town Hall, original portions of the Stearns Building (former Library and now Police Station) and others. Many had experienced serious deterioration over the years, as capital expenditures on schools and other properties necessarily took priority. Many of the properties have since been rehabilitated with Community Preservation funds. Initial appropriations of \$700,000 in CPA funds have been approved to establish an Historic Properties Preservation Fund. It will be used for all eligible preservation, restoration and rehabilitation work on historic municipal properties approved by Town Meeting, including work on roofs, exterior sidings, Building Code compliance, handicapped access, cemetery repairs, making historic mill sites and landscapes functional for recreational use, etc. Not more than \$75,000 can be used on any single property in any Fiscal Year. The intent is to add to this fund for several years with an intended target of \$1,000,000 so that it may provide funding for preservation of these properties over decades. An additional appropriation of \$50,000 has been requested this fall. PARTLY COMPLETED
- The slate roof of the historic Shawsheen Well Field Pump House needs immediate repairs. This roof has never been replaced in the building's 98-year history. It is critical to maintaining the integrity of the structure, which still contains important components of Bedford's water supply system. CPA funding of \$35,000 for this project was approved at the Spring 2007 Annual Town Meeting. PARTLY COMPLETED
- Two Brothers Rocks on the bank of the Concord River mark the land grants of John Winthrop, first Governor of the Massachusetts Bay Colony, and Deputy Governor Thomas Dudley in 1638. They are among the very oldest historical landmarks in the Commonwealth. That portion of Dudley Road straddling the Bedford/Billerica town line also contains the site of the 17th century Stearns Mill and homesteads of multiple generations of the Stearns family. In the late 1800s, Dudley Pickman acquired several of the homesteads and hundreds

of acres of surrounding agricultural land in both towns, creating a model farm and rural retreat.

The area was declared eligible for National Register listing in Bedford's Historic Properties Survey, but the Massachusetts Historical Commission (MHC) required that any application be submitted jointly by Bedford and Billerica due to the location of historic resources in both towns. The Billerica Historical Commission and Bedford Historic Preservation Commission met and agreed to jointly pursue nomination of the area to the National Register of Historic Places. The MHC in January 2008 invited Bedford to apply for a Survey & Planning grant to prepare the nomination application and to provide interpretive signage at the Brothers Rocks. CPA funding of \$6,000 was approved by the Spring 2008 Annual Town Meeting in order to have a preservation consultant prepare the nomination.

Affordable Housing

- A total of \$220,000 in CPA funding was approved to support the Patriot Place affordable housing development. This funding (when combined with other subsidies) allowed the developer to alter the design of the development to make it more harmonious with its historic location across from the Old Burying Ground. The development was completed in summer 2005 and is now fully occupied. It provides seven affordable and three market rate housing units (although the state counts all ten units in the building for their affordable housing unit tally). Three units will be affordable forever. The other four will be affordable until the developer repays the CPA funding, which is being provided as a loan. COMPLETED
- The ECHO Program was an innovative pilot program to increase affordable housing in town while helping low-income homeowners (such as seniors) keep their houses. CPA funding of \$120,000 was approved for this program in 2004. Unfortunately, there was not enough interest from town residents. Therefore, the program has been cancelled. No funds were expended on the program so the \$120,000 previously allocated to this program has been moved to the Affordable Housing Reserve. TERMINATED
- The Duplex Conversion Project was approved for \$131,940 in CPA funding in October 2001. The Town contracted with the Bedford Housing Trust to manage and execute this project. A duplex was purchased in October 2002, renovated, and converted into two condominiums. After an open application process and a lottery, the condos were sold to two moderate-income families at an affordable price (about \$125,000). Deed restrictions will ensure that the condos remain affordable forever. COMPLETED
- The Condo Buy-Down Program was approved for \$161,200 of CPA funds in October 2001. This program involves purchasing market rate or previously restricted but unqualified condominium units, deed restricting the units as perpetual affordable “subsidized housing”, and selling the units to a qualified family. One condominium was processed through this program in 2002. Approximately \$145,000 remains in escrow for the purchase of more units and to subsidize condominium fees. Units will be handled as they become available. PARTLY COMPLETED

- Affordable housing development on a town-owned parcel at 447 Concord Road has been supported through CPA appropriations of \$25,000 (for predevelopment studies) and \$700,000 (for the actual development). This development will provide mixed income housing, drawing on many sources of funding as part of the MHP/DHCD Pilot “Suburban Rental Finance Program”. Legislative approval has been received for a long-term lease to a private developer and the lease has been signed after an open bidding process. The permitting process is now under way. PARTLY COMPLETED
- A part-time affordable housing support consultant has been funded by \$25,000 per year in CPA funds for each of FY03 through FY07. This consultant has proved invaluable in helping the Bedford Housing Partnership analyze Comprehensive Permit applications, especially in doing in-depth financial analyses. She has also prepared planning documents and managed Bedford’s membership in the MetroWest HOME Consortium. The Town receives approximately \$25,000 a year in federal HOME affordable housing funds from this Consortium. The consultant has also drafted important Town documents, such as our Planned Production Plan (through which we obtained a reprieve from Chapter 40B). PARTLY COMPLETED
- Rehabilitation of the kitchens and baths in the Bedford Housing Authority’s Elm Street family housing development was funded through a combination of \$162,500 in Housing Authority reserves, \$223,517 in state funding, and \$304,101 in Community Preservation funds approved at the Fall 2006 Special Town Meeting. COMPLETED
- Habitat for Humanity of Greater Lowell is planning to redevelop the 3.47 acre lot at 130 North Road, creating eight units of affordable homeownership units for low income families (25-50% of Area Median Income). The existing farmhouse would be renovated and seven additional new homes constructed. The Fall 2006 Special Town Meeting approved Community Preservation funding of \$600,000 for this effort. Habitat has purchased the property and permitting is under way. PARTLY COMPLETED

Recreation

- The playground near Town Center has been replaced and brought up to modern standards for safety and accessibility, using \$180,000 in CPA funds approved at the Spring 2006 Annual Town Meeting. A few items remain to be addressed, including the installation of a water fountain and perhaps more seating for adults. PARTLY COMPLETED
- The Town of Bedford faces many issues with playing fields. The number of playing fields in town continues to lag considerably behind demand. Playing fields are constantly under threat from other town needs (especially expansion of buildings). And several of our playing fields are on non-town-owned land. While the use of this land is greatly appreciated, it is not likely to continue indefinitely. Therefore, the Spring 2006 Town Meeting approved funding of \$50,000 for a study of future needs and opportunities with respect to our playing fields. The results of the study pointed out several opportunities to create new and improved recreational opportunities without needing to purchase more real estate.

A Fall 2007 Special Town Meeting approved \$425,000 for these efforts. Fields at the new

South Road Field area will be built so that they can be employed in several different configurations: a few large fields or a larger number of smaller fields. At "E" field (the softball field across Mudge Way from the library), lighting will be added to allow for night games and practices and the field will be rebuilt to meet the requirements for women's softball. An additional baseball diamond will be added at Page Field. Work on these efforts is under way. Wetland delineation and permitting for the St. Michael's Fields (behind the High School) is ongoing and will set the stage for fields to be added at that location at a future time. PARTLY COMPLETED

- A feasibility study was conducted in 2003, examining the possible ways that Springs Brook Park could be improved. This study, which included several public meetings to gather suggestions and share preliminary results, was funded with \$25,000 of CPA funds and \$25,000 of funds from the Recreation Revolving Fund. The results of the study indicated that certain moderate improvements to the park (enhancing the pond, expanding recreation facilities, and improving access) could provide significant benefits. Based on the results of the study, another \$20,000 in CPA funds was appropriated at the March 2004 Annual Town Meeting to use as matching funds for a Schematic Design. A careful analysis of this season's revenues and expenses was integrated into a business plan for a renovated park. Community Preservation funding of \$1,472,100 was approved at the Spring 2005 and Fall 2005 Town Meetings to implement much of this Schematic Design. Reconstruction of the bathhouse was funded through private donations (since it was not eligible for CPA funds) and completed by the Shawsheen Technical High School. This project was ready in time to open the park as usual in June 2006. It has been a great success, contributing to much higher attendance levels at the park and therefore better finances. COMPLETED
- CPA funds totaling \$12,000 were allocated in March 2004 to renovate a small town-owned playground on Elliot Street (near the intersection of South Road and Summer Street). This work was completed in Spring 2005. COMPLETED
- To widen some hiking trails and make them more accessible, \$69,000 of CPA funds were appropriated at the March 2004 Town Meeting. These improvements will focus on trails in the Town Forest off Hartwell Road, at the Minnie Reid conservation land on North Road, in the Lindau Farm Land area on Pine Hill Road, and at Fawn Lake on Sweetwater Avenue. Trail work in the Town Forest is waiting for a decision on the Hartwell Town Forest Boardwalk. However, work at several other sites has already been completed. PARTLY COMPLETED
- Several improvements to the Minuteman Bikeway and Narrow Gauge Rail Trail were made: benches, informational signage, and some landscaping. The March 2004 Town Meeting approved \$9,800 in CPA funds for this purpose. COMPLETED
- A shortage of public tennis courts in town had long frustrated members of the school teams and other Bedford residents. To address this issue, CPA funding of \$100,000 was approved at the October 2003 Special Town Meeting. The initial plan was to build two tennis courts near the Middle School but the plans were delayed due to possible interference with future YMCA construction. The project was later revised to construct one new tennis court near the others at the High School. This change allows the courts to be easily used by the High

School teams and allows construction to proceed without waiting for the YMCA. The disadvantage is that site conditions require more grading so only one court can be built instead of two. Construction has been completed and the court is in use. COMPLETED

- At the Spring 2003 Annual Town Meeting, an appropriation of \$230,000 was approved to purchase a small lot at 51 Loomis Street and convert it into parking for the adjacent Page Field. The property was purchased on July 2, 2003. The existing building has been razed and drainage installed. Most of the landscaping and parking lot development has been done. This project should be complete soon. PARTLY COMPLETED
- The Spring 2002 Annual Town Meeting voted to use \$85,000 in CPA funds to build a skate park facility. The skate park opened on July 12, 2002 and has proved to be quite popular. COMPLETED
- The tennis practice wall at the High School was removed during the recent tennis court addition effort. Community Preservation funding of \$14,000 was combined with \$11,000 left over from the tennis court addition project to construct a new practice wall to take the place of the one lost. COMPLETED
- In order to accommodate the growth in Springs Brook Park attendance due to the recent renovation, an additional parking area for 35 cars was constructed, using \$15,000 in Community Preservation funding provided for this purpose. COMPLETED

III

GOALS, NEEDS, AND PROPOSED PROJECTS

ASSESSMENT PROCESS

As noted above, funds collected under the Community Preservation Act can only be spent for four *community preservation areas*: open space, historic preservation, affordable housing, and recreation. At least 10% of the funds received in any fiscal year must be spent or set aside for each of the first three of those areas (open space, historic preservation, affordable housing). The remaining 70% of each year's funds can be spent in any of the four areas, as determined by the needs of the community. However, CPA funds cannot be spent on maintenance or used to supplant funds being used for existing community preservation purposes. Up to 5% of annual Community Preservation revenues can be spent on administrative and operating expenses of the Community Preservation Committee.

In order to translate the town's vision statement (found on page 2) into specifics and determine which projects should be funded, the Community Preservation Committee gathers information and ideas from Bedford citizens and people who are knowledgeable about each of the community preservation areas. For instance, we consult with members of the Planning Board, the Historic Preservation Commission, the Conservation Commission, the Recreation Commission, the Bedford Housing Authority and the Bedford Housing Partnership. In addition, we have Open Hearings, staff a booth at Bedford Day, and hold informational meetings at the Council On Aging.

Based on the information gathered from these sources, we develop an assessment of Bedford's goals and needs in each of the community preservation areas and a list of proposed projects in each of these areas. Some of these projects are ready for immediate action; others are a few years down the road. This allows the Community Preservation Committee and the town to plan for the future.

PROJECTS THAT SPAN SEVERAL AREAS

Many projects funded with CPA funds span several of the allowed areas (Open Space, Historic Preservation, Affordable Housing, and Recreation). In fact, the Community Preservation Committee encourages such "multi-area projects." Multi-area projects currently proposed or considered for the future are listed in this section.

Current Proposals

Town Tree Inventory

The Bedford Arbor Resources Committee (BARC) has proposed a partial inventory of town-owned trees, focusing first on trees in prominent locations such as near schools and intersections. The inventory will be used to identify and reduce hazards, prioritize pruning and removal, and aid in budgeting and planning. BARC plans to supplement CPA funding of \$5,000 with \$7,000 in grants from state and private sources. If all funds are obtained, the \$12,000 total should allow for an inventory of 1,000 to 1,500 trees.

Possible Future Proposals

Land Acquisition

Widespread development in Bedford has made undeveloped land a rare commodity. Land acquisition and preservation of land for open space, recreation, or other permissible CPA purposes is a critical issue. As part of an ongoing effort to preserve land for public uses, \$2,751,579 in Community Preservation funds has been appropriated for this purpose by several years' Town Meetings. These funds are held separately and can only be used to purchase properties that have been specifically approved by Town Meeting. Lists of properties identified as most critical for acquisition have previously been reviewed and approved by several Town Meetings. It is likely that further appropriations for this purpose may be needed in the future. See the Open Space section below for more details.

Wilson Mill Park Phase II and III

In the summer of 2000, the Town of Bedford purchased the land next to the Wilson Mill site from the Zion Alliance Church. This parcel has been combined with another purchased from the estate of Sophie DeVincent and 2 other small parcels already owned by the Town to create the Wilson Mill Historic Park. The combined parcels total about 5 acres and are located at the east end of Old Burlington Road. They are bordered by Route 62, Route 3 and the Vine Brook Mill Pond.

In the summer of 2003, the Selectmen appointed a Wilson Mill Park Planning Committee including representatives from the Selectmen, Conservation Commission, Historic Preservation Commission and Recreation Commission as well as local residents. The committee's mission is to protect, foster, and advocate for the historic mill site, surrounding natural habitat, and passive recreation opportunities available at Wilson Mill Park for the people of Bedford to enjoy.

The Wilson Mill Park Planning Committee has prepared a Five-Year Development Plan detailing recommendations for improvements to the park. Funding for phase I of this plan, which addresses immediate issues, critical maintenance, and key restorative projects, was approved at Annual Town Meeting in Spring 2004. Phases II and III will further develop the park, improving access and recreational and educational opportunities. Funding for these phases may be requested in the future. Subsequent historic preservation work may be accomplished under the Historic Properties Preservation Fund already approved for historic municipal properties.

Hartwell Forest Boardwalk Construction

As described in section II above, feasibility studies and design for the construction of two boardwalks in the Hartwell Forest have been conducted. After the results of the feasibility studies have been analyzed, we may proceed to construct one or both of these boardwalks.

Minuteman Bikeway Extension Construction

As described in section II above, feasibility studies are looking at extending the Minuteman Bikeway along the existing dirt rail trail that runs on Town owned land from Railroad Avenue to Concord Road (previously the B&M railbed). If the result of these feasibility studies is positive, we may proceed to construct this extension.

OPEN SPACE

Open Space Resources

Bedford enjoys a variety of Open Space resources distributed throughout town. This includes Town-owned properties such as Fawn Lake, the Hartwell Town Forest, Wilderness Park, Elm Brook Conservation Area, and a variety of smaller conservation areas. Bedford also enjoys many scenic vistas, farms, and open fields owned by other parties. However, most of these spaces are not protected in any permanent manner and may fall victim to development pressures at any time.

Open Space Goals

Open Space resources are highly valued by Bedford residents, as noted in the Vision Statement above. Bedford first had an Open Space and Recreation Master Plan in 1977. This has been updated periodically with new input from Town residents. The most recent version is the Open Space and Recreation Plan 2004-2008, which states:

Bedford is fortunate to have a variety of open space and natural areas within its borders, including the Great Meadows National Wildlife Refuge, the Concord and Shawsheen River systems and other local conservation areas, that provide the residents with an opportunity to enjoy its natural attributes. In order to maintain the community character highly valued by its residents, Bedford must pursue acquisition or long-term protection of remaining open lands which contribute to natural resource, recreational, scenic and historic interests.

The nine community goals listed below were developed through the 1996 Open Space and Recreation Survey and input at scheduled meetings of the Action Plan Working Group. A detailed series of action items has been developed to implement these goals.

- Goal 1: Preserve Bedford's small town image
- Goal 2: Protect valuable water resources and unique wildlife habitat areas
- Goal 3: Protect aquifer recharge areas for existing and future water supply
- Goal 4: Develop and promote a public awareness program for Bedford's conservation and recreation areas
- Goal 5: Preserve and protect historic and cultural properties and sites
- Goal 6: Preserve large tracts of undeveloped land
- Goal 7: Improve access and trail linkages to conservation, recreation and other land uses
- Goal 8: Enhance the quality and variety of passive and active recreational opportunities for all age groups and abilities
- Goal 9: Increase the town's responsiveness to protect environmentally sensitive and culturally significant properties

The passage of the Community Preservation Act has helped the Town of Bedford to continue to accomplish these goals. As described in Funded Projects Status Report, Community Preservation

Act funds have been used to acquire several parcels of environmental or cultural importance, such as the Altmann Conservation Area and the Valente property.

Current Proposals

Altmann Conservation Area Restoration

The Altmann Conservation Area (222 and 269E Dudley Road) is a 16 acre parcel that abuts Great Meadows Wildlife Refuge and Huckins Farm. This property provides a good buffer for and improves trail access to Two Brothers' Rocks, an adjacent historic site. The property has a large amount of upland and contains a wide diversity of wildlife habitat, including a certified vernal pool, riverfront area, old stone walls, and cart paths.

Portions of the Altmann Conservation Area are heavily overgrown with non-native, invasive plants. After considerable study, a proposal has been developed to remove much of this vegetation and restore native species to the area. CPA funding of \$11,000 has been requested for this purpose.

Possible Future Proposals

Land Acquisition (Open Space)

Due to the appetite for development in Bedford and the consequential loss of Open Space, acquiring land for Open Space is an important and ongoing issue for the Town. Many parcels have been generously donated to the Town for Open Space and Conservation uses. Others have been purchased by the Town using CPA and non-CPA funds. Recent Town Meetings have appropriated \$2,751,579 in CPA funding to be used for land acquisition and approved a list of properties that may be purchased with these funds.

The Conservation Commission and its Land Acquisition Sub-Committee have identified a list of undeveloped lots in Bedford that might be suitable for purchase as Open Space. These lots have been categorized in terms of size, resource areas and potential uses. The most critical ones were included on the list of properties approved for purchase by the March 2004 Annual Town Meeting.

The Land Acquisition Sub-Committee has periodically sent letters to the owners of high-priority properties informing them that the Town may have an interest in purchasing the property. There have been several successes in recent years. Two parcels identified by the Land Acquisition Sub-Committee, the Hughes parcel and 220 Dudley Road, were successfully acquired in 2002. The 220 Dudley Road acquisition was partially funded by Community Preservation Act. Another parcel (133 and 135A Shawsheen Road), which had been listed in the town's Open Space and Recreation Plan as a desirable site to acquire, was purchased with partial funding from the CPA.

The Land Acquisition Sub-Committee continues to pursue opportunities to acquire specific sites from the list of sites approved at the Annual Town Meeting in Spring 2004. Approving this list helps streamline the land acquisition process and demonstrates to land owners the Town's serious intent. Reserving CPA funds for purchasing these properties also sends a clear signal that the Town truly wants to compete with developers and will offer the fair price for land.

Property values in Bedford have risen substantially in recent years. This makes land acquisition for Open Space more difficult but even more urgent. If we want to preserve the walking trails, scenic vistas, and wildlife that many residents enjoy, we must act quickly before property values head out of

sight. The Community Preservation Act can help Bedford act on this Town-wide priority before it's too late, taking advantage of state matching funds and issuing bonds if necessary.

Because of the confidential and delicate nature of real estate negotiations, we cannot publish a complete list of parcels under consideration by the Land Acquisition sub-committee at this time. However, here are a few statistics:

- 4 sites are less than 5 acres
- 9 sites are between 5 and 15 acres
- 5 sites are between 20 and 50 acres
- The individual assessed values of these parcels are between several hundred dollars and several million dollars.
- All of the sites are adjacent to Town-owned open space. Acquisition of these sites would help create continuous access for citizens and a broader wildlife corridor.
- Some of the larger sites could accommodate multiple uses and goals: ball fields or other types of recreational activities, affordable housing, and open space.
- Most of the 9 community Open Space and Recreation goals listed earlier can be addressed through acquisition of these sites.

In light of the ongoing disappearance of open space in Bedford due to development, reserving more funds for land acquisition is important from an Open Space perspective.

Hartwell Forest Boardwalk Construction (Open Space aspects)

The future Hartwell Forest Boardwalk Construction project noted above under Multi-Use Projects will improve access to and through the town's conservation lands.

Minuteman Bikeway Extension Construction (Open Space aspects)

The future Minuteman Bikeway Extension Construction project noted above under Multi-Use Projects will improve access to and through the town's conservation lands.

Wilson Mill Park (Open Space aspects)

Future phases of the Wilson Mill Park project (described above) will improve wildlife habitat in the area by removing water chestnuts, an invasive non-native species, from the pond. They will also substantially improve access to this lovely area for Bedford residents and nearby workers.

Fawn Lake Preservation

Additional funds may be required in future years to prevent Fawn Lake from becoming choked with plant matter.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION

Historic Preservation Resources

Bedford has a large number of historic and cultural resources, including both private and town-owned properties, dating back as far as the town's original settlement in the 1600s. A Townwide

Historic Properties Survey conducted in 1998 documented all historic resources that existed prior to 1948 outside of the Old Bedford Center Historic District.

Historic Preservation Goals

The town's Historic Preservation Commission has identified the following goals:

- Goal 1: Preservation and enhancement of municipally owned properties of historic, archaeological and cultural significance;
- Goal 2: Acquisition of threatened properties of particular historical significance, subject to Town Meeting approval;
- Goal 3: Providing technical and financial assistance to private owners of historic properties to encourage their preservation;
- Goal 4: Providing education and community outreach regarding the historic and cultural resources within Bedford.
- Goal 5: Reviewing and making recommendations for all applications under the town's demolition delay bylaw.

Many of these goals are eligible for Community Preservation Act funding.

Current Proposals

Freight House Restoration

Bedford's Freight House is a small but significant part of the Depot Park historic area. This small, white building faces South Road next to the end of the Minuteman Bikeway. It has been used for many purposes over the years, including engine house, freight house, bakery, etc. Exterior restoration of the Freight House in Depot Park is being completed, using federal and state funding. However, these funds do not cover interior restoration. The desired outcome is for the Freight House to be used by the Friends of Bedford Depot Park to sell refreshments and souvenirs, as was done before restoration began. Proceeds from these sales would be used to advance historic preservation projects and maintain Depot Park.

In order to prepare the Freight House for this use, it is proposed that \$10,000 be transferred from the previous CPA funding for the Rail Diesel Car Restoration project. This will allow the town to install storage cabinets, shelving, counters, sink, and other needed materials. Thus, the Freight House can be returned to productive use by Spring 2009, about three years after it was closed for restoration.

Historic Properties Preservation Fund

The Town of Bedford owns a number of properties that span the period back to its original settlement in the 1600s. All of the properties are on the Massachusetts Cultural Resource Inventory System (MACRIS), and most are individually listed or included in historic districts in the National Register of Historic Places. A number of the properties that were in serious need of repairs have been restored or are currently being restored with the assistance of Community Preservation funds.

All of the properties require periodic preservation work to save them for future generations and to preserve the historic character of their surroundings. Performance of the work under the CPA allows the town to offset a substantial portion of the costs through the application of matching State CPA funds. In a number of cases, the award of additional State matching grants has reduced the town's total share of costs to as low as 20%.

A Historic Properties Preservation Fund has been created, with initial funding of \$700,000 in CPA funds approved at the Spring 2006, Spring 2007, and Spring 2008 Annual Town Meetings. The Community Preservation Committee has recommended additional funding of \$50,000 in Community Preservation funds as part of an ongoing effort to build an adequate long-term endowment to preserve these properties.

Possible Future Proposals

Old Town Hall Bonding and Debt Service

Previous Town Meetings authorized the issuance of bonds to fund the preservation and rehabilitation of Old Town Hall. The project has been completed, but bond payments will continue until FY 2011.

Old Burying Ground

The Old Burying Ground is a significant contributing element to both the Old Bedford Center National Historic District and the Bedford Historic District. The age and condition of the site requires ongoing investments to preserve it for future generations. A Preservation Plan for the Old Burying Ground was completed in 2005 and the highest priority work on broken gravestones and the south tombs was completed through the approval of \$70,000 of Community Preservation funds and a State matching grant of \$35,000. Repair of the north tombs and other badly cracked gravestones is still required. Funding of \$50,000 from the Historic Properties Preservation Fund is planned to be provided as a Town match to a \$50,000 MPPF grant request to MHC. On-going required repairs may be accomplished under the Historic Properties Preservation Fund.

Bedford Depot

The March 2006 Town Meeting approved funding for a Preservation Plan for adaptive re-use of the Bedford passenger depot. This Plan was recently completed and it identified priority repairs that are needed, especially roof repairs. The Spring 2007 and Fall 2007 Town Meetings approved \$145,000 for these repairs. Additional funds may be needed in the future for other repairs and/or preservation.

Job Lane House

The Job Lane House (ca. 1715) is among the oldest houses in Bedford. The west parlor retains wall mural frescoes that have been attributed to Rufus Porter, a leading mural painter who resided in Billerica from 1823 to 1843.

The Historic Preservation Commission is responsible for administration of this property, while the Friends of the Job Lane House help to maintain the property and provide interpretive programs. Due to the building's great age and its individual listing in the National Register of Historic Places, on-going preservation work will be needed that must conform with appropriate Federal and State standards. On-going repairs may be accomplished under the Historic Properties Preservation Fund if additional funding of that source is approved by Town Meeting.

Wilson Mill Park (Historic Preservation aspects)

The Wilson Mill Site is one of the most historically significant in Bedford, including mill ruins dating to the earliest history of settlement within the present boundaries of Bedford. As early as 1676, John Wilson established a corn (grist) mill on Vine Brook.

A Preservation Plan has been completed, and the Wilson Mill Park Planning Committee has prepared a Five-Year Development Plan detailing recommendations for improvements to the park.

CPA funding of \$112,500 for Phase I of the plan was approved in March 2004 Town Meeting. Subsequent historic preservation work phases may be accomplished under the Historic Properties Preservation Fund already approved for historic municipal properties.

Town Hall

The Town Hall currently occupies the former Center School, which underwent major renovations in the late 1980s to convert it to its current use. It is also a significant contributing element to the Old Bedford Center National Historic District.

Periodic major capital repairs will be required to maintain the building's functionality in future years. Funding of eligible work may be accomplished under the Historic Properties Preservation Fund if additional funding of that source is approved by Town Meeting.

Bacon-Fitch-Clark Mill Site

Michael Bacon III (ca. 1640-1707) operated a corn mill on the Shawsheen River off of Old Billerica Road on the west bank of the Shawsheen River as early as 1675. About 1730, Benjamin Fitch (1703-1770) purchased land and the mill from the Bacon family. The original mill was destroyed during King Philip's War and immediately rebuilt. The mill eventually passed to Herbert Clark, who sold it to the Town of Bedford in 1947. The town demolished the mill as well as the dam in an effort to improve storm drainage.

The site has been evaluated as eligible for listing as a contributing element within a proposed Old Billerica Road National Historic District. A Historic Landscape Preservation Plan study similar to that completed for the Wilson Mill site will be needed before costs can be assigned for this potential project.

Abbott Farmstead Site (ca 1725)

Existing documents indicate that the location of Obed Abbott's 1725 homestead is in a parcel off of Springs Road that is currently subdivided between the first 3 northerly lots on Copeland Drive. The site includes the foundations of a house and barn, several wells, a silo, causeway and ramp. Until recent subdivision construction, the land had been undisturbed for about a century. Based on preliminary surveys in 1990 and 1991, the Massachusetts Historical Commission has determined that the Abbott site could contribute information meaningful to local, state and national history. The site has the potential to contribute significant information on "... vernacular buildings, historical land use, and the socio-economic interaction of rural farms with village, regional and international markets."

The site is listed in the State Register of Historic Places, and a Preservation Restriction has been placed on the site. However, little more can be done while it remains in private ownership split between 3 owners. If the Town is able to purchase the site, it can preserve the site appropriately and possibly have an archaeological investigation conducted. The costs for acquisition have not been determined.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Affordable Housing Resources

At present, 14.26% of Bedford's housing units (669 units) are classified as affordable "subsidized housing" by the state's Department of Housing and Community Development (for the purposes of

Chapter 40B). Actually, only 350 units are affordable but state rules count market rate units in a mixed income rental development so we get credit for the following 669 units:

- Ashby Place, 80 affordable apartments reserved for seniors and handicapped
- Bedford Meadows, 10 affordable homeownership homes out of 40
- Bedford Village, a 96-unit apartment complex with a mix of 24 affordable and 72 market units, all of which count as affordable
- Elm Street, 12 affordable rental units in duplexes
- Old Billerica Road, 4 affordable rental units of special needs housing
- Railroad Avenue, 8 rental units of affordable special needs housing
- Patriot Place, 10 apartments with a mix of 7 affordable and 3 market units
- Village at Concord Road, a 20 unit development with a mix of ownership and rental units (5 affordable and 15 market), of which 14 units count as affordable
- Avalon at Great Meadow, a 139-unit apartment complex with a mix of 35 affordable and 104 market units, all of which count as affordable
- 34-36 Summer Street, 2 affordable condominiums
- Stephen Lane House, 2 affordable condominiums
- Village at Bedford Woods, a development with 88 condos of which 22 are affordable
- Heritage at Bedford Springs, 164 apartments with a mix of 33 affordable and 131 market units, all of which count as affordable
- 46 affordable DMR housing units
- Eight affordable DMH housing units
- Veterans Administration Hospital, 60 SRO units, all of which are affordable
- Shawsheen Ridge, 6 affordable condominiums, none of which count as affordable under state guidelines

Some of these housing units have been completed. Others have been approved but not yet built.

We have now passed the state's 10% affordable housing unit guideline. This means that the Bedford Zoning Board of Appeals can choose to deny or approve with conditions any Comprehensive Permit without concern that the state Housing Appeals Committee will overrule because we don't have enough affordable housing.

Implications of Gaining Local Control of Housing Permits

Surpassing the state guideline of 10% affordable housing is a cause for celebration and congratulation. Several years ago, we set a goal of reaching this milestone. We imposed on ourselves a property tax surcharge that allowed us to do this by funding local affordable housing efforts, and we accomplished our goal. This marks the first time since Chapter 40B became law in 1969 that Bedford has local control over housing permits. Very few suburbs can say this.

Does this mean that we don't need to create more affordable housing? No. There continues to be a severe shortage of affordable housing in Bedford and throughout the Boston area. Young people are leaving the Boston area and moving to other places with lower housing costs. The same is true for seniors. We have a moral obligation to provide housing that addresses the needs of the town and region.

We also must remember that the state formula does not stand still. The state recalculates the denominator in their affordable housing fraction (the bottom number, the total number of housing units in Bedford) every ten years based on the decennial census. In approximately 2011, that number will increase from 4,692 (the number from the 2000 census) to a higher number. We estimate that the new number will be approximately 5,300 housing units but it could be more. To stay above the 10% threshold, we will need at least 530 affordable housing units.

That might seem a safe bet since we have 669 affordable housing units now but this number is fragile and not indicative of our true affordable housing inventory. Why fragile? Some of the projects that currently count have not been built. If they are not built soon, they won't count any more. Some units come and go from year to year (like the DMR and DMH units). And some developments that have been built (like Bedford Village) are subject to "expiring use" clauses that allow their owners to convert them to market rate. We must ensure that this does not happen. Why not indicative of our true affordable housing inventory? Because in mixed-income rental developments like Avalon, all of the housing units count as affordable on the state inventory but only part (25% for Avalon) are actually affordable. And even those affordable units are only affordable to people making 80% AMI (defined below, roughly \$50,000 per year).

The true effect of achieving local control of Housing Permits is that we can now decide how to continue building housing in Bedford. The goals below are taken from the town's 2002 Comprehensive Plan. Because we have funding (CPA funds) and local control over permitting (since the ZBA has local control over Comprehensive Permits), we have a great deal of leverage. We can and should encourage affordable housing that forwards our goals.

Affordable Housing Goals

Goal 1: Meet local housing needs along the full range of incomes, while promoting diversity and the stability of individuals and families living in Bedford.

Bedford residents have long indicated their support for diversity in economic status, age, religion, race and ethnicity. The preservation and production of affordable housing is a proven method for promoting diversity, allowing individuals and families with more limited means to afford to live in town. The town will utilize Community Preservation funds to create new environments that offer current and future residents a wide range of housing options including mixed-use housing, senior residential developments, supportive housing alternatives, live-work spaces, and artist workspaces.

Goal 2: Ensure that new affordable housing is harmonious with the existing community.

Developments will incorporate a number of characteristics designed to maintain a low to medium density with locations scattered throughout the town while conserving the natural landscape.

Goal 3: Surpass the 10% State standard for affordable housing.

In order to ensure that future affordable housing development is consistent with the needs and character of the town, Bedford must meet and exceed the state's 10% affordable housing standard. If we have not achieved that milestone, the town will be considered deficient in this area.

Goal 4: Leverage other public and private resources to the greatest extent possible.

Bedford does not receive federal or state funding for affordable housing on an entitlement basis. The Bedford Housing Partnership will be creative in leveraging public and private resources to make affordable housing development possible. Creativity will be demonstrated by combining Community Preservation funds with the various private, state, and federal resources that are available on a non-entitlement "competitive" basis. This will include Federal Home Loan Bank funds, federal HOME, Housing Stabilization, and Housing Innovations funds, and Federal Low Income Housing Tax credits.

Affordable Housing Needs

Bedford has established an affordable housing development strategy based on the goals listed above: encouraging the creation of affordable housing that is harmonious with the existing community and meets local and regional needs. We have had good success with this strategy so far. Several affordable housing developments are under construction and more are on the drawing boards. As noted above, we have now achieved local control over housing permits and we expect to meet the state's 10% affordable housing guideline this fall.

CPA funding is crucial to building affordable units that meet the Town's needs and further our housing goals. Without CPA funding, the only developments that are economically feasible involve putting lots of units (mostly market rate) on a small parcel of land. With CPA funding, many other options are feasible.

Affordable housing has many definitions and addresses many different income levels. For now, our primary focus is on the threshold set by the state's Chapter 40B guidelines, which consider a housing unit as affordable if it is subsidized by state or federal programs that support low- and moderate-income households, at no more than 80% of the Area Median Income (AMI). The following charts show what 80% AMI is and what the maximum purchase and rental prices are under the latest state guidelines for the Town of Bedford. All of these numbers are subject to change, especially the condo and home sales prices which vary somewhat depending on interest rates.

Now that we have achieved local control over housing permits, we will reexamine our previous focus on housing for 80% AMI. We may want to prepare developments designed for other income levels, either below or above the 80% AMI figure. We will also probably want to focus on underserved populations such as low-income seniors who may own their home but have little savings otherwise.

TOWN OF BEDFORD COMMUNITY PRESERVATION PROGRAM AND PLAN
 FALL 2008, VERSION 1.0, DRAFT

MAXIMUM ANNUAL HOUSEHOLD INCOME AT 80% AMI
 (HUD 2007 GREATER BOSTON AREA)

# OF PERSONS IN HOUSEHOLD	MAXIMUM ANNUAL INCOME AT 80% AMI
1 PERSON	\$46,300
2 PEOPLE	\$52,950
3 PEOPLE	\$59,550
4 PEOPLE	\$66,150

AFFORDABLE PRICES AT 80% AMI IN BEDFORD
 (FOR A FAMILY OF 1-4 PEOPLE)

CONDO OR HOUSE FOR SALE

1 BEDROOM	\$135,000 - \$170,000
2 BEDROOMS	\$150,000 - \$195,000
3 BEDROOMS	\$165,000 - \$215,000

RENTAL PER MONTH (INCLUDING UTILITIES)

1 BEDROOM	\$1,150
2 BEDROOMS	\$1,300
3 BEDROOMS	\$1,600

Current Proposals

Possible Future Proposals

Affordable Housing Fund

The goal of this Fund would be to provide ongoing funding to ensure Bedford's long-term ability to meet affordable housing needs in a fashion consistent with Bedford's Comprehensive Plan. Through this Fund, Bedford can maintain the fiscal flexibility and stability needed to continue to develop small, scattered site housing that fits in with the character of Bedford and meets people's needs, to preserve the affordable housing that we have in place, and to respond to proposals for new affordable housing.

There are four categories of need for funds in the Affordable Housing Fund: the invaluable housing consultant, the Bedford Housing Authority Rehabilitation, preserving existing affordable housing, and new housing opportunities. CPA funds will certainly be requested in the future to support

affordable housing and meeting the needs of the community as it is really the only source of funding available.

Affordable Housing Consultant

A part-time affordable housing support consultant has been funded by \$25,000 per year in CPA funds for FY03 through FY07. This consultant has proved invaluable in helping the Bedford Housing Partnership analyze several Comprehensive Permit applications, especially in doing in-depth financial analyses. She has also prepared the Town's Planned Production Plan and done administrative work related to Bedford's membership in the MetroWest HOME Consortium. The Town receives approximately \$25,000 a year in federal HOME affordable housing funds from this Consortium. While the funds previously approved for the affordable housing consultant are adequate for the time being, more funds will probably be required in the future.

Other Affordable Housing Efforts

CPA funds will certainly be requested in years to come to support affordable housing efforts in Bedford. As in the past, the Town may undertake affordable housing developments itself, continue past programs that promote affordable housing (such as the Condo Buy-Down Program), or decide to assist private developers in their own efforts. And a Senior Housing Task Force has examined housing needs and resources for seniors in town. However, we do not have specific proposals at this time so we will not include these in the Community Preservation Program yet.

RECREATION

Recreation Resources. Bedford residents enjoy a variety of resources that support recreational activities. Springs Brook Park provides swimming and other summer fun. Playing fields support organized sports such as soccer, lacrosse, baseball, and others. The Town Center houses many activities for seniors, youth, and children. Conservation land and bike trails around town provide opportunities for hiking, biking, walking, and many other activities. The Bedford schools put on shows and host other activities. Land owned by private owners or other governmental bodies provides other opportunities (such as fireworks at the VA hospital).

Recreation Goals. Most of the goals listed in the Open Space section above apply here, but will not be reproduced here to save space. In addition, the Bedford Recreation Commission has identified the following long-term goals, many of which pertain to this area:

- Goal 1: Provide for better, fuller recreational utilization of currently town-owned lands and facilities
- Goal 2: Improve recreational program offerings to traditionally under-served populations
- Goal 3: Further broaden the diversity of Recreation Department-administered programs to activities beyond traditional "sports and games"
- Goal 4: While maintaining town center as the focus of recreational activity, decentralize appropriate activities to neighborhood locations

Goal 5: Coordinate new recreation program initiatives with the plans and activities of other town organizations that serve different, but complimentary, agendas (e.g., school physical education program, land conservation efforts, neighborhood association activities, etc.)

Goal 6: Evaluate and improve as needed the safety standards attending all town recreational facilities and programs.

Current Proposals

Springs Brook Park Debt Service

Previous Town Meetings authorized the issuance of bonds to fund improvements to Springs Brook Park. The project has been completed, but funding of \$304,950 is needed for current debt service in FY 2009.

Possible Future Proposals

Playing Field Creation and Preservation

The Town of Bedford faces many issues with playing fields. The number of playing fields in town continues to lag considerably behind demand. Playing fields are constantly under threat from other town needs (especially expansion of buildings). And several of our playing fields are on non-town-owned land. While the use of this land is greatly appreciated, it is not likely to continue indefinitely. In light of this situation, the Spring 2006 Annual Town Meeting approved funding of \$50,000 for a study of future needs and opportunities with respect to our playing fields.

A Fall 2007 Special Town Meeting approved \$425,000 for the first phase of these efforts. However, additional funds will likely be needed to complete the rest of the work.

Additional Playing Field Creation and Preservation

The Playing Field Study carried out last year identified several ways in which we can increase utilization of Bedford's playing fields and expand athletic opportunities without adding real estate. As noted above, the Community Preservation Committee has recommended immediate funding for some of these steps. Others are planned for later years. Examples include the creation of playing fields on the land purchased from St. Michael's and the addition of practice level lighting at the South Road fields (allowing for extended use of these fields, especially during the spring and fall).

Installation of synthetic turf at the current High School football field is also under consideration. This would allow four sports (football, soccer, field hockey, and lacrosse) to use the one field, greatly increasing its utilization. While it may be hard to picture synthetic turf in Bedford, increasing utilization of existing fields provides reduced cost as compared to the price of purchasing and developing additional land, more usage for existing facilities at this field (such as the snack bar, seating, and lighting), lower ongoing costs for field maintenance, and reduced environmental impact by leaving more land undisturbed.

Hartwell Forest Boardwalk Construction (Recreation aspects)

The future Hartwell Forest Boardwalk Construction project noted above under Multi-Use Projects will improve recreational opportunities such as walking and skiing in the Town Forest, as well as improving access to possible future playing fields off South Road.

Minuteman Bikeway Extension Construction (Recreation aspects)

The future Minuteman Bikeway Extension Construction project noted above under Multi-Use Projects will expand recreational opportunities directly through use of the bikeway extension and indirectly by improving access to resources in the center of town such as the Skate Park, playground, and playing fields.

Improvements to Springs Brook Park Access Road

Safety and accessibility improvements to the Springs Brook Park access road are highly desired.

Athletic Field Fencing

Construction of fencing at several athletic fields is needed.

Tent for Springs Brook Park

A tent for use at Springs Brook Park would greatly assist with park operations.

ADMINISTRATIVE COSTS

The Community Preservation Committee attempts to keep our administrative costs to a minimum. We are all volunteers and (unlike some neighboring towns' Community Preservation Committees) we write all of our own reports. However, we do sometimes incur administrative costs. These include legal costs associated with real estate and other transactions, accounting fees to ensure close tracking of the finances related to the many projects we have funded, hourly fees for a Recording Secretary who provides an official and public record of all our meetings, and the cost of membership in the Community Preservation Coalition (a non-profit organization that provides us assistance in navigating and interpreting the complexities of the Community Preservation Act).

We generally request an appropriation of \$5,000 to \$18,000 per year for these purposes, depending on the amount of legal costs in any particular year. We have not yet made any such request for FY09 but anticipate that we will do so before the Spring 2008 Annual Town Meeting. To put this into context, \$18,000 (our highest annual request) is less than one percent of our FY08 budget of \$2,056,849.92. So this is a pretty good deal. We will continue to strive to keep our administrative costs low but we must also ensure that Bedford's Community Preservation funds are properly managed and that our process is open and fair. As Bedford citizens and taxpayers, we are committed to these principles.

IV

SELECTION CRITERIA

The Community Preservation Committee requires that all proposed projects be eligible for CPA funding according to the requirements described in the CPA legislation.

Projects are then evaluated with consideration of the following criteria, although not all criteria will be appropriate for every project:

- Consistency with Bedford's Master Plan, Open Space and Recreation Plan, and other planning documents that have received wide scrutiny and input
- Feasibility
- Urgency
- Affordable cost
- Serving a currently under-served population
- Serving multiple needs and populations
- Consistency with recent town meeting actions
- Preservation of currently owned town assets
- Acquisition of threatened resources
- Multiple sources of funding
- Environmentally responsible

The Town Meeting has the ultimate say, as the law requires Town Meeting approval for all Community Preservation Committee funding recommendations.

V

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Community Preservation Committee has approved the following preliminary recommendations:

- To recommend that the town appropriate \$11,000 for Altmann Conservation Area Restoration.
- To recommend that the town appropriate \$50,000 for the Historic Properties Preservation Fund.
- To recommend that the town transfer \$10,000 from the Rail Diesel Car CPA article for Freight House Restoration.
- To recommend that the town appropriate \$5,000 for the Town Tree Inventory.

VI

SOLICITATION OF PROJECT PROPOSALS

The Community Preservation Committee welcomes new project proposals that may contribute to community preservation in Bedford. Please submit such proposals to the Committee using the form and guidelines on the next few pages.

Project Submission Sheet

Community Preservation Committee

Submitter:	Submission Date
Submitter's address and phone number.	Purpose: (please select all that apply)
Town committee (if applicable)	<input type="checkbox"/> Open Space <input type="checkbox"/> Affordable Housing <input type="checkbox"/> Historic Preservation <input type="checkbox"/> Recreation

Project Name: _____

Description:

Please provide detailed information including cost estimates. Include other pages as needed.

Fiscal Year	Total Cost	CPC Funds Requested	Other Funding Sources
2009			
2010			
2011			
2012			
2013			
Total			

How does this project help preserve Bedford's character?

Consider and address the items listed in the Selection Criteria section of the Town of Bedford Community Preservation Program and Plan.

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For Community Preservation Committee Use

Received on:	Associated Town Committee:
Reviewed on:	Determination:

Guidelines for Submission

- 1) Each project request must be submitted on the Community Preservation Committee Project Submission Sheet (this form).
- 2) Requests should be within a 5 year period from FY 2009 to FY 2013
- 3) Requests must include the need for the item and be documented with appropriate support information.
- 4) Obtain quotes for project costs whenever possible. If not, cost estimates may be used provided the basis of the estimate is fully explained.
- 5) If request is part of a longer-term project, include the total project cost.
- 6) For Departments or Committees that have multiple project requests, prioritize projects.
- 7) Requests received by August 31, 2008 will be considered for recommendation at the Fall 2008 Special Town Meeting.

Please keep in mind that there are legal limitations on what CPA funds can be used for. For example the funds cannot be used to build gymnasiums, stadiums, or any similar structure. Also, they cannot be spent on maintenance or used to supplant funds being used for existing community preservation purposes. If you are in doubt about your project's eligibility, please submit it so we have the opportunity to review it.

Thank you for your input.

Community Preservation Committee
Bedford, MA

Please submit your form to:

Community Preservation Committee
c/o Town Manager's Office
10 Mudge Way
Bedford, MA 01730