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# CAMPAIGN TIPS FOR BRINGING THE COMMUNITY PRESERVATION ACT TO YOUR COMMUNITY

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"[A local initiative] has to be seen as a compelling need, it has to be affordable, and they have to trust that the money will be spent as promised. And then there has to be a good campaign." - Steve Glazer, Political Strategist

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CONGRATULATIONS, CPA IS ON THE BALLOT IN YOUR COMMUNITY!  
BUT WHAT COMES NEXT? A SUCCESSFUL CPA CAMPAIGN NEEDS THREE THINGS:  
**COMMUNICATION, PEOPLE, AND ACTION!**  
WE'VE PUT TOGETHER THIS GUIDE TO HELP YOU COORDINATE A  
WINNING CPA CAMPAIGN FOR YOUR COMMUNITY.

# Communication

- ♦ What is your message?
- ♦ How will you convey that message?
- ♦ What is the best approach?

## What will CPA adoption do for your community?

- \* Why would your community want to support the CPA? What will CPA allow your community to achieve?
- \* Use Specific Examples and Stories:
  - ♦ Community housing (“your kids can buy a house in town!”)
  - ♦ Special land areas that are threatened
  - ♦ Historic community buildings falling under disrepair
  - ♦ Projects that **could have** been completed with CPA
- \* Use words like: **Local Control, Housing for Seniors, Veterans, & Young Families, Investment, Quality of Life, Preservation, Protection, and Community Character**
- \* Avoid words like **Taxes and Fees**
- \* Be prepared to make brief presentation every time you speak with someone! No matter how much outreach you’ve done, some people will be hearing about the CPA for the first time.



## Craft your message using the “Four C’s”

- \* Make sure your message is concise, compelling, consistent, and controlled by you.
- \* Your description of the CPA should be as simple as possible and jargon-free.
- \* Boil it Down to a Core Message:
  - ♦ “Invest in our Community”
  - ♦ “It’s a Good Deal”
  - ♦ “Preserving our Community’s Character”
- \* Focus on the CPA’s selling points and benefits.
- \* Share information that people can actually absorb—don’t overwhelm them, especially with numbers.
- \* Don’t be afraid to be emotional or hopeful. Make the message personal— it’s your home, after all!





# People

- ◆ Who are your supporters?
- ◆ Who has local influence?
- ◆ Who can help build your campaign?

## Assemble a diverse group of supporters

- \* Focus on building a group of supporters from your community that is as diverse as possible. However, don't feel that you need to educate and persuade the entire community. **Strategically focus on those who are willing to give CPA a chance.**
- \* Identify your potential supporters by going out into your community:
  - ◆ Meet with other groups, such as the Council on Aging Club or Sportsmen's Clubs
  - ◆ Educate people about CPA in high traffic areas such as town stores, parks, and athletic fields
  - ◆ Host your own events, such as a public gathering with food or a neighborhood coffee hour



## Influential support—who will publicly advocate for CPA?

- \* Specific, influential members of your community can make tremendous strides in outreach, education, and swaying public opinion towards CPA adoption. Consider the following ideas for building your local support base:
  - ◆ Community groups (Friends of the Library, Sportsmen's Clubs, Council on Aging, PTA, Garden Club, Rotary and Lions Clubs)
  - ◆ Elected officials (Selectboard or City & Town Councilors, Finance Committee, Planning Board, Cemetery Commission)
  - ◆ Well-known and well-respected local individuals—every community has them!



## Don't go it alone! Build your campaign!

- \* The more people involved in the campaign, the more the workload can be shared. **Reach out and ASK for their help.**
- \* Be proactive in talking to the media. Make friends with your local reporter and make sure that your campaign's voice is heard.
- \* Maintain an appropriate public face for the campaign. The messenger can sometimes be just as important as the message.
- \* Choose presenters who are respected by other community members and who are ready to rebut, respond, and reassure in the face of pressure.

# Action!

- ♦ Educate Your Voters!
- ♦ Mobilize Fundraising Efforts!
- ♦ Be Aware of Opposition!
- ♦ Get out the Vote!

## Let your voters know why they should adopt CPA

- \* You can use various means of educational outreach to inform your voters. Try some of the following ideas to get the word out:
  - ♦ Media (social media, newspapers, local TV & cable news, online blogs)
  - ♦ Mailings (physical or email)
  - ♦ Public forums
  - ♦ Presentations to community boards & commissions
  - ♦ One-on-one meetings with key people
- \* Plan your campaign so that the energy and momentum build until Election Day. Coordinate media outreach and visibility tactics so they peak at the end of the campaign, without time for the opposition to respond.



## Support your campaign through fundraising

- \* Visit [www.grassrootsfund.org](http://www.grassrootsfund.org) to learn about different fundraising options. This organization can fund educational forums, mailing expenses, or copying for your campaign. However, you cannot use that money to explicitly lobby– for example, they will not be able to fund “Vote Yes for CPA” signs.
- \* Ask your supporters! Along with your educational materials, ask supporters for funds to make your campaign a success.

## Be Aware of Any Likely Opposition

- \* Try to predict likely criticisms of CPA and address them upfront.
- \* **However, don't waste your valuable time and energy getting into a debate with people you know will never support CPA!**

## Get Out the Vote!

- \* When Election Day draws near, get your supporters to commit to going out to the polls!
  - ♦ Send informational flyers and/or postcards 1 week before the vote
  - ♦ Schedule “letters to the editor” 1 week before the election
  - ♦ The night before or day of the election, call your supporters and remind them to get out and vote
  - ♦ Organize carpools or rides if necessary

