

Example of Pro-CPA Letter to the Editor (edit details for your community)
Special thanks to the letter's original author, Martha Maguire of Wareham, MA

To the Editor:

In 2003, I purchased 10 acres of open space, commissioned a historic properties survey, provided funding for fencing on recreational land - all for \$35.26. But that was nothing. The following year, I picked up a whopping 101 acres of waterfront property on the Agawam River plus 5.5 acres of beachfront property at Swift's Beach and put a down payment on the Tremont Nail Company building - for the colossal sum of \$37.28.

Since then I've underwritten the mapping of a burial ground, funded several housing studies intended to address Wareham's ongoing 40B problem, contributed on a major scale to the restoration and rehabilitation of the Oak Grove School for conversion to a Head Start center and of the historic Spinney Memorial Building in Onset slated to become a much needed and overdue library branch. This fall, I am contemplating a purchase of even more pristine open space with river frontage. My out of pocket expenses the last two years: \$47.90 and \$55.48 respectively.

How have I managed to make my dollars accomplish so much? I am neither a magician nor a clever real estate speculator. What I am is a Wareham resident who benefits from our town's far-sighted adoption of the Community Preservation Act. The dollar figures cited above represent a 3 percent surcharge on my real estate taxes and the numbers boil down to about 15 cents a day. True, other Wareham residents have also contributed to fund these purchases based on the value of their own real estate, and many, many more have paid even less than I. Those who rent, live in mobile home parks or own property assessed at \$100,000 or below have contributed nothing at all. And yet, we all enjoy the benefits of CPA projects.

Our open space purchases reduce future tax rates (the alternative is more residential development which means higher taxes all around). And, every one of our CPA projects improves the quality of life we currently enjoy in Wareham, which, by the way, has the added bonus of enhancing all our property values.

How privileged we are to be in a position to save historic landmarks and landscapes and enjoy access to open spaces most of us could never afford to own. Plus, by adopting CPA at the maximum 3 percent real estate tax surcharge level, we have attracted additional public funds to Wareham. The state of Massachusetts has matched our CPA funds dollar for dollar in 2003, 2004, and 2005 for a total of \$1,108,355, more than a million dollars that otherwise would never would have made it to our town.

I'm glad to play my part. And I am proud that together we have made such a dramatic difference in our community.

I believe we've also gained a more energized citizenry along the way: Since adopting CPA, Wareham has embarked on a massive zoning regulation rewriting project, launched a variety of housing initiatives and has seen the Wareham Land Trust grow by leaps and bounds. It's contagious! Now when we talk about Wareham and quality of life, we do so with pride and also, responsibility. CPA DOA? Not a chance. Not here, not now, no way.