

Goshen Implements the Community Preservation Act (CPA) in 2008

Goshen's 2008 property tax bills include a 3% surcharge for Goshen's share of the new Goshen Community Preservation Act Fund. Dollar for dollar, Goshen's contribution will be matched by the state of Massachusetts to pay for open space, historic preservation, community housing and recreation projects in Goshen.

CPA was adopted by Goshen at the 2007 Town Election in May, after 66 citizens signed a petition calling for a vote. Goshen became the 121st community in Massachusetts to adopt the CPA.

The first CPA grants will be distributed in fall 2008, after a local CPA committee proposes projects to be funded and they are approved by Town Meeting. The legislation enabling CPA was passed in 2000 by the Massachusetts legislature, and Goshen's CPA funds will be collected and distributed under its guidelines. With approximately \$45,000 collected from Goshen taxpayers matched 100% by the state's CPA Trust Fund, we anticipate that about \$90,000 will be available for grants in 2008.

This fall, a CPA committee will be appointed by the Select Board. It will be composed of seven members, one member each appointed by the Recreation Commission, Planning Board, Historic Commission, Open Space Committee, and Conservation Committee. Another person will be appointed in lieu of a Housing Authority representative, and another will be at-large member. The CPA Committee will evaluate proposals for CPA funds. By law, they must allocate at least 10% of the fund to each of three areas: open space, historic preservation, and community housing. The remaining 70% of the funds collected can go to any of the above areas, or to a recreation project. Funds can be saved for the future or spent, but all the funds collected that year from taxes and the state match must be allocated to one of the four areas. Anyone may propose a project for CPA funding whether or not they serve on one of the above boards. All projects must be approved at the Town Meeting before they can be funded.

Matching Funds: At the state level, the CPA Trust Fund accumulates money by a surcharge on all transactions at the Registry of Deeds, such as home sales and mortgage re-finances. In 2006, \$58.6 million was distributed to 102 communities in matching funds. The match has been at 100% since its inception, but some towns may see a drop as the housing market slows and the number of towns adopting the CPA grows. However, Goshen's match would remain at 100%, due to a three-round distribution formula that favors the smallest towns with property tax levies of under \$4 million as long as they have adopted the 3% surcharge.

Exemptions: The purpose and spirit of the CPA law is community preservation. Therefore, the CPA surcharge is not meant to be burdensome to townspeople. The Goshen CPA would exempt low-income families and low-to moderate-income seniors over 60 from the surcharge (see next page for income limits). Net household annual income is derived from household gross income minus an allowance for dependents and certain medical expenses. Applications for exemptions are available from the Assessor at the Town Office: 268-7856. (Office hours: Mon., 9:30-11:30 AM; Wed., 6:30-8:30 PM.)

Potential CPA Projects

Historic Preservation: Ensure that Goshen's historic John James memorial building can be used by future generations by restoring and renovating the front columns and façade, roof, windows, and heating system. Repair and preserve the historic gravestones, trees and landscaping in our beautiful town cemetery. Restore the unique architectural elements of the clock and belfry on the town office building.

Open Space and Recreation: Conserve and protect wildlife corridors, forests and scenic vistas. Assist landowners with permanently protecting their land from development. Install a new septic system and restrooms at Tilton Field. Construct a basketball court and another baseball field at Tilton Field. Renovate the town tennis courts. Link up and improve multi-user town trails including the Tilton Town Farm trail loop.

Community Housing: While the CPA would not raise enough funds to build new community housing, the CPA could be used for other community housing needs such as retrofitting housing for seniors to make them safer and handicapped accessible and providing assistance for first-time homebuyers.

CPA Tax Relief for Moderate Income Seniors and Low Income Households

Property owned and occupied by people who would qualify for low-income housing or low-to-moderate-income senior housing would be **exempt** from the surcharge. The income limits are:

Low-to Moderate-Income Seniors 60+

<u>Household Size</u>	<u>Income</u>
1	\$43,260
2	\$49,440
3	\$55,620
4	\$61,800
5	\$66,744

Low-Income Families

<u>Household Size</u>	<u>Income</u>
1	\$34,609
2	\$39,552
3	\$44,496
4	\$49,440
5	\$53,395
6	\$57,350
7	\$61,306
8	\$65,261

2007 median income for a Goshen family of four is \$61,800.

Figures from 2007 HUD Affordable Housing Income for Massachusetts (Goshen)