

Community Preservation Report — Spring 2020

The Community Preservation Committee has approved the following recommendations for the FY 2021 Advisory and Finance Committee's Consideration

April 2, 2020

ARTICLE ??. (Community Preservation) To see whether the Town shall vote to spend, or set aside for later spending, not less than 10 per cent of the annual revenues in the Community Preservation Fund for open space, not less than 10 per cent of the annual revenues for historic resources, and not less than 10 per cent of the annual revenues for community housing or to take any other action as may be allowed under the Community Preservation Act as requested by the Community Preservation Committee.

- A. To appropriate the sum of \$10,000 from Fiscal Year 2021 Community Preservation Fund estimated revenues for administrative and operating expenses of the Community Preservation Committee.

Supporting Statement – In addition to annual expenses such as dues, help with printing the warrant, etc., these monies are available to assist applicants with professional help in the application process.

- B. To appropriate the sum of \$50,000 for the preservation of Ellingwood Chapel from the FY2021 Community Preservation Fund estimated revenues to fund priority building envelope repairs identified in the 2018 conditions assessment and interior plaster repair and painting consistent with the application for CPA funding by the Nahant Cultural Council and Town of Nahant, and including all incidental and related costs.

Supporting Statement – The Chapel is an architectural treasure. Designed by internationally known architect, Ralph Adams Cram, the Ellingwood Chapel is listed in the National Register of Historic Places along with Greenlawn Cemetery. Having been returned to active use for services, concerts and events, the Chapel has actively served the community for the past 20 years. A comprehensive assessment of the Chapel in 2018 funded by a planning grant from Community Preservation identified some \$500,000 in necessary repairs. With a FY2019 CPA grant of \$112,000 matched by a Massachusetts Preservation Projects Fund grant of \$50,000, significant progress (a third of the estimated need) has been made in addressing critical water infiltration and masonry restoration. Celebrating its centennial, the Cultural Council and Town of Nahant are continuing the efforts to preserve the chapel and make it presentable for public use and enjoyment.

- C. To appropriate the sum of \$17,000 from FY 2021 Community Preservation estimated revenues to cover 20% of the cost of the Nahant Dory Club in procuring and installing a new gangway and davit apparatus from Town Wharf and two new floating docks for the purpose of promoting recreation in the Town of Nahant. The majority of the total cost of the project, \$83,830, will be borne by the Dory Club and will be no less than \$66,830. The Dory Club will provide a

professional engineering plan for the project, and the release of CPF funds will be contingent upon approval of the Town Administrator based on any independent engineering review of the plans he elects to engage, especially with regard to the impact of the new davit and gangway on the structural integrity of Town Wharf.

Supporting Statement – The Dory Club has long been the center in Nahant for instruction in sailing, boat safety, navigation, fleet racing and cruising, central recreation activities in our seaside community. The centerpiece of the program is the Nahant Sailing Program (NSP) which it provides and subsidizes primarily for the benefit of the children of Nahant. Three launches for the NSP are tied to the floats and safe access to them is essential for the program. The current two floats are disintegrating—their replacements will have more durable moorings—and the badly damaged gangway from Town Wharf needs to be replaced with one that will permit its elevation for secure storage during winter and harsh weather. In addition to NSP, other public services gladly provided by the Dory Club include serving as a venue for events of the Lions Club, Women’s Club, Garden Club, US Coast Guard Auxiliary, the Council on Aging, the Nahant Memorial Day Parade and SWIM (Safe Waters in Nahant).

- D. To appropriate the sum of \$6,000 from FY 2021 Community Preservation Fund estimated revenues to the Nahant Historical Society for professional archival conservation and preservation of historic Town documents and objects including all incidental and related costs.

Supporting Statement from the Community Preservation Committee – The mission of the Nahant Historical Society (NHS) is to “acquire, preserve and interpret artifacts of Nahant...for the enjoyment, education and enrichment of the public.” Support of this funding request will begin the first of a multi-year project by NHS to conserve, preserve, and digitize a number of artifacts, objects, and Town documents in their collection. This project will protect these items from further degradation and eventually make them digitally accessible to the public. Among the items to receive work in year one of this projected five year program: Articles of Incorporation – 1853, First Annual Report – 1854, Wood Letters – 1819, and Book of Common Prayer – 1701 (surviving gift to start Nahant Public Library in 1818). The Nahant Historical Society is providing a 100% match to this year’s funding recommendation to begin this project.

- E. To appropriate the sum of \$45,000 consisting of \$33,240 FY2021 Community Preservation fund estimated revenues and \$11,760 from the CPC Community Housing Reserve to address window-related building envelope issues at the Authority’s buildings located at 41-53 & 75-77 Spring Road & 7-9 Emerald Road including all incidental and related costs, and in effect repair deteriorated wood material surrounding the windows to preserve the building envelope structure and remove the current windows in 12 low income family units, remove the deteriorated materials, replace the materials with new material, and then re-install/re-use the same windows.

Supporting Statement – The Committee reviewed the application and determined a need existed. The Housing Director met with the Committee twice. She informed it that the current windows are fine, but the surrounding material has experienced substantial rotting from leaks on to material supporting the windows for several years. Failure to perform the project soon would result in more costly repairs later and much worse mold and other contaminant penetration. But, the Committee unanimously agreed that heightened assurances were needed that the project would be performed in a manner consistent with quality industry standards. The Director explained to the Committee that about three years ago Nahant Housing entered into a new relationship with a state sponsored Region’s Capital Assistance Team “RCAT.” RCAT aids small housing authorities, like Nahant’s, with such matters for long-term management & preservation of assets. For these reasons, the Committee supports the grant request.

- F. To appropriate the sum of \$155,000 from CPC Community Housing Reserve for the purposes of preserving the building envelope of the Nahant Housing Authority buildings located on Spring and Greystone Roads including all incidental and related costs, but if and only if NHA has first reported the exact and detailed nature of any preservation efforts it intends to, and receives approval to proceed from, the CPC and the Town Administrator before the CPC releases any such funds for the purposes stated herein.

Supporting Statement – The Committee discussed the Nahant Housing Authority’s application in great detail. The Committee expressed concern that the original proposal to preserve the buildings envelopes, protect against mold and other outside penetration, and to reverse further deterioration, the material initially proposed did not meet community standards for the Town’s character and failed to blend with surrounding homes and structures. In short, vinyl, though durable may not be the best solution. The CPC agreed a problem and need existed, however. Accordingly, the NHA Commissioners agreed that the NHA’s Executive Director, Ms. Kelly Collins, would meet with, consult, and work with CPC Members and the Town’s Administrator to find a solution agreeable to the Town and the CPC that worked best for the Town, while simultaneously protecting the assets and residents therein. Only after an agreeable solution is found, would any funds be released, if at all. Many residents have expressed concern for the need to keep those properties in good condition from what many passersby observe as, at minimum, unsightly and increasingly concerning conditions. Given those stringent parameters, the CPC supports the grant request.

- G. To appropriate the sum of \$41,000 from FY2021 Community Preservation estimated revenues for Bailey’s Hill Park - Fort Ruckman East Slope Restoration, consistent with the Town’s request for CPA funding, including all incidental and related costs.

Supporting Statement – The Nahant Open Space and Recreation Plan Committee identified the Bailey’s Hill Park and connected Heritage Trail area as ready for restoration. Once done it will increase the open space in and around Bailey’s Hill park. Passive recreation areas will be increased, made safer and open to the public. The Nahant Department of Public Works is ready to begin phase one of the project this year.

The Bailey’s Hill Complex is a well-used and valued open space in Nahant. The Heritage Trail traverses the bunkers and provides passive recreation for residents. The subject location is adjacent to the Heritage trail, a well-used walking trail that connects open spaces in Nahant.

The Nahant DPW Director provided a plan to the Open Space and Recreation Plan Committee to restore the east slope of Bailey’s Hill. This area has been neglected for many years. There are extensive invasive species that choke off native vegetation. In the past the DPW has used the area in front of the bunker for dumping of construction waste such as bricks, old asphalt, boulders, and discarded tree trunks. The dumping ended years ago and the DPW has removed some of the old debris. In its current condition it is not usable as open space or recreation.

The Community Preservation Committee ("CPC") recognizes the need to restore this popular park and heritage trail system. The intention is to fund half of the restoration requirements for \$41,000 this year. Next year, we anticipate the grant application will be resubmitted to the CPC for the completion phase of the restoration project. The grant application for next year may include private donations to support the project.

The CPC recommends this article as an important initiative for community preservation of open space and recreation.

- H. To appropriate the sum of \$20,000 from Fiscal Year 2021 Community Preservation estimated revenues to the Nahant Preservation Trust for planning and preparation costs related to the designation of East Nahant as a State and National Historic District consistent with the application for CPA funding by the Nahant Preservation Trust, including all incidental and related costs.

Supporting Statement from the Community Preservation Committee – In 1989 a town-wide Nahant Historic Resource Survey was prepared by Northfields Preservation Associates. This survey recognized areas in the East/Northeast of Nahant as historically significant. The Nahant Preservation Trust has obtained a quote for professional services to complete the application process required to designate this area as a State and National Historic District. Achieving this designation will add this area to a list of over 900 National Register Districts in Massachusetts. The National Register of Historic Places, begun in 1966, promotes an appreciation of our diverse cultural heritage.

The benefits of a designation of this portion of Nahant as a State and National Historic District are:

- *Recognition of the significance of a property to the community, state, and/or Nation.*
- *National Register listing allows the owners of income-producing properties certain federal tax incentives for substantial rehabilitation according to standards set by the Department of the Interior.*
- *National Register properties are afforded limited protection from adverse effects of federally assisted projects; and, through automatic inclusion in the State Register of Historic Places, limited protection from state actions.*
- *Inclusion in the State Register of Historic Places, which comes automatically with National Register listing, provides eligibility for matching state grants for restoration of properties owned by private nonprofit organizations and municipalities, when such grants are available.*

Although the proposed Historic District does include a number of residential homes, the designation in no way interferes with a property owner's right to alter, manage, or sell the property when using private funds.

The process of achieving this designation is extensive and costly. The Nahant Preservation Trust has generously offered a 100% match of funds to achieve this designation.

- I. To appropriate the sum of \$27,000 from the FY2021 Community Preservation estimated revenues to make improvements to the Lowlands Softball Fields for the purpose of promoting recreation in the Town of Nahant, consistent with the Town of Nahant's request for CPA funding including all incidental and related costs.

Supporting Statement – The Lowlands softball fields, south of Nahant Road, are one of the major features of the gateway to Nahant. Last year CPC funds supported renovations to the Women’s Softball Field which have greatly improved the appearance and utility of that facility. On the adjoining Men’s Softball Field the deteriorating backstop, benches and outfield fencing are unsightly and unsafe. This project will replace them, and purchase new benches for the Women’s field as well and a sign announcing both fields.

- J. To appropriate the sum of \$165,000 consisting of \$128,165 from FY2021 Community Preservation estimated revenues and \$36,835 from CPC General Reserves for preservation of the Town Hall to fund priority handicapped access work consistent with the request for by the Town of Nahant, including all incidental and related costs.

Supporting Statement – Nahant’s Town Hall is used intensively for meetings large and small; for office use and public use for records, payments, and inquiries; for voting; and notably by the Council on Aging’s Tiffany Room where meals are served along with social and recreational activities. At present handicapped access is limited to portions of the ground floor level. Technically the Council on Aging space is not handicapped accessible. The exterior ramp that once served the upper floor is in poor repair and does not meet the current handicapped code. A Community Preservation funded assessment and recommendations study (FY17 and FY19) has guided the scope and budget recommendations for this appropriation which will build a new ramp to the upper floor, make the Council on Aging space accessible, and modify the restrooms and door hardware to meet the Massachusetts Architectural Access Boards code requirements.

- K. To appropriate the sum of \$24,000 Community Preservation Fund General Reserves for the use of the Town of Nahant to make improvements to Little Nahant Playground for the purpose of promoting recreation and the use of open space in the Town of Nahant consistent with the request by the Town of Nahant, including all incidental and related costs.

Supporting Statement – Little Nahant Playground is the only open space on Little Nahant and its only recreation facility for children. The surface of the park badly damaged in recent flooding will be repaired by a grant from FEMA. The previous recreation equipment had to be removed for safety considerations. It will be replaced by a multipurpose jungle gym carefully selected to provide maximum utility and durability—built of recycled plastic, impervious to salt – at a reasonable cost. The initial grant request of \$30,000 covering replacement of deteriorated benches and tables was reduced to \$24,000 because some of that furniture was repaired, but primarily to insure that adequate funds are available to buy a high quality centerpiece jungle gym, with the hope that private donations to purchase new furniture may be stimulated by the restored equipment and active use of the park.

- L. To appropriate the sum of \$12,000 from Community Preservation Fund General Reserves for the use of the Town of Nahant to restore the basketball court on Spring Road for the purpose of promoting recreation in the Town of Nahant consistent with the request by the Town of Nahant including all incidental and related expenses.

Supporting Statement – The once heavily used basketball court on Spring Road has fallen into disrepair as the court surface, basketball hoops, and backboards have deteriorated and invasive plants including poison ivy have crept from the periphery onto the playing surface. This project will underwrite a great deal of work at a modest cost: resurfacing and repainting lines on the court,

two new steel stanchions, fiberglass backboards and hoops, and approximately 175 feet of fencing on two sides of the court to keep plants out and basketballs in.

M. To appropriate for the payment of debt service of principal and borrowing on the \$400,000 Public Library Bonding authorized by the 2020 Annual Town Meeting (Article 16C), the sum of \$60,400 from Community Preservation Fund General Reserves.

Supporting Statement – This the second year of a ten-year bond supporting repairs to the Public Library.

N: To see if the Town will vote to appropriate through borrowing the sum of \$1,500,000 to pay a portion of the costs to acquire, by gift, negotiated purchase, eminent domain taking, or otherwise, the fee simple interest, or any lesser interest in the land described as [insert description of the property], for conservation purposes, including the payment of all costs incidental and related thereto, subject to: (i) a later vote of the Town to so acquire the above described property, and (ii) the receipt by the Town of grants or gifts in the amount of at least \$3,000,000, or such larger amount, as shall be required, together with the amount appropriated by this vote, to pay the purchase price or *pro tanto* amount, as the case may be, of acquiring such interest in the above described property, and to take any other action relative thereto.

Motion __: [I move] that the Town votes to appropriate the sum of \$1,500,000 to pay a portion of the costs to acquire, by gift, negotiated purchase, eminent domain taking, or otherwise, the fee simple interest, or any lesser interest in the land described as [insert description of the property], for conservation purposes, including the payment of all costs incidental and related thereto, subject to: (i) a later vote of the Town to so acquire the above described property, and (ii) the receipt by the Town of grants or gifts in the amount of at least \$3,000,000, or such larger amount, as shall be required, together with the amount appropriated by this vote, to pay the purchase price or *pro tanto* amount, as the case may be, of acquiring such interest in the above described property; that to meet this appropriation, the Treasurer, with the approval of the Selectmen, is authorized to borrow said amount under and pursuant to M.G.L. c. 44B, or any other enabling authority, and to issue bonds or notes of the Town therefor. Any premium received upon the sale of any bonds or notes approved by this vote, less any such premium applied to the payment of the costs of issuance of such bonds or notes, may be applied to the payment of costs approved by this vote in accordance with M.G.L. c. 44, §20, thereby reducing the amount authorized to be borrowed to pay such costs by a like amount.

Supporting Statement – The Committee found all aspects of the application consistent with and well within the parameters of the Community Preservation Act. Further, the BOS must legally secure as binding historic gifts totaling at least \$3 million from private donations. The \$1,500,000 borrowing will be repaid from CPC funds over 30 years to cover principal and interest (P&I). Together, these costs address the acquisition of the easements and associated legal and other fees.

Further still, the Committee also observed that the matters raised by the Application have become increasingly urgent. Current and proposed activity on that property make even more difficult the Town's ability to preserve and protect the open space and wildlife preserve that is East Point. Moreover, the Application reflects a measured approach regarding a matter involving a high

degree of important public concerns. Moreover still, repeated demonstrations of an overwhelming number of Nahant residents made clear their desire to preserve as open space, further protect from adverse climate conditions, and use as watershed and wetlands the areas of Canoe Beach and East Point at issue. If approved, this Warrant will provide funds necessary to acquire the property interests to be preserved for the current residents ourselves and our posterity. Consequently, for these and many reasons, the Committee highly recommends and urges approval.

- O. To recommend that the Town transfer \$3,809.93 from the unexpended funds appropriated to the Town of Nahant by the Annual Town Meeting from FY2014 Community Preservation funds for the Recreation Feasibility Study for the Flash Road recreation area to the Community Preservation General Reserve.
- P. To recommend that the Town transfer \$159.72 from the unexpended funds appropriated to the Town of Nahant by the Annual Town Meeting from FY2014 Community Preservation funds for the Wharf Sea Walls project to the Community Preservation General Reserve.
- Q. To recommend that the Town transfer \$12,830.06 from the unexpended funds appropriated to the Town of Nahant by the Annual Town Meeting from FY2016 Community Preservation funds for the Wharf Boat Ramp project to the Community Preservation General Reserve.
- R. To recommend that the Town transfer \$29.45 from the unexpended funds appropriated to the Town of Nahant by the Annual Town Meeting from FY2018 Community Preservation funds for the Town Hall, Library, Ellingwood Chapel building envelope assessment study to the Community Preservation General Reserve.
- S. To recommend that the Town transfer \$ 0.41 from the unexpended funds appropriated to the Town of Nahant by the Annual Town Meeting from FY2018 Community Preservation funds from the 10-year Wharf bond to the Community Preservation General Reserve.
- T. To recommend the Town set aside from Fiscal Year 2020 Community Preservation Fund revenues for later appropriation any other amount not otherwise set aside or appropriated as aforesaid to be maintained in the Community Preservation Fund General Reserves Account for later appropriation.

