

Community Preservation Act Committee Proposal

Request Form for FY 2014

CPA funding category - Check all that apply

Community Housing X Open Space
 Historic Preservation Recreation

Date: December 11, 2013

Submitting Entity: Amherst Conservation Commission
Contact Person: David Ziomek, Assistant Town Manager
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Overview of Proposal:

A. Appraisals, Surveys and Related Studies

Funding for required appraisals and surveys can often mean the difference between a land conservation project moving forward or not. Currently, the Conservation Department budget does not include funds for appraisals or any of the other due diligence costs. This funding is critical to get projects started and to establish value.

Funding Request- \$25,000

B. Conservation Restrictions

Amherst like many other cities and towns across the Commonwealth must move forward to place permanent conservation restrictions on all property purchased with CPA funds. Although this is a requirement of the original CPA legislation (M.G.L 44B) until now most municipalities have been unable to find land trusts willing to accept these restrictions. More recently, Amherst has engaged in productive discussions with The Kestrel Land Trust (KLT) which has agreed to hold the restrictions in perpetuity. The Town and KLT have agreed to establish a monitoring fund for all such properties. Some baseline studies would also be part of this effort.

Total Funding Request - \$40,000

Describe how your request meets the CPA criteria:

1. Description of funding needed including:

- a. Documentation of cost estimates. Other sources of funding, e.g., grants, self-funding, fund-raising.

Whenever possible the Conservation Department seeks partners to help fund land preservation projects. Through the years local CPA funds have leveraged millions of public and private dollars for projects in Amherst. The reality is that most of that funding must go towards direct acquisition costs and not due diligence making the case for both requests even more compelling. During the project presentation phase Town staff will provide a breakdown of recent project costs and will fully outline our proposal for placing conservation restrictions on all applicable properties. Property lists will be provided.

- b. Timeline on how CPA funds, if awarded, would be spent.

The conservation restrictions would be completed during the summer/fall of 2014. Due diligence funding could last until Annual Town Meeting 2015.

- c. Timeline for spending funds;

2. Urgency of the Project, if any:

There is great urgency to fund both of these requests. The available balance for surveys, appraisals and similar required studies is approximately \$3000. The Commonwealth is requiring all municipalities to place conservation restrictions on properties or risk not being considered for future grants.

3. Estimated timeline from receipt of funds to Project completion:

See 1b. above.

4. Acquisition or preservation of threatened resources:

The requested funds would help the Commission and Department continue to assess properties of high natural resource value while also facilitating placement of required restrictions on existing conservation properties.

5. Population(s) to be served by the Project:

Conservation land and trails in Amherst are free and open to the public 365 days a year and serve thousands of residents and visitors annually while providing habitat for birds and wildlife.

6. How the Project is prioritized by requesting Town committees or commissions:

The Conservation Commission voted to recommend three projects to the CPAC this year. Each is unique and important to further the open space goals of the Town.

7. Other information regarding the Project deemed necessary for CPAC: