

Print**Community Preservation Act Committee Proposal Request Form FY2022 - Submission #15995**

Date Submitted: 10/12/2020**Instruction**

Submit proposals by Monday, October 12, 2020 at 4:30pm. CPAC will ask relevant boards, committees and commissions for their input on proposals and encourages applicants to consult with them before submission. Presentations of projects will be scheduled for CPAC meetings in October and November. Recipients of funds shall report back in writing annually about the progress of the project. Projects must be completed within three years of award and unspent funds returned to the CPA Fund.

Criteria

1. Feasibility of the Project; 2. Documentation for Estimated Costs; 3. Funding available: a. multiple sources of funding, b. need for additional funding in future years, c. demonstrates lack of other funding sources if applicable; 4. Urgency of the Project; 5. Estimated timeline from receipt of funding, to start and to completion; 6. Acquisition and/or preservation of threatened resources; 7. Population(s) to be served by the Project; 8. A Plan for how the project will be maintained over time; 9. Priority ranking of your Project set by relevant Town boards, committees or commissions.

Project Title*

Creating an interpretive historic trail along the Mill River

Funding Category*

Check all that apply.

- Community Housing
 Historic Preservation
 Open Space
 Recreation

Amount of Funds Requested*

\$51,500

Submitting Entity*

District One Neighborhood Association (DONA)

Contact Person*

Meg Gage

E-mail Address*

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Project Team

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Names and e-mail addresses for other members of your project team.

If your proposal has an associated website, you may include a link.

in progress

Proposal Overview***Project Summary**

Along the Mill River, from the Mill River Recreation Area to the Cushman Common, are dozens of sites of 19th century mills where hard-working Amherst families made many useful products such as pencils, paper, boxes, and doors. In addition, the site of the Cushman Clam Club is near the River, just west of the Cushman Common. Now there are only cellar holes and retaining walls, as well as the midden of discarded clam shells from the Clam Club. Some sites, including the Cushman Clam Club, are visible from the conservation trails, some are tucked into the woods. Some of the sites are adjacent to the wheelchair accessible trail east of Puffers Pond,.

This project intends to undertake an approach aligned with Community Archaeology to engage the community, in learning about the local Amherst history and people. This project would not involve actual excavation. (See Footnote below) It would instead be an archaeology reconnaissance project, involving background research on the histories of the sites, mapping and photographing them, assessing their conditions, making recommendations for their protection, learning about the people involved, and developing an interpretive program.

A central goal is to create a sense of stewardship in the community, training and encouraging people in community to take care of and protect their archaeological heritage, to see the sites as something to protect and learn from, but not a place to find artifacts.

Another goal of the project is to identify threats to the resources and suggest strategies for their protection. One of the greatest strengths of community archaeology is it's the best way to protect historic sites. The best protection isn't the police or the government; it's knowledgeable neighbors and the broader community who frequent the trails and care.

We hope to tell the story of each site with audio recordings of students, text and ASL interpretation, accessible by cell phone. The final product will be a narrated historical trail that enables people in Amherst to learn about, appreciate and protect Amherst's entrepreneurial 19th century history as they walk through the woods of North Amherst.

Note: While this is a project of the District One Neighborhood Association, we intend to engage the Cushman neighborhood and nearby District 2 neighborhoods, including the east side of East Pleasant Street, the Rosemary Lane neighborhood and north of Silver Bridge.

Footnote: Archaeological excavation of historic sites is heavily regulated in order to prevent destruction of valuable history. Actual archaeological digging requires a permit and supervision from the State Archaeologist and partnership with an approved curation center. However, even though this project involves only a reconnaissance, not excavation, because all of the designated area is public conservation land, it is highly recommended that we get a permit per the 950CMR70 regulations. Also, we want to tell our story so there is as much public awareness as possible. Having a 950CMR70 permit helps bring attention and credibility to the project. The more public awareness the better.

What is Community Archaeology?

Community Archaeology is archaeology by the people and for the people, where people learn about their past by exploring sites that contain history. Typically, community archaeology is used in indigenous communities and by other displaced people to learn about, uncover and reclaim their history. Projects vary but there are two general aspects found in all community archaeology projects:

- Community archaeology involves communities in planning and carrying out projects of interest to them.
- Community archaeologists try to make an altruistic difference; that is, they seek to engage with and contribute in a positive way to communities, not just engage in research for its own sake.

Responsibilities of the project planner:

- Find, read and organize all available historic material
- Complete a thorough annotated map of the Mill River noting each identified site
- Create a timeline of when each site was active
- Assist DONA in promoting the project through our newsletter, public zoom meetings and other outreach to neighbors
- Assist DONA in keeping relevant Town staff and committee members informed and engaged as appropriate
- Recruit volunteer community archaeologists to be trained, perhaps in a summer field school with both high school and

University undergraduates

- Organize training program
- Help recruit and orient the trainer
- Preparing 950CMR70 permit application to State Archaeologist
- Identify sequence of sites to be explored
- Create a multi-year timeline for site exploration
- Help DONA create a budget and write a proposal for implementation

Qualifications of the project planner:

- Archaeology training and experience
- Enthusiasm about community engagement
- Good interpersonal skills

Include specific details of your project, including deliverables, items to be repaired, specific purchases, etc. Once your proposal is approved by Town Council, no changes will be allowed.

Description of Funding Needed*

Documentation of estimated costs:

Project planner, ½ time for one year	\$40,000
Technical support	\$5,000
Training of community by qualified archaeologist	\$4,000
Community outreach costs	\$2,500
Total request:	\$51,500

Available funding:

We have no other committed funding because we have not yet planned the project and budget, which this application to CPAC would support. We believe there is private funding available, as well as possible future CPAC funding, once we have a plan in place that includes a detailed evaluation of the various sites, the cost of signage, gathered existing research, community archaeologists trained and technology related to taping the narratives related to each site.

Include cost estimates and other sources of funding.

Budget*

Documentation of estimated costs - budget.docx

Attach your project budget.

Estimated Timeline*

Estimated workplan for one-year planning project

We estimate the year of planning beginning in July 2021. The work of the planning year includes:

- Identify, read and organize all historical records and narratives
- Create neighborhood committee to oversee the project for the long term
- Outreach to the community to engage people in a variety of roles
- Creation of maps of the River and the location and timeline of different mills
- Recruitment of community archaeologists, hopefully including high school students
- Training of community member archaeologists
- Creation of a multi-year timeline and budget
- Identify funding sources for the multi-year project
- Secure funding for project implementation
- Secure permit from State Archaeologist, per regulation 950CMR70
- Work with relevant Town boards, committees and staff to assure compliance with regulations

When the planning is completed we expect to have these outcomes:

- A detailed timeline for completing the project
- A detailed budget and funding prospects
- A detailed map of the mill sites along the River with dates active
- A list of zoning and planning issues to be worked out with the Town related to this being a conservation area
- Involvement of UMass or other professional archaeologists
- A commitment from the Conservation Commission to proceed
- Support from the Historic Commission
- A commitment from the High School to participate and a plan for how that will work
- Identified research and writing about the sites
- A strong, volunteer community group to supervise and help the project
- A 950CMR70 permit from the state archaeologist

Describe the project timeline from receipt of CPA funds to project completion. Include in the timeline when funds will be spent.

What is the urgency of the project, if any?

In terms of uncovering and saving an important part of Amherst's plucky 19th Century 'can-do' entrepreneurial energy, we can't think of another part of our Town where there is so much to uncover and reclaim. The people of North Amherst were industrious and creative. Imagine diverting a stream in order to produce pencils! It's pretty amazing, and we think our young people and everyone else will enjoy learning about and animating this entrepreneurial North Amherst history, before there was electricity. And as people walk along the history trail they will enjoy the beauty of the extraordinary Puffers Pond conservation area.

North Amherst is now a target for outside investment in big development projects, thanks to the designation of all of North Amherst as an Opportunity Zone, per the Trump administration's 2017 tax law. This Mill River project gives North Amherst residents an opportunity to have a role in the way North Amherst is developed and to make evident what we value.

Does this project preserve or acquire any threatened resources?*

These sites are slowly eroding as the river pulls and tugs at the cellar holes and retaining walls. The written history is slowly disappearing as well. Significant historical research is sitting in boxes in basements and will soon be lost if it is not retrieved and preserved.

What population(s) will be served by this project?*

All Amherst people who like to walk in the woods and historians everywhere. The students recruited to be community archaeologist will learn invaluable new skills and understanding of local history.

How will the CPA investment in your project be maintained over time?*

Following the July 2021 – July 2022 year of planning, we would implement the project, hopefully starting in the fall of 2022, and after securing implementation funding. Once the project is implemented, the District One Neighborhood Association (DONA) is committed to partnership with the Town Conservation Commission and Town conservation staff to maintaining the trail through a permanent, volunteer committee of neighbors.

What relevant Town committees or commissions are you working with?

Conservation Commission
Historic Commission
Town conservation staff

Please include any other information regarding the project you deem necessary for the CPAC.**Feasibility of project:**

If we are able to secure a planning grant, this is a very feasible project. Without planning it is not. The pieces are all there – the mill sites, various historical documents, interest by UMass archaeologists, the possible high school Social Studies Department support and the extensive existing trails through the conservation area. But there is no volunteer capable of the huge planning effort it would take to put the pieces together, to find and summarize the research, to assess the mill sites, to recruit students and other community members, to create a project budget, train the students and community members and secure a permit. With this grant a part-time planner will be able to put together a comprehensive plan that the District One Neighborhood Association will implement.

Why this is a great idea:

- The project will enhance and build on an existing conservation area and trail system that are popular and accessible.
- The project will engage the community, hopefully high school and UMass students, in learning about and salvaging local history, as well as honing hands-on research skills.
- Hopefully the project will build a collaborative relationship with UMass archaeologists, pending a viable plan.
- Members of our community will learn the skills of archaeological reconnaissance.
- Every year the remnants of these sites and the historical records deteriorate.

Research Notes:

Holland, Patricia and William Robinson, North Amherst and Cushman, Images of America Series, 2012, Arcadia Publishing. Pat and Bill live locally and will be important sources.

Fay Kaynor, now deceased, wrote numerous articles on the Mill River sites and on Cushman. We are working with her son Van Kaynor to find her notes and articles. Pete Westover may have them in his basement and is looking around. Van believes some of her papers are at the Jones in Special Collections.

Jonathan Tucker, former assistant planner for Amherst, is knowledgeable about the Mill River sites and has offered support. The Historic Resources sections of the draft conservation management plans for the Upper and Lower Cushman Brook conservation areas have relevant historical details. These draft conservation management plans cover the areas beginning at Puffers Pond and proceeding upstream to Haskins Meadow.

The 1856, 1860, and 1872 county atlas maps have helpful information and are available through the Digital Amherst site through the Special Collections of the Jones Library website.

Carpenter and Morehouse, The History of the Town of Amherst, Massachusetts, 1895. This source is online and has information on the mills and manufacturing throughout Amherst including along the Mill River.

UMass Community Archaeologist Eric Johnson PhD, has offered his assistance as a resource. He has led the community archaeology project and summer field study project at the Dickenson Homestead.

We have not been able to attach photos for a technical reason we are not able to resolve immediately. We will send the photos separately.

You may upload any attachments you deem useful to CPAC here.

No file chosen

Suggested attachments include floor or site plans, photographs, drawings, etc.

You may upload any attachments you deem useful to CPAC here.

No file chosen

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No file chosen

Affirmations*

I understand that if my project is approved by the Town Council, my organization will have a maximum of three years from July 1, 2021 to expend its grant. After June 30, 2024, the Town may return any unused money to the CPA fund for new appropriation, unless an extension is granted.

I acknowledge the above.

