

Please support the CPA in Brookfield

TO THE EDITOR:

I am writing this letter to present my case in favor of our adoption of the Community Preservation Act (CPA), which requires a majority vote at the Nov. 1 town meeting and another majority vote at the May ballot election.

In truth, when I first heard of the CPA a few years ago, I was skeptical. I believed that it was an increase in taxes that we didn't have a good reason to pursue. However, in our pursuit of an affordable way to renovate our historic town hall, I have thoroughly researched the CPA and discovered that it is a very smart way to fund a portion of the town hall renovation. It does so without impacting low income families, it increases our opportunity for grants, and it lowers the total burden on the town through the matching funds from the state.

The CPA is a local surcharge of 3 percent on our property tax bills that is matched by the state, and in our case we can reasonably expect a 100 percent match from the state against this local surcharge. This would locally raise approximately \$75,000 annually, and be matched by the state for a total of \$150,000. The state has raised its matching funds through a fee on real estate transactions recorded at the Registry of Deeds.

On a residence that is assessed at \$250,000 the yearly surcharge would be \$74.03, or \$6.17/month. There is an exemption for low-income families and low and moderate income seniors. This means that if you have a family of four that makes less than \$66,880 a year or if you are over 60 years old and make less than \$58,520 (\$66,880 for a couple), you will be eligible for the exemption from the CPA surcharge, which means you will not have to pay anything for the CPA.

1. The funds will be matched by the state. Over the

lifetime of the debt for the town hall renovation, the state match could save us over \$1 million.

2. These funds will limit the impact of this project on low income families and seniors in town. By virtue of the exemption, low income families and low and moderate income seniors can opt out of the CPA surcharge by filing an application annually at the assessors' office. The exemption prevents those families in the area that are struggling from having to pay anything.

3. The CPA will improve our ability to receive additional grants for the project. The CPA is a checklist item in the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) grant application, and increases our points toward receiving the grant. Also, other grants look at the local CPA as a source of matching funds, thus making us a better candidate for the mass historic preservation projects fund and several other grant.

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Foundations and other grant offering bodies like to see that the town is willing to invest smartly in a project like the Town Hall renovation and they support efforts to do so. Any grants provided directly bring down the cost of a town hall renovation.

4. The CPA funds will provide up to 40 percent of the money, 20 percent locally and up to 20 percent of state

matching funds, to renovate the Brookfield Town Hall.

Please vote YES for the Community Preservation Act at the Brookfield Town Meeting on Nov. 1 at 7 p.m. This will allow the CPA to be placed on the ballot for the annual election in May. The CPA will provide funding that is matched by the state, exempts those who are struggling financially in town, and increases our eligibility for grants. I believe it is a large and smart first step towards renovating the Brookfield Town Hall

For more information please call me, Bill Simpson, at 508 867 6897, or if you are interested in researching the CPA please visit the website www.communitypreservation.org. Also, if you want to see our reasoning and plan for renovating the town hall visit the Friends of the Brookfield Town Hall at www.friendsofthebrookfieldtownhall.com.

Bill Simpson