TOWN OF ARLINGTON
MASSACHUSETTS

REPORT OF THE

COMMUNITY PRESERVATION ACT COMMITTEE

TO THE

ANNUAL TOWN MEETING

April 2026

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Note from the Chairs

Dear Town Meeting Members,

The Community Preservation Act (CPA) establishes a dedicated funding stream for projects that protect our community's character and livability, the kind of investments that matter deeply but rarely win out in annual municipal budgets.

In adopting the CPA, the people of Arlington chose to invest in these long-term priorities and to entrust the CPA Committee and Town Meeting with a portion of their tax dollars for projects that benefit residents throughout the community.

The CPA Committee is conscious of that trust. We are deeply grateful to our members, who, for the past several months have diligently studied the local need for CPA projects and carefully vetted each funding proposal. We are proud to say that, while most of our members represent expertise in a particular program area, each of them engages fully in every project we consider and works hard to ensure it will succeed.

Respectfully,

David Swanson and Susan Doctrow

Community Preservation Act Committee

Kin Lau	*Arlington Redevelopment Board*
Brian McBride	*Arlington Conservation Commission*
Clarissa Rowe, Vice Chair	*Select Board appointee*
Leslie Mayer	*Arlington Park and Recreation Commission*
Susan Doctrow, Co- Chair	*Select Board appointee*
Jo Anne Preston	*Arlington Housing Authority*
JoAnn Robinson	*Arlington Historical Commission*
Alexander Franzosa	*Select Board appointee*
David Swanson, Co- Chair	*Select Board appointee*

The Committee gratefully acknowledges the assistance of Lauren Costa, Budget Coordinator, and Christine Bongiorno, Deputy Town Manager/Operations, in administering the CPA program.

In addition, we recognize the dedication and enormous contributions of two members who are resigning from the Committee this year, Alexander Franzosa and Clarissa Rowe.

1. Introduction

The Arlington Community Preservation Act Committee (CPAC) is pleased to present eight CPA projects and the FY2027 budget to Town Meeting.

The CPA Committee provides the main motions to Town Meeting for all CPA appropriations. These recommended votes under **Article 77** are presented beginning on page 7 of this report.

The Committee is grateful to the Select Board, Finance Committee and Capital Planning Committee for their consultation and endorsement of the proposed FY2027 CPA projects and budget in their warrant article review and hearing cycle.

The Community Preservation Act (CPA) allows participating cities and towns to reserve dedicated funds to preserve open space and historic sites, create affordable housing, and develop open space and recreational facilities. The acquisition, creation and preservation of these community assets is financed through the Community Preservation Fund, comprised of local revenues collected from a property tax surcharge (in Arlington, 1.5% of the net tax levy), plus annual distributions from the Massachusetts Community Preservation Trust Fund.

The Town of Arlington adopted the Community Preservation Act in November 2014. The following year, Annual Town Meeting established the Community Preservation Committee, and the Town began collecting the local tax surcharge that funds the program. Arlington received its first state CPA distribution in 2016, and that same year Annual Town Meeting approved the first round of CPA grants.

This year, we mark a significant milestone: the 10th Anniversary of the Community Preservation Act in Arlington. More information will be distributed on the night of the CPAC presentation to Town Meeting.

Arlington is fortunate to steward a rich array of community assets. Its preserved open spaces possess a scenic beauty that predates the Town itself. Historic resources offer a window into Arlington's past, a measure of how far the community has come, and perhaps a guide to where it is headed. Recreational lands provide safe, welcoming places for community activities that strengthen the health and well-being of all residents. And community housing ensures that a broader range of people can share in everything Arlington has to offer, including many who might otherwise be unable to contribute to the Town's future.

The Community Preservation Act Committee is committed to helping Arlington protect and enhance these irreplaceable assets. CPA funding has proven to be both a powerful steward of the Town's character and a smart fiscal tool: qualifying capital projects can be funded through local surcharge revenues, bolstered by the annual state distribution and matching grants from outside sources. Over the past decade, Arlington's CPA grants have directly leveraged new external funding for open space, recreation, and historic preservation and have helped secure the local match required to unlock millions of dollars in federal and state housing awards.

2. Recommended CPA Projects (FY2027)

Unless otherwise indicated, the amounts recommended were unanimously approved by the committee. Those members voting in the negative favored a different award level.

COMMUNITY HOUSING

Cusack Terrace Fire Alarm and Sprinkler System Upgrade

Arlington Housing Authority (AHA)
Recommended funding: **$300,000**

Scope of the project includes replacing the existing fire alarm and sprinkler system with a new code-compliant system. The Fire protection (sprinkler) scope of the project includes replacing the existing fire sprinkler heads with new heads and adding fire sprinkler protection to the portions of the building currently without sprinkler protection including the basement areas. Fire alarm systems protect personal or real property from injury, harm, or destruction and save lives. This is considered a high priority project by AHA to protect Cusack Terrace and its tenants. With approval of this funding, AHA will move forward with the design phase immediately, with a goal to start and complete this project as soon as possible. In addition to the CPA funds requested, the AHA will be utilizing annual capital Formula Funding from EOHLC (Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities). It will also be seeking out other funding where available, for a project estimated to cost $832,743.

Homelessness Prevention Funding

Housing Corporation of Arlington (HCA)
Recommended funding: **$20,000**

HCA's Homelessness Prevention Program (HPP) assists Arlington residents at risk of losing their home through one-time grants covering back rent, security deposits, or moving expenses for a new Arlington apartment. Additional support is coordinated by HCA's Social Service Manager as needed. The program aims to help families return to financial stability and reduce stress, recognizing that prolonged housing instability takes a serious toll on long-term health and quality of life.

With this CPA award, supplemented by additional HCA funding sources, the total project cost is approximately $260,931. HCA aims to provide grants of up to $2,500 to every household that applies and qualifies, serving an estimated 45–50 Arlington households between July 1, 2026 and June 30, 2027.

Emma’s Court

Housing Corporation of Arlington (HCA)
Recommended funding: **$500,000 (Vote 6-3)**

Emma's Court will create 40 new affordable homes on existing Housing Corporation of Arlington (HCA) property. In September 2025, HCA acquired three Arlington properties — 840 Mass Ave (26 units), 846 Mass Ave (31 units), and 17 Newman Way (2 units) — using a $3.5 million MBTA Communities Catalyst Grant awarded by EOHLC to the Town and passed through to HCA.

HCA will preserve the existing buildings at 840 and 846 Mass Ave while redeveloping 17 Newman Way and the vacant front lawn of 840 Mass Ave into two new buildings comprising 40 additional affordable units. Building 1, on the 840 Mass Ave lawn, will be six stories with 28 units and street-level commercial space. Building 2, replacing 17 Newman Way, will be three stories with 12 units and 11 surface parking spaces. Together with the 57 existing units at 840–846 Mass Ave, Emma's Court will create a campus of 97 affordable units total. Parking will be provided across three areas: the existing lot behind 846 Mass Ave (35 spaces), two spaces behind 840 Mass Ave, and the 11 new spaces for a total of 48 spaces. All units will be deed-restricted and affordable to residents with a household income at or below 60% of Area Median Income (AMI). The total estimated project cost is $28,147,423. Committed funding includes $1.1M from the North Suburban HOME Consortium and $50,000 from the Arlington Affordable Housing Trust. As with past HCA projects this CPA award will demonstrate local support and strengthen HCA's applications for additional state and federal funding.

OPEN SPACE AND RECREATIONAL LAND

Crosby Courts Renovation-Rehabilitation

Town of Arlington, Parks and Recreation Commission
Recommended funding: **$750,000**

This project will rehabilitate the heavily-used Crosby Courts in East Arlington. The site currently has five courts: four lined for tennis (two of which are also lined for pickleball using the center net), plus an undersized basketball court and a concrete hitting wall used for various sports. Last renovated in 2005, the courts have required several repairs over the past 20 years. While those repairs extended their usability, the courts are now considered beyond repair.

Veterans Memorial Park Renovation

Town of Arlington, Department of Health and Human Services, Veterans Services
Recommended funding: **$300,000**

The primary goal of this project is to provide a respectful and contemplative space to honor Arlington veterans, while also creating an inclusive and accessible public park that is welcoming to visitors of all ages and abilities. The project will also strengthen civic identity and provide a functional gathering space for community events. Improvements will include an updated honor roll wall and monuments, and will provide space for community events, ceremonial gatherings, and daily use for rest and reflection. Improvements will make the site ADA accessible. The applicants estimate the total cost as $2M and have secured $1.4M in prior awards (state, CDBG, and capital funds, miscellaneous town funding) and $70,000 in donations. Other funding requests/applications are pending.

Cooke’s Hollow Preservation

Town of Arlington, Department of Planning and Community Development
Recommended funding: **$140,000**

The goal of this project is to implement the redesign of Cooke's Hollow and ensure its preservation, as the space is threatened by climate change-driven biodiversity loss and extreme storms. Specific objectives include: minimizing flood and erosion damage along the Mill Brook corridor; improving cooling benefits during extreme heat events; enhancing pathways and amenities; increasing native habitats for local wildlife and plants; creating a visually appealing landscape; and integrating climate-resilient practices into Town open spaces.

The project began in FY23 with a prior CPA award, followed by design development using CDBG funds. The Town now has construction-ready designs and all necessary permits. Anticipated cost for this project is $1.4M, so this award provides 10% of the project cost as a local match for state funding.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION

2026–2027 Digitization Project

Arlington Historical Society
Recommended funding: **$47,500**

This project represents the next phase in the Arlington Historical Society's long-term collections preservation effort. Currently, about 40% of the Society's 19,000-item collection is fully digitized. This phase will focus on rehousing and digitizing the remaining items including historical artifacts, photographs, archival records, and library holdings to meet professional museum standards for care and access. As with items already digitized, the newly processed materials will be made available online through the Society's website.

Town Hall Building Envelope

Town of Arlington, Town Manager’s Office
Recommended funding: **$900,000**

Built in 1912 and donated through the will of Winfield Robbins, the Robbins Memorial Town Hall is Arlington's center of civic activity. This architecturally-significant building, protected by a preservation restriction,

features an ornate limestone façade, terra cotta Clock Tower, wooden windows and doors, and various roofing membranes. Following decades of deferred maintenance, the Town retained a consultant to assess the building's condition to evaluate the exterior and develop preservation recommendations, identifying the entire building envelope as needing repair or replacement.

Restoration of the Town Hall envelope is a four-phase project culminating in full restoration (Phase 4, ~$10M). A FY24 CPA grant ($385,000, Phase 1) addressed the damaged Clock Tower and leaking roof that had caused severe water damage to the Lyons Hearing Room. The Tower was removed, the opening roofed over, and 3D laser scanning was performed to inform fabrication of a future reproduction; the Lyons Hearing Room was also restored. A FY26 grant ($300,000, Phase 2) funded an Owner's Project Manager which is required for a municipal project of this scale to set budget and schedule, manage designer selection, and oversee construction coordination.

The current award (Phase 3, $900,000), supplemented by a $300,000 request to the Capital Planning Committee, will fund hiring a designer to develop full construction specifications. This phase is a critical step toward stopping further interior damage and completing the long-overdue preservation and restoration of this landmark building.

3. CPA Budget for FY2027

The table on page 6 shows the recommended CPA budget, with available funds and proposed expenditures for FY2027, beginning July 1, 2026.

CPA Revenues and Other Available Funds

Town Meeting appropriates CPA expenditures from the Community Preservation Fund, which consists of revenues from the CPA property tax surcharge, plus annual distributions from the state CPA trust fund. The estimated local CPA revenues for the coming fiscal year are $2,271,176 and the estimated state distribution is $327,573, totaling $2,598,749.

In addition to appropriating from anticipated FY2027 revenues, Town Meeting may also access an existing fund balance for CPA expenditures. The available balance is principally composed of any funds not yet appropriated for any CPA purpose (the “unrestricted Community Preservation Fund balance”) and any funds previously appropriated to a dedicated reserve account for future projects in a specific CPA program area. It also includes surplus local or state revenues in excess of projections, and any unused or returned funds from prior appropriations.

At the end of FY2026 there will be an estimated $922,503 in the unrestricted Community Preservation Fund balance. The FY2027 CPA budget draws down $451,751 from this balance in order to fund the slate of FY2027 projects. The remaining CPA fund balance after all FY2027 appropriations are committed would be a projected $470,752. That amount would remain available for appropriation to future CPA projects.

CPA Expenditures

The CPAC is recommending a FY2027 CPA budget of **$3,050,500**, comprised of $2,957,500 for the CPA projects and $93,000 for the CPA administrative expenses account.

State law requires that, every year, Town Meeting either spends or reserves a minimum of 10% of anticipated CPA revenues for each of the three CPA areas of interest (open space/recreation, community housing, and historic preservation). We ensure annual compliance with this statutory requirement by executing temporary accounting transfers for each CPA project area in the first of the three Town Meeting votes on the CPA budget.

The recommended CPA projects are detailed in the prior section. All CPA awards to non-Town entities require a grant agreement between the Town and the awardee specifying terms and conditions required by the CPAC or otherwise required by the Town. Funds for CPA projects are progressively disbursed upon documentation of actual expenses incurred. Undisbursed funds remaining after the completion of a project return to the local CPA fund balance for future CPA project appropriation by Town Meeting.

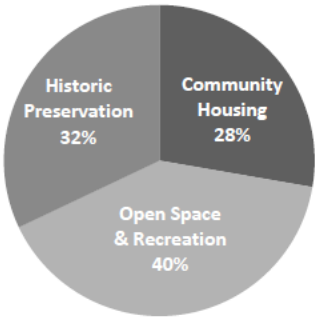
The CPAC is budgeting 3.5% of expected CPA revenues for program administrative expenses, a smaller

portion than the 5% permitted by state CPA law. The administrative expenses account protects the Town's operating budget from CPA operating costs wherever allowed by law. Such expenses could include signage and plaques, legal consultation, environmental or land surveys, or other necessary due diligence. The CPAC also requires staff support for administering the CPA program; using CPA administrative funds for this purpose avoids unnecessary use of the operating budget for Town employee time. By law, the unspent balance is returned at the end of each fiscal year to Arlington's CPA fund for future projects.

FY2027 CPA Budget
AVAILABLE FUNDS

Estimated FY2027 CPA Revenues		
Local CPA tax surcharge receipts (projected)		$ 2,271,176
State CPA Trust Fund distribution (projected)		$ 327,573
total revenues		**$ 2,598,749**
Other available funds		
Anticipated Remaining Funds from FY26, Surplus State Matching, Interest and Turnbacks		$ 922,503
TOTAL AVAILABLE FUNDS		**$ 3,521,252**

Expenditures by CPA Program Area



EXPENDITURES

CPA Projects	Applicants	Community Housing	Open Space & Recreation	Historic Preservation	TOTALS
Cusack Terrace Fire Alarm and Sprinkler Upgrade	Arlington Housing Authority	$300,000			**$ 300,000**
Homelessness Prevention Funding	Housing Corporation of Arlington	$20,000			**$ 20,000**
Emma's Court	Housing Corporation of Arlington	$500,000			**$ 500,000**
Crosby Courts Renovation-Rehabilitation	Arlington Parks and Recreation Commission		$ 750,000		**$ 750,000**
Veterans Memorial Park Renovation	Arlington Veterans Services		$ 300,000		**$ 300,000**
Cooke's Hollow Preservation	Arlington Department of Planning and Community Development		$140,000		**$ 140,000**
Town Hall Building Envelope Restoration - Design Phase	Town of Arlington - Manager's Office			$ 900,000	**$ 900,000**
2026 - 2027 Digitization Project	Arlington Historical Society			$ 47,500	**$ 47,500**
TOTAL PROJECTS		**$ 820,000**	**$ 1,190,000**	**$ 947,500**	**$ 2,957,500**
Expenses					
CPAC administrative expenses					**$ 93,000**
TOTAL FY2027 CPA EXPENDITURES					**$ 3,050,500**

4. Recommended Votes – Article 77

ARTICLE 77 APPROPRIATION / COMMUNITY PRESERVATION FUND

To see if the Town will vote to make appropriations from the Community Preservation Fund for eligible community preservation projects; for community preservation reserve accounts for historic preservation, open space and recreation, and affordable housing; for Community Preservation Act Committee administrative expenses or other eligible expenses; or take any action related thereto.

Recommended votes on this article are divided into three sections: (a) votes to transfer funds to temporary dedicated reserves, as explained in the vote comment; (b) votes on the eight CPA projects, and (c) a vote on administrative expenses. The moderator generally elects to address all of the sections in a single vote.

VOTED:

1. **That the Town take the following actions regarding dedicated CPA project area reserves:**

   a. **Transfer the sum of $259,875 from FY2027 Community Preservation Fund revenues to a CPA Open Space and Recreation Reserve account, for later Town Meeting appropriation for open space and recreational land purposes; and**

   b. **Transfer the sum of $259,875 from FY2027 Community Preservation Fund revenues to a CPA Historic Preservation Reserve account for later Town Meeting appropriation for historic preservation purposes; and**

   c. **Transfer the sum of $259,875 from FY2027 Community Preservation Fund revenues to a CPA Community Housing Reserve account for later Town Meeting appropriation for community housing purposes.**

COMMENT:

These transfers, taken immediately prior to the CPA project appropriation votes that follow, ensure that the Town complies with the state legal requirement to either appropriate or reserve at least 10% of estimated annual CPA revenues (est. $2,598,749) in each of the three CPA project areas.

Although these transferred funds are immediately recommended for appropriation in their entirety in the next vote, this action ensures that the Town maintains compliance should Town Meeting reduce or reject the recommended appropriations, or does not become retroactively out of compliance with state law should any approved project not proceed as planned. (In such an event, the reserved funds would remain in or be returned to the dedicated account for future appropriation in that CPA project area.)

2. That the Town take the following actions to appropriate funds for FY2027 CPA projects, with each project considered a separate appropriation:

a. Appropriate the sum of $300,000 from the Community Preservation Fund revenues for the Cusack Terrace Fire Alarm and Sprinkler Upgrade project for the preservation of community housing, subject to the condition that a grant agreement between the Arlington Housing Authority and the Town be executed, said funds to be expended under the direction of the Arlington Housing Authority and the Community Preservation Act Committee;

b. Appropriate the sum of $20,000 from the Community Preservation Fund revenues for the Homelessness Prevention Funding project for the support of community housing, subject to the condition that a grant agreement between the Housing Corporation of Arlington and the Town be executed, said funds to be expended under the direction of the Housing Corporation of Arlington and the Community Preservation Act Committee;

c. Appropriate the sum of $500,000 from the Community Preservation Fund revenues for the Emma's Court project for the creation of community housing, with $259,875 being appropriated from the Community Housing Reserve Account and $240,125 being appropriated from Community Preservation Fund revenues, subject to the condition that a grant agreement between the Housing Corporation of Arlington and the Town be executed, said funds to be expended under the direction of the Housing Corporation of Arlington and the Community Preservation Act Committee;

d. Appropriate the sum of $750,000 from Community Preservation Fund revenues for the Crosby Courts Renovation – Rehabilitation project for the rehabilitation of recreational land, with $259,875 being appropriated from the Open Space and Recreation Reserve Account and $490,125 being appropriated from Community Preservation Fund revenues, said funds to be expended under the direction of the Arlington Parks and Recreation Commission and the Community Preservation Act Committee;

e. Appropriate the sum of $300,000 from Community Preservation Fund revenues for the Veterans Memorial Park Renovation project for the rehabilitation of recreational land, said funds to be expended under the direction of the Veterans Services Division of the Department of Health and Human Services and the Community Preservation Act Committee;

f. Appropriate the sum of $140,000 from Community Preservation Fund revenues for the Cooke's Hollow Preservation project for the preservation of open space, said funds to be expended under the direction of the Department of Planning and Community Development and the Community Preservation Act Committee;

g. Appropriate the sum of $900,000 from the Community Preservation Fund revenues for the Town Hall Building Envelope Restoration – Design Phase project for the preservation, rehabilitation and restoration of historic resources, with $259,875 being appropriated from the Historic Preservation Reserve Account and $640,125 being appropriated from Community Preservation Fund revenues, said funds to be expended under the direction of the Town and the Community Preservation Act Committee;

h. Appropriate the sum of $47,500 from the Community Preservation Fund revenues for the 2026-2027 Historical Society Digitization project for the preservation of historic resources, subject to the condition that a grant agreement between the Arlington Historical Society and the Town be executed, said funds to be expended under the direction of the Arlington Historical Society and the Community Preservation Act Committee.

COMMENT:

The CPAC recommends the above CPA projects to Town Meeting for FY2027 funding, having carefully vetted each application for compliance with the CPA law, feasibility, importance, cost justification, sustainability and other criteria.

3. That the Town take the following action regarding administrative expenses:

a. Appropriate $93,000 from FY2027 Community Preservation Fund revenues to the CPA Administrative Expenses account for eligible FY2027 administrative expenses, such funds to be expended under the direction of the Community Preservation Act Committee.

COMMENT: These expenses are explained starting on page 5.

This table summarizes the funding sources for each of the preceding transfer and appropriations votes.

Budget sourcing for Article 77 vote language	Community Preservation Fund	10% CPA Category Reserve Transfers	EXPENDITURE TOTALS
RESERVE ACCOUNT TRANSFERS			
CPA Community Housing Reserve account (10%)	$ 259,875		$ -
CPA Open Space and Recreation Reserve account (10%)	$ 259,875		$ -
CPA Historic Preservation Reserve account (10%)	$ 259,875		$ -
PROJECTS			
Cusack Terrace Fire Alarm and Sprinkler Upgrade	$ 300,000		$ 300,000
Homelessness Prevention Funding	$ 20,000		$ 20,000
Emma's Court	$ 240,125	$ 259,875	$ 500,000
Crosby Courts Renovation-Rehabilitation	$ 490,125	$ 259,875	$ 750,000
Veterans Memorial Park Renovation	$ 300,000		$ 300,000
Cooke's Hollow Preservation	$ 140,000		$ 140,000
Town Hall Building Envelope Restoration - Design Phase	$ 640,125	$ 259,875	$ 900,000
2026 - 2027 Historical Society Digitization Project	$ 47,500		$ 47,500
			$ -
EXPENSES			$ 2,957,500
CPAC administrative expenses	$ 93,000		$ 93,000
TOTAL CPA EXPENDITURES			$ 3,050,500
The first three reserve transfers are not included in the expenditure totals as they are immediately appropriated in their entirety			