

It's Our Turn: **The Community Preservation Act in Salem**

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Contact: Stan Franzeen
978-247-3100 days
978-594-5944 eves

What do you know about Question 1 on the Ballot for Election Day, November 6, 2007? What is the CPA? How can it benefit Salem? Why have 127 other Communities taken advantage of this state legislation since it went into effect in 2001?

Starting Wednesday, October 24, 2007, SATV will begin showing *IT'S OUR TURN: The Community Preservation Act in Salem*, a lively video forum taking the mystery out of the Community Preservation Act (CPA). The program was produced by Salem CPA-Yes!, a group of volunteers who have formed the Committee to get the CPA passed in Salem. Honorary Committee Co-chairs are: Rev. Jeffrey Barz-Snell, former City Councilor Claudia Chuber and former Mayor Tony Salvo. Committee Treasurer is Stan Franzeen.

The program will be shown on **SATV Ch. 16** on: **Wednesday, October 24-8:02 PM and 10:30 PM; Thursday, October 25-3:30 PM; Friday, October 26-6:30 PM**. More broadcast times will be listed on next week's SATV schedule (www.satvonline.org). Hosted by Claudia Chuber, the program will feature a presentation by Stuart Saginor, Executive Director of the Community Preservation Coalition, and will conclude with Mr. Saginor's responding to questions posed by members of the studio audience.

Some basic points covered in the video include:

- In July, the Salem City Council voted unanimously to place the CPA on the November ballot. If approved, it will add a 1% surcharge to local property taxes with exemptions for low-income homeowners, and low and moderate-income seniors. For all homeowners, the first \$100,000 of assessed value is exempted.
- CPA monies offer Salem a special tool to support long-ignored projects that need attention and become more expensive every year they go unfunded.
- The State will provide matching funds that go into a special trust fund, not the general fund. The matching funds come from Registry Fees from all over the state.
- Currently, 127 Bay State municipalities have adopted the CPA and are enjoying the benefits of revenues that are already available to all Massachusetts cities and towns.
- The CPA enables communities to fund only 4 specific needs. The statute requires that Historic Preservation, Open Space/Recreation and Affordable Housing each receive 10% of the revenues. The remaining 70% must be invested only among these areas.
- A Salem CP Committee will be formed with one representative from each of five city commissions: conservation, planning, recreation, historic, and the housing authority, and up to four optional at large members appointed by the City Council. The Committee is required to hold at least one annual Public Hearing and submit specific funding requests to the City Council for approval. Voters can repeal the Act in 5 years.
- For Salem homeowners the surcharge would add a modest amount to the property tax. For example: on a \$400,000 assessed value residence – after the first \$100,000 is deducted, the tax on the \$300,000 remaining would be approximately \$32 annually.
- At the 1% surcharge level, Salem has lost an estimated \$5 million since the CPA began in 2001. Over the next 5 years, Salem would receive an estimated \$2 million.

The Committee believes that the CPA represents a critical investment in the future of Salem and that it is OUR TURN to bring these state matching funds to Salem! Some possible CPA-eligible projects are:

- New roof on the Witch House
- Reconstruction of Pioneer Village
- Purchase open space, e.g. Thompson's Meadow
- Rehabilitate Old Town Hall

The CPA also enables Salem to leverage these funds as "seed money" or matching funds for other public and private grant and philanthropic sources of revenues.

*Salem CPA - Yes! is a project of the Conservation Campaign, Stan Franzeen, Treasurer, 34 Daniels Street, Salem, MA.
For more information: www.salemcitizens.org/issues/cpa and www.communitypreservation.org.*