

## ***Community Preservation Committee Fiscal Year 2016 Report***

Shutesbury's Community Preservation by-law created a Community Preservation Committee comprised of up to nine representatives of town boards, commissions and committees with functions that are related to community preservation. The members of Shutesbury Community Preservation Committee during Fiscal Year 2016 were Leslie Bracebridge, Historical Commission; Linda Avis Scott, Conservation Commission; Sue Essig, Open Space Committee, Rita Farrell, community housing; Jim Aaron, Planning Board; Allen Hanson, Finance Committee; Michael Vinskey, Select Board; and Donald Fletcher, the "at-large" member and its chairperson.

The Community Preservation Committee (CPC) began Fiscal Year 2016 with its annual review of what it learned during the prior fiscal year. As a result, the Committee revised its process for reviewing proposed projects. The CPC decided that, prior to determining eligibility, it needed to gather more specific information related to whether proposed projects meet the minimum eligibility criteria for the use of CPA funds. The CPC also it decided that, after it determines that proposed projects are eligible, applicants need more time to prepare final applications. As a result of these decisions, the CPC added a question to the Determination of Eligibility Preliminary Application form, adopted "Due Diligence Guidelines" to ensure a thorough review of the preliminary applications, and added two weeks to the time available for applicants to complete and submit final project proposals.

During the first phase of the application process in Fiscal Year 2016, two applicants submitted a total of three Determination of Eligibility applications. Applicants attended the CPC meeting when the eligibility of each project was discussed. During that meeting the CPC members informed the applicants of the steps in the annual review process and the additional information needed in the full application, which is the second phase of the application process. The CPC also described the three open CPC meetings that applicants are expected to attend during the Committee's review process. The CPC members also discussed the criteria that the committee had developed and would use when deciding whether to recommend that Town Meeting approve the community preservation funds requested for the proposed projects.

During Fiscal Year 2016 two applicants, the Shutesbury Community Church and the Shutesbury Elementary School, submitted initial Determination of Eligibility applications for three projects. The CPC determined that all three proposed projects were eligible to receive CPA funds. The Shutesbury Community Church chose not to submit a full application for its proposal to make its first floor accessible. The Shutesbury Elementary School submitted two full applications and completed the review process. These projects involve the restoration of the young children's playground and the construction of a multi-use track on the school's upper field. After its review process the CPC recommended that Town Meeting approve funding for the two recreation projects proposed by the Shutesbury Elementary School.

After completing its review and evaluation, the CPC members voted unanimously on March 17, 2016, to recommend funding the projects. When the CPC compared the proposed projects to our selection criteria we were impressed. We determined that each project:

- is financially and administratively feasible,
- has other sources of funding,
- includes significant in-kind volunteer contributions,
- has support from town residents, town boards or committees,
- will provide a positive impact on the community, and
- is a step toward achieving long standing, but unfunded, priority goals for Shutesbury.

The total cost of the two projects being recommended by the CPC this year is \$34,000, which is \$13,700 less than the estimated Community Preservation Fund revenue for Fiscal Year 2017.

The Shutesbury Elementary School requested \$29,000 to rehabilitate the young children's playground and to replace its major play structure. The restoration of the existing playground will create an easily accessible playground space for small children, which includes children with disabilities. There are three parts to this project:

- the purchase of an ADA accessible playground structure
- the certified installation of that structure, and
- the resurfacing the playground with a code compliant surface.

The existing wooden playground structure had become an increasing hazard for children. The number of splinters has increased significantly. Children have also been injured falling onto the existing pea-stones surface on the playground. The existing pea stone surface does not comply with existing safety codes. □

The rehabilitated play ground and new play structure will benefit Shutesbury's young children who attend the Elementary School; and it will be a resource for families with young children after school hours, on the weekends and during vacations. Off street parking is already available nearby with a paved walk leading to the playground. Completion of this project will help accomplish long-standing goals in Shutesbury to enhance the existing recreational infrastructure.

Letters of support for this project were submitted by the:

- Shutesbury's Parent Teacher Organization
- Community Network for Children Program
- Shutesbury Elementary School Nurse
- Girls and Boys on the Student Council

The PTO and the Shutesbury Athletic Club have committed to donate funds to support the playground restoration. The volunteers (parents, teachers and support staff at the school) organized this project on their own time.

The Shutesbury Elementary School's second proposed recreation project requested \$5,000 to construct a multi-use track that circles the outer edge of the upper field behind the school. It will be usable and safe for many different populations. The construction would involve digging out the top 6" of soil for a 6' wide 1/8<sup>th</sup> mile long track – 660 feet. The bottom of the trench will be leveled and then filled with packed gravel. A layer of small hard packed trap rock will be on top and will be level with the surrounding ground.

A 100-mile running/walking club will be promoted at the elementary school to excite children about exercising and outdoor fun. The track will enhance and increase the use of an existing community field and restore interest in this town-owned recreation space. Because the school maintenance staff will be able to plow the track's surface, the construction of the track will allow the upper field to be used through the winter months. The Shutesbury Council on Aging supports the multi-use track for older residents who need a flat, level surface for walking or to monitor their walking distance. The track will also be a benefit for the MN Spear Library story walk program that has operated in the upper field.

The Swift River School in New Salem constructed a similar track, which has been very successful. Students at the Shutesbury Elementary School have written heart-warming letters of support. The teachers and especially the physical education teacher are excited about creating an opportunity for organized and structured physical activities.

Letters of support for this project were submitted by the:

- Council on Aging
- M.N. Spear Library
- SES Parent Teacher's Organization
- Community Network for Children
- SES Physical Education Teacher,
- Elementary School Student, and
- 'Tri Peace', a private running club

As the CPC discussed ideas for worthwhile community preservation projects, it recognized that each successful project depends on a group of committed volunteers to organize the project, to complete a thorough application and see through the review process, and to oversee implementation through project completion. In the CPC's annual presentation to Town Meeting, those attending were reminded of the range of worthwhile community preservation projects and that worthwhile projects will require volunteers to come together to develop projects that will meet town goals. During FY 2016, a group of volunteers devoted their energies and creativity to organize and propose two projects that were endorsed at the Annual Town Meeting.

The Community Preservation Committee thanks the citizens of Shutesbury for its continuing interest, contributions, and support for our community's preservation projects.

Respectfully submitted by,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Donald Fletcher". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping tail on the final letter.

Donald Fletcher, Chair, Community Preservation Committee  
June 30, 2016