

Please see my initial responses interspersed in the questions below (also reflecting some input from other members of the CPC. I understand from others that the deadline for responses has been extended until late November. Could you please confirm this? If true, please consider this response preliminary only. The Community Preservation Committee (CPC) has a meeting scheduled for November 18 and I would propose to have the survey as a discussion item on our agenda for that meeting. After that meeting, I will send a final version of CPC's response to your committee's survey.

Bill Reardon, Chair

For the Community Preservation Committee ('CPC')

**From:** Phillips, Lynn [<mailto:phillips@hingham-ma.com>] **On Behalf Of** Government Study Committee

**Sent:** Wednesday, October 27, 2010 4:15 PM

**To:** [crowleysix@comcast.net](mailto:crowleysix@comcast.net); [phealey@abpclaw.com](mailto:phealey@abpclaw.com); Jack Manning; [neilsenc@verizon.net](mailto:neilsenc@verizon.net); [tomandreg@comcast.net](mailto:tomandreg@comcast.net); [stbsolutions@comcast.net](mailto:stbsolutions@comcast.net); [dalyccusa@gmail.com](mailto:dalyccusa@gmail.com); Horte, David; [sberry1@verizon.net](mailto:sberry1@verizon.net); [striper2279@comcast.net](mailto:striper2279@comcast.net); [wsreardon@comcast.net](mailto:wsreardon@comcast.net); James Obrien; [marosull@verizon.net](mailto:marosull@verizon.net); [joe.freeman@tetrattech.com](mailto:joe.freeman@tetrattech.com)

**Subject:** Government Study Committee Survey

October 27, 2010

Dear Committee Chair:

The Hingham Town Government Study Committee asks that you, in consultation with fellow department employees or committee members, carefully consider the following questions and answer them as fully as possible. Please return your responses in writing by November 8 to the members of the GSC who are working with your department or committee.

1. Please state your department's or committee's charge or job description. Pursuant to The Community Preservation Act, "CPA" (Mass. General Laws Chapter 44B) and a town By Law approved by the 2001 Annual Town Meeting as Article 38 of the Town's By Laws, the CPC was created to study the needs, possibilities and resources for the town regarding community preservation and shall make recommendations to town meeting for the acquisition, creation and preservation of open space, for the acquisition and preservation of historic resources and for the acquisition, preservation of land for recreational use, for the creation, preservation and support of community housing and for the rehabilitation or restoration of such open space, historic resources, land for recreational use and community housing that is acquired or created as provided in the CPA. CPC makes such recommendations to town meeting for the appropriation of CPA funds available through the CPA surcharge and state matching funds for those stated purposes.

2. To whom is your department or committee accountable? Ultimately to all the town's citizens and, specifically, the voters at Town Meeting
3. What three things contribute most to the successful functioning of your department or committee? A) the makeup and personnel on the committee. 5 of the 9 are determined by statute to come from ConCom, the Planning Board, the Housing Authority, The Historical Commission and a Selectman. Of the remaining four 'at large' members, two are selected by the Selectmen and two by the Moderator. The resulting diversity of views and approaches generated by the fairly wide cross section of the relevant constituencies does a pretty good job of acting as an initial screen and a proxy for what may be reactions by voters at Town Meeting to each of the appropriations recommended. B) the hiring of a part time Administrator, as allowed by the CPA has made a HUGE difference in the efficiency, organization and record keeping capabilities of an all-volunteer CPC. The overall effectiveness of CPC since that occurred has dramatically improved the professionalism of CPC's work and its responsiveness to voters, whether grant requestors or members of the general public with questions/concerns about CPC's proposed recommendations. C) I believe the thoroughness of the deliberative process, in a pretty orderly annual grant request consideration process, including a formal public hearing and frequent opportunities for concerned or interested voters to be heard at various meetings of the CPC, has led to an appreciation from most voters that recommendations coming to Town Meeting have received a thorough 'vetting' by the CPC; most have proceeded with relatively strong majorities to be approved by ATM voters.
4. What three things would you change to bring about more effective functioning? A) Not within our power, but within the power of the Mass legislature, the funding source for the CPA match needs to be stabilized to assure towns that the match to the voters' own surtax amounts collected is substantive. As the match has declined from the first five years at 100% to the more recent match in October 2010, the perceived value to the town of the CPA concept has declined to some extent in the eyes of some voters. While voted out of the Ways and Means Committee on Beacon Hill last summer, corrective legislation in the form of SB 90 was caught up in the Casino debate was ultimately not passed, which has been the situation over each of the last three years
5. What challenges do you anticipate that might impact the work of your department or committee in the future and what changes would you suggest for addressing those challenges? A) The CPA concept in Hingham has been challenged numerous times over the last four years by a small but vocal minority of voters who question the value of CPA to the community in relation to its cost. For those who believe that CPA has been successful and effective for the town, continuing to respond effectively to questions raised by that group of voters remains a concern and something of a necessary distraction to the base work of CPC. B) Open space has been the largest single topic receiving support from voters during the entire history of CPA. As attractive parcels of open space have dwindled in the town as a result of development, the remaining parcels of environmentally important or scenically significant have become almost prohibitively expensive which may limit the ability of CPC to continue to add appropriate parcels to the town's land inventory. C) Likewise, the paucity of land purchase possibilities has perhaps made less attractive the task assigned to the Town's Open Space Acquisition Committee. That Committee has suffered in recent years from declining levels of enthusiasm and interest in the 'on again, off again' world of negotiating for the town with land owners. ConCom and that Committee are and need to work with the Selectmen to redefine the makeup and role of that committee so that it can continue to be an

effective generator of land acquisition opportunities for consideration by CPC and the voters at ATM.

6. Do you have anything to add? Nothing else at this time, though the CPC will follow with interest the work and deliberations of the Government Study Committee as it proceeds with this important mission for the Town.