



**TOWN OF CONCORD**  
**COMMUNITY PRESERVATION COMMITTEE**  
141 KEYES ROAD, CONCORD, MA 01742  
TEL. (978) 318-3290 FAX (978) 318-3291

**Application for CPA Funding**  
Due no later than 4:00pm on Friday, October 9, 2020

Applicant: Town of Concord

Co-Applicant (if applicable): \_\_\_\_\_

Project Name: Wheeler-Harrington House and Land.

Project Location/Address: 249 Harrington Ave.

Purpose: (Select all that apply)

- Open Space       Community Housing       Historic Preservation       Recreation

Project Budget:

Amount of CPA Funds Requested: \$ 20,000

Amount from Other Funding Sources: \$ 0

Total Project Budget: \$ 20,000  
(If multi-year project, note current phase only)

Please check which of the following is included with this Application:

- |                                                                     |                                                                                                       |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> One Paragraph Project Summary * | _____ Timeline *                                                                                      |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Map (if applicable)             | _____ Architectural plans, site plans, photographs<br>(if appropriate)                                |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Narrative *                     | _____ Copy of Audit or most recent Financial<br>Information ( <u>Non Profit Organizations Only</u> )* |
| _____ Selection Criteria and Needs Assessment                       | _____ Letters of Support (if any)                                                                     |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Detailed Project Budget *       |                                                                                                       |
| _____ Feasibility Assessment                                        |                                                                                                       |
| _____ Statement of Sustainability (if applicable)                   |                                                                                                       |

\* Required Documentation

The Contact Person for this Project is: Marcia Rasmussen

All Correspondence should be mailed to: 141 Keyes Rd. Concord MA 01742

The Contact Person can be reached by phone at: 978 318 3290 or by email at: mrasmusen@concordma.gov

Signature of Applicant: Marcia Rasmussen

Signature of Property Owner (if different): \_\_\_\_\_

**For Historic Preservation Projects Only** – please check the box below left and acknowledge:

- I/We have read the U.S. Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties and understand that planning for and execution of this project must meet these standards.

## **Brief Project Summary**

The Town requests funds to hire a consultant to assist with public outreach in determining future use and plans as they relate to the Wheeler-Harrington House and Harrington Park. This property is a unique Town-owned parcel containing a historic structure on 15.6 acres of fields, wetlands, trails and riverfront in West Concord. A site with tremendous potential as a recreational and open space destination, it is primarily known as the home of the ca. 1745 Wheeler Harrington House. The Town, through funding provided by the Community Preservation Act funds, previously conducted a historic survey of the house, has contracted to have the property surveyed, and has been working with the preservation consultant who dismantled the Ball-Benson house and barn about the potential to relocate the barn to this site. The Town proposes to hire a professional facilitator to help with public outreach that will result in developing a community specific plan for the site.

## **Narrative**

Harrington Park is a 15.6 acre parcel of former farm land bordered by Harrington Road to the south and the Assabet River to the north. This unique Town-owned property is the home of the Wheeler-Harrington house, an intact ca. 1745 farmhouse that has retained its original location and setting, but the parcel is far more than a residential house lot. The property was a working farm from the 1700s until 1974, when the Town purchased the property from its last owners, the LeBallister family. A plan was developed at that time to demolish the house and convert the site into playing fields, but as residents became aware of the history and significance of the former farmhouse, a grass roots effort spread to restore and preserve the house. This effort convinced the Town to abandon its original plan for the site, and in 1975 area residents banded together to restore and repair the structure.

Since the 1970s, the Town has rented the house to live-in caretakers, who have had some responsibilities for maintaining the land in close proximity to the house, and the remaining field to the adjacent farmer. The oversight of the property is divided between the Concord Historical Commission (CHC), which oversees the preservation of the house, and the Natural Resources Commission (NRC), which oversees the land. In recent years, both groups have taken steps to develop a better understanding of the property and make use of its potential. Through a series of projects, two of which were CPA funded, the CHC has succeeded in adding the property to the National Register of Historic Places, completing a much needed Historic Structure Report for the building, and having CPA funds allocated to make much needed repairs to the historic house. In respect to the grounds, the NRC has developed a new trail system linking the site along the Assabet River to Second Division Brook. These trails were made possible by a series of recent land and easement acquisitions, partially funded with CPA project funds, which have opened up new possibilities for a network of pathways to connect the Town open spaces throughout this area. All of this work has taken a step towards reconnecting Harrington Park with the larger community, and the proposed project is intended to take the next step in developing the future of the site.

## **CPC's Selection Criteria and Needs Assessment**

This application meets the following Selection Criteria as found in the 2020 Community Preservation Plan:

*a. The project's eligibility for CPA funding under the CPA legislation.*

The application meets three of the four CPA criteria: for Open Space because it will provide funding to plan for the preservation of existing fields, river frontage, and wetlands; for Recreation as it will provide funding to study the creation of new active and passive recreational uses on the property; and for Historic Preservation as it will provide funding for the preservation (and possible interpretation) of a resource listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

- b. *The project's consistency with Town-wide planning efforts and reports that have received broad-based scrutiny and input.*

Harrington Park is included in the 2020 Community Preservation Plan as the Wheeler Harrington House is an historic building that serves a public purpose and is eligible for CPA funding. The site is also eligible under Historic Preservation for its agricultural lands, which are "central elements of the development and history of Concord," and under Recreation for its potential Waterway Access.

The project also accomplishes a number of goals as identified in the 2005 Comprehensive Long Range Plan. Specifically, the preservation of the site addresses Goal CH-1 "Protect and maintain Concord's existing historic and cultural resources" as well as Goal CH-2 "Protect and maintain historic and cultural scenic vistas" as the site is a key component of the historic farmland character of that section of Harrington Avenue and West Concord. The project may also serve to promote Goal CH-3, "Increase the level of citizen knowledge and responsibility for the Town's unique history and historic and cultural resources," by bringing attention and awareness to the significance and preservation needs of this historic Town Owned site. Lastly, the project is expected to meet Goal OS-3 "Promote use of and access to existing open space resources" and Goal R-2 "Develop a broad range of passive recreational resources to accommodate the interests/needs of the community" by using public meeting forums and workshops to bring awareness to the site and develop potential new uses for the property.

In regards to the 2015 Open Space and Recreation Plan, the project will meet Goal 2 "Improve Connectivity and Access to Recreational Resources" and Goal 3 "Protect Agricultural Land, including Fields, Meadows and Orchards" as the existing site is part of a new and developing network of trails in the area and includes both a field and former orchard.

- c. *The project's support by relevant Town boards and committees and community groups and its consistency with recent Town Meeting actions.*

The Historical Commission has long supported the preservation of this building and has advocated for further study and research on the site's condition and potential future uses. The Natural Resources Commission works to see to the site's preservation and maintenance, and has been supportive of past efforts to better understand the property and its potential. In 2013 and 2016, Town Meeting supported the site when it voted to use CPA funding to complete the previously referenced studies and to set aside funds for the physical preservation of the building.

- d. *The extent to which the project preserves, protects or enhances existing Town-owned open space, recreation, historic and/or housing assets.*

The primary purpose of this project is to preserve and protect an existing Town-owned historic, open space and recreational resource. This house is the oldest structure owned by the Town, one of the few 1700s structures remaining in Concord, and holds a unique place in the history of West Concord. The site itself is a large open parcel with river access which could be greatly enhanced for community use.

- e. *The extent to which the project serves multiple or underserved populations.*

The property is a Town-owned resource which is available to all Concord residents but is currently underutilized and largely unknown. This project proposes to respect the historic structure at the heart of the site while working to develop it as an open space and recreational amenity for the West Concord community.

- f. *Whether or not the project fulfills more than one purpose of the legislation: housing, historic preservation, open space or recreation.*

The purpose of this project is to consider the site for future open space and recreation projects and uses. This project does not propose to directly impact the historic preservation resources on this site, but will integrate (and potentially interpret) those resources into any future plans.

g. *Administrative and financial management capabilities of the applicant.*

The project will be administered through the Town of Concord's Department of Planning and Land Management (DPLM). Natural Resources is a division of DPLM, and the Department is also responsible for staffing the Concord Historical Commission. DPLM has extensive experience in administering CPA funded grants and projects and the Town has completed all of the requirements of their previously funded programs to date.

h. *The extent to which the applicant has successfully implemented projects of a similar type and scale or otherwise demonstrated the ability and competency to implement such a project.*

As noted above, the applicant has a long standing role in maintaining Concord's existing Town-owned open space parcels and has initiated many similar projects to plan for the future of individual sites. The Planning Division has overseen numerous grant funded projects and has the expertise to implement a project of this scale.

i. *Whether or not the applicant has site control or written consent by the property owner to submit an application.*

The property is owned by the Town of Concord and the Town will be responsible for overseeing this project.

j. *Demonstrated financial need.*

This Town-owned and supported site is maintained and overseen by the Natural Resources Commission, which is responsible for all of the Town's conservation lands. At present there is no staff capacity or funding available to take the next steps of considering future uses for the site.

k. *Whether or not there will be multiple sources of funding for the project, including leveraging of other public and/or private funding.*

As noted above, the Town pays for the regular maintenance of the site and will provide in-kind services to the project in the form of staff time and project administration.

l. *The feasibility of the project plan and whether or not the most reasonable approach for implementing the project has been selected.*

The Town has extensive experience in site planning and will hire the appropriate consultant to facilitate the public outreach required to develop a community supported plan/program for the property. The Town plans to work closely with the caretakers and consultants to complete the work without undue inconvenience.

m. *The urgency of the project, the flexibility of the schedule and the impact of any delay in initiating the project.*

The potential for the property has been largely forgotten since its purchase in the 1970s. With the further development of West Concord in recent years, and the purchase and development of trails on the adjacent parcels, there is a growing emphasis on making the area's public open spaces more accessible. The Town would like to capitalize on the recent completion of the studies project and the renewed interest in the preservation of the historic house to move planning for the property forward and gain community input on the site as a whole. While there

is flexibility as to the timing of the project, the Town is eager to take advantage of this forward momentum to create a vision for the future of the site.

*n. The provision for maintenance of the project.*

The building and site have an established maintenance plan that will continue to be followed during and after the completion of this project.

*o. The inclusion of an appropriate permanent deed restriction, preservation restriction, or conservation restriction.*

The Wheeler Harrington House has an existing Historic Preservation Restriction that was established when the Town took ownership of the property in the 1970s. The property is already designated as conservation land and is managed by the Natural Resources Commission.

**Budget**

The proposed budget of \$20,000 has been estimated based on the cost of other public outreach efforts.

**Feasibility**

The Town has completed numerous planning projects on other Town-owned properties and has both the experience and resources to complete this work on time and on budget.

**Timeline**

The Town proposes to begin work to find a qualified facilitator to begin the public outreach in the summer of 2021.