



**Town of Longmeadow**  
Massachusetts  
**Community Preservation Committee**



Telephone 413-565-4110  
Fax 413-565-4112

20 Williams Street  
Longmeadow, MA 01106

www.longmeadow.org

*Application for*  
**Community Preservation Act Funding**

**Instructions**

1. Review attached Community Preservation Act (CPA) funding eligibility, selection criteria (Appendix), and application.
2. Prepare and submit 10 typed and double-sided copies of the application form and project description to the CPC, c/o the Town Clerk's Office, Town Hall, 20 Williams St., Longmeadow, MA 01106.
3. The Community Preservation Committee (CPC) will accept project proposals **through November 29, 2018** for possible consideration at the following Annual Town Meeting.
4. The CPC will review all applications and schedule a meeting with each applicant to discuss its proposal.
  - a. The CPC may ask for more information before deciding to recommend the proposal for funding.
  - b. The CPC may request that you present your proposal at a public hearing.
5. If the project is selected for a funding recommendation, the CPC will submit it to Town Meeting.
6. Town Meeting has the sole authority to fund projects.

*\* Please note that the Committee reserves the right to modify these procedures and timeframe. Emergency applications will be accepted at the discretion of the CPC. The committee reserves the right to reject applications that are incomplete or late.*

**Application Form**

For CPC Use: Project # \_\_\_\_\_  
Received on: \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_ Received by: \_\_\_\_\_  
Reviewed on: \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_ Determination: \_\_\_\_\_

**Applicant Information**

Project Title: <i>Proposal for Grant to Fund a Landscape Master Plan for Bliss Park and</i>			
CPA Funding Request: <i>\$ 14,000</i>	Total Cost of Proposed Project: <i>\$ 14,000</i>	<i>Leavell Park</i>	
Applicant Name: <i>Fran Cress</i>	Contact Name: <i>Fran Cress</i>		
Mailing Address: <i>99 Oxford Rd.</i>	Community Preservation Act Category  <i>Please check all that apply:</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Community Housing
City, State, Zip Code: <i>Longmeadow MA 01106</i>		<input type="checkbox"/>	Historic Preservation
Phone/Fax: <i>413-847-2627</i>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Open Space
Email &/or Website: <i>mfcress@comcast.net</i>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Recreation

*Please attach a project description and budget, as indicated on page 2.*

*See attached and Addendum "A" and Addendum "B"* Community Preservation Act Funding Application p. 1



Community Preservation Application, November 29, 2018

Project Title: Proposal for Grant to Fund a Landscape Master Plan for Bliss Park and Laurel Park

As you may be aware, a volunteer group called Longmeadow Citizens to Save our Parks (LCSP), was formed in the Fall of 2016 in response to the proposed development of an Adult Center on the Southeast corner of Bliss Park. As a result of the group's efforts, the proposed development failed at a Town Meeting on October 25, 2016. The following Spring, the LCSP, drafted Warrant Article 42 for consideration at the May 10, 2017 Town Meeting. Extensive historical research conducted by the group to support the defeat of the Adult Center proposal revealed the compelling history of these two land parcels and their likely status as parklands offered protection under Article 97 of the Massachusetts Constitution. Article 42 directed the Town of Longmeadow to execute and record legal documents with the Hampden County Registry of Deeds as necessary to protect Bliss Park and Laurel Park as parkland under Article 97 and to ensure their future use only for park and conservation purposes.

The Article was approved by majority vote thereby reaffirming a similar majority vote at a Town Meeting on February 28, 1934. That Town vote had transferred the land from water district to parkland. This now 84 year old transfer had also been approved by the MA State Legislature on February 13, 1934, a required authorization because in 1899, the State Legislature had authorized the Town to take, by eminent domain, land necessary to create a water district for the town's water supply. The lands so obtained created one large parcel, subsequently named Bliss Park and Laurel Park after the land area was bisected by the Laurel Street Extension that was completed in 1930. This rich history, including the use of Federal Funding to begin construction of an Olmsted Landscape Plan to create a park, conformed with the requirements necessary to afford it such Article 97 protection. Since no legal documentation of relevant deeds had been undertaken at that time, this omission and the fact that current citizen's lacked any awareness of the land's rich history, resulted in an opportunistic attempt to develop a portion of this parkland by the town.

We are pleased to confirm that the intent of the citizen vote on May 10, 2017 has now been affirmatively supported by a unanimous vote of the Select Board at their meeting on November 19, 2018; a reversal of their August 21, 2017 majority opinion when they had concluded that the town vote was not binding but merely advisory. The Town Manager has now been directed to complete the necessary legal documentation that will ensure that no future development of these lands can occur without the protections afforded them as Article 97 parklands. We are now ready to undertake pro-active planning to improve the use, accessibility and value of these parklands for our citizens. To that end, we are proposing to engage The Conway School in the preparation of a Landscape Master Plan for these parklands. For more information on The Conway School in Northampton, MA, please visit their website at: [www.csld.com](http://www.csld.com) .

Conway students, engaged in a Masters Program in Sustainable Landscape Planning and Design, under the direct supervision of professional staff, will help our community identify and articulate our vision for these parklands in a manner that recognizes and protects the land's intrinsic value to our community and supports that vision and value with a sustainable and ecologically appropriate plan for our use and enjoyment of it. We see the following issues as critical considerations; erosion and sedimentation remediation along Cooley Brook waterway, remediation of degraded habitats/environments, invasive species control and reintroduction of indigenous planting and a plan to mitigate dog waste. The work will likely include;

- 1) natural resource mapping with particular focus on Cooley Brook, a critical water resource to the Connecticut River Watershed,
- 2) habitat restoration including indigenous plant reintroduction and invasive species control,
- 3) designs for trail creation, remediation, maintenance, mapping and signage, addition of a universally accessible ADA trail with on-trail rest areas, and dog park,
- 4) conservation planning and management of existing ponds and dams consistent with work being undertaken by The Nature Conservancy in the Fannie Stebbins Wildlife Refuge/CT River Watershed,
- 5) park design initiatives such as; picnic grove development, renovation of restroom facilities and improvements to existing athletic fields, courts both tennis and basketball and playground.

We know from the survey that was undertaken while preparing the

2012-2019 Open Space and Recreation Plan that walking, biking and hiking are the three most prevalent activities in which Longmeadow citizens regularly engage. We also know that natural resource protection, aestheyic/scenic beauty and wildlife habitat protection are among the four top priorities of Longmeadow citizens. Bliss Park is the most highly used open space resource in our community and Laurel Park is the third most used after The Town Green. Given that there only 129 acres of designated parkland in our community and these two parcels, at a combined acreage of 83 acres, account for over 64% of that total, we need a document that will guide us in caring for and improving these parklands in an ecologically sustainable way that meets the recreation needs of citizens in the heart of our community; a community that is virtually "built out" with no possibility of increasing our available natural spaces.

The development of a plan with The Conway School will help us to engage our community and facilitate public input. We seek a comprehensive plan that not only respects and compliments the initial Olmsted Plan, which never fully met it's 1934 expectations, but also builds upon that earlier foundation. Our goal is to meet or exceed the objectives laid out in the 2012-2019 Open Space and Recreation Plan and to renew citizen focus and interest in being part of the positive changes we envision for these parklands including community awareness of the important environmental impact they play in our ecosystem.

We respectfully request your favorable consideration in support of a grant in the amount of \$12,000 to engage The Conway School in developing a Landscape Master Plan for Bliss Park and Laurel Park. If this grant proposal is awarded to us and The Conway School accepts our proposal to engage with us, we will enter into a fixed price contract of no less than \$10,000 with them early in the summer of 2019 for work to be undertaken in either the second or third semester of the 2019-2020 academic year. We have included a 20% buffer above the proposed contract value to cover potential inflation between now and contract signing. Since the Plan will not be available to us before next year's CPC Grant Cycle beginning in November 2019, we hope to continue to receive your support for a grant proposal for that cycle (2020-2021) that compliments; parkland needs, an "updated" Longmeadow Open Space and Recreation Plan and the work we have already begun through your support of our grant proposals for the Fiscal Years 2017-2018 and 2018-2019 and hopefully the separate proposal currently being submitted for Fiscal

Year 2019-2020. Please note attached Addendi "A" and "B" for further information in support of this proposal.

Thank you for your consideration. I respectfully submit this grant request on behalf of the undersigned and the other 385 members of Longmeadow Citizens To Save Our Parks.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Frances Cress".

Frances Cress

Kristen Carnahan  
Patrick Carnahan  
Craig Carr

Marsha Harbison  
William Harbison  
Betsy Port

## Addendum "A"

"As of the date of the submission of this application for funds, the Conway School has not committed to completing this project as part of their graduate student program for 2020. When a draft scope has been developed and evaluated by the faculty, the school may choose to select this project ahead of their usual timeframe, or they may choose to delay a final decision until late 2019."

## Addendum "B"

The Text of an Email sent to members of LCSP, signatories to this application for Community Preservation Act Funding

For your review. Our proposal, attached, will be submitted no later than tomorrow, November 29, 2018 by 4:30PM to the CPC. It will include this document as Addendum "B" and the following Addendum "A":

"As of the date of the submission of this application for funds, the Conway School has not committed to completing this project as part of their graduate student program for 2020. When a draft scope has been developed and evaluated by the faculty, the school may choose to select this project ahead of their usual timeframe, or they may choose to delay a final decision until late 2019."

I will be walking both Bliss Park and Laurel Park with CJ Lammers from the Conway School tomorrow, November 29, 2018. We will depart from my house at noon. Anyone wishing to join us is welcome. The purpose of the walk is to familiarize The Conway School faculty with the property so that they can properly develop a project scope for this parcel that serves our proposed needs as well as the educational needs of the institution and their students.

I expect they will be actively considering the role Cooley Brook plays in the greater ecosystem with particular focus on its terminus in the CT River. This is of particular interest to the school given Longmeadow's position in the CT Watershed and the current restoration work now being done by the Nature Conservancy, the current owner of the 330 acre Fannie Stebbins Wildlife Refuge. There are 223 acres, including 32.2 acres of old farm field, under restoration back to a flood plain forest through funding from the National Resources Conservation Service, a division of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

These flood plain forests provide specialized habitat for wildlife and "are considered to be among the rarest and most threatened natural communities in Massachusetts." When completed over 8000 shrubs and trees will have been planted there and Fannie Stebbins will be the largest flood plain forest in the entire CT River Watershed which spans 7.2 million acres reaching from the Canadian border in NH to the Long Island Sound in CT. Once the restoration is completed the land will be transferred to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service as part of



the Silvio O. Conte National Fish and Wildlife Refuge, which was established in 1995 by Congress "to conserve the abundance and diversity of native plants and animals in their habitat within the CT River Watershed..."

This is a compelling and noteworthy project. Its existence and the relationship Cooley Brook has with that ecosystem provides a great opportunity for student learning and engagement while also creating an opportunity for us to be good stewards of our parks given their importance to the CT River Watershed as we plan for their ecologically sustainable use for public recreation.

