

PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT (PCD)
(175, 177, 170 & 691)

Our department has a number of land use responsibilities ranging from routine zoning & subdivision permitting of residential & commercial structures, including rehabilitation & new development, to Town wide - long term land use & transportation planning, to wetland conservation matters including the preservation of open space & historical places, to development of affordable housing programs, to floodplain mapping & management, and economic retention & development. In addition, our office also does a majority of the land use grant writing for the Town in these various areas.

In addition we work collaboratively with other Town departments such as Engineering, Public Works and Inspectional Services on joint community and neighborhood projects throughout the Town. The department also works closely with our neighbors, the Towns of Weymouth, Holbrook, Randolph and the City of Quincy on various regional issues.

We also serve as staff to the Mayor's office on initiatives being put forward relative to a variety of community development matters. The department provides technical assistance and information to other Town departments, citizens and professionals.

Budget Proposal:

A. General Items:

In an effort reduce the budget in accordance with the directive from the Mayor's Office, the following "generic" line items appearing throughout the PCD budget were reduced under most program budgets:

Office Supplies	Newspaper Periodicals	Mileage
Postage	Printing	

Contractual requirements for personnel per the current BPMA Collective Bargaining Agreement resulted in increases in the following:

Salaries for staff – 2.6%
Clothing allowance and prescription eyeglasses (new – 100%)

B. Detailed cuts to the budgets under Department 175, 177, 170 & 691

1. Planning Administration –17501

#17501-5123 (Internships) reduced by \$500 – in past years \$4,000 allowed for two interns for the summer program.

2. Planning -17504

#17504-5102 (Principal Planner) reduced by \$25,859.00 – Prior to Calendar Year 2020 we had advertised for availability for this position and had interviewed candidates. During the change of administrations a freeze was placed on any new hires and it was determined by the current administration to only fund ½ year. This position is needed for the department's work load and we anticipate filling the position mid-year.

#17504-5128 (Comprehensive Zoning) reduced \$1,500.00 -Due to the elimination of the proposed Zoning Re-write this account is no longer needed.

Other reduced items see comments in Section A. (above)

3. Conservation -17505

#17505-5123 (Ranger P/T) -shows increase - We would note that last year's budget had a computer glitch when this position was added and had to be addressed in a supplemental budget. In fact there is no increase this year and the funding is equal to FY20.

#17505-5774 (PM Vegetative Treatment) reduced \$5,000 – In order to comply with Mayor's directive for cuts this annual appropriation for Pond Meadow Park was cut in order to preserve Sunset Lake and Eaton's Pond maintenance.

#17505-5775 (Climate Change) reduced \$5,000 – This was a regional effort that was cut to address the Mayor's directive.

#17505-5840 (Trees/Fertilizing/Pest) - We would note that last year's budget had a computer glitch that deleted this line item and it had to be addressed in a supplemental budget. In fact there is no increase this year and the funding is equal to FY20 and prior years.

Other reduced items see comments in Section A. (above)

4. Zoning Board of Appeals -17506

#17506-5103 (Zoning Planner) – reduced \$6,468 – An existing employee previously in the Principal Planner's position was promoted to this position and is not at the end of the position's salary range as in previous employee.

Other reduced items see comments in Section A. (above)

5. Economic Development – 17507

#17507-5306 (Reimburse Historical) – reduced \$12,500 – This funding has been reduced to accommodate anticipated reductions in revenue while still providing support that benefits the public interest.

#17507-5333 (Life Science) – reduced \$5,000 – A regional initiative that was recommend by the PCD Director and the Mayor to not participate in for the future. The Town of Braintree was receiving no quantitative benefits from participation.

Other reduced items see comments in Section A. (above)

6. Fair Housing – 17508

#17508-5205 (Awards & Ceremonies) – reduced \$750 - This budget was previously under the Mayor's office and last budget season was transferred to the PCD because of Braintree's participation in the South Shore Housing Consortium. These funds are used for training of landlords and management companies on the Fair Housing laws.

#17508-5340 (Telephone) – reduced \$100 – There is no telephone since the PCD took this budget over.

Other reduced items see comments in Section A. (above)

7. Historical Commission – 17509

Other reduced items see comments in Section A. (above)

QUESTIONS

- What was the \$5K in Climate Change intended for? I see nothing expended YTD in FY20.

This is correct to date there has been no expenditure – the funds have been put in a purchase order and earmarked as part of the Town’s local match to the Watson Park bank restoration project. The local match (Town’s portion) is \$20,000 total. An additional \$5,000 has been earmarked from another operating account and the balance of \$10,000 has been requested in the Capital Budget. The funds have not been expended because the project is presently undergoing the various local, state and federal environmental permits for their comments to be worked into the design. Work is estimated to be completed by the fall of 2021.

- \$2,500 for Monatiquot Dam: what is the intention of those funds? Why has nothing been expended YTD for FY20?

This is correct to date there has been no expenditure—The funds have been put into a purchase order along with other funds for payment to Milone and MacBroom consulting. Information about the project can be reviewed online at

<https://braintreema.gov/DocumentCenter/View/5565/Monatiquot-River-Update-May-2020?bidId=>

- Consultants (01-17507-5305) \$40K budgeted but we have not come close to meeting that over the prior three years. What do we expect to change in FY21 to incur the full amount of this budgeted request?

This line item has been used in the past to pay approximately \$21,000 (half of the cost of the Geographic Information Service (GIS) consultant). The GIS consultant maintains and revises the current Town GIS system as new information becomes available. In addition, the consultant has assisted in special projects including requested mapping, land calculations and other GIS requests of the Planning/Community Development Office and land use boards that we serve. The remaining funds have varied over the years as to use – they have been used as local matches to grants such as MAPC (regional planning agency) and for Direct Local Technical Assistance (Landing zoning, Ivory Street Corridor and Life Science Corridor studies). In addition, funds have been used to have appraisals performed for land acquisitions by the Town. Also, funds have supplemented year round internships as needed and Special Projects such as the clean-up of Eaton’s Pond from the homeless encampments and illegal dumping. Funds have also been used to supplemental larger projects such as architectural design - the universal accessibility of the Old Thayer, Union School and Town Hall schematic design proposals that could not be covered by use of CPA funding.

In addition having these funds assists our effort to seek grants for whatever becomes available throughout the year through use as a Town match – these funds allow the department flexibility to answer a grant solicitations with low costing local matches and having the funding availability has also allowed the Town to obtain grants that we would have not made the submission deadline if we were to require a further appropriation. Grant applications that can demonstrate available local matches tend be looked upon more favorably than applications that have to seek funding.

- Can we please have an explanation from Director Stickney or Ed on the 18th about how the CPA fund works? I know it can be used for affordable housing, open space and historic preservation, but it would be helpful to understand Braintree's strategy in using this funding. It looks like we have significant unused funds, why?

See attached summary of CPA funds taken from the Town’s current bond disclosure report.

The 7 member Community Preservation Committee (CPC) reviews the applications submitted by organizations, individuals and other boards/commissions. As a recommending body they do not initiate the applications they review and instead recommend appropriation to the Town Council. Annually the CPC holds a public meeting, duly advertising that funds are available, for public to attend; however, because of the current situation with COVID this has been delayed. In addition, there is a CPC website that provides the application and the information on past projects up until the last year – it has not been updated to include FY19 and 20 projects.

- Pg 26--Administration--Your expenditures in Planning Admin are quite different year to year. Can you explain what this line item covers and why expenditures vary so widely?

The use of this line is fairly broad and has varied from year to year to cover general operation expenses of the Department. Prior purchases include office furniture, file cabinets and a recorder for taping meetings. Additionally, it has been used to purchase manuals, including land use and ITE traffic manuals, a 21E at the Allen Street property and a Parking Study of Town squares.

- Pg 28--Conservation--What does the part-time ranger do?

We have two rangers that work 3 hours each a week. They walk the conservation lands, keep the trails cleared of any down limbs and they collect any trash on the properties. They also keep watch on activities including identifying deer stands for illegal hunting or homeless encampments. There is approximately 460 acres of lands under the custody and care of the Conservation Commission.

- Pg 28--Conservation--Why do you have \$2500 budgeted for the Monatiquot Dam when you have no history of expenditures there?

See above. This project has been underway and the funds will be expended at a later date.

- Pg 28--Conservation--Please explain why the budget for the two line items for **Vegetative Treatment** seems to be going up, when expenditures are going down. This same trend is evident in the line item for **Trees Fertilizing/Pest**.

Our Department is responsible for the lake and pond treatment for both Sunset Lake and Eaton's pond to assure the vitality of these two environmental resources. Without the treatments they would become choked with weeds because of their shallow depth and eventually kill the areas of vegetation and species. The treatments are done annually (usually in July) in portions of each of the water bodies because we don't have enough funds to do them in their entirety each year.

The Tree/Fertilizing/Pest line takes care of some key vegetation including the great oak across from Town Hall in the rotary behind the Library as well as other areas of tree plantings that were done by the past administration to care for the trees in these areas around Town. We work the department of public works for certain key vegetation to ensure everything is cared for properly.

- Pg. 30--Economic Development--Why is the requested budget for consultants more than double any recent expenditures?

See above.

- Pg. 30--Economic Development--Have you moved costs for **Life Science** somewhere else?

In consultation with the Mayor's Office, the decision was made to not fund this program. The Department's regional participation was not yielding any quantified results for the Town and we no longer belong to the Life Science Corridor.

- Pg. 30--Economic Development--Costs for **Data Processing** seem to have dropped substantially since 2018. Can you explain that, and also, why you have kept your budget request more closely in line with 2018 expenditures?

In prior years the Town moved to a centralized purchase process for equipment including computers, printers or plotters per the direction of the Mayor's Office. This coming year our computers are slated for replacement as is the plotter in our office. The current equipment is 4-5 years old and we have set aside funds to replace at least one item in FY20. We also pay the annual service plan for the plotter, which increases annually, out of this account. The plotter allows us to produce plan size printing for maps and plans and is one of two owned by the Town. Without the plotter, we would be required to utilize a third party vendor for these services, which would be more costly.

- Pg. 32--Historical Commission--Why are costs for consultants so much higher than expenditures?

The Historical Commission is charged with maintaining the historical inventory for the Town's Historic resources and submission to the Massachusetts Historical Commission. This type of work is done by a historical preservation architect to validate and research a Form "B" that is submitted to the state. In addition this line item has been used to hire a consultant for the enlargement of the central local historic district and the Commission has desire to create other historic districts throughout the Town. The Braintree Historical Commission (which is not the Braintree Historical Society nonprofit) is a town commission that meets once a month throughout the year and their expenditures are fairly low.

- It has been pointed out to me that the historical society reimbursement will be decreased from \$25K to \$12.5K - that is a significant cut compared to other areas? Why is that necessary and what is behind it?
- Regarding the cutting in half of the historical society reimbursement I was told that "the Town intends to work with the Historical Society to identify other means of support that can be provided". My follow-up question is: has that been done and what will the town do to support the historical society. Also, I really think this is not an area that should not be cut so dramatically.

This reduction was made as part of the Town's efforts to anticipate reductions in revenue sources in FY21. In lieu of the additional funding, the Town intends to work with the Historical Society to identify other means of support that can be provided.

The Town is considering other services it can provide to the Historical Society, including for example assistance with maintenance of the grounds through DPW (rather than using a third party vendor). Additionally, the Historical Society may be eligible for CPA funds to support their operations. This has been suggested in the past, but the Society has not submitted an application for consideration.

****NOTE—AS OF 5.21.20, THIS LINE HAS BEEN INCREASED TO \$22,500 FOR FY21****

Room Occupancy Tax: Under this tax, local governments may tax the provision of hotel, motel and lodging house rooms at a rate not to exceed 6% of the cost of renting such rooms. The tax is paid by the operator of the hotel, motel or lodging house to the State Commissioner of Revenue, who in turn pays the tax back to the municipality in which the rooms are located in quarterly distributions. The Town has levied the full 4% as permitted under the law since the inception of the tax. On August 11, 2009, the Town adopted an increase in the room occupancy tax to 6% to be effective October 1, 2009. This tax produced \$1,467,638 in fiscal 2015, \$1,596,257 in fiscal 2016, \$1,569,459 in fiscal 2017, \$1,585,651 in fiscal 2018 and \$1,710,380 in fiscal 2019.

Local Options Meals Tax: The Town voted to accept the provisions of General Laws Chapter 641, Section 2(a) to impose a local meals excise tax beginning July 1, 2013, and for all proceeds derived from said excise tax to be used solely to fund capital improvements, including but not limited to, equipment purchases and/or leases. In fiscal years 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018 and 2019, the Town received \$1,017,862, \$1,142,349, \$1,166,320, \$1,208,369, and \$1,249,555 respectively, in meals tax.

Other: Other sources of revenue include departmental income, investment income and various other sources.

Community Preservation Act

The Massachusetts Community Preservation Act (the "CPA") permits cities and towns that accept its provisions to levy a surcharge on its real property tax levy, dedicate revenue (other than state or federal funds), and to receive state matching funds for (i) the acquisition, creation, preservation, rehabilitation and restoration of land for recreational use, open space, and affordable housing and (ii) the acquisition, preservation, rehabilitation and restoration of historic resources. The provisions of the CPA must be accepted by the voters of the city or town at an election after such provisions have first been accepted by either a vote of the legislative body of the city or town or an initiative petition signed by 5% of its registered voters.

A city or town may approve a surcharge of up to 3% (but not less than 1% under certain circumstances) and may make an additional commitment of funds by dedicating revenue other than state or federal funds, provided that the total funds collected do not exceed 3% of the real property tax levy, less any exemptions adopted (such as an exemption for low-income individuals and families and for low and moderate-income senior citizens, an exemption for \$100,000 of the value of each taxable parcel of residential real property or \$100,000 of the value of each taxable parcel of class three, commercial property, and class four, industrial property as defined in Chapter 59, Section 2A of the General Laws, and an exemption for commercial and industrial properties in cities and towns with classified tax rates). In the event that the municipality shall no longer dedicate all or part of the additional funds to community preservation, the surcharge on the real property tax levy of not less than 1% shall remain in effect, provided that any such change must be approved pursuant to the same process as acceptance of the CPA. The surcharge is not counted in the total taxes assessed for the purpose of determining the permitted levy amount under Proposition 2½ (see "Tax Limitations" under "PROPERTY TAX" above). A city or town may revoke its acceptance of the provisions of the CPA at any time after 5 years from the date of such acceptance and may change the amount of the surcharge or the exemptions to the surcharge at any time, including reducing the surcharge to 1% and committing additional municipal funds as outlined above, provided that any such revocation or change must be approved pursuant to the same process as acceptance of the CPA.

Any city or town that accepts the provisions of the CPA will receive annual state matching grants to supplement amounts raised by its surcharge and dedication of revenue. The state matching funds are raised from certain recording and filing fees of the registers of deeds. Those amounts are deposited into a state trust fund and are distributed to cities and towns that have accepted the provisions of the CPA, which distributions are not subject to annual appropriation by the state legislature. The amount distributed to each city and town is based on a statutory formula and the total state distribution made to any city or town may not exceed 100% of the amount raised locally by the surcharge on the real property tax levy.

The amounts raised by the surcharge on taxes, the dedication of revenue and received in state matching funds are required to be deposited in a dedicated community preservation fund. Each city or town that accepts the provisions of the CPA is required to establish a community preservation committee to study the community preservation needs of the community and to make recommendations to the legislative body of the city or town regarding the community preservation projects that should be funded from the community preservation fund. Upon the recommendations of the committee, the legislative body of the city or town may appropriate amounts from the fund for permitted community preservation purposes or may reserve amounts for spending in future fiscal years, provided that at least 10% of the total annual revenues to the fund must be spent or set aside for open space purposes, 10% for historic resource purposes and 10% for affordable housing purposes.

The CPA authorizes cities and towns that accept its provisions to issue bonds and notes in anticipation of the receipt of surcharge and dedicated revenues to finance community preservation projects approved under the provisions of the CPA.

Bonds and notes issued under the CPA are general obligations of the city or town and are payable from amounts on deposit in the community preservation fund. In the event that a city or town revokes its acceptance of the provisions of the CPA, the surcharge shall remain in effect until all contractual obligations incurred by the city or town prior to such revocation, including the payment of bonds or notes issued under the CPA, have been fully discharged.

The Town adopted the CPA at an additional charge of 1% in April 2002, effective beginning in fiscal 2003. As of June 30, 2019, the Town levied \$770,526 in surcharges and received state matching funds totaling \$139,255.

Enterprises

The Town's water and sewer, golf course and electric light activities are accounted for as enterprises. See "Appendix A – Braintree Electric Light Department" for a discussion of the operations of the electric light activities enterprise.

The water/sewer rate structure as listed below also has a base fee of \$17.25 per quarter for both water and sewer shown below.

Tier	Usage	Rate
Water tier 1	0-500 CF	\$ 3.31
Water tier 2	501-3,500 CF	4.99
Water tier 3	3,501 -20,000 CF	9.54
Water tier 4	Over 20,0001 CF	13.57
Sewer tier 1	0-500 CF	\$ 6.15
Sewer tier 2	501-3,500 CF	7.78
Sewer tier 3	3,501 -20,000 CF	14.21
Sewer tier 4	Over 20,0001 CF	15.61

Annual Audits

The Town's finances are annually audited by Powers & Sullivan, Certified Public Accountant, the most recent of which was performed for the fiscal year ended June 30, 2019 and is attached hereto as Appendix A. Prior audits are available upon request from the Town.

The attached report speaks only as of its date, and only to the matters expressly set forth therein. The auditors have not been engaged to review this Official Statement or to perform audit procedures regarding the post-audit period, nor have the auditors been requested to give their consent to the inclusion of their report in Appendix A. Except as stated in their report, the auditors have not been engaged to verify the financial information set out in Appendix A and are not passing upon and do not assume responsibility for the sufficiency, accuracy or completeness of the financial information presented in that appendix.

Summary of Significant Accounting Policies

See Appendix A attached.

Financial Statements

Set forth on the following pages are Governmental Funds Balance Sheets for fiscal years ending June 30, 2019, June 30, 2018 and June 30, 2017, and Statements of Revenues, Expenditures and Changes in Fund Balance, for the fiscal years ended June 30, 2015 through fiscal year ended June 30, 2019. Said statements were extracted from audited financial statements.