

Appendix B – CPA Project Application Proposal

[CPC Use Only]	Date Received: 3/7/2026	Received By: M. M. MacNeil	Assigned CPC #: 2027-10
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This form may be copied. Please type or print clearly, answer all questions, use "N/A" if not applicable. Use additional paper as needed.

1-A Applicant Information

Last Name: Haddad	First Name: Mark
Organization(s)(as appropriate) Groton Town Manager/Select Board	

1-B Regional Project? YES NO If YES, Town/Organization:

2 Submission Date: March 17, 2026

3 Applicant Address

Street: 173 Main Street	City: Groton	State: MA	Zip: 01450
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4 Phone: 978-448-1111 Email: mhaddad@grotonma.gov

5 CPA Purpose (Check all that apply)

Affordable Housing: <input type="checkbox"/>	Community Housing: <input type="checkbox"/>	Historic Preservation: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Open Space: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Recreation: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	

As per MA General Law Chapter 44B, proposed historic projects that are not on the structures listed on the state's Registry of Historic Places require a determination by the Groton Historic Commission that the proposed project is of historic significance.

6 Town Committee or Boards Participating: Select Board/Town Manager

7 Project Address/Property Owner's Name: Squannacook River Dam - Squannacook River - No Address

8 Project Name: Repair of Squannacook River Dam

9 Additional Responsible Parties (If applicable)

Role (specify)	Name	Address	Phone	Email
Property/Site Owner	Town of Groton/Estate of Helmar Nielsen	173 Main Street, Groton, MA	978-448-1111	mhaddad@grotonma.gov
Project Manager	Mark Haddad	173 Main Street, Groton, MA	978-448-1111	mhaddad@grotonma.gov
Lead Architect	Haley & Aldrich	465 Medford Square, Boston, MA	617-899-7343	dbell@haleyaldrich.com
Project Contractor	R.Bates and Sons	140 Pratts Junction Road, Sterling, MA	978-333-1791	jason@rbatesconstruction.com
Project Consultants	Tom Delaney	173 Main Street, Groton, MA	978-448-1111	tdelaney@grotonma.gov
Other:				
Other:				

10 As appropriate, indicate if proposal requires:

P&S Agreement: Deed: Option Agreement: Memorandum of Understanding:
 Other: Describe: **Construction Easement from Estate of Helmar Nielsen**

11-A Assessor Info (Map/Block/Lot ID(s)): **No parcel ID in Groton - Shirley Parcel ID is 103 C 3**

11-B Tax Classification Type: **N/A**

12 Permits required:

Zoning: Historic Preservation: Other: **All Permits Have Been Received**

13 Historic Commission Approval Signoff (When Required): _____ Date: _____

14-A Project Cost: \$ **812,500** Estimate: Professional Quote:

14-B Requested from CPC: \$ **812,500** **14-C** Committed from OTHER Source: \$ _____

If applicable:

Annual Anticipated Total Income: \$
Annual Anticipated Total Expense: \$
Anticipated Net Income (Loss): \$
Name of Estimator/Company:

15 CCP Objectives - Use CODES from Section 5 to indicate all that apply

5.1 - Historic Preservation - 5.3 - Open Space and Recreation

16 Project Timelines

Proposed State Date: 07-01-2026

Projected Complete Date: 12-31-2026

17

Estimated Delivery Date of Completion Report to CPC: 01-31-2027

18 Project Description and Explanation (Attach Additional Sheets as Needed)

See attached Project Description and Explanation

19 Feasibility

The Town has put this project out to bid and received a low bid of \$502,500. Total Cost, with engineering and contingency is \$812,500. Should the Community Preservation Committee and Town Meeting fund the project, work will commence as soon after July 1, 2026 as possible.

20 List of Attachments

Project Description

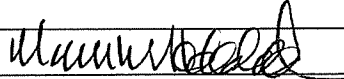
21 Additional Information

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22 Management Plan

Town Manager Mark Haddad, serving as Chief Procurement Officer and Tom Delaney as Project Consultant, along with engineers from Haley & Aldrich will oversee the project construction.

23 Signature

Applicant Signature: 	Date: March 17, 2026
Co-Applicant Signature:	Date:
Co-Applicant Signature:	Date:

SQUANNACOOK RIVER DAM REPAIR PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Town of Groton proposes to undertake repairs to the Squannacook River Dam, located in the West Groton section of Town on the Squannacook River near West Groton Road and adjacent to the RiverCourt residential complex. The project will address structural deficiencies in the dam to ensure the continued safety, stability, and functionality of this historic and scenic community asset.

The Squannacook River Dam is a concrete and stone masonry structure approximately 150 feet long and 18 feet high that regulates water levels along the river in the historic West Groton village area. Originally constructed to support water-powered industrial activity, the Dam now serves primarily recreational, environmental, and scenic purposes while helping preserve the character of the surrounding landscape. The Town of Groton assumed ownership of the Groton portion of the dam in the early 1990s and has since been responsible for maintaining the structure in compliance with the Massachusetts Office of Dam Safety.

Engineering inspections have determined that while the dam is currently in fair structural condition, repairs are required to address deterioration in portions of the masonry and structural components in order to ensure long-term safety and regulatory compliance. The Dam is classified by the Massachusetts Office of Dam Safety as a High Hazard Dam, meaning that failure of the structure could result in significant downstream impacts including potential loss of life and damage to nearby residential and commercial properties.

Timely repairs will stabilize the structure, address areas of deterioration, and extend the useful life of the dam while maintaining compliance with state dam safety standards.

The proposed project includes structural repairs necessary to stabilize and preserve the existing dam. Work is expected to include:

- Repair and stabilization of masonry and concrete structural components
- Rehabilitation of spillway and training wall elements
- Removal of debris and stabilization of deteriorated areas
- Construction oversight and inspection by qualified engineers

These improvements will ensure the long-term structural integrity of the dam and protect downstream public safety.

The Town recently completed a public procurement process for the repair project. The project attracted strong contractor interest, resulting in eight competitive bids. The bids ranged from:

- Low Bid: \$502,500 – *R. Bates and Sons, Inc.*
- High Bid: \$1,421,496

The bid submitted by R. Bates and Sons, Inc. in the amount of \$502,500 represents an exceptionally competitive price for the required construction work. When engineering oversight, construction administration, and contingency costs are included, the total estimated project cost is \$812,500. The Town is able to hold these bids through the 2026 Spring Town Meeting, allowing the Town to move

forward with the project at this favorable pricing if funding authorization is secured. Given current construction market conditions, it is unlikely that similar pricing would be achieved if the project had to be rebid in a future year.

The Squannacook River Dam is an important component of the historic industrial landscape of West Groton, reflecting the town's history of water-powered mills and river-based industry. Today the dam maintains the upstream river conditions that contribute to the scenic character of the Squannacook River corridor and supports passive recreational uses, including canoeing, kayaking, fishing, and enjoyment of the natural river environment. Preserving the dam helps maintain the visual character of the West Groton area and protects an important historic resource that contributes to the community's identity.

The proposed repair of the Squannacook River Dam is eligible for funding under the Massachusetts Community Preservation Act (CPA) under the categories of Historic Preservation and Open Space and Recreation.

Historic Preservation

The Dam is part of the historic infrastructure associated with the development of West Groton's mill industry and represents an important physical reminder of the town's industrial heritage. Preservation and stabilization of historic structures and infrastructure are recognized CPA-eligible activities when the work protects historically significant community assets. Repairing the dam will preserve an important historic structure and maintain the historic character of the West Groton village area, preventing deterioration that could ultimately lead to the loss of this historic resource.

Open Space and Recreation

The Squannacook River Dam maintains the upstream river conditions that support the scenic river corridor and surrounding open space resources. The river and impounded area provide opportunities for passive recreation such as canoeing, kayaking, fishing, and enjoyment of the natural landscape. By maintaining the dam and preserving the existing river conditions, the project protects the environmental and recreational value of the Squannacook River corridor that is widely enjoyed by Groton residents.

Across Massachusetts, CPA funds have been used to repair and preserve historic dams and water control structures where those structures support historic landscapes, recreational water bodies, or significant environmental resources. Based on guidance and examples from the Massachusetts Community Preservation Coalition, similar projects have been found eligible under the Historic Preservation and Open Space/Recreation categories when the work preserves historically significant infrastructure or protects recreational and scenic natural resources.

As stated above, it is necessary to repeat the importance of doing this project now. There is a significant time-sensitive opportunity to undertake these repairs now due to the highly competitive bids recently received through the Town's public procurement process. The Town received eight bids for the project, with the lowest responsible bid coming from R. Bates and Sons, Inc. in the amount of \$502,500. These bids can be held only through the 2026 Spring Town Meeting. Given the volatility of construction costs and the significant spread between the lowest and highest bids received, it is highly unlikely that the Town would receive the same competitive pricing if the project were delayed

and rebid in a future year. Moving forward now allows the Town to take advantage of exceptionally favorable pricing, significantly reducing the overall cost of the project for Groton residents.

If funding is not secured at the 2026 Spring Town Meeting, several negative consequences may occur, including the Loss of Competitive Bids as the Town would likely need to rebid the project at a later date. Construction costs have been increasing significantly, and it is unlikely the Town would receive a bid as competitive as the current low bid of \$502,500. Delaying repairs may lead to additional deterioration of the structure, increasing the scope and cost of future repairs. In addition, as a High Hazard Dam, the structure must continue to meet the standards of the Massachusetts Office of Dam Safety. Delays in making necessary repairs could increase regulatory risk and potential liability for the Town. If CPA funds are not available to support the project, the Town's only viable funding alternative may be to pursue a debt exclusion override under Proposition 2½, which would increase property taxes for Groton residents. Using CPA funding allows the Town to address this important infrastructure and preservation project while minimizing the financial impact on taxpayers.

Repairing the Squannacook River Dam will provide several important benefits to the community:

- Ensuring public safety by maintaining a high-hazard dam in safe operating condition
- Preserving an important historic infrastructure resource tied to Groton's industrial heritage
- Protecting scenic and recreational river resources
- Taking advantage of exceptionally competitive construction bids
- Avoiding the potential need for a tax-increasing Proposition 2½ override

By acting now, the Town of Groton can preserve this historic and environmental resource, protect public safety, and do so in a financially responsible manner.

March 19, 2026
100 Hollis Street
Groton, MA 01450

Community Preservation Committee
Town Hall
Groton, MA 01450

Re: West Groton Dam

Dear CPC Committee Members,

I will not be able to attend your meeting on Monday that will include an application for funds for the repair and restoration of the West Groton Dam, so I am submitting this letter. As described in the letter (printed below) that I submitted to the Groton Herald, I believe the historic, cultural and community values of restoring the dam significantly outweigh the environmental benefits of removing it. However, since the Town's cost for repair/restoration may exceed its cost for removal, and therefore affect the tax rate, I am concerned that debate at Town Meeting will be more on costs than on the core long-term issues that will affect the Town long into the future. I therefore encourage the Committee to allow the matter to be brought to Town Meeting as a CPA Article.

Respectfully,



Bob Pine

March 9, 2026

100 Hollis Street
Groton, MA 01450

Re: West Groton Dam

To the Editor,

I would like to discuss my understanding and perspective of some of the issues associated with the choice between removing and restoring the West Groton Dam.

Environmental. The primary environmental arguments for dam removal are that it will restore the natural flow of the river, reconnect biological ecosystems, cool the water, and allow migratory cold-water fish to reinhabit the area above the dam. There is no question that reconnecting biological systems is valuable, but the increase in ecological value is limited in this case by the H&V dam which is only 1.2 miles upstream and will not be removed. Moreover, today there is an established, viable ecosystem in

the portion of the river above the dam which will be diminished if the dam is removed. Cooling the water would primarily be achieved by eliminating the water currently backed up by the dam that warms when exposed to the sun. However, I calculated that the warming due to the upstream H&V and Townsend Harbor dams is on the order of 14 times more than the warming due to the West Groton dam. Also, water is currently cooled and aerated as it falls over the dam, compensating for at least some of the minor warming in the West Groton Pond. With respect to cold water fish, the Horsley Witten report raises issues as to whether the water depth and flow will be adequate for trout. The Report does not mention the impact of climate warming which may make the water too warm.

Removing the dam would also have negative environmental effects. The State will not restore the exposed areas that will be drained. Allowing disturbed areas to restore naturally is often successful in New England, but not when there are adjacent invasives, which are prolific in the area near the pond. Also, the portion of pond that will remain is deeper than the riverbed and will be isolated from the river by a ridge, so there is a significant likelihood that standing, stagnant water will host breeding mosquitos in the summers.

Costs: The bid cost for restoring the dam is \$502,500 plus an additional \$60,000 in engineering costs and \$250,000 added as a contingency, making an estimated total cost between \$562,500 and \$812,500. We have been told The Town will likely have to pay all of those costs plus ongoing inspection and maintenance costs.

The cost for dam removal is estimated at between 1.2 and 1.7 million dollars. We have been told that the state will pay most of the costs of removal, which seems a bit optimistic. There is some evidence of rare mussels living along the section of river that would be lowered if the dam is removed. It is my understanding that the state will not cover the costs if Natural Heritage requires that the mussels be relocated. Also, the state has said they will not pay for restoration of the site after the dam is removed, such as removing invasive plants.

Historic, Cultural and Community. West Groton developed as a mill town starting hundreds of years ago when the first dam was built there. It has a long and varied history, and the dam and mill pond are the remaining iconic images that reflect that history. Groton has done a remarkable job of preserving much of the culture and historic landmarks of our Town, with actions such as our Historic Districts, our demolition delay bylaw, and investing in the protection of our historic landscapes and buildings, as exemplified by the Town Center and Gibbet Hill.

I have spent much of my life protecting and restoring natural resources in Groton and this region. I have been a Trustee of the Groton Conservation Trust and served on the Board of the Nashua River Watershed Association for many decades. I am an advocate for removing dams to restore original conditions, but I think the historic, cultural and community values of restoring this dam far outweigh the reasons for removing it. The West Groton Dam is an iconic part of the history of Groton as a whole and of the West Groton community in particular. We need to invest in ensuring its future.

Bob Pine