

## **Helping build a Habitat: Town Meeting approves \$50,000 toward house**

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Friday, November 24, 2006

Town Meeting gave the potential Habitat for Humanity house adjacent to Scituate High School on Route 3A a big boost last week, unanimously approving \$50,000 in Community Preservation funds toward construction.

Former Selectman Richard Lane, a local carpenter by trade, helped the local project committee for Habitat secure a location for a three-bedroom house on a 40,000-square foot parcel of land along Route 3A adjacent to the Scituate High School sign through a Town Meeting vote in March. When constructed, the home will be Scituate's first Habitat House.

Because Habitat for Humanity receives no government funding, money to build the homes is raised through private donations, corporate contributions and the support of churches throughout the South Shore. Jim Comeau, construction manager for Habitat, said the organization would look to raise \$50,000 privately for the house, which he said would cost a total of about \$135,000.

The Community Preservation Act is funded by residents through an annual 3 percent tax surcharge. The act funds projects for historic preservation, open space acquisition and the creation of affordable housing. The Habitat article was the only article to receive funding from the Community Preservation Committee at Town Meeting.

A single-income family from Scituate will live in the new home. In order to qualify, Community Preservation Committee chairman John Hallin said families must be willing to invest 400 to 500 hours of their own time in finishing the house through what is known as "sweat equity." The selected family will pay a \$135,000 mortgage to Habitat over a 20-year period.

"It's good," Hallin told the Mariner in August. "They (Habitat) will get a little bit of money back each month so they can continue funding these projects in other communities."

Comeau said the Habitat is awaiting transfer of the land from the town to the organization, after which he said Habitat hopes to break ground on the house next month. Habitat will then begin fielding applications from families interested in occupying the new home. Comeau said in order to apply for the house, families must attend two upcoming informational sessions with Habitat officials.

"We'll explain to them the process and what's expected of them, because they need to know they will be partners with us," Comeau said. "This isn't a handout, it's a hand-up."