



TOWN OF EAST LONGMEADOW

Town Manager's Report

November 10, 2020

Good Evening:

Following up on last meeting's report, the Town's Open Space Plan received final approval from the Commonwealth's Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs on October 20, 2020 which makes us eligible to apply for DCS (Division of Conservation Services) grants through October of 2026. I want to thank all of the committee members who contributed to this effort since its inception and particularly, Bethany Yeo, Donna Prather and Diane Bishop for accomplishing the last necessary steps to complete the project over the last 60 days.

The Town received notice of Community Compact Connector Grants available to small businesses in East Longmeadow and immediately posted the information regarding applications on our Town website through the Planning Department. Rebecca Jones began employment as the Administrative Assistant in Planning on November 2, 2020. Her prior experience as a municipal paralegal in the City of Westfield will be a significant enhancement to that Department's operations.

In addition to the progress on the Open Space Plan, we received our bond rating (AA+) and have proceeded to bond for the FY 20 capital projects. All necessary paperwork was signed on November 2, 2020 and the funding is expected on November 12, 2020. The refunding of prior bonds has resulted in significant savings and the specific detail on those issues may be addressed by Steve Lonergan later in the meeting. The Finance, Assessors and Treasurer offices are working to submit the tax recapitulation to DOR by the end of November and obtain a prompt certification of free cash.

As I reported last time, work continues on a variety of long term projects, Capital Improvement Plan, Compilation of Fixed Assets, Master Plan, Employee Guidelines Handbook, and Financial policy updates, etc. We are also reviewing our liability coverage limits with the Town's insurer and evaluating the impact of potential rate increases in our health plans. Several grant applications are still pending which may assist with some outstanding requests for capital funding, namely, Mass Works, a FEMA Building Resilient Infrastructure grant to fund acquisition of a generator for the Town Hall and CPC funding for the track at the High School.

On the issue of Board and Commission vacancies, I did receive an application for the Conservation Commission from Elizabeth Stoughton, and I appointed her. However, on the same day, a current member, Erin Lynch, resigned from the Commission so at that point we were still down two positions. I mention this only to demonstrate the difficulty of filling these positions. Fortunately, several other residents have since expressed interest through emails to my office, so two additional appointments were made to Conservation.

Work continues on the reporting process for FEMA reimbursement for Covid expenses not covered by the Cares Act

I conducted a Department Heads meeting on October 21, 2020. Performance evaluations were discussed in a general way and all were encouraged to think about and document any methods, projects or operational protocols to improve their respective functions. Those who live in Town and have long standing in the community were asked to think about recommendations to their associates for service on Town Boards. All Departments reported on their ongoing projects and business operations. There was discussion of how best to continue service to the public once the winter weather arrives, so the possibility of renting a tent or limited access to the vestibule is being considered. All of our public facing offices as well as Town residents will need some protection from the elements over the next several months.

Health Director Aimee Petrosky received the John Crowley Award for 2020 from the Mass. Health Officers Association; the award honors a person who has contributed to the growth and success of the Association through outstanding leadership and extraordinary service. Aimee continues to monitor the Town's Covid response, community transmissions, hot zone status and general effects on the community. All staff are mindful of the difficulties this situation presents for everyone on a daily basis. As you know, the Governor issued a revised stay at home Order on November 2, 2020 which imposes further restrictions. This Order has been posted on the Town's website.

In other Health Department news, the Shared Health services initiative with Longmeadow has been tabled for the present time. Longmeadow's Health Director is retiring at year's end and a new Director must be hired there which prompted the decision to table the project for now.

Our recycling coordinator, Elizabeth Bone, was featured in a Springfield Republican Living section article recently for her

very interesting hobby of beekeeping. In response to her efforts as the recycling coordinator, The Town has also received a Recycling Dividends Program grant award in the amount of \$17,600. This grant is pursuant to the Green Communities Act and rewards municipalities which have implemented specific programs and policies to maximize reuse, recycling and waste reduction. Funds are awarded on the number of criteria points earned based on the 2020 Grant Guidelines.

ELCAT is in the process of creating a video presentation of a Town Hall walk through. Filming began on November 3 with a tour of the Health, Finance, Assessors, Library, DPW, Planning and Building. The Police Department, Human Resources, Clerk's Office and Recreation Department were visited on November 5, other Department visits will follow as time allows.

The Broadband Committee, chaired by Don Maki, intends to develop a video to assist the community as to how to obtain television services by interviewing various providers.

Many thanks to our Clerk, Jeanne Quaglietti, and her staff including Jackie Sullivan, Mary O'Connor and Melissa Goodrow for their continuing efficiency and effectiveness during this most unusual voting cycle in the midst of the pandemic. They worked diligently to accomplish all necessary procedures for early voting, requests for absentee ballots, vote by mail and conduct of the election itself on November 3, 2020.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary E. McNally
Town Manager