

Town Manager's Report Monday, August 5, 2013

To: Board of Selectmen
From Christopher Whelan, Town Manager

McGrath Farm Purchase Completed: On July 31, the Town concluded the purchase of the property at 449 Barrett's Mill Road from the estate of Patrick McGrath. The 2013 Annual Town Meeting authorized the acquisition of the farmhouse, barn, green house and farm stand, along with 1.9 acres. The property is surrounded by nearly 40 acres of publicly-owned farmland, much of it acquired from the McGrath family over the years. Affordable housing advocates have secured \$200,000 in pledges and committed those funds to renovate the farmhouse into two units of affordable housing that will be made available to a farmer and farm-worker at an affordable monthly rent. Work is expected to begin on the renovations in September, and a Request for Proposals from individuals or groups wishing to rent the farmstead will be issued in November. The goal is to have the farmhouse and about 17 acres leased to a local farmer in time for spring planting in 2014.

State Prison Mitigation Funding Restored: Concord is one of six communities in the Commonwealth that host State correctional facilities. For many years, the State has provided funding to those host communities to help offset the impact of having a prison located in the community. In December of 2012, anticipating a State revenue shortfall, the Governor cut the entire appropriation in this account, including \$140,000 allocated for Concord. When State revenue actually exceeded estimates in the spring of 2013, Representative Cory Atkins and Senator Michael Barrett worked successful to get this funding restored. However, in June, the Governor vetoed several local aid appropriations, including the re-funding of the Prison Mitigation account. Fortunately, the Massachusetts House and Senate overrode the Governor's vetoes and \$140,000 was restored for both FY2013 and FY2014.

Assistant Light Plant Director Retiring: Dale Cronan announced his plans to retire effective August 23 after nearly 17 years of service with the Town. Dale came to the Light Plant from Boston Edison. He used his significant experience in customer service to enhance CMLP's reputation for excellent customer service and responsiveness. He also managed power supply matters for the Light Plant, including the transition from a single wholesale power supplier to managing a diverse portfolio of power supply contracts. Dale helped expand Concord's green power portfolio by adding hydro, wind and bio-fuel sources to our energy mix. Dale will be missed at the Light Plant, and we wish him a long and happy retirement.

Concord Solar Challenge a Success; Program Deadline Extended!

Over 300 people have signed up for a solar site evaluation and 60 homeowners have already signed contracts for a total of more than 500 kilowatts in solar capacity. We are halfway to our goal of 100 homes, at which point Astrum Solar, our installer partner, will

donate \$10,000 to the Town for a solar PV (photovoltaic) system. And we have achieved the lowest pricing level under the program.

Important things to know:

1. Pricing is so low and incentives are so high that sites with lower solar potential are still financially attractive. East, south and west-facing roofs with good sun are candidates for solar.
2. The Light Plant is looking into allowing no-money-down, low-monthly payment equipment leases for solar. We expect a final decision in mid-September.
3. The deadline for the program has been extended from July 31st to **October 31st**. All contracts must be signed by that date to get preferential pricing. Sign up for a site evaluation right away at <http://go.astrumsolar.com/concord> today to begin the process.
4. Now is the time to go solar. The Light Plant rebate may be reduced or eliminated at the end of this year, "bonus" depreciation for businesses also expires at the end of 2013, and the State is revamping its SREC (solar renewable energy certificate) program in early 2014. And our great group pricing expires at the end of October.

If you have any questions, please contact Jill Appel, Solar Coach at 978-371-7270 or jill.appel@comcast.net.

Following are some of the matters reported on this week by various Town Departments:

FIRE

Station 1 Renovation: Installation of the vehicle exhaust system at Station 1 is nearly complete. Sprinkler repair bid walk-throughs were held this past week for refurbishment of our Floor 3 dry sprinkler system.

Unusual Emergency Responses: On Tuesday July 30, CFD responded to a kitchen fire at Emerson Hospital. On arrival, CFD crews found a small extinguished fire in the grill area caused by an apparent natural gas shut off valve malfunction. There was no fire damage and full kitchen operation was only briefly interrupted.

On Thursday, August 1, CFD responded to a dormitory at Middlesex School for an electrical fire caused by contractors welding. There was minor damage to a ceiling and electrical wiring.

LIBRARY

Saturdays at CFPL: The Concord Free Public Library has been pleased to offer a full day of service on summer Saturdays by remaining open until 5:00 p.m. In the first four Saturdays a total of 2,195 residents took advantage of these increased hours by visiting.

Important Donation: Leslie Wilson, Curator of the William Munroe Special Collections, reported that a descendant of Thomas Munroe (brother of William, founder of the Concord Free Public Library), has donated a collection of family daguerreotypes and ambrotypes, including daguerreotypes of William the cabinet maker and pencil maker and his son William, the Library founder. These images of the two Williams will be taken to NEDCC in Andover for estimates on preservation and the creation of copy negatives. These preservation measures will permit use of the two portraits in our upcoming exhibition “The Munroes of Lexington and Concord,” which is a collaborative project with the Lexington Historical Society scheduled for November 5, 2013 – January 31, 2014.

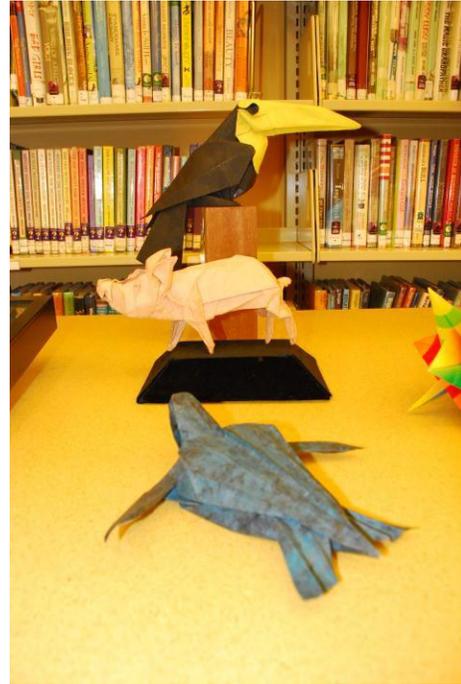
Digital Commonwealth: Recently, the Concord Free Public Library became a member of the Digital Commonwealth. This participation has enabled the Library to have the following materials digitized: Concord Town records (manuscript transcripts), 1774 – 1776. These manuscript transcripts – 107 pages, handwritten in both pen and pencil on pre-printed forms – come from a set of transcribed documents created during a project conducted in 1934-1935 under the auspices of the Civil Works Administration (CWA) and supervised by Whitney S. Smith. Tom Blake, Digital Projects Manager at the Boston Public Library, made a site visit on 7/23/13 to review the material, explain the Digital Commonwealth’s processes and policies, and transport the items for digitization and inclusion in this online collection. The digitization will take approximately one month and the manuscript records will be returned to CFPL at that time along with PDF copies of the digital files. The digitized content will then be made available on the following sites: the Digital Commonwealth (www.digitalcommonwealth.org), the Concord Free Public Library (www.concordlibrary.org), and the Digital Public Library of America (<http://dp.la/>). We are looking forward to offering increased access to these important historical documents through our participation in the Digital Commonwealth.

Last in Summer Series: On Wednesday, August 7 at 7:00 p.m. the Boogalo Swamis will perform the last summer concert of the season on the Library’s front lawn. Residents are encouraged to bring a blanket and come to enjoy the music. When the band, Southern Rail performed at CFPL in late July approximately 200 attended.

Recruitment Update: Second round interviews for the Library Assistant position will take place with the four finalists this Thursday and Friday, August 8th and 9th. We anticipate checking references and preparing a request to make a job offer shortly thereafter.

Reference Activity: The Reference Department reported that 940 reference questions were answered during the month of July. This represents a 16% increase over the number of reference questions answered the prior month.

Children’s Programming (photos on next page): The Children’s Room recently offered a walk along glider program. This program demonstrated how paper gliders can be flown for a long period of time by holding a piece of cardboard under it to control air flow and direct the path of flight. This popular program attracted several boys and their fathers when it was repeated at the Fowler Branch. The Main Library’s Children’s Room was also pleased to host an origami workshop with origami master, Michael LaFosse.



Ongoing children's programs include pajama story time on Tuesday nights in August at 7:00 p.m. Children can come in their pajamas for stories, songs, and a puppet show before bedtime. Also available on Fridays in August are family films from 1:00 – 3:00 p.m. at the Main Library. All films in the series are rated G.

LIGHT DEPARTMENT

Station 219 Transformer Delivery: This Tuesday we expect to receive the first of two new high voltage transformers as part of our Substation 219 upgrades on Forest Ridge Road. This new unit weighs in at nearly 133,000 pounds! The truck hired to move such a large item is 128 feet long, 12 feet wide and weighs over 100,000 pounds empty. On its way from Washington Missouri, this 120-ton convoy will make its way down Route 2, turn right on Main Street/Route 62 West and follow Main Street all the way to Forest Ridge Road. If you see this rare sight roll past you, be sure to take a picture! Do not worry if you miss it because you will have a second chance in a few weeks when the second transformer is delivered along the same route!

CMLP's Warehouse Expansion Makes Progress: The steel construction for the warehouse is virtually complete and the masons have worked quickly, nearly completing all of the structural concrete block. This means the masons should be moving to installation of the brick veneer finish along the length of the concrete block.



This week we should also see the installation of conduit for the electrical and security systems and fire protection piping. Lastly, a notice of award has been issued to Mass Crane & Hoist for a 5-Ton crane intended to load materials inside the warehouse once it is complete.

PLANNING & LAND MANAGEMENT

Building Inspections Division

TD Bank has Begun: TD Bank has now fenced in the former gas station property at 1112 Main Street at the corner of Baker Avenue in West Concord. As soon as a demolition permit has been issued, the former gas station will be demolished. The developer is Arista Development.

Another Busy Construction Season for Concord: Building permits are up 7 % over a year ago at this time. Based upon this activity, this year may be a record breaker for the number of permits issued and the value of construction.

Solar Panels: Solar panel installations are keeping Concord Electrical Inspector Brian Smith busy. So far this year, we have issued electrical permits and inspected 40 photovoltaic solar panel installations.

Health Division

Going Batty: Health Division staff has received several calls from both Lincoln and Concord residents regarding finding bats in their homes. This past week, Administrative Assistant Karen Byrne sent two bats to the State Lab for testing; both bats tested negative for rabies.

As a reminder to residents, bats may carry rabies and if there is potential contact with humans (such as a bat found in a bedroom) or contact with pets, the bat should be submitted to the Health Department for testing. If no contact occurred (no bite or scratch or found in non-sleeping area of house) the bat may be released outdoors. For more information visit <http://www.mass.gov/eohhs/docs/dph/cdc/rabies/bat-what-to-do-in-home.pdf>

New Food Establishments Opening Soon: This past week, Health Inspector Gabrielle White issued approval letters for both Haute Coffee and Bondir. Look for these exciting new food establishments to open in the early fall.

The Tick Education Project: Health Director Susan Rask and Inspector Gabrielle White have been working with Public Health Intern Pam Okerholm on a Regional Tick Education project. Funding for the Middlesex Tick Task Force (MTTF) is through a CHNA 15 grant. The group has produced a variety of educational materials to be utilized by all participating towns. In the final two weeks of Pam's work with MTTF, she will be visiting local haunts with a traveling display that features a scarecrow dressed for tick habitat and a collection of educational materials which provide options for keeping yourself safe while enjoying the outdoors. Her recent visits to Concord COA, Walden Pond and Spring Brook Park in Bedford have been a big hit. Look for this traveling display at local libraries and at the Concord AG Day this fall.

Planning Division

Historic Districts Commission: The HDC met on Thursday, August 1, and reviewed two continued and nine new applications for changes within the Historic Districts. The Commission approved Certificates of Appropriateness for new solar panels at 13 River Street; new paint colors for the Town House (22 Monument Square); new windows, front steps, and HVAC equipment at 276 Main Street; altered signage for 33 Walden Street; the demolition of an existing garage and construction of a new one at 440 Main Street; a new addition at 100 Walden Street; new solar panels at 214 Monument Street; and the demolition of a garage, gates, stone walls, lighting and guard house at 68 Great Meadows Road. The Commission also reviewed applications for new railings on the Town House; new light fixtures at 214 Monument Street; and the demolition and construction of a new house at 310 Lexington Road in order to allow the Applicants time to present additional materials. Lastly, the Commission voted to deny an application to demolish the existing house and garage at 445 Lowell Road.

Historic Districts Guideline Revisions: The updated and revised guidelines for the Historic Districts Commission are currently available in draft form for review and comment on the HDC's webpage. The Commission plans to schedule a public hearing to complete this review period at their regular meeting on Thursday, September 19.

Recreation Facilities Strategic Plan RFP: Planning Division staff have been working with Recreation Dept. staff to issue a Request for Proposals to solicit consultant services in

preparing a Recreation Facilities Strategic Plan. This effort is expected to take place in the fall/winter 2014.

24 Commonwealth Ave./Former West Concord Supermarket: New owner Jim Canty with Nick Boynton met with the West Concord Advisory Committee on Wednesday night seeking the WCAC's recommendation to the Planning Board for their plan to renovate/restore the existing building and convert the use from retail to restaurant. A standing room only crowd attended the meeting at the Harvey Wheeler Community Center to express support for the use and to raise concerns about parking and other impacts to West Concord. This item is scheduled to be on the September 10 Planning Board meeting and the September 12 Board of Appeals meeting.

Natural Resources Division

Natural Resources Commission: At the July 31 NRC meeting, the Commission issued Negative Determinations of Applicability for 73 Wayside Road to remove trees, 99 Riverside Road to remove invasive species, and 195 Commonwealth Avenue to install a fence and shed. The Commission also issued an Order of Conditions for 53 Stacey Circle to reconstruct the entranceways. The Commission heard the following matters and anticipates issuing Orders of Conditions at the next meeting on August 14: a Notice of Intent (NOI) for 389 Pope Road to construct a deck and pool; an NOI to remove trees at the Concord Country Club; an NOI to demolish and reconstruct a single family house at 60 Walden Terrace; an NOI to repave and improve drainage at Wedgewood Commons; an NOI to upgrade the septic system at 34-38 Cranberry Lane; an NOI to create a meadow habitat at 41, 68, and 112 Great Meadows Road; and, an NOI to demolish and reconstruct a single family house at 147 Minot Road. The NOI for Concord Public Works to replace culverts at Sleepy Hollow Cemetery was continued, after discussion, to the September 4 NRC meeting to submit additional information.

New applications received this week for the August 14 NRC agenda include: a Request for Determination of Applicability for 67 Wayside Road to remove trees; an Abbreviated Notice of Resource Area Delineation for 43 Park Lane seeking confirmation on an Isolated Land Subject to Flooding; and, a Notice of Intent for 34 East Circle to replace a failed subsurface sewage disposal system. The Commission will also hear the continued matter on the after-the-fact Notice of Intent to reconstruct a driveway at 24 Off Harrington Road.

NRC Membership: After seven years of service, George Lewis is stepping off the Natural Resources Commission, leaving a large void on the Commission. With a Masters in Forestry, a Minor in Botany, and as a graduate of the New England School of Law, George brought a wealth of knowledge and insight to the Commission that will be greatly missed. We thank George for the considerable amount of time and effort he has put in to evaluating each of the more than 330 Notices of Intent and 100 Requests for Determination of Applicability that he has reviewed in his tenure.

POLICE

Operational Services: On Monday, July 29, a motor vehicle crash with rollover was reported on Strawberry Hill Rd at 10AM. The driver received minor injuries and was transported to Emerson Hospital.

Also on July 29, a violation of a restraining order was reported to have occurred at the Club Car Café on Commonwealth Ave. Upon the arrival of officers it was determined that the subject had fled the scene. A warrant was sought for the involved subject, a Newton resident, and he was later arrested by the Newton Police Department.

On July 29, a child was reported to have been pulled, not breathing, from the water at Walden Pond. CPR was administered by the Walden Pond lifeguards. The Concord Police and Fire Departments responded, and the child was transported to Emerson Hospital.

On July 31 at 12:30AM, officers responded to a rollover crash on Cambridge Turnpike near Rte. 2. Upon the arrival of officers the driver had fled the scene. With assistance from the Lincoln Police and the Mass State Police the driver, a 38 year old Lunenburg resident, was located and arrested by Officer DiRienzo. He faces numerous charges including operating under the influence of liquor.

On August 1 at 11PM officers responded to Kenney Lane on a report of underage drinking occurring at a house. Upon the arrival of officers, a number of underage subjects from Lexington were located, along with a quantity of alcohol. The daughter of the homeowner will be charged with a person under 21 possessing alcohol.

On August 3 at 1:24AM, officers responded to a rollover crash that occurred at the upper end of Monument St. A 21 year old Concord resident received minor injuries and was transported to Emerson Hospital.

Also during this past week, 7 vehicles were reported to have been entered overnight, and items removed from them. The areas involved include Elm St., Baker Ave., Bradford St., Maple St., Sorrell Rd., and Musketaquid Rd. Most of those vehicles were unlocked. Taken was cash and electronics, including a laptop. These cases are under investigation.

Community Services: During last week, Detective Camilleri assisted the Council on Aging as well as other outside agencies in regard to several senior residents facing challenging issues.