

Town Manager's Report

Tuesday, July 28, 2014

To: Board of Selectmen
From Christopher Whelan, Town Manager

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

Fire Department

Mutual Aid:

On Sunday Engine 4 and Car 1 responded to 206 Hudson Road, Stow on the 4th Alarm House fire. Duties assigned included interior fire attack and roof operations.

Emergency Management:

The completion of the Harvey Wheeler Emergency Generator project is very near. National Grid is installing the gas meter on Tuesday. This will be followed by a testing process before the generator is placed in service. This will provide critical back-up power to the HWCC as this is Concord's new Emergency Shelter location.

Planning & Land Management

Planning Division:

- **CC at Play/CCHS Field Renovation Project Pre-construction Meeting:** On June 24th, Town staff from Planning, NRC, Engineering, Water & Sewer, Fire and CMLP met with the Engineering Project Manager and the contractor to review the conditions of approval that needed to be met prior to commencing construction, required permits, the timing and phasing of the project, access and safety during construction and reporting and monitoring required for the project. This coordinated effort gave everyone a better understanding of the issues, concerns and steps required by each department and will help facilitate the progress of the project.
- **'Woods Hill Table' restaurant at 24 Commonwealth Ave.:** At the July 22nd Planning Board meeting, the Board granted an amendment to the Special Permit for 24 Commonwealth Ave. to allow a 5,200 s.f. restaurant in the West Concord Village District.
- **Comparative Analysis of Planned Residential Developments:** Town Planner Elizabeth Hughes has completed a detailed analysis of all of the Planned Residential Developments (PRD) approved and constructed since the late 1970's in Town with a GIS map showing their locations. The analysis provides a matrix of the land area of each project, number of units, the units per acre factor, area of protected open space, the unit per protected open space

factor, the unit mix and approximate square footage of the units. It is anticipated that the matrix will provide guidance to the Planning Board and Zoning Board of Appeals on evaluating new PRD applications.

- **MAGIC (Minuteman Area Group on Interlocal Communication) meets:** Nine of the thirteen communities participating in MAGIC and supported by the regional planning agency, MAPC, met on July 24th to share local community events; consider and adopt the FY 2015 MAGIC work plan, receive updates on the TIP Comment Letter submitted to the Metropolitan Planning Organization and discussed the MAPC Strategic Plan Update.
- **National Preservation Commission Conference:** Last week, Senior Planner Lara Kritzer attended the 2014 FORUM conference in Philadelphia held by the National Association of Preservation Commissions. The Conference was well attended with representatives from 48 states present and provided a national perspective on the preservation challenges and goals which local commissions are facing, particularly with the rise of destructive storms and the realization that historic institutions need to have better response plans to disaster situations. The Conference also included informative sessions on the use of new technology for local Historic Resource Survey work, best design review practices, addressing building code concerns with Historic Structures, and the use of new alternative materials on historic structures.

Health Division

- **Camp Thoreau at the Thoreau Club:** Health Division staff spent considerable time investigating a near drowning incident of a camper and a case of communicable disease in a camper where the camper was not properly excluded from returning to camp while infectious. Health Inspector Gabrielle White met several times with Camp Thoreau's director to review and suggest improvements to camp policies regarding communicable disease and camper use of aquatic facilities. Health Director Susan Rask worked with the camp nurse and MDPH epidemiologists to ensure that parents of campers exposed to the infectious disease were properly notified of the risk and provided with advice on medical follow-up for their children.
- **New England Fencing Academy, 119 Commonwealth Avenue:** The New England Fencing Academy is opening in the space previously occupied by Dabblers at 119 Commonwealth Avenue. Health Division staff followed up on two complaints received from concerned parents that the fencing academy planned to operate what appeared to be a recreational camp program which did not have a license to operate as a camp. Health Division staff met with the fencing academy owners to suggest modifications to the program so that the academy could offer individual fencing classes instead of operating a camp program.

Natural Resources Division

- **Natural Resources Commission:** At the July 23rd meeting, the Commission heard the following matters: continued Notice of Intent (NOI) hearing to install a dock and landscaping at 112 Great Meadows Road; continued NOI hearing to demolish and construct a new house at 163 Lindsay Pond Road; an NOI to repair a septic system at 90 Pine Street; and, an

NOI to demolish and reconstruct a single family house at 84 Bruce Road. Construction commenced on the following sites this week: Phase II of the Playscape at Ripley and a septic repair at 199 Cambridge Turnpike. Work will also start next week at 129 Lowell Road to perform additional soil sampling and remediation associated with soil contamination, and at 500 Walden Street/Concord-Carlisle High School for Phase I of the CC-at-Play playing fields project.

- **Water Chestnut removal:** Conservation crew completed their annual efforts this week to remove water chestnut from the Sudbury River and Fairhaven Bay with assistance from the Conservation Land Conservation Trust and AmeriCorps volunteers. The water chestnut population was relatively light this year so hand harvesting efforts were expanded to include the area from the Route 2 Bridge near Emerson Hospital to the Route 117 Bridge in Lincoln. Water chestnut efforts were also conducted at Hutchins and Macone Ponds.

Building Inspections Division

- **New England Fencing Academy:** A new fencing academy has received a Certificate of Occupancy to open its doors at 119 Commonwealth Avenue in West Concord. This is in the former retail space of Dabbler's Hobby shop.
- **Middlesex School Maintenance Barn:** Middlesex School has been issued a building permit to allow the school to begin demolition and construction of new maintenance facilities across the street from the main campus on Lowell Road. This work involves the demolition of an existing non-conforming barn building and replacing it with a conforming maintenance office building, renovations to an existing barn and site improvements for parking and access.

Concord Police Department

Operational Services:

- On Tuesday, July 22, Detective Camilleri took a report from Concord Park regarding the purchase of prescription drugs under false pretenses. The medication stolen was done so by using the information of a current resident of Concord Park. Detective Camilleri learned that a former employee of Concord Park might be involved in the criminal activity. Detective Camilleri completed his investigation and determined that the former employee did commit the crime. That employee is being charged with the offense.
- On Wednesday, July 23, Officer Holsinger responded to the Colonial Inn for a report of cash stolen from the front desk. Officer Holsinger learned that approximately \$360 had been taken during the overnight hours. A review of security camera video and several other leads are being followed up on.

- On Wednesday, July 23, Sgt. Connell, Inspector Monahan, Officer Soll and Officer Koppental responded to the emergency room at Emerson Hospital for an out of control patient. Officers arrived and quickly located the subject, placing him into protective custody. The subject was transported to the Station for processing.
- On Friday, July 25, Officer McGrath and Officer Roberts took a report from an Adams Road resident regarding credit card fraud. Officers learned that the credit card in question had actually been stolen from the victim's motor vehicle while it was parked at the Beede Fitness Center. It was learned that the credit card was used at several locations in Acton. Officers are following up on surveillance video from those locations in an attempt to determine the thief's identity.

Community Services:

- Officers are actively patrolling the area of White Pond during the course of their shifts as specific directed patrols. Officers are to monitor the adjacent neighborhoods and address any issues that may arise. Illegal parking, noise complaints and other similar types of calls will be handled in an appropriate and fair manner.
- On Saturday July 26, Dayshift personnel assisted the businesses in Monument Square with the annual sidewalk sale. No issues, including shoplifting, were reported during the day.

Finance Department

FY15 First Quarter property tax bills due on or before August 1

Almost 7,000 property tax bills for the first quarter of fiscal year 2015 (covering July 1 to September 30) were issued on July 1 and are due and payable on or before Thursday, August 1 at 4:30 PM. Payment must be received at the Town House prior to that time or can be paid online via the Town's website, concordma.gov, by midnight on August 1. Payment received after that date will incur interest charges in accordance with state law.

Payments received at the Town House delivered through the US Post Office or through any other delivery service after the close of Town House business hours at 4:30 PM on August 1 must be considered late according to state law, as the Tax Collector is not permitted to use the postmark date as verification of timely payment.

A payment processed through the taxpayer's personal online banking service does not come electronically to the Town but rather is directed by the taxpayer's bank to a third-party company that prints and mails a physical check to the Town. There is often a lag of up to a week between the time a taxpayer processes the payment request and the time the Town actually receives payment. Thus taxpayers using their own online banking service should make their payment at least a week ahead of the due date in order to ensure the Town will receive it by August 1.

By comparison, use of the Town's online payment option through its website, concordma.gov, does result in an electronic transaction received and posted the same day. The Town's website permits a payment to be scheduled in advance.

New owners who may not have received their quarterly tax bill should contact the Treasurer-Collector at 978-318-3050, or by e-mail at collector@concordma.gov.

For most taxpayers, the quarterly bills due August 1 and November 1 are based on one-fourth of the net tax billed for all of the prior fiscal year (July 1, 2013 through June 30, 2014). State law allows for a 2.5% increase plus an increase corresponding to any voter-approved override or debt exclusion ballot votes. The FY15 adjustment is 0.85%, reflecting the increased property tax levy required in this budget year to meet debt service on voter-approved projects, including the new high school and Concord's elementary school projects. See page 39 of the April 2014 Finance Committee Report (page 41 of the pdf file available on the town website) for detailed information:

http://concordma.gov/pages/ConcordMA_BComm/2014%20FinCom%20Report.pdf