

Town Manager's Report **Monday, November 1, 2010**

To: Board of Selectmen
From Christopher Whelan, Town Manager

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

FINANCE

Assessor Recruitment:

The Assessor recruitment process is well underway, with first round interviews of 7 candidates completed last week, and second round interviews with a smaller number of candidates to be scheduled in the near future. Retiring Assessor Lynn Masson has agreed to defer retirement until the completion of this year's tax-rate setting process which concludes with the mailing of the 3rd quarter tax bills at the end of December.

Finance Committee's Preliminary Budget Guideline for FY2012. The Finance Committee met on Thurs, October 28 and approved preliminary spending guidelines for Town Government operations, as well as for the Concord Public Schools and Concord-Carlisle Regional School District. The Guideline Sub-committee will be discussing these preliminary figures with School officials and the Town Manager on Thurs, November 4, prior to setting a final spending guideline, which by Town bylaw must be approved by November 30.

State-wide Election.

Town Clerk Anita Tekle kept her office open on Saturday, October 30 to accommodate those wishing to cast absentee ballots. Based on active absentee voting, she is anticipating fairly heavy turn-out for the State-wide election on Tuesday, November 2. Polls will be open from 7:00 a.m. until 8:00 p.m. on Tuesday. The Town Clerk is usually able to post the preliminary results from the electronic balloting on the Clerk's page of the Town's website several hours after the polls close.

FIRE

Renovations:

The Fire Chief reports that at the moment, the Walden Street Station renovation project is slightly behind schedule, but the General Contractor (Delphi) advises they should be able to catch up fairly easily. Work being done presently includes installation of steel studs, preparation for structural steel for the addition, and boiler changeover.

Apparatus:

Newly purchased Engine 4 is now in-service and continues to operate well. Engine 3 is has been sent out for another 3 weeks for warranty-covered paint work. When Engine 3 returns, the old Engine 4 will go out for its long awaited refurbishment.

LIBRARY

Library Events:

Events related to the Concord Festival of Authors continued at the library last weekend with Suspense Night taking place Friday evening and the first Leslie Riedel Memorial Lecture for Young People with David Macaulay Saturday night.

Special Collections:

The Library Special Collections staff has begun planning the upcoming Nov. 2011-Jan. 2012 collaborative exhibition and lecture series "Collecting Transcendentalism," which will be on view in the Library gallery. The exhibition will feature many items from the CFPL's collections and a selection from the Joel Myerson Collection at the University of South Carolina. Speakers for the three-part lecture series will include Joel Myerson and book dealer Mark Stirling, owner of Up-Country Books. Curator Leslie Wilson will travel to South Carolina later this month to firm up the display and lecture details with Professor Myerson.

Annual Conference:

Approximately eight Library representatives had the opportunity to attend the New England Library Association's Annual Conference that was held in Boxborough, MA, October 17 – 19. (Several attendees had their conference registrations paid for through the Library's LSTA grant due to their attendance at a readers' advisory session during the conference.) Staff members report receiving many ideas related to programming and utilizing new technologies to increase patron library use.

Professional Development:

On 10/28 five colleagues attended a genre study training for guidance on how to approach the staff historical fiction genre study scheduled to begin this fall. On 11/18 the Library will have its first genre study discussion on *Woodburner: A Novel* by John Pipkin.

LIGHT DEPARTMENT

Power Supply:

The department received indicative pricing for power purchases for a portion of the Town's needs for the period from 2013-2016. The sample prices received were very favorable and based on these results, CMLP will proceed in the near future to secure firm bids for approximately 5 megawatts of the Town's daily power needs for that period. Five major power generators, including Florida Light & Power and Constellation Energy Group responded to the Town's request for indicative (non-binding) pricing.

West Concord Undergrounding Project / System Upgrade:

CMLP is currently up-grading much of the electric system in West Concord Center, including transformers and underground cabling. Staff is now installing new conduit runs; cable installation has begun on Beharrell Street; and CMLP has opened bids for switchgear to be installed in the coming months.

Smart Grid/ Fiber:

The Light Department is reviewing a marketing plan from Uptown Services for the expansion of the Smart Grid customer base, including discussing options related to the rollout of the Smart Thermostat program. This week the contractor installed 28,280 feet of aerial fiber, and 9,530 feet of inner duct as part of the under-ground system.

Belknap/Elsinore Underground Conversion:

Surveying for this project began this week.

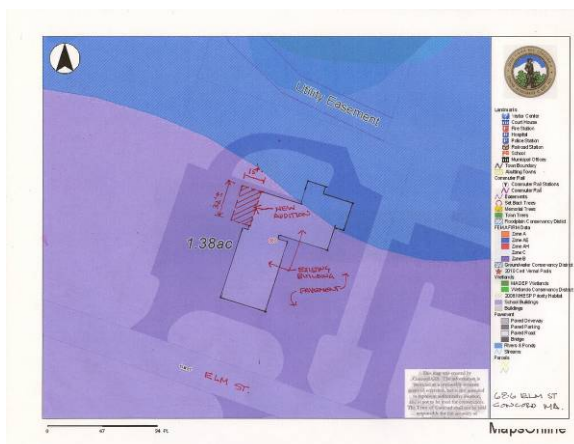
Street Lights:

Responses are ongoing to customer concerns and inquiries regarding street light removals (approximately 2 per week)

PLANNING & LAND MANAGEMENT

Building and Inspections

- **Caesar Robbins house:** John Minty met with Maria Madison of the Drinking Gourd Project to review their Board of Appeals application to move the “1780”Caesar Robbins house from 324 Bedford Street to a spot adjacent to the North Bridge parking lot off Monument Street. The Drinking Gourd project will be seeking a special permit and site plan approval from the Board of Appeals to establish this house as a museum (“philanthropic use”). The Board of Appeals hearing will be December 9. The house is 16 feet wide by 35 feet long and 16 foot high. To move such a structure across Town roads will require a Selectmen “house moving permit” as well. They will be seeking this permit in the spring so that the house can be moved onto its new foundation next summer.
- **75 Bow Street:** The Historic Districts Commission requested that a building inspector go out to inspect the garage that has been under construction at 75 Bow Street. The site inspection revealed that the owner has now lowered both sides of his garage roof to the height that had been previously approved by the HDC in 2007. The HDC will be following up with the owner on other changes to the design of the building, but is happy that the largest violation issue has now been resolved.
- **Architectural Access Board Training:** This week, staff attended a two-day Architectural Access Board training course, presented by the Massachusetts Office on Disability and designed to train inspectors and local accessibility advocates on how to better understand their obligations to provide access to the disabled community.
- **686 Elm Street:** John Minty, Julie Vaughan and Marcia Rasmussen met with local architect Paul Mahoney, to look at a proposal to expand Concord Gas - a gas & service station located at 686 Elm Street. This property is a pre-existing non-conforming use so Mr. Mahoney was advised that the proposed work would require a special permit and site plan approval by the Board of Appeals. The owner



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of the property is hoping to expand the footprint of the existing gas station building to create an additional bay where he can perform vehicle inspections (for State inspection stickers) and also expand the retail area of the building. The addition would be approximately 15'x 32' to the west of the existing building. See the hatched area on the proposed plan.

Natural Resources

- **Natural Resource Commission:** On November 3, the Commission will be evaluating new information submitted for the continued Hearings for the following projects: demolition and reconstruction of houses at 315 Musketaquid Road and 51 Pilgrim Road, landscaping at 289 The Valley Road, and repaving the parking lot at Millbrook Tarry. New applications include a garage at 55 Musterfield Road, the relocation of the Caesar Robbins House and construction of a new dwelling at 324 Bedford Road, a determination on the wetland boundary at 109 Oak Road and construction of a replacement septic system at 162 Hawthorne Lane.
- **Division of Natural Resources:** The Division learned that the Town did not receive a LAND grant through the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs for acquisition of the Rogers Land off Harrington Avenue. The Trails Committee will be commencing construction of new trails at the Old Rifle Range and the Thoreau-Tuttle Loop in the Town Forest and will commence the blazing of the trail system in Punkatasset Conservation Land. Progress is being made on the 10-15 Baseline Documentation Reports to be completed this year by Land Stewardship Inc. in association with the Conservation Restriction Stewardship Committee.

Planning

- **Community Preservation Act Funding:** In October, the Department of Revenue released the Community Preservation Act Trust Fund disbursements for next year. These disbursements are the State funds allocated to each of the 142 CPA communities in Massachusetts based on the percentage of CPA funds collected at the local level, and are the funds available to allocate at the 2011 Annual Town Meeting. This year's disbursement is a 27.2% match to our locally collected CPA funds, or \$233,141. While this number is down slightly from last year's 34.8% match, it is slightly more than had originally been projected for this year. The CPC can now confirm that they will have \$1,144,836 in CPA funds and another \$235,484 in Reserved Open Space funds available for project recommendations at the 2011 Annual Town Meeting.
- **Community Preservation Committee:** The CPC held the second project review meeting on October 25. Committee members met with Louisa May Alcott Memorial Association to learn more about their project to restore the School of Philosophy; with the Concord Scout House, Inc. on plans to restore and reinforce the Scout House's building envelope; and with the Concord Children's Center to discuss their application for a new Natural Playscape at Ripley School. The Committee has one more project review meeting scheduled for November 8, and will hold a public hearing on all of the potential funding applications on Tuesday, November 16.
- **Planning Board:** Tuesday night the Planning Board voted to recommend that the Zoning Board of Appeals approve the proposed T-Mobile wireless project at 100 Keyes Road. The project had previously received a Certificate of Appropriateness from the HDC. The Planning Board is looking forward to a lengthy discussion on potential Zoning Bylaw Amendments with the West Concord Task Force at their November 9 meeting.

- **Bruce Freeman Rail Trail update:** Marcia Rasmussen attended the public information session in Acton on the Request for Qualifications for design consultants to continue the Phase 2A and 2C trail design, and later in the week received confirmation on Friday that MassDOT would be funding the 25% design and Design Public Hearing.

Health

- **Proposed Warrant Bylaw – by resident:** Staff was contacted by Concord resident Jean Hill who wanted to meet with the Board of Health to discuss a proposed Warrant article for this April's Town Meeting to ban the sale of water in plastic water bottles; the wording in the bylaw would direct the Board of Health to act as the enforcing agent. The resident was advised to submit her request in writing with supporting documentation. The item will be reviewed at the November 16 meeting.

POLICE

Lieutenant Recruitment:

The Police Chief reports receiving 12 applications in the internal recruitment currently underway to fill the vacant Lieutenant position. The selection process will take place over the next several weeks with the hope of filling the vacancy perhaps in December.

PUBLIC WORKS

Paving:

The Public Works Department is working to close out several paving projects while the weather still allows, with Farmers Cliff Road being paved today, portions of the Walden Street municipal lot scheduled for paving tomorrow, and Whittemore Street to be paved some time in the near future.

Solar Trash Compactors:

CPW has set out several solar-powered trash compactors in various locations – early feedback is very positive. The goal of these units is to use solar energy to compact the trash, thus requiring less frequent pick-up by the trash removal vehicle. This has been a collaboration with the Town's solid waste contractor Waste Management, Inc.

Fields Update:

The turf fields (at CCHS) resurfacing project is back underway this week after a brief hiatus due to issues on the contractor's end. Work on "Field 2" is wrapping up" and the field is now available again for play. Work to replace the artificial turf "Field 1" is set to commence this week.