



Town of Concord

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Town of Concord Awarded Pickard Innovation Award

CONCORD, MA— The Town of Concord is pleased to announce their success in winning the Kenneth Pickard Memorial Community Innovation Award, given by the Massachusetts Municipal Association at their Annual Conference this past Saturday, January 25th in the Hynes Convention Center in Boston. Deputy Town Manager Kate Hodges, accepted the Innovation Award during MMA’s closing reception having been recognized for the work that she and Erin Stevens, Concord’s Public Information and Communications Manager, they have done over the past eighteen months to promote voter participation and citizen engagement through social media.

The Innovation Award recognizes municipalities for finding creative new ways to solve problems and deliver services. In choosing the winner, members of the MMA Executive Board, including several current and retired State Officials, considered programs and initiatives which were original, adaptable, cost-effective and productive. “Finding new and innovative methods to engage citizens in meaningful ways has always been a high priority for us. As a parent of young children myself, I find the standard 7:00 PM meetings out of the home difficult to attend, but that does not erase my desire to contribute to thoughts and ideas.” With this concept mind, Hodges said the idea of using ‘virtual’ meetings was born.

First piloted in 2018, in conjunction with the Gerow Park Master Plan, a public forum which was held on site was broadcast on both Facebook and Instagram live so people were able to watch, comment and participate as if they were in the audience. “That was an amazing test for us. There were about 50 people in the audience, but nearly 200 online who were able to participate in the planning session and get a virtual tour of the property without even being there. Some were from Concord, others were interested because of the park’s proximity to the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail. It was amazing that from all over the place people were able to be present – some were at the ballfield with their children, others stuck at work, some at home, and one women even texted-in from the grocery store!”

Using Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube, the Town has worked to provide the community with access to information in real time and with minimal effort. Erin Stevens remarked that Concord's efforts in these fields will continue to include the use of Facebook Live for events, but will also include upcoming forums and hearings related to Town Meeting and the budget process overall. "We are constantly looking for ways to improve what we're doing," Stevens said, "I try to create a mix of events, pictures of 'around Town', and information that people may find useful to make our social media presence both interesting and informative."

The community is encouraged to follow the Town on social media using @TownofConcordMA for Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. Minuteman Media Network, the Town's local cable station, can be found on YouTube at [youtube.com/mmnminutemanmedianetwork](https://www.youtube.com/mmnminutemanmedianetwork). For emailed notifications from the Town, please sign up for News and Notices by visiting the Town's website at concordma.gov and visiting "Notify Me" on the left hand side.

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