

TOWN MANAGER

Christopher Whelan,
Town Manager

The end of 2012 marked the completion of my 20th year of service as Concord's Town Manager. The Town is emerging from the recent economic downturn in a strong condition and was able to retain all core services and make modest increases in meeting the needs of our residents. We are therefore poised to make further enhancements in the services provided to the community and the opportunities for residents to engage in community life and have an impact on the place where they live.

General Business

Concord continues to be in excellent fiscal health as we emerge from the recent economic contraction in a very good position. Conservative budgeting and revenue-estimating has left us with very strong financial reserves as well something which is very unusual among Massachusetts municipalities: a substantial amount of unused levy capacity. And while some services were modestly reduced during the recent economic slowdown, all core services are provided at a level residents have come to expect and efforts have been made to increase the efficiency of our operations and to expand collaboration with other communities in delivering services.

The Selectmen voted to implement the provisions of the Municipal Health Care Reform Act in February, and this action led to immediate and substantial savings in the Town's Group Health Insurance obligations. The result will be back-to-back years with no increase in the cost of group health insurance, following nearly a decade of double-digit increases in cost. At the same time, the Town was able to continue its practice of funding reasonable salary increases for Town staff in order help employees deal with the higher co-pays and deductibles provided in the new health care plans. Concord's total compensation program for staff continues to be highly competitive with the communities we must compete with to attract talented and dedicated employees.

2012 saw the completion of planning for several long-awaited projects. Among these is MassDOT's Route 2/Crosby's Corner Reconstruction which will bring welcome safety improvements to that section of Route 2 but will also have significant traffic impacts for Concord in the next three years. Concord Public Works successfully negotiated grant funding from DOT for the reconstruction of Cambridge Turnpike from Lexington Road to Route 2. This will address some long-standing flood and safety issues, but will also contribute to traffic congestion beginning about a year after the three-year Crosby's Corner construction starts.

Crosby Corner

The Concord Mews affordable housing facility near the Acton town line saw its first occupant this year and now is nearly completely filled. This had an immediate impact on the Town, starting with children enrolled in the school, but also for the Police and Fire Departments. The project allowed Concord to meet the State-mandated goal of having 10% of our housing stock deemed "affordable" by the Commonwealth. This insulates Concord from the kinds of hostile Ch. 40B housing projects which other communities have found

Housing Diversity

to be so divisive. But the impact of Concord Mews on Town services is not inconsequential.

Public Works

CPW accomplished a large number of significant projects this past year including putting the finishing touches on a lengthy sidewalk extension on Lowell Road. This successful project is consistent with a variety of Town goals including promoting recreational opportunities and reducing traffic congestion. Partial funding was provided by Middlesex School. CPW also collaborated with groups in West Concord to undertake a wonderful rehabilitation of Junction Park at the West Concord Depot. Other projects include the rehabilitation of Nagog Pond dam, after a century of service contributing to our public water supply; successful rebuilding of the Monument Street retaining wall at Hutchins Farm, partially funded with Community Preservation Act funds and done in an historically sensitive manner. Also, CPW completed an analysis of the Town's wastewater needs and it appears that the existing treatment plant could be modified at far less cost than building a new plant, which could create additional treatment capacity for up to ten years of new growth and development.

Solar Installation

Town Meeting authorized the lease of space at the former Landfill site on Walden Street for the installation of utility-scale solar power generation. Bids were opened in November and negotiations are under way with the vendor deemed most advantageous for the Town. The hope is to have the 2.8 megawatt facility partially on-line during calendar 2013. By that time, the share of electrical power the Town uses from renewable sources will be approaching 20%. CMLP has also purchased its first all-electric vehicle and a commercial electric-vehicle charging station which will be installed at the West Concord Depot. The Light Board set an attractive rate for "net-metering" to encourage property owners to install solar panels on their roofs, and the "commercial lighting rebate" program was well received by many businesses, enabling many to save on their lighting costs while the Light Plant promotes energy conservation. And once again, the municipal light plant responded effectively during Hurricane Sandy to restore power to homes and businesses under very challenging conditions.

Light Plant

Concord is now served with a Town-wide fiber optic system that will allow Town Departments to manage resources more effectively and which will enhance collaboration and communication among different Town Departments. But the network also holds the potential to offer internet services to residents and businesses, which have been somewhat lacking, and the Town will be ready for a wave of communication innovation, as society moves away from traditional telephone and television services.

Concord town government continues to strive to provide high quality services in an efficient manner and at reasonable cost. Citizens are encouraged to get involved in self-governance by serving on a committee or speaking up at public hearings and events. Continued public involvement, cooperation and transparency in government decision-making will help Concord preserve that which is most treasured in the Town while improving those things that we agree as a community need some attention.



Concord has implemented a new way to keep residents informed of events and meetings that are occurring in the Town. Whenever a new event or document is posted to the Concord Web site (www.concordma.gov) you have an opportunity to receive a copy of that posting in your personal e-mailbox, automatically. It won't be necessary to visit the Web site, although we encourage you to do so, since not all folders will be subscribable. And if you decide that you no longer want to receive notices automatically, you can use the form to remove your name from the list.

If You sign up for News and Notices, You will receive mail regarding:

Weekly Town Manager Reports
 Holiday trash collection information
 Road closures
 Tree and Styrofoam recycling
 Burning permits
 Recreation News
 Beede Swim Center activities and closures
 Power outages

Summer Peak electricity demand
 Water bans
 DropOff Swap dates and activities
 Affordable Housing Opportunities
 Employment Opportunities
 Volunteer Opportunities
 Notices of Special Events
 Council on Aging events

You may also sign up for agenda and minutes from a number of committees.

News and Notices
 Recreation News
 Selectmen Agendas
 Selectmen Minutes
 Selectmen Agenda Support Materials

Cemetery Committee Minutes
 Public Works Commission Minutes
 Employment Opportunities
 Council on Aging Newsletters
 Town Manager Reports

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- Select: Add My Name and provide your e-mail address where indicated.
- Select the notices that you want to receive from the Mail Lists: e.g. News & Notices. The system will respond to your request promptly and you will receive an Email confirmation in your incoming mailbox. In order to protect your privacy, you **MUST** reply to this email in order to receive postings from the list.
- You may remove your name from it at any time by returning to the site and using this form.