



TOWN OF CONCORD

Office of the Town Manager

Operational Status Reports & Departmental Updates

For the Week Ending September 15, 2022

Town Manager's Office and General Administration

- Governor Baker has signed into law H.3731, 'An Act to make permanent a **senior means tested property tax exemption** in Concord.' This is very exciting news for the residents of Concord. A means-tested property tax exemption for Concord seniors is now part of state law. Congratulations to David Karr and the Tax Fairness Committee and the Select Board for all their work on this important issue. Once Town Counsel has completed the legal review, the Assessor's Office will provide guidance on the process for this program. The Act can be accessed here: <https://malegislature.gov/Laws/SessionLaws/Acts/2022/Chapter193>
- The Town Manager's Office has been updated by the Division of Local Services that the second and final **ARPA tranche** of funds will be sent out to 254 Massachusetts municipalities, including Concord, on or around September 23, 2022. This tranche will complete the total ARPA amount to Concord of \$5,654,719.45.
- Official **elections results** are now available on the [Elections & Voting page](#).
- The State House News Service is reporting that the MA Department of Revenue will be mailing out checks and processing direct deposits in November 2022 to MA taxpayers who submitted a 2021 tax return. The DOR reports about \$2.941 billion will be returned to eligible MA taxpayers. There is no application to submit or notice to the DOR in order to receive this tax refund. The refunds are expected to total 13% of the amount of personal income tax owed for 2021. Concord residents can access the refund calculator here: <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/chapter-62f-taxpayer-refunds#refund-estimator->

Public Safety

Police Department

Activity Log Sept. 8 – Sept. 14

Log items	787
Traffic Enforcement	68
Motor Vehicle Stops	126
Arrests	2

- Welcome to Patrol Officer Corey Lopez who joined the department on Monday September 12. Previously he worked for the University of Massachusetts (UMass)) at Lowell Police Department for three years. He holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in criminal justice with a minor in accounting from Franklin Pierce College and a master's degree in criminal justice from UMass Lowell.



Officer Cory Lopez

Fire Department

Calls for service

The fire department responded to 94 calls for service during the week. Captain Curran, a member of the State Hazardous Materials Team, responded to the City of Marlborough for a hazardous materials incident.

Fire Prevention

Semi-annual inspections took place at some of the public schools. Middlesex School fire drills were conducted. Fire companies conducted pre-plans of several commercial buildings.

Other News

The Fire Department was pleased to be invited once again by the Rotary Club. Each year on September 11th the Rotary Club honors a Police Officer and a Firefighter for service. The Fire Department recipient this year was Firefighter Chris Hunter. Firefighter Hunter, while off duty, reacted quickly to an accident that he witnessed which resulted in serious injury. FF Hunter's intervention directly contributed to the victim's survival.

Department of Planning and Land Management

Economic Vitality & Tourism

- On Thursday September 15, **the Visitor Center Celebrated its 20 anniversary** at its current location with cake and a ribbon cutting. Current and past members of the Town, Concord Business Partnership, Concord Chamber of Commerce, and many residents and staff were on hand to celebrate a successful Visitor Engagement Center. Visitation (and revenue) continue to grow steadily each year. The EVT Staff are grateful for the Town's support and wonderful partnership with those that funded the building and helped it grow to its current state.
- The **Greater Boston Convention and Visitor Bureau** hosted Beth Williams on Wednesday, Sept. 14th, who shared a presentation of what Concord Visitor Center can offer. The staff of over 20 were thrilled to hear about the Shuttle program, new Fall tours and bus parking locations – questions often asked by visitors to the GBCVB. The GBCVB has created a new section of their website called 'Beyond Boston', with Concord being the first sponsor. Through this effort, Concord will be featured to an email audience of over 12,000 opted-in travelers that have expressed interest in seeing more than just the city.

Building Inspections

- Since August 18, the Building Inspections Division staff issued 68 building permits, 84 electrical permits, 33 plumbing permits, 19 gas permits. Staff also conducted 114 building inspections, 124 electrical inspections, 83 plumbing and gas inspections. Annual inspections were also conducted at the elementary, middle, and high schools, prior to the start of school.
- At 1:28am on Thursday morning, Concord Police dispatch called the Building Commissioner to request a building inspector at 475 Monument Street. Upon arrival to the scene at approximately 2:00 am, the Building Commissioner was informed by Fire Department personnel that a vehicle had left the road and struck the left side of the building, causing major structural damage. The driver of the vehicle was taken to the hospital by ambulance. The homeowner was unhurt and planned to spend the night with friends.

Natural Resources

- **Weed Warrior Training:** Natural Resources Director Delia Kaye and CLCT Executive Director Jane Gruba-Chevalier led an invasive species management training workshop this week at Willow Guzzle and Thornton Woods. The Weed Warrior Program is a SuAsCo CISMA regional initiative to train volunteers to become certified leaders for invasive species removal projects on public lands in the SuAsCo Rivers watershed. Just over a dozen volunteers attended and learned how to identify glossy buckthorn, common

buckthorn, bittersweet, burning bush, multiflora rose, Norway maple, and porcelain berry. Volunteers also learned proper removal and disposal techniques. More of these workshops will be held over the coming months.

- **Old Calf Pasture:** Land Manager Will Holden joined Native Plant Trust staff treating invasive glossy buckthorn at Old Calf Pasture last week. Management this season has primarily consisted of target specific herbicide application to individual buckthorn plants through a hand swipe method to the leaves of smaller plants, and a cut and paint method to larger, mature plants. Three days of buckthorn treatment have been conducted with one more day scheduled to close out the season. Many hundreds of buckthorn plants have been treated this year alone.



Health

- **White Pond Update:** Water sampling conducted September 12, 2022, shows a rapid increase in bloom forming cyanobacteria (BFC) compared to samples taken a week ago on September 4. There is concern that cyanobacteria biomass may continue to increase rapidly over the next week or two. If this occurs, there is a possibility that wind-blown visible blooms and scums may accumulate temporarily at areas along the shoreline. These areas of concentrated cyanobacteria may contain significant levels of toxins. Out of an abundance of caution, water use status has been changed to Swim at Your Own Risk and a Pet Advisory has been issued. Pond users are reminded to avoid swimming or wading in areas of visible bloom or scums and to keep pets away from these areas.

Water samples will be taken again next week to continue to monitor cyanobacterial populations.

Planning

- **Planning Board meeting of September 13:** The Board heard presentations from the Applicants for 3 different projects - the 48Y Fitchburg Turnpike Planned Residential Development, the Concord Middle School project and the Concord Academy Centennial Arts Center project. All three applications are still working through the issues and concerns identified by Town staff and will make changes to the projects based on comments from the Board. The Planning Board is required to make a recommendation to the Zoning Board of Appeals for each application. The Planning Board continued discussion on the PRD to September 27th and the Middle School and Concord Academy CAC projects were continued to October 11. All three applications are on the ZBA agenda for October 13. The Board postponed discussion on the Department of Housing and Community Development MBTA Communities Zoning Requirement Guidelines until September 27.
- **Grant applications for FY2024 projects** are due to the Community Preservation Committee by Friday, September 16 at 4:00 p.m. The Concord Historical Commission is submitting an application for the first phase of a Historic Preservation Plan as recommended in the Envision Concord long range plan.
- **West Concord Junction Cultural District Committee meeting of September 13:** Final plans are underway for the September 24 Porchfest, which begins at 1:00 p.m., and the unveiling of the newest mural on

Beharrell Street at 11:00 a.m. This year's mural celebrates the industrial history of West Concord. There's also a photo display in the Fowler Library of the various West Concord industries over the years.

- **Housing Production Plan – 2nd forum conducted September 14:** Wednesday night's public forum for the Housing Production Plan reviewed the preliminary goals and strategies for creating additional affordable housing in Concord. Over 55 people attended the virtual forum, led by consultant team of JM Goldson and the Regional Housing Services Office. To view the presentation made during the forum, here's the link: <https://www.concordma.gov/DocumentCenter/View/38557/HPP-Update-Public-Forum-Presentation-9-14-22>.
- **BFRT Communities Group:** Representatives from all but one of the communities served by the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail attended a discussion organized and led by the Friends of the BFRT on Thursday, September 15. The focus of this meeting was to reach agreement on posting uniform/consistent rules in all communities that people using the trail will be moving through. The next step will be to bring the list of rules back to the Town Managers or Select Board (as may be required) for final approval. The Friends have offered to pay for the new signs.

Library

Climate Preparedness Week

The library has a slate of programming prepared for Climate Preparedness Week including [an educational presentation on wildfires](#) hosted by Chief Judge and Asst Chief Latta on Thursday, September 22 at 6:30 p.m. at the Library and on Zoom.

Concord Public Works

In the Media

CPW's own, Alan Cathcart provided perspective on the current **challenges facing water utilities** on [WBUR's Morning Edition](#). The story highlighted supply chain issues, aging infrastructure and drought as serious factors impacting municipal water systems.



Alan Cathcart at the Deaconess Water Treatment Facility. (Robin Lubbock/WBUR)

Projects

Commonwealth Ave Construction – Underground utility work by National Grid and new utility services to private parcels have been completed. CMLP is scheduling the replacement of an underground concrete vault and the remaining streetlights. Road reconstruction by the Town's contractor, Newport is scheduled to begin in September following approval of their traffic management plan. CPW Engineering has given a project update to the West Concord Advisory Committee at their meeting on Wednesday 9/7.

Pavement Preservation Project – CPW will be piloting another pavement preservation treatment called microsurfacing on Prairie St, Pleasant St, Wright Rd and Hildreth Ln at the end of September and early October. Microsurfacing is a low-cost asphalt emulsion application process that utilizes specialized equipment to combine polymer, mineral aggregate, water, and additives. Preparation work on these streets has started.

Stow St Library Parking Lot Reconstruction – All the major construction and final paving of the parking lot are complete. Restriping of the parking bays is being scheduled. (Photo attached)

Stow St/Hubbard St Parking Lot Repaving – This parking lot was in need of repairs and had been used over the past year and a half by contractors as their material lay down area. It was repaved and restriping will occur soon.

Hubbard Street Reconstruction – Final paving of the sidewalks and roadway has been completed.

BFRT Crossing Lights at Old Marlborough Rd – CPW trimmed tree cover at the crossing in order to improve the charging of the solar operated flashing beacons. The signal maintenance contractor believes that this is the main reason for the malfunctioning of the flashing beacons. Because the batteries were completely discharged, they are being manually re-charged in a shop and will be reinstalled on Thursday 9/15.

Information Technology/Broadband

Information Technology

- We are working to fill an Information Systems Technician position and will be conducting interviews in the next couple weeks.
- The Town has procured new firewalls, which operate in a high-availability cluster to minimize downtime. We hope to have the devices installed in the next few weeks.
- The wireless access points we bought with money from a state grant awarded last year have begun to arrive after supply chain delays. We hope to begin to install them in October, although some units are not expected until early 2023.
- IT has redesigned its network and will be changing how our two datacenters interact with each other. We will be installing a new storage device in the next few weeks, and it should be a highly reliable addition to the Town's server equipment. This will ensure we meet compliance requirements, and it will allow a complete failover at either site.

Broadband

The Broadband update can be found at [the link](#) and includes the quarterly metrics dashboard and the results of a user survey.

Minuteman Media Network

AG Day Project

- Lead Producer, Tory Wesnofske produced a video PSA about AG day, which was held this past weekend. A more in-depth look at the local farms in Concord is in the works. One of the farms, Salt box Farm, is highlighted below. Click the pictures to play the videos...



AG Day Promo (T. Wesnofske/MMN)



Salt Box Farm Video T. Wesnofske/MMN)

Carlisle playground – Lead Producer, Matt Beren has the lead on the Carlisle playground project. One of the last wooden playgrounds built in the 1980's is being taken down and replaced at the Carlisle school complex. Members of the school committee, students from CCHS, and many town volunteers are involved. MMN has been over many times to capture the work in progress and interview the workers. They will be waiting for the cement to dry and then start up again in a week or so. MMN is creating a documentary video of the history making event.

PEG Access Advisory Meeting – Production Manager, Mark Pauley, and MMN's new Manager, Jason Bulger, attended the PEG access Advisory Committee Meeting held last week. The new COMCAST franchise renewal was discussed, with the hiring of a legal representative Sue Buske to help negotiate the new 10-year agreement. Her firm specializes in cable access negotiations nationwide and was most recently hired to assist Carlisle. Mark has also been in contact with Diane Proctor of the Concord 250 Media/Publicity Subcommittee with aspirations of providing live event coverage, and to record the events for future generations.