



MEMORANDUM

TO: Select Board

FROM: Clancy Main, Acting Town Manager

CC: Robert Maynard, Director of Administrative Services

SUBJECT: Town Manager's Report, June 17, 2024

DATE: June 12, 2024

Neighborhood Listening Sessions - Council on Aging Front Lawn

The first listening session was held at the Council on Aging front lawn. It was a great success with approximately 35-40 attendees. Key topics of discussion included:

- A new Council on Aging building
- Additional housing options for seniors
- Pedestrian safety around the Town Center

Upcoming Sessions

Two more listening sessions are scheduled:

Hajar School: June 20th – 6:30PM

Pinehurst Fire Station: June 25th – 6:30PM

I recorded a CodeRED message to inform residents about these meetings. Moving forward, listening sessions will be held on the fourth Tuesday of every month.

Old Ditson Park Listening Session

This session saw an impressive turnout with over 50 attendees. The neighborhood largely agreed on several enhancements:

- Walking path around the perimeter with a story board
- Upgraded playground and basketball court
- More trees and benches
- Pavilion

Additional suggestions included water fountains, dog waste stations, lilac plantings, and extra lighting around the path. I will work with local landscape architects, landscapers, and Shawsheen Tech to help develop a plan. I am aiming to secure donated time for this part of the project.

Once the plan is ready, it will be presented to the Board and the neighborhood for feedback.

Opioid Abatement

As of June 3rd, our Opioid Abatement survey had about 250 responses. After extensive sharing on social media and various other venues, responses have now exceeded 1,000. The next listening session is scheduled for June 18 at 7:00PM. Following this, the consultant will finalize the landscape analysis. Results will be presented to the Select Board and BSAP to help shape a future Town Meeting warrant article.

Cable Ascertainment

In March, the Town began renegotiating our Cable Contract with Verizon. Five years ago, we secured a favorable contract due to the Howe School project. Many of the items were tied to the completion of the Howe. I do not believe Verizon thought it would come to fruition when the Town showed them the building pre-construction.

This time around the Town was still able to negotiate a favorable contract maintaining most of the same contract terms, including the capital ratio per subscriber. A few minor issues need to be addressed before presenting it to the Select Board for a vote.

Town Center

After the June 3rd Select Board meeting, I met with BETA. The team reviewed the comments from the meeting and will begin to incorporate as appropriate. BETA estimated the project, and it is currently on budget as presented to the Board, including a 25% contingency. Refinement will continue over the course of the summer.

Shawsheen Tech

I toured and met with Shawsheen Tech Superintendent Tony McIntosh. We discussed potential partnerships and maintaining open lines of communication.

The Superintendent mentioned multiple MSBA submissions, which have not yet been accepted. The school is about 50 years old, is in good condition but faces space challenges.

North Billerica Train Station

I spoke with Representative Lombardo regarding the North Billerica train station. He has been in contact with the MBTA about the station's condition. The Representative is trying to set up a meeting with the MBTA and the Town. From the current lack of maintenance, it seems the State may not be interested in holding onto the property. After the meeting with the State, I will report back during a formal agenda item so a discussion and vote can take place if needed.

Recreation Building Update

The Town is very pleased with the progress of the Recreation Building project. We are in the process of pre-qualifying for the General Contractor and have received 11 requests for the bid proposal. This indicates that it is a competitive project and that the price is on target. The Town's recent successes, as well as the reputation of Left Field / Abacus, make it a very favorable team to work with and project to work on.

North Billerica Fire Station

The project team had a pre-design meeting with Conservation, DPW, and BOH. The meeting went well and things are continuing to progress. The Town is in the process of conducting a cost estimate around any wetlands issues and temporary relocation costs if the Town is to build on-site. Depending on this estimate, the Town may look for other more cost-effective options rather than rebuilding on-site. I plan to have Galante Architects present to the Board at a future meeting.

PFAS Lawsuit

Water Superintendent Todd Melanson, DPW Director Fred Russel and I met with attorneys from SL Environmental regarding a class action lawsuit for PFAS contamination caused by 3M and Dupont.

They are working with a large list of Massachusetts communities including City of Attleboro, City of Mansfield, City of Westfield, City of Worcester, County of Barnstable, Dedham-Westwood Water District, Dracut Water Supply District, East Chelmsford Water District, Grafton Water District, Sudbury Water District, Swansea Water District, Town of Andover, Town of Burlington, Town of Canton, Town of Clarksburg, Town of Concord, Town of Foxborough, Town of Halifax, Town of Hopedale, Town of Hudson, Town of Ipswich, Town of Lincoln.

The Town could be entitled to a total of \$3,000,000+ over the course of next two decades. Prior to a formal vote of the Select Board to enter into any litigation I would like to confer with our new Town Counsel after their appointment. I'll bring additional information on the lawsuit to the Board after further discussion with Town Counsel.

Town Owned Farmland

Director of Permitting, Mark LaLumiere, and I met with Mr. Griggs and his attorney about water and physical access to the Town-owned land.

Mr. Griggs said was amenable to an agreement if the party farming the land was "friendly." Mr. Griggs has an agreement with a landscaper who dumps his clippings and composts them on our land. He agreed to remove the clippings from our property.

The other option is to create a curb cut at our frontage and bring a water line onto the property. Both options on parallel tracks is most likely how I will handle the situation.

Sprague Street and Tower Farm Road – Thickly Settled District

I spoke with Kelley Conway about the request from Marlies Henderson at the last meeting during Open Mic. Speed bumps were not recommended but Kelley did believe a 25mph thickly settled district was warranted.

I also alerted DPW and the Police about the motion at the last meeting regarding changing the speed limit on Tower Farm Road to 25mph. Kelley Conway is completing the paperwork. You may have to re-vote a different motion that includes "amending the traffic rules and orders" at a future meeting due to the notification process to the State. If it is the case, the Board can vote the language needed on 6/24.

Truck Traffic Tower Farm Road

I spoke with Kelley Conway about a heavy commercial vehicle exclusion. An engineering study is required and certain warrants must be met. This begins on the link below at page 11. I asked Kelley to use best procurement practices as it is not an emergency. Her team will procure three quotes.

<https://www.mass.gov/doc/massachusetts-amendments-to-the-mutcd-2009/download>

School/Town Munis Conversion

The Schools and Town met with CLA who performed the audit for the School Department that re-identified this issue. CLA walked us through the process, what the chart of accounts would be like, and the timing.

The Town and School are working to reconcile their books to go into FY25 on the same page. This will help make the conversion easier.