



MEMORANDUM

TO: Select Board

FROM: Clancy Main, Acting Town Manager

CC: Robert Maynard, Director of Administrative Services

SUBJECT: Town Manager's Report, September 23, 2024

DATE: September 20, 2024

Recreation Building

The project team is continuing to fine-tune the design and materials for both the interior and exterior of the new recreation building. These adjustments aim to enhance the building's design and ensure it fits into the surrounding neighborhood. This process is expected to continue over the next month or so.

Billerica DPW

Site work has officially begun, with clearing currently taking place. The project team has been in direct communication with neighbors to ensure transparency and address any concerns. We are aiming to hold a groundbreaking ceremony sometime in October, likely on a Saturday. As part of the site work, there will be some blasting required. The contractor has assured us that all blasting activity will be communicated in advance, and we will ensure neighbors are fully informed ahead of time.



View of Project Site from River St Ext

West Nile Virus

A suspected human case of West Nile Virus (WNV) has been identified within the community. The individual has recently traveled to Maine and New Hampshire, so it is unclear where the virus may have been contracted. As a precautionary measure, the Central Mass Mosquito Control Project will be conducting targeted mosquito treatments this evening in the specific areas where the individual resides. This action is being taken out of an abundance of caution to ensure public safety, should the virus have been acquired within Billerica.

Ribbon Cutting – Allium Engineering

Allium Engineering has recently opened a new facility in Billerica and is launching a pilot factory that focuses on advanced steel manufacturing technology. They will be holding a ribbon-cutting event on October 3rd, which will showcase innovative manufacturing techniques for resilient, low-carbon infrastructure. The event will also emphasize the role of public funding in growing sustainable manufacturing. The ribbon cutting will take place at the Allium Engineering Factory at 19 Sterling Road. Doors open at 9:45 AM, with the program beginning at 10:00 AM.

Accessory Dwelling Units (ADU)

The State has recently passed an accessory dwelling unit (ADU) law, and we are beginning to explore how this needs to be implemented locally. I will be meeting with our Interim Planning Director and Director of Permitting Services next week to begin thinking about potential regulations for Billerica. Our goal is to move quickly and potentially have a draft ready in time to include on the Special Town Meeting warrant in December.

Tax Increase

Earlier this week, I met with Chief Assessor, John Spidel to begin preparations for the tax recap process. As a result of the significant budget increase for FY25, we are anticipating a notable tax increase. We will continue to work through the details and I should have more information as we move towards November.

Gazebo Repairs

The Town will be presenting plans for the Gazebo to the Historic District Commission on September 25th. I will follow up with the Board after the meeting.

Safe Routes to Schools

Following our recent discussions, it became clear that Billerica is not alone in facing challenges related to safe routes for students. The State offers a program called Safe Routes to School, and the current grant cycle is open. I plan to explore Parker Street as a potential area for this grant due to the second vote that was taken. Additionally, I will be working with Dr. Clery to identify other areas in town that could benefit from this program. This initiative could greatly improve safety for students traveling to and from school.

MBTA

In accordance with the state law known as MBTA Communities, the Planning Board is working on drafting new zoning districts in town that would allow for multifamily homes. The Board is seeking public input on where in Town this zoning would be suitable. The survey describes several areas under consideration, and it asks respondents to rank the options by preference. This survey will be open through October 7th. Survey Link: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/BMBTA>

Heroes ACT

As part of the Heroes Act recently enacted by the Massachusetts Legislature veterans now qualify for a motor vehicle exemption if the VA determines they have a 100% disability. In addition, this legislation increases local flexibility for Veterans property tax exemptions allowing municipalities to double property tax exemptions for Veterans. Our Veterans Agent Donnie Jarvis and Chief Assessor John Speidel have been working together to inform all Billerica veterans of these benefits to ensure they receive them. Any Veteran in Town should reach out to Donnie to learn more about the Heroes Act and all the provisions that benefit them.