

MEMORANDUM

TO: Town Council
FROM: David E. Cox, Town Manager
DATE: October 23, 2020
SUBJECT: Town Manager's Report



The following information includes follow up from general items that were discussed at previous Council meetings as well as updates of a general nature from the departments. The items are organized by department and are intended to provide information on activities currently being undertaken by the Town's departments and those matters that are upcoming. Not all departments will be represented in each Report.

Clerk & Registrar

- Staff continues to process absentee ballot applications and, to date, staff has received and processed approximately 2,800 applications (about 32% of registered voters). Of that, about 1960 have returned ballots thus far. For perspective, a "normal" election might have as many as 200 absentee voters.

Collector

- The Tax Office is busy with sewer use bill collections. With this being the first year customers can pay their sewer bill in two installments, the Town has already reached an 84% collection rate for the first installment with over a week left to pay. The last day on which to pay without penalty is November 2, 2020. On November 3, interest will be charged at a rate of 1.5% per month from the original due date.
- Staff will be reviewing delinquent real estate accounts in the next few days and sending out letters to those accounts that are more than two years delinquent. Due to the pandemic, the letters will not demand payment at this time, but rather remind taxpayers what their outstanding balance is. The payer will be encouraged to begin making payments in order to avoid further collections procedures.

Finance

- For the ninth year in a row, the Town has been awarded the Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting from the Government Finance Officers Association for our Annual Report for the 2018/2019 fiscal year. The recognition represents significant effort on the part of the staff to present the Town's financial information in a clear and concise way in accordance with the Association's standards. Attached is the official press release.

Land Use

- A local business owner has purchased the property located at 101 Main Street and is currently undertaking extensive clean-up of the property. In the short-term, the building will be used as a warehouse. Long term plans are still in the works and staff will work with the owner on future uses. Updates to the façade are expected and will enhance the aesthetic value of the property.
- The Planning and Zoning Commission recently approved a text change to the zoning regulations which officially allows for fueling stations in combination with retail uses in the Commercial Zone with a Special Permit and after location approval by the ZBA. This will bring several existing locations back into conformance with the regulations for the first time in more than thirty years.
- The Planning and Zoning Commission is currently in the process of reviewing two zone changes. The first is located at the corner of Colchester Avenue and Main Street which would allow for the eventual reconstruction and expansion of the existing fueling station. The Hearing for this application opened at the October meeting and will continue at the November meeting. The second zone change application is for approximately five acres on Middle Haddam Road adjacent to the existing commercial area in Cobalt. This change is being proposed to allow for an existing veterinary clinic located in a neighboring town to move into Town and operate their business here. A public hearing for this application will be opened at the November meeting.
- The Planning and Zoning Commission opened the Hearing on adopting new watershed regulations (update of section 3.1) at the October meeting and will likely make a decision to adopt the new regulations at the November meeting. Several public workshops were held and the Commission worked closely with neighborhood associations and others in the watershed to update these watershed regulations for the first time in approximately 25 years. Extensive work had been done prior to COVID shutting down in-person meetings but was delayed at the onset of pandemic-related closures. Rather than wait longer, the Commission has decided to move forward with the update process.
- Department staff, along with the Building Official and Fire Marshal, are working with the property and business owner on final approvals for a new Gulf station located at the corner of Main and Skinner Streets. The new store will offer many items in a convenient location and will be a welcome addition to the center of Town.

- Staff recently held very preliminary discussions with a developer about redevelopment of the old Town Hall facility located at 20 East High Street. It is likely that redevelopment and reuse of this property will include review by the Planning and Zoning Commission but as more information becomes available it will be shared.
- Complaints continue to be submitted to the Department at a high volume regarding potential zoning violations. Staff continues to verify these complaints and work with property owners to rectify the situations. Nevertheless, these situations can take time to resolve as staff attempts to achieve voluntary compliance in the matter.

Library

- Library staff are currently in the interview process for a new Adult/Young Adult Librarian as was included in the current fiscal year budget and as was recently approved by the Council. Interest in the position has been good and a new Librarian is expected to be in place before the end of the year.

Police

- On Saturday, October 24, the East Hampton Police Department will be participating in the annual National Prescription Drug Take Back Day sponsored by the US Drug Enforcement Agency. The event will take place on the front circle drive at the Town Hall and will run from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm. All are invited to dispose of expired or unnecessary drugs at this event or to take advantage of the permanent collection box in the lobby of the police department.

Parks and Recreation

- The Low Impact Development (LID) projects for phase one of the current 319 grant funding have wrapped up and all projects are completed. Staff is now meeting with private landowners to review proposed plans for phase two of the grant funding which will start in the spring of 2021. These projects include: Town Hall/Edgewater Hills property, Paul's and Sandy's/ Old Marlborough Road, Christopher Brook, Fawn Brook and West Point Road.
- The Aeration System will be turned off the first week in November and turned back on the first week of May 2021.

- Winter Lake Draw down has begun. The dam is open 8" as of Monday, October 19 and will stay open until 18" – 20" of drawdown has been met.
- The RFP for professional services related to the High School Athletic fields has been posted. The projected timeline is as follows:
 - 11/10/2020 RFP due date
 - 11/16/2020 Interviews for top respondents as necessary
 - 11/24/2020 award of contract
 - 12/01/2020 contract effective date
- Last week Eversource met with DEEP and members of the town regarding the Air Line Trail connection near the Portland border. At this meeting, Eversource committed to moving its wires out of the wetland area contingent on the Town's willingness to provide an easement across a portion of the Wastewater Treatment Plant property and along Gildersleeve Road to RT 66. The proposed plan was agreed upon and an easement is in the works for presentation to the Council. A design plan is also in the works for the board walk system that will run through the 1200' of wetlands to facilitate connection.
- The Parks and Recreation Advisory Board will meet in November to decide if Youth Basketball will run at all four schools this year. A decision will be made according to CIAC and State guidelines for indoor sports programming. The Recreation Department is working on protocols that will be enforced for coaches, players and spectators and that will address potential outbreaks of the virus. These protocols will be approved by the Board prior to the start of the season in January of 2021.

Public Works

- Paving of the Library and Fire Company #1 parking lots is complete. Over the upcoming weeks, Public Works crews will be installing curbing, topsoil and seed, re-stripping the lots and performing general clean up from the projects.
- Replacement of the tank on the vactor truck is complete. This was a long term project undertaken by the Department mechanic's shop. The original tank on the truck had become severely rusted from the inside out and was in constant need of patching. A used tank in nearly new condition was purchased from another town for \$5,000 by the previous Director. While the tank was a near match to the old tank, substantial metal fabrication and welding was necessary for fitting the tank to the Town's existing chassis. All of this work was completed in house by town staff mechanics at an enormous cost

savings to the town. A replacement tank for the system was previously quoted at over \$40,000.

- The East Hampton Cemetery Board is proceeding with designing and permitting expansion of the Old Young Street Cemetery onto the abutting property previously purchased by the Town for this purpose. Staff is currently in the process of preparing an RFP related to the expansion including civil engineering design services, permitting, construction document preparation and contractor selection services. The project was approved in the Capital Reserve Fund in a prior year and is now being completed.

WPCA

- The WPCA/Joint Facilities has been extremely busy with cleaning wet wells in the various lift stations in all associated towns using the new Jet/Vacuum truck.
- The plant roof on the main building is in the process of being repaired before winter.
- The lift station upgrades at Pine Trail and Barbara Avenue should be receiving the generators in the next couple of weeks.

Town Manager/Other

- Construction will begin soon on the solar energy plant on Skinner Street from which the Town will be receiving the energy. As the Council will recall, this facility, the site plans for which were approved through the Siting Council, is contracted by the Town to provide electricity to Eversource at no charge. That energy will directly offset the Town's electricity bills from Eversource and a portion of those savings are paid to the owner of the solar facility by the Town. Savings will be spread across Town, Board of Education and WPCA facilities.
- Recently, a letter was received from Crown Castle Towers indicating that it has officially withdrawn its request for a proposed cell tower on Lakeview Street. It is staff's understanding that an agreement has been reached to allow the existing tower to remain in its current location thereby eliminating the need for the new tower.

DC

Attachments

cc: Management Staff



GOVERNMENT FINANCE OFFICERS ASSOCIATION
NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

10/14/2020

For more information contact:
Michele Mark Levine, Director/TSC
Phone: (312) 977-9700
Fax: (312) 977-4806
Email: mlevine@gfoa.org

(Chicago, Illinois)—Government Finance Officers Association of the United States and Canada (GFOA) has awarded the Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting to **Town of East Hampton** for its comprehensive annual financial report (CAFR) for the fiscal year ended June 30, 2019. The CAFR has been judged by an impartial panel to meet the high standards of the program, which includes demonstrating a constructive "spirit of full disclosure" to clearly communicate its financial story and motivate potential users and user groups to read the CAFR.

The Certificate of Achievement is the highest form of recognition in the area of governmental accounting and financial reporting, and its attainment represents a significant accomplishment by a government and its management.

Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) advances excellence in government finance by providing best practices, professional development, resources, and practical research for more than 21,000 members and the communities they serve.

KENNETH C. BALDWIN

280 Trumbull Street
Hartford, CT 06103-3597
Main (860) 275-8200
Fax (860) 275-8299
kbaldwin@rc.com
Direct (860) 275-8345

Also admitted in Massachusetts
and New York



October 15, 2020

Via Electronic Mail

Melanie A. Bachman, Esq.
Executive Director/Staff Attorney
Connecticut Siting Council
10 Franklin Square
New Britain, CT 06051

Re: **Docket No. 493 – Application of Global Signal Acquisitions IV LLC and Crown Castle Towers 06-02 LLC For A Certificate of Environmental Compatibility And Public Need For The Construction, Maintenance And Operation Of A Wireless Telecommunications Facility off Lakeview Street, East Hampton, Connecticut**

Dear Ms. Bachman:

On behalf of the Applicant, Global Signal Acquisitions IV LLC and Crown Castle Towers 06-02 LLC, I write to formally WITHDRAW the Docket No. 493 application from further consideration by the Council.

If you have any questions or need any additional information please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

Kenneth C. Baldwin

KCB/kmd

Copy to:

Jason Mayo (*via electronic mail*)
Pascelle Saint-Laurent (*via electronic mail*)
David Cox, East Hampton Town Manager
Abutting Property Owners

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