


MEMORANDUM

TO: Town Council
FROM: David E. Cox, Town Manager 
DATE: July 9, 2021
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.

Library

- The Library has received an American Recovery Plan Act Grant from the Connecticut State Library and the Institute of Museum and Library Services. The Library will use the funds (\$17,145) to upgrade the public wireless internet, add a charging station to improve access to electrical outlets and to purchase and install mobile shelving to allow for socially distanced furniture arrangement and traffic flow. Improvements are expected to be completed by mid-autumn.
- The Library has been approved to participate in Governor Lamont's "Everyone Learns WiFi Initiative," a program that offers a subsidized WiFi service for increased Internet access for our community. The program provides a Cisco Meraki access point to be installed on the exterior of the Library for convenient public access. The program subsidy covers the hardware, installation, licensing, and CEN bandwidth for one year. ***After one year, the hardware and remaining 4 years of licensing is donated to the town.***
- Over 400 community members attended the Library's Summer Reading Kick Off Event held on Friday, June 25. Over 700 community members have signed up to participate in the Library's Summer Reading Program, which is nearly double the number who participated in 2019.
- For the first time, the Library has reached the milestone of 100,000 borrows in a single year, a 51% increase from four years ago. Comparatively, in 2017/2018 borrowing was 66,000, in 2018/2019 it was 77,000 and in 2019/2020 it was 82,000. To celebrate, the Library will be handing out free sunglasses to the public on Old Home Day weekend, paid for through donations to the Library.



Police

- On July 6, 2021, the Department officially swore in its newest member, Officer Mateusz Sokolowski, who was a certified police officer for two years in Chicago, Illinois. Since he is a certified Police Officer, he does not need to attend the Connecticut police academy. Instead, he will need to attend abbreviated training that deals with Connecticut law and medical training. The Department expects his training will be complete by mid-August, at which time he will begin his field training program. If everything goes well, he should be on his own by the end of September or first week of October.
- The Department recently took delivery of two large speed monitors that were given to the Town by the Connecticut DOT under a grant to reduce injuries/fatalities due to speed on local roads. The speed monitors come equipped with back up batteries and solar capabilities that allow the equipment to stay in the same place for months at a time. This equipment will supplement the existing equipment in use by the Town now and will provide additional opportunities to both monitor and educate drivers regarding their speed.



Public Works

- Chip sealing on Portland Reservoir Rd, White Birch Rd, Ridge View Drive, Mott Hill Rd, and Brack Farm Rd has been delayed due to ongoing rain events. Weather permitting, our contractor indicates that the chip sealing project is scheduled to begin Wednesday, July 14.
- The Edgerton Street Drainage project is progressing well. Crews have nearly completed work on the north side of the street and will soon be moving to the south side to begin catch basin and culvert replacements.
- The roadside mowing program is underway and will continue throughout the summer.
- Some drainage improvements were made at the intersection of Wangonk Trail and Sequonia Trail to address an ongoing issue with stormwater runoff. Additional preparations were made in anticipation of the Friday rain event including ensuring catch basins were clear and that the drainage system was free of blockages with special focus on areas in which there are known problems.

Senior Center

- The Senior Center is working on a grant application for a replacement vehicle for older adult transportation. Under the current Enhanced Mobility of Seniors & Individuals with Disabilities program, if the Town is funded, it is expected that the vehicle would be purchased with 100% grant funds and no local match. It is anticipated that a public notice of the proposed application will be made in about two weeks and the Council will be asked to approve the application at the last meeting in July. If the application is approved, it is not likely the new vehicle would be received before late 2022.
- The Commission on Aging is developing an update to a survey it produced a few years ago to again measure the current and future needs of the Town's older adult population. The survey is expected to cover housing and transportation needs as well as financial ability and other perceived areas of need. The Commission is expecting to present the draft survey to the Town Council later in July.
- More participants are returning to the Senior Center and additional programming is being offered as the comfort level continues to increase. Staff at the Center is working with CRT to reinstate the congregate meals program later this summer.

Youth and Family Services

- The Department continues to provide services to an ever-growing number of residents including coordination with the Parks and Recreation Department to help with financial assistance related to summer camps as well as the usual Operation Fuel assistance and general assistance. The Department will be bringing on another student clinician this month to supplement the busy counseling staff. Currently, the Department has more than 30 active counseling cases and is receiving new intakes weekly.
- The Department completed seven Juvenile Review Board hearings and has two additional cases coming through soon as part of its ongoing efforts to address the actions of juvenile offenders and move them away from inappropriate behavior.
- The Department is attempting to connect with a town resident who has been identified as living in hoarding conditions. It is the Department's goal to make contact and work with the individual on improving conditions in the living space to prevent a need for more drastic actions up to removal from the property.

Town Manager/Other

- The Town's COVID rates remain very low and as of yesterday, the Town has had no cases in the last two weeks. In order to be more fully protected, residents continue to be encouraged to get vaccinated and to practice safety protocols if they are not.

- A letter is included in this Report that was sent to Danielle Tyler, owner of Sweet Jean's Café, congratulating her on the restaurant's selection as the Outstanding New Business by the Middlesex Chamber of Commerce.

- A letter is included in this Report that was sent to Senator Norm Needleman seeking his support in encouraging the State Bond Commission to borrow the funds that have been authorized for work on recreational trails. This would allow the Town to be able to apply for funds to implement the project on the Air Line Trail to construct a board walk in the wetlands area north and west of Rt 66 near the Portland border.

DC

cc: Management Staff



Office of the TOWN MANAGER

DAVID E. COX

dcox@easthamptonct.gov

June 30, 2021

TOWN COUNCIL

James Brown
Chairperson

Dean Markham
Vice Chairman

Tim Feegel

Derek Johnson

Barbara Moore

Mark Philhower

Kevin Reich

Ms. Danielle Tyler
Sweet Jean's Café
13 N Main Street
East Hampton CT 06424

Dear Danielle,

Congratulations on being selected as the Outstanding New Business by the Middlesex Chamber of Commerce! It is certainly deserved. From my own experience and those I hear about, the food and the people in your establishment are terrific.

We could not be more proud to have you in Town and part of the fabric of our community. The great food and family feel make it a fantastic destination.

I look forward to your continued success and wish you all the best. Once again, congratulations!

Sincerely,

David E. Cox
Town Manager

cc: Town Council
Economic Development Commission



Office of the TOWN MANAGER

DAVID E. COX

dcox@easthamptonct.gov

June 28, 2021

VIA US MAIL AND EMAIL

TOWN COUNCIL

James Brown
Chairperson

Dean Markham
Vice Chairman

Tim Feegel

Derek Johnson

Barbara Moore

Mark Philhower

Kevin Reich

Senator Norm Needleman
Legislative Office Building
Room 3900
Hartford, CT 06106-1591

Dear Senator Needleman,

I am writing on behalf of the Town of East Hampton Parks and Recreation Advisory Board and the East Hampton Air Line Trail Committee, who, together, serve as advisory bodies to the Town of East Hampton with respect to the use and maintenance of the Air Line Trail State Park in East Hampton. I am seeking your support to assist the Town of East Hampton and its neighbors to complete a segment of the Trail northwest of Highway 66.

As you may be aware, there is a 1200-foot gap in the completion of the Air Line Trail from East Hampton to Portland, which has been deemed wetlands by the Army Corp of Engineers. The area is a portion of the old rail bed that passes through a rock ledge cut with a width of 10 feet. The limited width of this ledge cut has made it difficult to construct the trail around the wetlands and the area is further limited by the presence of utility poles used by Eversource. The Town of East Hampton, DEEP and Eversource have collaborated on a proposal to construct a boardwalk system to bridge the wetlands area.

At a meeting on October 6, 2020, Eversource and the Town agreed to move forward with an easement that would allow Eversource access onto Town owned property to place new utility poles and reroute the Eversource wires off the wet portion of the trail and directly to Route 66 to bypass the area. This was a big step forward in the process with Eversource, as removing their poles from this 1200' section is the first critical step toward completing the boardwalk project and closing our gap. The cost to the Town of this first step is estimated at \$60,000 to clear and grub trees from the easement area and is expected to be completed in the summer of 2021. DEEP is providing significant grant funds to offset this cost. Eversource is relocating the poles and wires at its expense.

DEEP and the Town are working on a plan to fund the design and construction of the boardwalk. The overall cost is estimated at \$1.4 million. The Town's project is eligible for and will rank highly on the priority list based on the DEEP's Recreational Trails Grant program criteria. As you are also likely aware, the Grant Program funds have not yet been released by our



State Bond Commission. As of today, the Bond Commission has not borrowed and allocated \$3 million it has available in its authorization from 2018 for the purpose of trails. Additionally, \$6 million has been authorized in recent legislation divided between state fiscal years 22 and 23. I am writing to ask you to present the request to the Bond Commission to make these funds available so that this work to complete the Air Line Trail in this area may be accomplished.

Usage of the Air Line Trail in East Hampton has increased dramatically in the last several months (see the below link to the CT Trail Census reports), mainly due to the COVID-19 pandemic and an increase in outdoor recreation while trying to remain socially distant (<https://cttrailcensus.uconn.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/2046/2020/03/2019-Trail-Use-Count-Data-Report.pdf>). During this time the Parks and Recreation office has received multiple calls inquiring about the progress of the trail in this area, people continue to advocate moving forward with funding of this project, which is why we need your help!

We are seeking your help to advocate to the Governor's office and put added pressure on the State Bonding Commission to release the CT DEEP Recreational Trails Program funds so East Hampton and towns like ours across the state can receive the necessary funding to eliminate these gaps along the Air Line Trail. The Trail, when completed and connected, will reach from Portland to the Massachusetts state line! This connection becomes an integral part of the long range plan to develop the connection of the Air Line Trail to the Farmington Canal Trail and the larger concept of the loop trail in central Connecticut. It will be a great asset for many who use it as a means of recreation, transportation, and leisure and become a real economic driver for the region.

Thank you for your efforts to help complete the Trail!

Sincerely,

David E. Cox,
Town Manager

cc: Town Council
Jeremy Hall, Parks and Recreation Director