


MEMORANDUM

TO: Town Council
FROM: David E. Cox, Town Manager 
DATE: November 19, 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.

Land Use

- As of mid-November, the lake has been drawn down to the lowest level in recent memory. As such, the Land Use Department is inspecting permitted retaining wall reconstructions, guiding homeowners and contractors regarding as-of-right and maintenance work and monitoring the shoreline for unpermitted work. Several projects are underway, and the Department will be at various locations around the lake daily for the next few weeks monitoring progress. Property owners looking to take advantage of the low water level to do any work near the shoreline are being urged to contact the Department to determine whether a permit may be necessary.
- The Department continues to monitor several large projects that were permitted earlier in the year including St Clements Marina banquet facility and Edgewater Hills Salt Pond Apartments. In addition, several subdivisions continue to be very active with new construction including Skyline Estates and Salmon Run.
- Document scanning has been completed for about one-third of the building files for properties in town. This project was initiated in an effort to permanently preserve property files, include historic files into the digital permitting system, be able to provide files upon request without the need to travel to Town Hall and, ultimately, to be able to reduce file storage space in the Town Hall. Staff hopes to continue the scanning effort in the next few years until all files are complete. As Council may recall, additional scanning was accomplished this year beyond what was covered in the budget using grant funds in coordination with the Town Clerk's Office for the preservation and storage of records.
- The Department continues to see increased activity in Town, which began around May of 2020. The Land Use and Building Departments are preparing the combined report for the upcoming Annual Report for Fiscal Year 21. In summary, 1,345 permits were reviewed for building, electrical, plumbing, and mechanical projects, up from 1,082 in FY 20; 310 zoning approvals were granted, up from 224 in FY 20; 2,783 inspections were conducted, up from 2,587 in FY 20;

80 applications were reviewed by the Land Use Commissions (P&Z, IWWA, ZBA), up slightly from 73 in FY 20. Finally, Department revenue was just under \$435,000, up from \$208,000 in FY 20.

Library

- Library Director Ellen Paul has resigned her position. Her last day will be Tuesday, November 30. She has accepted the position of Executive Director of the Connecticut Library Consortium. The Library Advisory Board will host a goodbye reception for Ellen at the Library on Tuesday, November 23 from 4:30 to 5:30pm.
- The Town and the Library welcome Christine Cachuela as the new Children's Librarian. Christine has previously worked at the Douglas Library of Hebron, the Windsor Public Library and the Waterford Public Library. Christine's first day with the Library will be Monday, November 22.

Parks and Recreation

- Department staff continues to coordinate with Bevin Brothers Manufacturing, owner of the Lake Pocotopaug dam, to maintain the lake level at 36 inches below the top of the dam to facilitate the Sears Park Boat Launch Replacement Project. The Town's contractor, Butler Construction anticipates starting the project in the first week of December and estimates completion by December 23.
- The Town's contractor for the High School Athletic Fields project, Mountain View Landscapes, is nearing completion of this season's work at the high school track, baseball field and tennis courts. Irrigation lines have been connected and installed, the tennis courts being paved and the drainage work on the main soccer field completed. The contractor will complete sod on the baseball field the week after Thanksgiving, which will conclude the necessary work for this fall.
- General fall clean-up is underway with a majority of staff's responsibilities being leaf clean up at all parks and schools and the removal of soccer goals, benches and other temporary equipment from fields.
- The Department and its consultant recently compiled results of the Needs Analysis Focus groups that were held in early November. Preliminary information was included in the last edition of this Report. The next step in the Needs Analysis process is to release a town wide survey via Survey Monkey.
- At last week's Conservation Lake Commission meeting, the Commission discussed the possibility of a Town ordinance banning fertilizer around the watershed. Preliminary conversations revealed an interest to pursue the possibility. The Commission will revisit this matter at its next meeting.

Police

- On November 13, members of the East Hampton Police Department and East Hampton Volunteer Fire Department participated in a "Stuff a Cruiser" "Stuff a Truck" event to benefit the local food bank. The event was held at Stop & Shop and was a huge success. The community donated a truckload of food as well as \$1,474 in cash. The next day, the Ambulance Association and volunteers from the Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) accepted similar donations and the community responded equally as well. The donated food and cash will benefit our local food bank and the departments are very thankful for the generous donations.
- The Town and Department will welcome Officer Brandy Lenois as its newest Police Officer on November 29 to fill an existing vacancy. Officer Lenois is a certified police officer from another law enforcement agency in Connecticut and certified as an EMT, so she will not be required to attend the police academy, nor will she need the medical training our officers receive. She will start her East Hampton field training program immediately and is scheduled to be on her own by January 1.
- Sergeant Tim Dowty has tendered notice of his retirement from the Department effective December 18, 2021 after nearly 25 years of service to the East Hampton community. It is anticipated that Council will publicly acknowledge and recognize Sergeant Dowty's service at its December meeting.

Public Works

- The Department completed the drainage work on Edgerton Street. This project began in March, lasted through the summer and into the Fall with many starts and stops, some planned and some unplanned. In all 26 catch basins have been completely replaced and nearly 2,700' of compromised metal drainage pipe has been replaced. The project was completed and engineered entirely by Public Works staff and made possible by the purchase of the excavator. As discussed during budgeting, undertaking the project with in-house staff represents a cost savings to the town of upwards of \$150,000 to \$200,000 as opposed to using an outside contractor to complete the work, even with the purchase of the excavator. Temporary restoration has been completed through the corridor to allow for winter maintenance. Over the winter, a sidewalk project will be developed to replace portions of the sidewalk that had to be removed as part of the drainage project. The final phase of work for this area will be the spring reconstruction and repaving of Edgerton as well as the adjacent roads including Cedar Ridge, Huckleberry Acres Road, and Dziok Drive. Spring paving will also include a portion of Abbey Road that is in failed condition. A letter will be going out shortly to residents in the area of Edgerton Street updating them on the upcoming process.

- The Department has completed fall cleanup at the Town-owned cemeteries and is continuing with cleanup at other locations. It will also be assisting the Parks and Recreation Department in its leaf collection and clean-up work.
- The mechanics have begun preparing trucks for winter including checking calibrations for road salt application. An important note is that the per ton price of salt in the State-bid contract has increased \$10 to \$76 per ton for this winter season. The Department is making significant efforts and has made great strides in adhering to industry standards for roadway salt application to help limit this expense.

Senior Center

- The Commission on Aging (COA) survey has been completed and the Commission is compiling and analyzing the results. It gave initial review at its meeting this week and plans are being made to discuss the results and future policy recommendations either at an upcoming Council meeting or a special workshop for that purpose.
- The Community Renewal Team (CRT) offered its traditional Thanksgiving Dinner on Thursday, November 18 at the Senior Center and it was a great success. Fifty people enjoyed fellowship and food at the Center.
- The Senior Center and Chatham Health District are sponsoring a Booster Clinic aimed at older adults at the Town Hall on Monday, November 29. Participants need to call the Center to make an appointment.

WPCA

- Work is underway on the Air Line Trail east of the Cranberry Bog to repair the force main carrying wastewater from Colchester. The project, which is a project of the Town of Colchester, involves lining the existing pipe to address corrosion related failures. While the Trail will generally remain open, users will need to exercise caution in the area of the work and the Trail may be closed at times for safety reasons. It is expected that the project will be completed by December 24.

Youth and Family Services

- Youth and Family Services has started getting its first walk-ins and calls from community members looking to donate to support families in need. The Department has also posted on social media inviting those who are interested to contact staff to sponsor a local family or donate some gift cards. The Department will do a series of small gift card trees that community members can fill up and will include opportunities to provide support through Amazon cards,

gas cards and grocery store cards. Staff will then coordinate with other resource agencies to identify families to which the support can be given.

Town Manager/Other

- The Town's COVID rate jumped up in the recent figures and the Town returned to the "Red Alert" level under the State's framework. In the recent reporting, the Town saw an average of about 2.6 new cases each day or 20.1 cases per 100,000 population. All who are eligible are being encouraged to receive the COVID vaccine, which is available through Chatham Health District and other locations. About 66.5% of the Town's residents are fully vaccinated.
- Proposals for redevelopment of the Summit Thread Site were due at noon today. Unfortunately, no proposals were received. Staff will consider options for next steps in the upcoming weeks.

DC

cc: Management Staff