


## MEMORANDUM

TO: Town Council  
FROM: David E. Cox, Town Manager   
DATE: December 4, 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.

### **Building Department**

- Due to the required quarantine of the Building Official as the result of a direct exposure to a known case of COVID-19, the Town has implemented a remote inspection system using a stand-in for the inspector and video observation. These inspections, which are recorded and appended to the electronic file for the respective permit, will continue as long as necessary.
- The Building Official, Glen LeConche, has announced he will be leaving the Town at the end of December. The Town will be advertising for the position and is expected to quickly name an Interim Building Official as necessary while a permanent replacement is sought.

### **Clerk's Office**

- The Town Clerk's Office has moved to remote service only as a result of a confirmed COVID-19 diagnoses and for quarantining of those with direct exposure. Many services can be provided online and certain services normally performed in East Hampton may be performed at neighboring municipalities. Information can be found on the Clerk's website page or by calling the Clerk at 860-985-4059. All other offices of the Town Hall are open for service.

### **Collector's Office**

- The second installment of taxes for real estate, personal property, and supplemental motor vehicles levied on the Grand List of October 1, 2019 are due and payable on January 1, 2021. The last day on which to pay without penalty is February 1, 2021. Supplemental motor vehicle tax bills will be mailed on December 10, 2020 and the bills will be available to view and pay online at that time.

- Staff is currently working with a new program that will allow printing and mailing of reminder notices for the second installments of real estate and personal property taxes. In the past, there has not been an additional mailing or reminder for the second installment, but it is anticipated that reminders will be prepared and sent in the upcoming weeks.

### **Land Use**

- The Planning and Zoning Commission held a discussion on December 2 regarding drafting regulations allowing Veterinary Clinics in some residential zones as a Special Permit use. This is in reaction to an application for a zone change that was received, which would have changed the zone at 9 Middle Haddam from R-2 to Commercial. Although there was agreement across the Commission and much of the public that the use seemed to fit the neighborhood, the zone change was not a desirable way to accommodate the use in this area. This led to a discussion of the nature of veterinary clinics and their impacts on surrounding land uses. A public hearing will be held in January to receive feedback on the text change proposal.
- The new Lake Pocotopaug Protection Zone regulations are now in effect. Although the regulations have not been used yet, there has been a strong showing of support from the community for the new protections.
- An application was received this week for a five-lot residential subdivision at the corner of Daniels and Young Streets. This application will be reviewed by the IWWA on December 30 and the PZC on January 6. Public Hearings will likely take place in January and February, respectively.
- An application has been received from the owners of Cheers Package Store at the intersection of Highways 66 and 16 to reinstate the use of the property as a fueling station. The proposal includes the installation of tanks, 4 pull through pumps with a canopy, a new convenience store located within the existing building, and significant site work. Although the fueling station is an allowed use, a provision within the zoning regulations prohibits residential uses on the same parcel of land as a fueling station. There currently exists a residential apartment on the second floor of the building that the owners desire to keep. The applicant has stated that a fueling station did previously exist on that site at the same time as the residence and the residence is, therefore, a legal non-conforming use. Statute places the burden of proof of a legal non-conforming use on the applicant and they are currently gathering evidence to prove the residential

use and the fueling station existed at the same time. Town records do not seem to show the two uses on the parcel at the same time.

### **Library**

- Circulation continues to be up from previous years despite the impacts of the pandemic. November 2020 circulation is up 2.8% from November 2019. This increase was driven in large part to more digital and downloadable borrows as might be expected.
- The Library performed customer service satisfaction surveying from November 9 through November 22. When asked to rate their last customer service experience at the Library, 96% of respondents said that their experience was 'exceptional.'
- The Library debuted a new teen space in November. By shifting non-fiction and large print books, staff was able to remove shelving and replace it with lounge furniture and a project table. This is the first time our Library has ever had a space specifically for teenagers.

### **Parks and Recreation**

- The Parks crew is finishing fall clean up including leaf clearing at all schools, parks and trails. Fall sports have concluded and staff is working to clear fields of soccer goals and benches. The removal of all tennis court nets, windscreens and the baseball field batting cage will be performed over the next two weeks. New infield mix has been delivered to the Middle school baseball field and field preparations are underway to maintain the baseball and softball fields at both schools prior to freezing temps so that these fields are prepared for the spring baseball and softball season.
- Based on state COVID restrictions, all sports contests have been postponed until January 19, which delayed the start of our youth and adult basketball season by three weeks. New guidelines from the state do not allow for more than 4 people per group to participate in organized practices or pick up sports games during the delay. See sector rules for sports here: [https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/DECD/Covid\\_Business\\_Recovery\\_Phase-2-1/CTReopens21\\_Sports\\_FitnessCenters1110.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/DECD/Covid_Business_Recovery_Phase-2-1/CTReopens21_Sports_FitnessCenters1110.pdf) and <https://portal.ct.gov/DPH/Communications/Guidance/General-Guidance-for-Youth-and-Amateur-Sport-Activities-during-COVID-19-Pandemic>
- The Department plans to continue running programming throughout the winter months using the State guidelines as a baseline for Town programs. Specific Department protocols that staff and participants must follow for each program, which consider size

of space, staffing numbers and participant numbers, must also be followed. The mission is to continue to run programs at a safe level for the public to participate in during these difficult times. With the holidays already upon us, staff will continue to provide families with options to celebrate while following all guidelines. The Department has already started preparations to go virtual again with future programs as these programs are released over the next two weeks.

### **Public Works**

- Public Works Crews have been working on fall cleanup including storm debris removal and wood pick up. These efforts will continue for the foreseeable future until all downed trees and storm debris is removed from Town property and roads.
- The mechanic's shop is currently in the process of the fall application of rust preventative to all Department equipment and confirming all plow trucks are calibrated to ensure the proper application rate of deicing material.
- Barring adverse weather conditions, it is anticipated that crews will begin work on Edgerton Street the week of December 7 to get some drainage work started before heavy winter sets in. This work is being done in anticipation of reconstructing Edgerton Street pavement next Fall.

### **Senior Center**

- The Senior Center is maintaining its open status by appointment only. As the virus continues to increase in our community, the Center will not hold any in-person group programs and will reassess in mid-January. All group programming is being done virtually. The exceptions to date have been CHOICES counselling and energy assistance. The Center continues to offer these meetings in three ways; via zoom, or telephone or in-person. Volunteer shopping and Grab and Go meals continue to be offered with minimal contact.
- Staff is encouraging people to sign up online for MyActiveCenter.com (MAC). This allows folks to register for programs from home! The Center rolled out the program in October and a few have signed up. Staff is now putting more program sign-ups on MAC and are calling folks to walk them through the steps. It is not difficult but just sometimes requires a bit of coaching. MAC is being used for entries into the drawings that are being done and staff is encouraging use of the program so participants do not miss out on a chance at a beautiful gift. The gifts are donations from local businesses. The Older

Adults of East Hampton have once again shown their support of the East Hampton Senior Center.

- In addition to the daily drawings, staff will be hosting virtual parties for the groups who have participated in our virtual programming. Each group will be offered a 'holiday kit' to pick up for the party on their designated day. A fun way to add sparkle to the holiday season that may be more difficult this year
- As mentioned previously, a virtual gathering for Connecticut senior centers will be held December 18 from 1 pm - 2:30 pm. As of a week ago, East Hampton Seniors were the second highest number of registrations in the State at 56! New Fairfield was first with 60! Registration is open until the date of the event. The people who registered by the deadline will get a special treat bag, sponsored by CASP, AARP, and CT Community Care.

#### **Youth and Family Services**

- Social Service continues to provide assistance and resources for the community like food, fuel, mental health and addiction assistance through various programs including the Food Bank, the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services and Rushford Rehabilitation. The Department continues with its free therapeutic counseling and is now serving 13 cases. Additional cases are anticipated in the new year.
- Calls continue to come in offering donations. Any funds received are put in a separate fund and used exclusively for our families in crisis and/or need.
- Most recently, our department has been dealing with a family displaced due to a falling tree rendering their rental unit uninhabitable. Staff has been coordinating with the Red Cross, Community Health Resources, and the landlord. The family has received a debit card to be used however the family deems fit as well as other assistance and has been refunded its security deposit, which now provides the family with funds to put towards a new rental.
- The Department continues advertise on social media and via its newsletter about the new zoom therapy sessions it will be offering. The Senior Center has advertised this as well. There has been interest and the first session will launch in the next week or two prior to the holiday.

- The Stuff a Stocking for East Hampton project continues as a replacement to the toy drive held in the past. Using donations, staff will deliver holiday gifts to families in need identified through the Department.

**Town Manager/Other**

- East Hampton continues to be in Red Alert status due to increased COVID-19 infections. The most recent information shows the Town at a rate of over 25 daily cases per 100,000 population. That equates to about 3 new cases each day in East Hampton.

DC

cc: Management Staff