### MEMORANDUM

TO:	Town Council
FROM:	David E. Cox, Town Manager
DATE:	February 20, 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.

### **Collector's Office**

Based on some comments received from taxpayers, staff is investigating additional ways to help people remember the second payment requirements for taxes in order to avoid delinquency. Staff is looking at additional or different wording on tax bills as well as automatic notifications via email or text in addition to more traditional notification methods using the print media.

### Land Use Department

- The Phase I evaluation of the 1 Watrous property was received and is being reviewed. It has also been sent to the Brownfields Land Trust who will be handling the Phase II and the Hazardous Building Materials analysis and will be generating an estimate for any needed remediation. Despite noting many potential problems with the site in terms of past activities, the basic statement from the Phase I evaluator was that there does not seem to be a lot of evidence of problematic releases. More information will come from the Building evaluation and the Phase II.
- Staff met with the company with which the Town has an Agreement for solar energy credits on its electric bills. The company is moving ahead with the permitting process for the installation of its solar facility through the Connecticut Siting Council. While East Hampton does not issue any land use related permissions for the project, the owner will be making presentations to the Inland Wetland and Waterways Agency (IWWA) and the Planning and Zoning Commission (PZC) for their information and to help inform the public. Any comments the Town may have will be accumulated and sent to the Siting Council. As a reminder, the solar energy installation is planned at 46 Skinner Street and will encompass about 20 acres as show on the material included in this packet. The

IWWA will receive its presentation on Wednesday, February 26 and the PZC will receive its presentation on Wednesday, March 4.

### Library

- The Library Ceiling Tile Replacement Project is largely complete. The contractor still has a small punch list but all ceiling tiles have been replaced and equipment moved out. Comments from the public, both in person and on Facebook, have been extremely positive.
- The Library Strategic Planning Survey closed on Monday, February 10. 273 people responded and the vast majority of them live in town. 43% of respondents visit the library at least once per week while 17% visit the library 3 times per year or fewer. The Library Board, Friends of the Library and Library stakeholders will be meeting on Sunday, February 23 and Sunday, March 8 to review the survey results and set goals for the Library on how we can best serve our community over the next three years.
- The Library was featured in another very complimentary article about the survey in the Rivereast. A copy of the article is included in this packet.
- The Library is offering 14 after-school programs for children in grades 2 through 5 this April and May. Each program can serve up to 17 children and can accommodate a wait list of 10. Registration for these programs opened on Monday, February 10 at 6:30pm. By 7:30pm, just one hour later, each program was full and had a waiting list.

### Police

The application process for the new Police Officer position in the Department closed on Sunday, February 9. The Town received 20 applications. The Department will begin its review of the applications which includes written testing and oral interviews with a cross section of Department staff and with the Chief. It is anticipated that the hiring process would conclude by the end of May of 2020 and that the new Officer would be in the academy class that starts in June 2020.

### WPCA

At its meeting on Tuesday, February 18, the Joint Facilities Committee, which directly covers the operation of the joint wastewater treatment plant, approved its budget for the next fiscal year. The budget increased just under \$85,000 or about 3.5% and provides for significant investment in future Capital Improvements. The Committee has

also been discussing its future needs at the treatment plant and its portion of the collection system, which will likely call for large expenditures and strategic planning for funding of that work including a possible call for the issuance of bonds or other borrowing. As a reminder, the Joint Facilities Committee is a cooperative of East Hampton and Colchester and the plant also serves portions of Hebron and Marlborough.

### Youth and Family Services

In 2016, the Town of East Hampton was the recipient of the Partnership for Success (PFS) grant provided by the CT Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS). This allocated \$150,000 per year for a four-year period, which, after a short extension, concludes this September. These funds were acquired by the East Hampton Local Prevention Council, which has since rebranded to the East Hampton Prevention Partnership, with the goal of reducing youth substance use rates within Town. Since receiving the funding, Partnership efforts have brought a medication drop box to our police department which has collected over 300 pounds of medication, reduced the past-30-day-drinking use rates at East Hampton High School from 46% to 34% over a two year period, hosted various presentations and created several educational campaigns. The Partnership is actively pursuing future funding in order to sustain its efforts including plans to apply for a federal government and is due in early April. It is anticipated that some actions by the Council will be requested in March related to these grants.

### Town Manager/Other

- Staff and the Town Attorney continue to wait for the closing on the Town Hall sale. The buyer is having the property surveyed in order to be assured of the location of the property line at the rear of the property with Eversource. Once that is complete, it is anticipated that the closing will occur. As a reminder, the Town would remain in possession of the building at no charge until the end of June 2020 to allow final moving and disposal of any items not be used elsewhere.
- Recently, information was received from a representative of the owner of the cell tower located on east/south side of E. High Street on the property occupied by Paul and Sandy's Too. The cell tower owner is considering a relocation of that tower to a position near the Lakeview Cemetery as shown in the material included in this packet. Like the solar installation, this approval of this potential location will be handled by the CT Siting

Council. Staff will be working with the cell tower owner to make a presentation to the Planning and Zoning Commission for its information and as a public information meeting.

- In the upcoming months, staff, with the assistance as necessary of our Labor Attorney, will be meeting with two of the Town staff collective bargaining units. Both the Police Officers and the Supervisory personnel contracts are expiring in June. As the process continues, staff will communicate with the Council and Council's Personnel Committee as needed prior to bringing contract proposals forward.
- Recently, a Memorandum of Understanding was executed with the State regarding access to the State Police Radio system. The MOU allows our Public Safety personnel to access the State system when a backup for the Town's main system is needed and to communicate across agencies for certain emergencies. The MOU carries no financial obligations for the Town and is merely an agreement that outlines the Town's responsibilities as it relates to use of the system and the confidentiality of encryption codes needed for use of the system.
- Earlier this week, members of the Conservation Lake Commission and the Town Manager met with representatives of Bevin Bell regarding the Lake Pocotopaug dam. The goal of the meeting was to establish an understanding of the plans for future operation of the dam and the lake level the group intends to maintain at various points of the year. There was agreement on a plan that will establish some predictability for residents and includes lower lake levels in the winter with "higher" levels in the summer. Notwithstanding weather, the lake level will be allowed to drop in September and October with an intentional effort to lower the level beginning in the last part of October. Lake levels would then be brought up in the spring for the fishing season with an effort to get to a recreational level by the end of May. Operation of the dam will remain with Bevin but there is an operational plan. The Commission will be providing some information to Bevin to assist them as they undertake dam operation.
- As part of the process for the Town's application for a Small Cities Grant related to improvements at the Housing Authority, the Council will be asked to hold a Public Hearing in advance of its March 10 meeting. As a reminder, the Housing Authority is preparing a grant application for a federal Community Development Block Grant to fund a number of improvements at the Authority's property. A similar grant was sought last year but the Town was not funded.

The Land Use Department and the Town Manager are looking into a membership in the Main Street Program, which is a resource for traditional downtowns like the Village Center. The concept was suggested to the Economic Development Commission who was interested and who is looking into the benefits as well. If a membership seems promising, it would likely be discussed with the EDC further as well as the Village Center businesses before being presented for approval.

DC

Attachments

cc: Management Staff



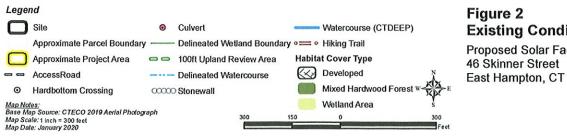
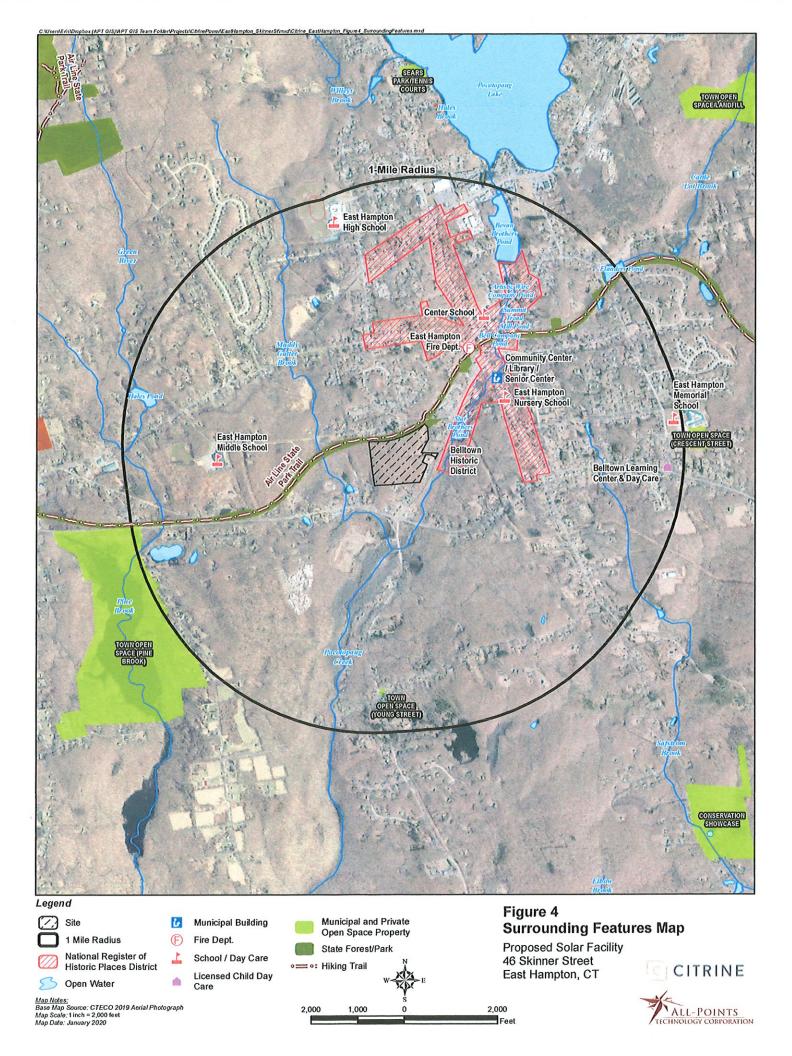
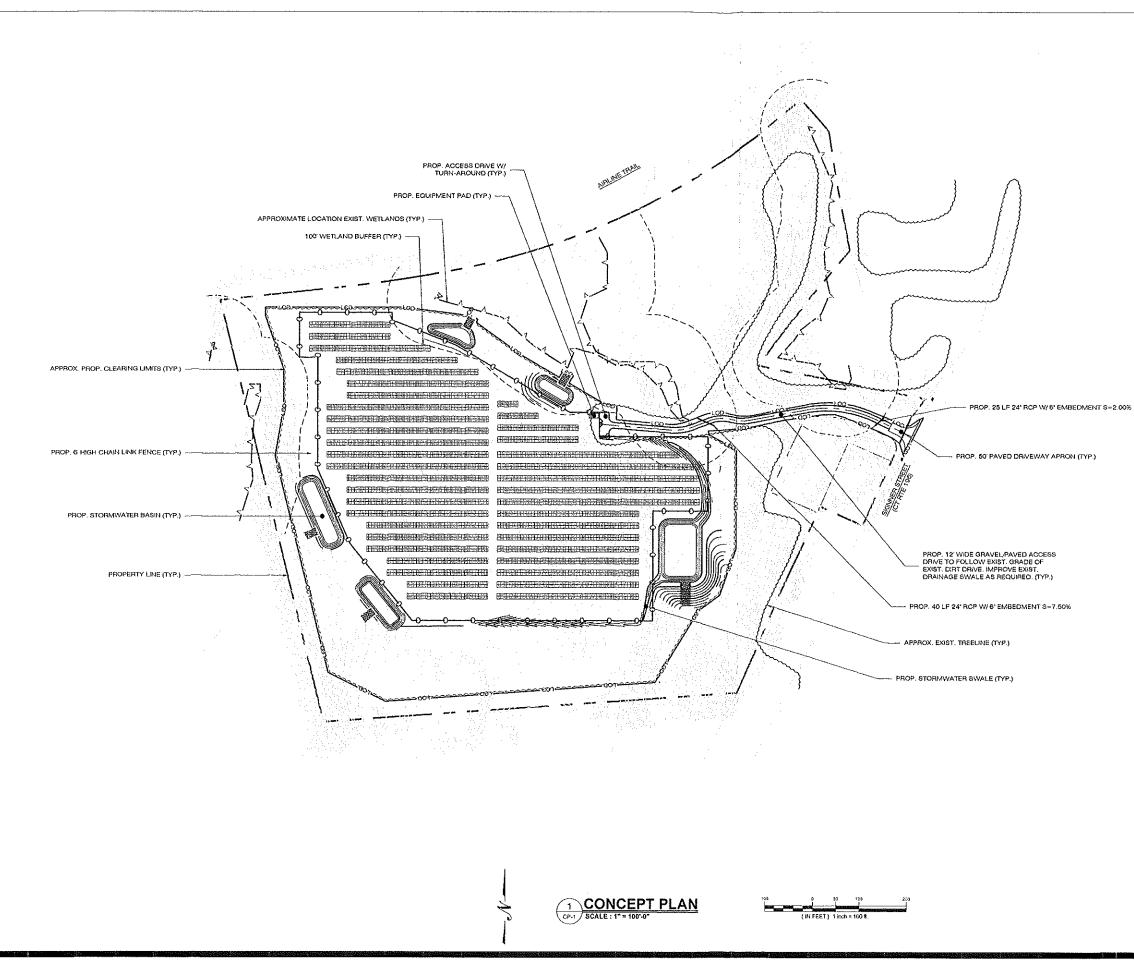
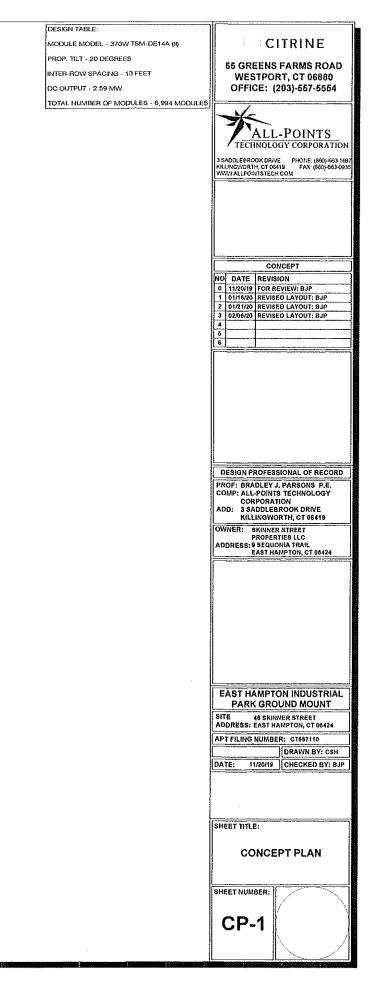


Figure 2 Existing Conditions Map Proposed Solar Facility 46 Skinner Street East Hampton, CT







### February 14, 2020 • NEWS BULLETIN

# East Hampton • East H Library Survey Yields Nearly 300 Reponses

### by Jack Lakowsky

Amy Ordonez, chair of East Hampton's Library Advisory Board, was nearly moved to tears when she first saw the East Hampton Public Library's new ceiling tiles.

"The space was really transformed," Ordonez said. "I have to give so much credit to Ellen [Paul, the library's director]."

Replacing the library's 34-year-old ceiling tiles was another of the many efforts to further improve service to patrons and the community at large, according to Paul.

To gauge what further steps the board and the library staff should take, Paul and the board distributed a survey to the public, asking for input on improvements, updates and projects to undertake in the future.

The survey closed on Feb. 10. Paul said that 273 residents, a number largely representing regular patrons, but also a significant amount of irregular library-goers participated in it. The survey was intentionally written with openended questions to allow for thoughtful replies describing the wants and needs of patrons, and improvements that can be made to library operations and to the building itself. Paul said she did not want to "proscribe" responses. This method makes analysis a bit more difficult, she said, but far more rewarding.

"That was really our jumping-off point," Paul

said. "I'm so impressed with the response, and so appreciative."

Paul said she was amazed at both the depth and breadth of the comments made by the community, and that responses contained both compliments and critique.

"It's amazing that people took such time to comment," Paul said.

Paul, Ordonez, library staff, board members, the Friends of the East Hampton Library and the Board of Education will pour through results to determine priorities and future steps.

Paul and Ordonez both described the tremendous growth experienced in recent months by the library, its services and its operations.

"Last summer, the board decided to be forward thinking and proactively plan for the future," Paul said.

In the year since Paul and the board began their reformations, borrowing at the library has increased 28%, jumping from 72,000 checkouts to more than 90,000. Borrowing continues to grow monthly. Paul said the library's goal is to reach more than 100,000 borrows by the end of this current fiscal year.

Paul said the library offers 14 after school programs. When registration for these programs went live, she said, these programs were fullwith waiting lists-within an hour of their announcement.

"Kids' attendance is through the roof," Paul said.

Ordonez said that the success of the afterschool programs is a testament to the library's growth.

Paul said she and the board will meet with the town council to ensure any plans align with overall town goals. A strategic three-year plan, based on the results of the survey, will be developed with the objective of best serving East Hampton's residents. She said she hopes to have this document ready in April. It will describe plans stretching from July of this year until July 2023.

All these accomplishments have not quieted Paul's ambition to help create the best library experience for Belltown.

"This is all really, really positive, but we can't let this growth stall," Paul said. "This only works if we're listening to the community.

There's so much more to do."

Ordonez said that the library was built in the 1980's and was not constructed to suit current technology. She also said that the library board will advocate for the introduction of a reference librarian position to lighten the load of serving 13,000 people carried by the town's four librarians, who are divided between the town's libraries and the school facilities.

"In the age of misinformation, we need someone who can steer people to the right knowledge," Ordonez said.

"Our library is really becoming what a library should be," she added. "A community gathering place, a place for people to connect. We'll be doing that in a way that the community wants."

Paul said that updates on the library's efforts will be posted to their Facebook page.

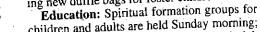
"It's going to be a very busy spring," Paul said.

### Haddam Neck Covenant Church News ing new duffle bags for foster children.

Haddam Neck Covenant Church, 17 Haddam Neck Rd., invites all to Sunday worship at 9 a.m., followed by coffee, refreshments and fellowship time. Pastor is the Rev. Tom Cowger.

Worship: Cowger's message series is "God's Gracious Gateway," grace-based intentional practices.

Dufile Bags: The Care Ministry is collect-



children and adults are held Sunday morning; children's group meets during worship and adult group meets after fellowship time. The adult group is studying the "Workbook of Living Praver."

Choir Practice: Wednesdays; Vocal Choir at 6 p.m. and Bell Choir at 7. All welcome.

General Info: Office hours are Tuesday, 1-4 p.m.; and Wednesday and Friday, 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m. Call 860-267-2336 for more information, or visit hncovenantchurch.org.

## **Upcoming Senior Center Trips**

East Hampton Senior Center, 105 Main St., has announced the following trips. Register at the senior center. For more information, stop by the center or call 860-267-4426.

Ogunquit, Maine: June 1-3. Featuring Kennebunkport City Tour, Foster's Clambake, and Nubble Lighthouse Cruise. Cost is \$479/ double or triple and \$589/single. A \$200 deposit is due March 2.

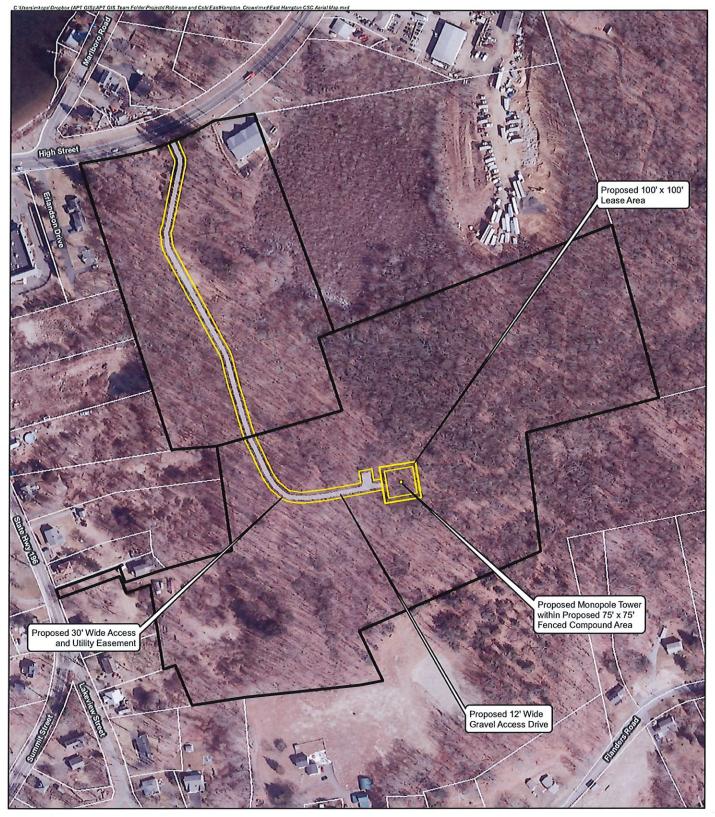
conday July 19 This

March 25.

Lighthouses of Boston Harbor: Tuesday Aug. 25. Take a 90-minute narrated cruise of the five Boston lighthouses. Lunch is at Th Venezia Restaurant. Cost: \$121; deposit of \$2 is due April 22.

Plimoth Plantation: Wednesday, Oct. Visit the newly restored Mayflower II, see "Th Rock" where the pilgrims landed, and have traditional Thanksgiving buffet at Plimoth Plan





#### Legend

- Proposed Site Layout
- Proposed Equipment
  - Proposed Gravel Access Drive
- Subject Property
  - Approximate Parcel Boundary (CTDEEP)

<u>Map Notes:</u> Base Map Source: 2019 Aerial Photograph (CTECO) Map Scale: 1 inch = 250 feet Map Date: February 2020



#### Site Schematic

Proposed Wireless Telecommunications Facility Site Number 876352 8 1/2 Lakeview Street East Hampton, Connecticut

