

MEMORANDUM

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

- Tax bills are being prepared and will be mailed as soon as they are ready. The "due date" is July 1 but the last day to pay without interest penalty is August 3, 2020. Payments received after that date will be charged the lower interest rate of .25% per month instead of the regular 1.5 % per month in accordance with the plan approved by Council to assist taxpayers. The plan remains in effect for the period through October 1 after which the interest rate will revert to 1.5% per month. All unpaid tax amounts will be charged 1.5% back to the original due date of the tax.
- To further incent payment via the online service, the Town is waiving the fee associated with all checking and savings account payments made through October 31, 2020. More information is found on the Town website: www.easthamptonct.gov.

Land Use

- The Land Use Department is in the final steps of preparing the Town's grant application related to the proposed purchase of the Christopher Pond property. The open space and conservation grant would cover about two thirds of the market price of the property for the purchase, which is included in the Town's 2021 budget. Once the results of the grant application are known, the normal land purchase actions and approvals under Town Charter would be followed in the fall, including a Town Meeting, to authorize the purchase.
- The Department is working with the Planning and Zoning Commission and the Design Review Board to undertake the final review process related to the construction authorization for the MS2 building in the Edgewater development, which is the area that includes the new Town Hall. The developer is moving ahead with construction of the building located at the main entrance near Rt 66. The building is a reflection of the

existing structure on the north side of the entrance. It includes commercial spaces on the first floor and two floors of multi-family housing consisting ten units (8 one-bedroom and 2 two-bedroom)

Library

- The Library's summer reading program signups have begun. Children, teens, and families ages 0-18 are signing up for the program online and receiving paper materials in their curbside pickup orders. On Friday, June 26, the Children's Summer Program will kick off with a musical variety show from Fiddle N' Fun and a coupon for one free children's sundae from Chatham Creamery to redeem any time this summer. The Teen Summer Program is kicking off Monday, June 29 with graphic artist Marek Bennett. Grades 6 and up will have an opportunity to design comics alongside Bennett, with optional office hours in July set aside for teens who would like more feedback on their work after the event. Flyers for the summer reading kickoff are included with this Report. The kickoff events will be held via the Zoom platform.
- A flyer is also included for one of the Library's collaborative summer programs, Book Buddies with the Senior Center. Children ages 7-12 will have the opportunity to meet with local older adults via zoom. While in the call, the adult volunteers will read a story and play get-to-know-you games. After the story, the Children's Librarian will walk participants through a craft activity related to that day's story. Each participant will be able to pick up crafts and books at the Library or Senior Center prior to the event.
- Curbside pickup orders remain steady at the library with 90-100 individual orders being distributed into patrons' hands each week. These curbside orders are made by card holders online and over the phone. In addition to longstanding card holders, town residents still have the opportunity to apply for a library card online at the library website. To date, 157 individuals have signed up for new library cards this way.

Parks and Recreation

- Work continues on the aeration project for Lake Pocotopaug. The west half of the system, which serves the deeper portion of the lake, is expected to be started today (Friday, June 19). As the final details for recording the Brookhaven Park easement have been worked out and construction on that site will commence after the air lines have been placed in the water.
- The construction of watershed improvement projects also continues with major work ongoing at Sears Park. The parking lot portion of the project and the related swales and

water treatment facilities have been laid out and are being reviewed before that work is undertaken. Staff will be coordinating the timeline for parking lot paving in order to minimize the impact on the boat launch traffic, which will be cut off for the short duration of paving. It is anticipated that the final preparation and paving will take as much as two days.

- Playground facilities opened on Wednesday, June 17. Signage at the playgrounds indicate that appropriate protection measures must be taken including distancing and masks. The structures are not sanitized and their use is an individual decision.

Police

- Officer Caleb Cavanaugh, the Town's newest Officer, is doing very well in his Field Training Program and is scheduled to complete that training by the end of July. He will then start working on his own, being monitored daily by his supervisors. Once the COVID-19 restrictions are relaxed enough, the Department would like to schedule a formal swearing in ceremony for him in the Town Council Chambers. The ceremony would be open to friends and family who were not able to witness his initial swearing in or attend a formal graduation ceremony because of COVID-19 restrictions. The intent would be to perform the ceremony in conjunction with a Town Council meeting and then move everyone to the training room for refreshments and cake so as not to disturb the entire meeting.
- Staff is completing proposed updates to the Use of Force General Order and the conduct policies and will present those to the Council in July for comment and consideration.
- The bridge and culvert replacement project on Rt 66 are progressing and periodic lane closures will occur until about Thursday, July 16. On that date, it is anticipated that the two-week full shut down will begin. During the period from July 16 to July 30 (assuming the contractor is on time) the highway will be completely closed at all times. No traffic will be able to pass through the area. Also, during that time, the contractor expects to be working nearly 24-hours per day with two long shifts including overnight work that will cause some noise. General traffic will be routed through the Village Center using Main Street and Rt 196/Lakeview/Summit to avoid the closed area. Large truck traffic that is not making local deliveries will be routed on Rt 196 to avoid the Main Street/Rt 66 intersection.

Senior Center

- The Senior Center continues to produce programming via Zoom. Weekly, it conducts Bingo, Yoga, Writer's Workshop, Belltown Stepper's- 'Steppin' On Up' and twice per month, it hosts the Lunch Bunch. Soon, it will introduce Beginner Tai Chi and The Quilter's Squares. The response to these groups has been very positive. The older

Adults are happy to be involved, active and interacting with their friends again. The social interaction promotes more positive well-being in the overall health of individuals. Representative Irene Haines even joined the Lunch Bunch during its last meeting.

- The CERT team continues to shop for those individuals in need of that service. We have approximately 2 people per week. CRT, the meals provider, continues to provide Drop and Go meals to 19 individuals and continues to deliver Meals on Wheels to the homebound. Additionally, a CERT member delivers about five or six meals to people in the community.
- The staff were able to attend the National Council on Aging Virtual Conference, titled Age +Action. This four- day conference provided us with new and up-coming programming, up-dates on COVID-19, how funding sources work, how the federal government interacts with NCOA and how that helps the older population. The best component was the resources staff were given to utilize in the future.
- The Senior Center staff are preparing for a delayed opening. It is difficult to determine the appropriate timing of this opening. The Governor's Executive Order really does not allow us to open safely until the Order is lifted. Staff will be returning to work at the facility over the next few weeks. This will allow plans to be put in place for opening and to set up the Center to accommodate the social distancing rules. We are still providing an up-dated newsletter once a month that is mailed to 175 people and emailed to over 400 people in our community.
- We continue to make phone calls to those without access to computer technology. We are seeing an increase of time on the phone as the stay at home order stays in place for older adults. We have added people to some of the services offered as a result of these phone calls including shopping service and meal delivery.
- We continue to educate people on the need to stay at home and stay safe. As more services open, it is difficult for people to stay home. This age group is at high risk for negative outcomes with this virus and staff feels an obligation to remind folks about why this order is in place.

Youth and Family Services

- Youth and Family Services continues to operate on a hybrid basis with staff working from both home and on site. The Department continues to be slow in terms of its intake of calls. Staff has finalized the last fuel assistance cases with no new calls coming in for utilities. Staff referred one case out for a family who required therapeutic services.

The Department is no longer getting phone calls for food donations, nor have we heard of any family or person with food insecurity at this point. The Director spoke with the head of the food bank recently and was told the food bank is operating successfully and is not in need of our assistance at this time.

- The Department expects to be providing therapeutic services by late August or early September when the universities open again. As a reminder, the Department uses students from the various related academic programs under the guidance of the Director and the student's school to provide most of the one on one counseling. The Department anticipates having five clinicians this year including three practicum students (second year of study) and two interns (final year of study).
- On June 15, 2020, the Department met with Chief Woessner and Sgt. Dowty to discuss Juvenile Review Board operations and procedure in anticipation of starting this program again. Council will recall that this board works with juvenile offenders to develop alternatives to incarceration that are aimed at rehabilitation and preventing re-offense. Despite youth offenses being at a low rate currently, perhaps because youth are home with their families, cases that do arise are referred to other programs until the Town's program resumes. Staff is also currently working on a grant application to continue the JRB program.

Town Manager/Other

- The contractors continue to work on items on the Town Hall "punch list" including some malfunctioning locks and some ongoing plumbing fixture issues. Additionally, a previously repaired roof leak has recurred and that is being addressed. Two items remain on the list for the final Certificate of Occupancy including correction of the missing attachment points on a roof ladder and adjustment of the operational handle for the roof hatch. These items are scheduled in the upcoming week.
- Preparations for reopening of the Town Hall to walk-in traffic are being finalized and it is expected that the building will be open next week. Once it is open, staff will publicize that fact in the news media and social media. The public should expect to wear masks in the building as well as limitations on the number of people inside and the usual distancing markers. The resumption of in person meetings may occur in July based on a number of factors including gathering limitations, expected size of a particular meeting and the ability to continue the use of Zoom or other online meeting platform to support participation by those outside of the building.

- Early this summer, planning will resume for an official Town Hall opening ceremony, which may occur in late summer or early fall. It is expected that the ceremony will not only “officially open” the Town Hall but will also rededicate the time capsule that has been relocated from the former Town Hall property as well as other historic markers and designations that are being transferred. Invitations and notice for the event will be sent closer to the date, which is not established as of now.

DC

Attachments

cc: Management Staff

The East Hampton Public Library's Virtual

TEEN SUMMER KICKOFF

Grades 6 - 12

Monday June 29

4:00pm

"IMAGINE YOUR STORY"

~SUMMER~
COMICS WORKSHOP

with
Marek
Bennett!

ONLINE CLASS!
No experience required --
EVERYONE CAN DRAW COMICS!

www.MarekBennett.com/imagine



The East Hampton Public Library's

SUMMER READING KICK OFF PARTY

Virtual Music Variety Show & Ice Cream Coupon

Join us for a virtual musical variety show with Fiddle N' Fun! In addition to singing, listening games, and movement, Fiddle N' Fun includes Suzuki-style activities using simple one-stringed instruments.

Then sign up for summer reading on our website so that we can keep track of your raffle tickets. Keep the fun going by cashing in your free ice cream coupon at Chatham Creamery.



Friday, June 26, 3:00pm

via Zoom Meeting

For children ages 6-12

Registration required



**EAST HAMPTON
PUBLIC LIBRARY**

The East Hampton Public Library's

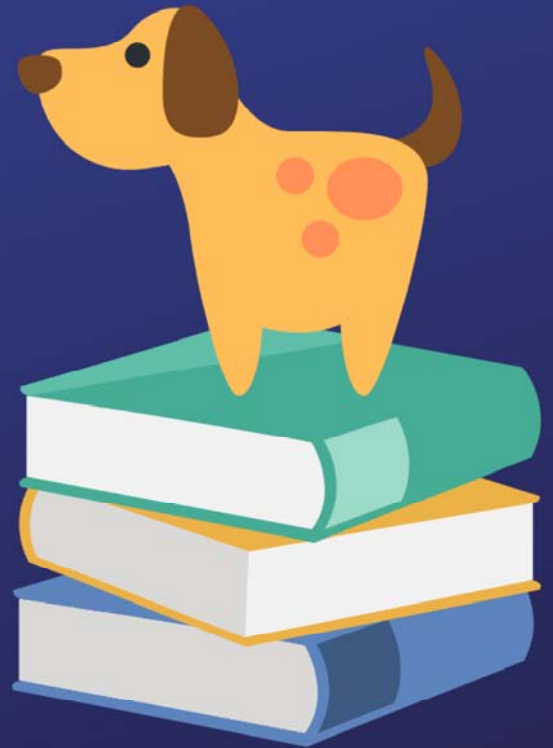
BOOK BUDDIES

Stories and Crafts with
Senior Center Volunteers



We'll get together on Zoom to listen to a story read by volunteers from the senior center. We'll get to know each other with some icebreaker games. Finally, we'll finish off with a craft activity that goes along with the day's story!

When you register for one class, you will automatically be registered for all four. Each child will receive a craft kit for the month.



Thursdays at 1:00pm

July 9, 16, 23, 30

For children ages 7-12

Registration required



**EAST HAMPTON
PUBLIC LIBRARY**