


## MEMORANDUM

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

- At its June 2 meeting, the Planning and Zoning Commission (PZC) failed to approve a zone change from R-2 residential to Commercial for three parcels; 1 Colchester Ave., 5 Colchester Ave., and 157 Main Street. The application was put forth by the owners of the property in an effort to enlarge the current Food Bag/Citgo gas station at the corner of Main Street and Colchester Avenue. A petition filed by enough neighboring property owners forced a super majority approval, which was not obtained. A motion to approve failed 4-3.
- An 8 lot subdivision was approved on approximately 20 acres along Long Hill Road. These residential lots will be constructed with open space preserved at the rear of the property, which is contiguous to space already preserved at the rear of the Charles Mary/William Drive subdivision. Additional land has been offered to a few of the abutting property owners in that subdivision as well. The subdivision lies within the Middle Haddam Historic District and as such, the design of the houses will be subject to a Certificates of Appropriateness from the Historic District Commission.
- The Commission also moved forward with setting a tentative schedule for creating a home based business occupation permit structure. Staff will be working with both the PZC and Economic Development Commission to schedule workshops in the coming weeks and months.
- Edgewater Hills is moving into the next phase of development which was approved by PZC earlier this year. Tree clearing has begun for the five apartment buildings which will be constructed just beyond the Town Hall.

### **Parks and Recreation**

- For the second consecutive month, the Department saw significantly increased revenue (\$52,085.40) and registrations for programming finishing at 715 people for the month. The average revenue for May dating back to 2016 is \$37,447 and registration numbers exceeded the average for this month by 206 participants for recreation programs. The last two months have shown significant increases in revenue and registration numbers. With the month of June statistically representing the busiest month each year for this activity, staff predicts the trend will continue to rise in both these categories. This information suggests a desire from public programming as the community comes out of the COVID pandemic and opportunities for the Department to present additional programming. The addition of the part time Program Leader continues to be successful.
- The Recreation Department received a \$20,000 state enrichment grant that is intended to be used to bring on an additional Program Leader position for eight weeks this summer to help facilitate and create more summer programming opportunities for kids within the community. Additionally, a portion of this grant could be used to purchase recreational equipment such as kayaks, fishing poles and paddle boards that will be used for summer programming and camps.
- The Town also recently received a \$40,000 grant from the State of CT DEEP to help fund the access road for Eversource to relocate its utility poles from the unfinished portion of the Air Line trail just behind Public Works. This phase of the project is slated to begin late summer of this year. Eversource is currently reviewing the proposed easement across the Town-owned land on which the wastewater treatment plant sits, which will be presented to the Town Council for approval.

### **Police**

- The Department recently completed its recruitment process to fill our police officer vacancy, and after starting with 40 applicants, the Town extended an offer to Mateusz Sokolowski, which he accepted. He is currently a Police Officer in Chicago, Illinois and his official start date is July 5, 2021.
- The Drug Take Back box, which is located in the lobby of the police department, continues to be a great resource for residents to safely dispose of unused prescription

medication. On June 2, 2021, 257 pounds of prescription medications were taken to be destroyed.

### **Public Works**

- Comer Contracting will be performing chip sealing operations beginning the week of June 21. The roads to be chip sealed are Portland Reservoir Rd, White Birch Rd, Ridgeview Drive, Mott Hill Rd, and Brack Farm Rd. A press release will be in the *Rivereast* the week before and notification will be on the Towns web site and social media outlets. It is important to note that drivers should keep speeds to 15 MPH on fresh chip seal.
- The State's contractor is scheduled to mobilize on June 11 and begin paving Rt 196 on June 14. As noted previously, it is anticipated that the paving work, which is expected to take about two (2) weeks, will begin at Rt 66 and move south. As a reminder, RT 196 includes Lakeview Street, Summit Street, a portion of Main Street in the Village Center, Skinner Street and Young Street. The community should expect delays and may wish to detour around the area if possible.
- DPW crews have begun a small drainage project Ridgeview Drive. This project will help to eliminate a groundwater/ icing condition near the intersection with White Birch Rd and should be complete prior to the chip sealing project.
- DPW Crews have remobilized to Edgerton Street to continue the drainage work there. This project is anticipated to last throughout the summer into the fall. While the intent is to have work continue uninterrupted during this time period, there may be times due to staffing, weather events, or other issues that arise, that brief pauses in the project may occur. Even with any brief pauses the Public Works Department is committed to finishing this project by the end of this fall to ensure final paving of the road in the Spring of 2022.
- Staff has been working with BETA engineering to develop a long-term Capital Roads Plan. This plan is intended to help us to identify road projects out approximately five (5) fiscal years. The plan is in the final stages of preparation will be presented to the Capital Improvements Committee and the Town Council this summer.
- The roadside mowing program is in full swing and will continue throughout the summer.

- The majority of the gravel roads in town have been addressed with just a few of the shorter less traveled roads remaining. Crews will continue with the maintenance until all roads have been addressed.

### **Senior Center**

- The Senior Center is fully re-opened as of June 1 although there are certain programs with time limitations. Staff is recommending mask wearing for those unvaccinated and others who choose to wear masks. Staff will be wearing masks when walking among the participants but may take off masks in their work area/office. All participants are completing a self- health assessment prior to entering the building, using the sanitizer station and signing in on computer system. Bingo was done in-person and virtual with 16 players. Folks returning to the Center were very pleased to meet up again. Yoga and the writers group met outside on Wednesday, and, due to the weather, the Thursday writers met virtually. Friday, Mahjongg will be held outside and the Textile group will be inside in the afternoon. Several people have called for appointments to update their registration forms and to take pictures. In all, lots of enthusiasm around being open to visitors again.
- The Intergenerational High School writing program completed with a Writer's Read program. Students of both groups read to an audience. The content was creative, genuine and inspirational.
- Program implementation will increase throughout the month. A slow approach to program implementation is proving appropriate. Both participants and staff are being introduced to the 'Hybrid' model of programming this week. There is a learning curve and comfort level to meeting in person again. It is wonderful to interact in person with the participants and staff anticipates offering more programming by the end of the month.

### **Town Manager/Other**

- East Hampton's COVID case rates have dropped to the level the Town saw last summer after the first wave of the pandemic and the Town is no longer on the State's COVID Response Framework. As of the last Department of Public Health report, the Town is only seeing a few cases each week. Vaccinations remain an important aspect of putting the pandemic behind, but vaccination rates have dropped as well. While virtually all of the Town's older adult population has been vaccinated only about 62% of the rest of the population has received a shot. The Town's outreach information will continue to urge vaccination among residents.
- Staff is in preparation for the Town budget referendum, which will be held at the Middle School on Tuesday, June 8. As soon as the budget is adopted, the Board of Finance will

meet to formally set the mill rate so that tax bills may be prepared and sent. The Town Council Approved Budget may be found on the Town Website [here](#). Hard copies of a budget summary are available at the Town Clerk's Office.

- The Town Council Water subcommittee will be meeting next week to finalize the RFQ document that is intended to be used to select an engineering firm with whom the Town will work to develop plans for implementing various improvements and expansions to the Town's water systems. It is anticipated that the RFQ will be released this month after Council approval and that selection of a firm will occur in late summer. As a reminder, the Town is the recipient of \$250,000 in grant funding from the State to move ahead with plans for a water system improvement that would eventually serve the commercial areas along Rt 66.
  
- The Town's Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan, which was developed in a regional partnership with the Lower Connecticut River Valley Council of Governments (RiverCOG), is complete and will be going through the local adoption process this summer. The Town Council will be asked to adopt the plan, which is linked via Dropbox [here](#), sometime in July when RiverCOG and Town staff can be coordinated for a meeting.
  
- The Town is also working with the RiverCOG on development of the regional Plan of Conservation and Development, which covers the entire 17-town region from East Hampton, Portland and Cromwell down to the shore along the Connecticut River. The final draft of the plan, which is linked [here](#) or can be found on the RiverCOG website, will be the subject of a public hearing on June 30. The public hearing will occur via Zoom and registration for the hearing is found on the RiverCOG website.

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cc: Management Staff