

MEMORANDUM

TO: Town Council  
FROM: David E. Cox, Town Manager  
DATE: June 5, 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**

- In an effort to help taxpayers understand, staff has prepared the tax bill insert that is included with this report. It outlines the various payment options with emphasis on the convenient ways to avoid trips to the Town Hall. Of note is the decision to waive the 50-cent fee for payments from checking or savings accounts to help encourage use of this option. Staff is also hoping to direct all mailed payments to the Town Hall address at 1 Community Drive located off Edgewater Circle.

**Fire Marshal**

- The Fire Marshal recently converted the open burning permits to an online fillable PDF to provide another method for residents to get this permission. The form can be emailed to the office, processed for approval and emailed back to the submitter for a simplified process that eliminates the delays associated with mailing and allows greater flexibility for obtaining these no-cost permits.
- In the capacity of Emergency Management Director (EMD), the Fire Marshal continues to maintain the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) in a monitoring or standby phase as has been the case throughout the health emergency. The office is also attending numerous meetings with state officials as well as a weekly meeting with the heads of the Police Department, Fire Department, Ambulance Association, and the Town Manager to support the Town's ongoing response.
- The Community Emergency Response Team (CERT), which is a team of local volunteers that have been trained to support emergency response efforts in the Town, continues to coordinate with the Senior Center to shop for seniors who are unable to get out and do their own shopping. It also continues its food deliveries to the seniors.

- The CT Business and Industry Association has been supplying local businesses with COVID-19 response supplies including masks and thermometers. In accordance with the established state protocol, these are picked up on a weekly basis by the Fire Marshal/EMD and delivered to the business that has requested the items.

### **Land Use**

- Temporary outdoor dining certificates have been successful. So far, four establishments have set up outdoor dining using the guidance and application process that was set forth, with a fifth exploring its options. We were able to coordinate a cross-department effort to expedite the review and approval process. The key with all of these is safety for patrons, particularly as many are either in or directly adjacent to parking areas and drive aisles.
- There has been a continued uptick in activity in the department. With many people working from home, staff has seen a large increase in permit activity and the number of property complaints received. We are working as expeditiously as possible with the increased workload.
- The Butler gravel yard on Young Street is now closed. Staff has held very preliminary discussions with an engineer about the next steps for the redevelopment of this site. It is anticipated that the Planning and Zoning Commission may see some preliminary plans related to a commercial/industrial development in the coming months.
- Staff will soon be meeting with the owners of the Food Bag located at the corner of Main Street and Colchester Avenue to continue a discussion regarding expanding and reconfiguring that facility. They have purchased the neighboring property along Main Street and are looking to reconstruct the station and store. A preliminary site plan was presented to the Planning and Zoning Commission last year to provide the opportunity for initial comments on this possibility. At the time, the owners were considering a rezone of the entire corner, but it was suggested by the Commission that rezoning just the parcels for the fueling station to Commercial was preferable in order to avoid expansion of the existing non-conformity of the site.
- The Connecticut Brownfields Land Bank has contracted with HRP Associates to conduct a Phase 2 Environmental Assessment and Hazardous Building Materials Assessment for the property at 1 Watrous. Once these are completed, a remediation cost estimate will

be prepared, and the Town will be in a better place to market the property to developers.

### **Library**

- The Library began curbside delivery of books after Memorial Day. In the first week, the Library logged over 109 contactless curbside pickup orders with East Hampton residents accounting for 719 items back into the community's hands. Patrons have the opportunity to call the library or place items on hold online. Once items are packaged up, staff contacts patrons, checks out their items, and schedule a one-hour window to pick up the items. Staff are currently creating book lists and videos designed to support residents who are not sure what they want to read and need suggestions. Patrons are also encouraged to call the library or use the Ask A Librarian feature at the bottom of our website to get more personalized suggestions.
- The online Library Card registration process continues to allow East Hampton residents who do not currently have a card to access our online materials like Hoopla, Ancestry.com, and more. This card ability now extends to curbside pick-up of tangible items. At this point, 146 East Hampton Residents have applied and received their card.
- The library is gearing up for the summer reading program, which supports children ages 0-18 and families. This year, all programs will be virtual. While this is certainly different from last year, we are focused on the core mission of summer reading: personalized goal setting and human connection. Attached is a copy of our Hero's Journey Adventure Log, which provides an overview for the upcoming summer. Adventure Logs will be distributed to patrons throughout the month of June and early July. Summer Reading's Kickoff event for Children will be held Friday, June 26 at 3:00pm. The Teen Summer Reading Kickoff will be Monday June 29, 4:00pm.
- Staff is finalizing collaborative programming with the school system, Senior Center, and Epoch Arts for summer programming. Memorial and Center school teachers will be presenting their read aloud series via Zoom. East Hampton Middle School/High School students and teachers will be sharing recorded book talks for tweens and teens all summer long and the Science teachers are also considering ways to share experiments with the community. The Library and Senior Center are teaming up to create a Book Buddies program in July for ages 7-12. Children will listen to librarian-selected books that are read aloud by senior volunteers. All participants will have craft kits related to the story that will be completed together over Zoom after the story. We will also be playing virtual ice breaker games to get to know each other.

- Epoch Arts has agreed to create and film a one-act play that aligns with our summer reading plans for this summer. Each week, children who check in their weekly reading on our website will be awarded with the next segment of the play, "A Hero's Journey." Performances will be completed by local teens.

### **Parks and Recreation**

- Staff met with the recreational sports leagues regarding planning for a return to play in late June and later in the summer. The discussions will focus on implementation of public health recommendations to facilitate both players and spectators. We are expecting new guidance from the State this weekend and will continue to meet with the leagues to develop plans.
- Installation of the Lake Pocotopaug Aeration System continues, and it is anticipated that the first part of the system (west/deeper side of the lake) will be online and operating by about June 12. The east side of the lake will follow as soon as the easement is finalized, and the construction can be accomplished. Staff and the Town's consultants are monitoring conditions in the lake to ensure that the startup occurs at the proper times. Conditions remain favorable at this point as oxygen levels at depth have not depleted too much yet.
- Work on the Watershed Improvement Projects is underway and the first phase of the project at Sears Park is being completed today. The contractor will be moving to two other sites away from Sears Park for the next few weeks and will return to the park after the Independence Day weekend. Work remaining in the park includes paving of the parking area and drive to the boat launch, which will cause closure of the launch for 24 – 48 hours. Advance notice will be provided to users and that closure will be planned to occur early in the week when it happens to minimize impact on boaters and avoid the heavy use days later in the week.

### **Police**

- The recent recruitment process came to an abrupt halt last week when our last remaining candidate failed the polygraph exam. As the Council may recall, a previous candidate also failed the polygraph exam. Based upon the background investigations conducted by members of the department, those were the only two qualified candidates left in the process. As such, the Department will initiate a new recruitment process. It is anticipated that the next Police Academy class will start in September/October of 2020 and staff will attempt to have a candidate ready for that session.

- On June 8, the Police Department will resume fingerprinting East Hampton residents or persons applying for a job within the town by appointment. This applies to the processing of Temporary Pistol Permit Applications as well. Fingerprinting hours will be from 8:30 am until 11:30 am on Monday and Wednesday and from 4:30 pm until 6:30 pm on Tuesday. To make an appointment, applicants should call the routine number for the Police Department (860-267-9544) during normal business hours. Individuals coming in to be fingerprinted are required to provide their own protective mask and wear it at all times.
- The Department also released a statement regarding the death of Mr. George Floyd, who died as a result of the actions of a Minneapolis police officer. The statement, which was posted to the Department's Facebook page, describes the Department's and the Officers' anger and upset related to the actions and inactions of the officers involved in the incident. The incident has led to discussions among the management and members of the East Hampton Department regarding the policies and practices that prohibit the tactics used in the incident, the obligations of our Officers to step in should a situation require intervention and the pledge to undertake the exercise of their duties equally and respectfully regardless of the ethnicity, socio-economic background, cultural or other differences between people. These discussions will inform our ongoing efforts to improve our written policies and our practices as we address racial and other biases in the Department's work. The Department will continue to serve residents and visitors to East Hampton with honor and integrity and at all times conduct themselves with the highest ethical standards to foster and maintain the trust of our community. The Department [Facebook page may found here](#).

## **Public Works**

- In addition to normal work related to close out of the Meeks Point Road project, roadside mowing and gravel road repairs, Public Works crews continue to support the move to the new Town Hall. As of May 29, all rental spaces (the "Annex" and the Police parking area) have been cleared of items and cleaned for turn over to their respective owners. All usable furniture is being stock piled at the old town hall for potential sale, reuse or distribution.
- The Director has been communicating with the Cemetery Board regarding work to be undertaken in the Town-maintained cemeteries. As that work list is approved, work will commence including headstone repairs, tree trimming and removal, asphalt and fencing repair among other items. It is anticipated that the Cemetery Board will meet soon to consider the possible maintenance activities.

### **Senior Center**

- The Center is promoting efforts to recognize resident Dick Bolles who turns 100 years old on June 15. The family is hosting a car parade on Sunday, June 14 at the VFW as described in the flyer included with this Report.
- The Center has a new virtual program, The Lunch Bunch, the next meeting of which is scheduled for Monday, June 15 beginning at 12:30 pm. Fifteen people attended the first meeting and the group was able to interact during the lunch time. The virtual meeting allowed participants to share news about friends in the community and to express how they missed seeing people. These events will continue as another means to continue to address the social needs of our older adult population and to help keep them connected to the community.
- The Center's June newsletter is included in this Report.

### **WPCA**

- The WPCA/Joint Facilities has been extremely busy with repairs to the Colchester Force Main located on the Air Line Trail over the Rapallo Viaduct. Personnel worked long hours along with Colchester Public Works while repairs were undertaken related to multiple line failures and while the temporary bypass was installed. Plans have been made to excavate and open the East Hampton side of the failed line again to allow for internal inspection by camera and to improve the connections for the bypass pipe. This work will occur in the upcoming days.
- There have been some issues with the Town water system. Staff responded and replaced the well pump at Memorial School last week and it is likely the well pump on the Village Center System Well #1 will also need replacement soon. The water system was flushed last week, and the flush water looked much better this year compared to last year. Having the storage tank cleaned and inspected along with increased backwash practices seem to have helped water quality tremendously.
- Due to technical issues with Zoom, the WPCA was not able to hold the public hearing related to the Water system budget and therefore, no final budget recommendation was made. That hearing has been rescheduled to June 16 and the Council's action related to the budget is planned for June 23.

### **Town Manager/Other**

- Town operations have moved to the new Town Hall, which is located at 1 Community Drive. Unfortunately, it has been difficult getting this new address, which is not only similar to another street in East Hampton but also not located on an identifiable street, recognized. This has created difficulties. Staff has been working with the local Postmaster and has reached out to various carriers to get the address and location into the system. Nevertheless, residents who live on Community Road have been subjected to unwanted traffic. The Town Hall is located approximately one mile east of the old Town Hall off East High Street (RT. 66). The new facility is located on Edgewater Circle and the closest mappable address is 10 Edgewater Circle. Staff will continue to help residents and deliveries find the Town Hall by posting this information to the Town websites and social media. Additionally, staff will continue to work with the Post Office to provide them the needed information.
  
- The last items on the contractor "punch list" are being completed and the last Code-related items on the Temporary Occupancy Certificate (TCO) are being addressed. It is anticipated that most of this work will be completed in the upcoming days and that the last remaining items related to finalizing the audio/visual systems will be addressed in the upcoming weeks. Staff continues to settle in and will be addressing final workspace adjustments now that staff has spent a few weeks in the building. Items on the TCO included the following items, which have been or are being addressed.
  - Roof ladder on PD roof is missing attachment points.
  - Area of Rescue signage needs to be put in place on the door leading from the lower level of the PD and in the Area of Rescue outside the door.
  - Roof hatch guards are missing.
  - The operational handle for the roof hatch makes opening the roof hatch difficult. Someone of small stature trying to open the hatch could over reach and slip off the access ladder (This item is under review).
  - Vault door threshold needs to be addressed (Item Completed).
  - Fire alarm panel graphic needs to be corrected.
  - There are no handrail returns on Main Staircase opposite of wall.
  - Handrail at bottom of stairs in stair tower 2 may not meet code. It encroaches on the egress path. (This item is under review)

DC

cc: Management Staff