


MEMORANDUM

TO: Town Council

FROM: David E. Cox, Town Manager 

DATE: September 20, 2019

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.

Council Meeting Follow Up

- Concern was expressed regarding the use of grant funds for the environmental clean up at the buildings on Watrous Street due to the possibility that these funds would need to be recovered in the sale of the property. Staff has investigated this matter with the State and with EPA. Thus far, we have confirmed that the funds we have used for the building at 1 Watrous Street are not subject to repayment or recovery. It is understood that this is the case for the 13 Watrous Street property as well but we are still confirming that matter.
- A concern was voiced regarding the condition of the driveway at the Library. This area was reviewed by the staff and while the area immediately adjacent to the roadway is in acceptable condition, staff is developing the plans for a significant improvement to the entire parking area at the Library/Senior Center for review as part of future budget conversations.
- A suggestion was made that perhaps the EH Schools could become involved in or perhaps perform testing of lake water. This matter will be addressed to the Superintendent but has not been discussed at this point.

Library

- The East Hampton Public Library broke new records for borrowing and summer reading participation this summer. Borrowing was up 41% from last year with residents borrowing over 20,000 items in July and August. Summer Reading participation was up 211% from last year with 361 children reading over 3,800 books.

Parks & Recreation

- The Parks and Recreation Department is being recognized as the 2019 Park/Facility of Merit Award winner by the Connecticut Recreation and Parks Association for the Seamster Park Playground project. The award will be presented in November at the Association's annual conference at the Mohegan Sun Hotel & Convention Center. Congratulations and thanks to Jeremy Hall, the committee and all who participated!

- As noted previously, as a result of confirmed reports of Eastern Equine Encephalitis in a human as well as the area horse population, both the Town Parks and Recreation Department and the EH Schools are taking steps to further protect the population. As of Tuesday, September 17, all outdoor School and Town recreational activities or those using Town facilities are ending one (1) hour prior to sundown. At this point, this will remain the case until after a hard freeze. Additionally, in cooperation with the EH Schools, the perimeter tree lines at the High School, Middle School and Center School fields will be treated with an organic mosquito spray that is intended to help protect those areas from mosquitos. The spraying will occur in the early morning hours of Monday, September 23 and is a one time application that may last up to 30 days.

Planning and Zoning

- A \$3,500 scholarship grant has been received from the Connecticut Chapter of the American Planning Association in order to fund a paid intern position for the Town. This intern will be used to work collaboratively with a multi-town master planning effort for the Airline Trail and to develop a plan for integration of the master plan with the Village Center as a destination point along the trail. This will be a comprehensive look at the Village Center to identify ways to make it more inviting for trail users, more accessible for pedestrians and cyclists and to link the Village Center to other areas of town. Staff will oversee the project along with DEEP and the Connecticut Resource and Conservation District, who is leading the trail master plan effort. There is no financial commitment required from the Town, rather, we have the option of keeping up to 10% of the total grant amount for administrative purposes.

- The first Public Workshop was held two weeks ago to begin the process of updating the Zoning Regulations for the Lake Pocotopaug Watershed Area (Section 3.1). Many comments were received. The Planning and Zoning Commission will create a new draft based on comments received and hold another workshop in late October/early November.

- The Lower Connecticut River Valley Council of Governments (RiverCOG) is in the process of updating the Natural Hazards Mitigation Plan for the region. Staff will be a part of this effort and will be working with other departments (DPW, EMD, CHD, etc.) to ensure a plan is created which includes realistic and implementable goals for the five-year update.

Police

- The Department is moving through the hiring process to select an individual to fill the additional position created in the current budget, which is budgeted for half of the year. Additionally, it is preparing for the retirement of one of our officers in December and hopes to be able to hire a second individual from this process. Currently, staff is working to identify what training academy classes will be available this fall and winter as the Police Officer Standards and Training Council (POSTC) has been a bit unclear about when it will hold the academy. It is possible that our best option may be to place a candidate in an academy that is currently scheduled to begin in November and staff is working to implement this plan. Then, as the budget allows, a second, replacement candidate would be hired to begin the academy in January or as soon thereafter that the POSTC holds an academy session into which we can place someone.

Public Works

- The North Main Street paving project is well underway. The catch basin tops have all been replaced and milling has begun. It is anticipated that milling will be complete in the middle of next week followed by some fine grading and compaction. Paving work is expected in the week of September 30. During these portions of the project, drivers should expect some minor traffic delays as lanes may be shut down for work but the road will remain passable for the duration of the project.
- The Old Marlborough Road Drainage project is complete. The road will be milled and paved in the near future. The paving will encompass the area where the WPCA force main repair work was done through the area of the public works drainage project. The paving of this area will be a joint WPCA/ Public works project.
- The new library fence has been installed. Work will soon begin to convert all of the outdoor lighting fixtures to LED, which will provide long term energy cost savings to the town.

- Several more dead trees were removed over the last few weeks. The Emerald Ash borer continues to plague the Town's Ash trees and also a large number of Oak trees were affected by the gypsy moth epidemic of two years ago and have started to die.

WPCA/Joint Facilities

- The Department continues to perform maintenance and updates in the water system to address not only the iron issue that arose recently but also as part of the continuing efforts related to PFAS. Carbon filters have been maintained and are being added at Memorial School to help address this. The additional carbon filter is in the approval process with the State Department of Public Health (DHP).
- Scott Clayton and Dave Cox attended a conference regarding the PFAS issue this week. In addition to some "interesting" chemistry lessons related to the various compounds included in the PFAS category, we received presentations on the scope of the situation as well as health impacts, legal issues and treatment possibilities for these compounds. Because this is such a wide-spread issue and due to the known presence of the compounds in East Hampton area ground water, staff, along with the Chatham Health District, are engaging DPH and the State Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) in developing a plan to undertake some additional testing potentially including the testing of private wells for the PFAS compounds.
- Upgrades to the equipment at the North Main Street sewer pumping station are progressing well. As a reminder, this project includes moving much of the equipment that was previously located below grade to an above ground location to minimize the need for entering the below grade confined space where health and safety concerns are significant.

Town Manger/Other

- The Town Hall project is progressing and currently remains on schedule. Interior wall drywall installation has begun. The exterior brick work is nearing completion. Window installation was expected to begin today. Staff is in the process of reviewing the furniture submissions and making final updates to those items before they are approved for purchase. Site work continues as sidewalk installation is nearing completion. Gas installation is expected to be complete by the end of the month and permanent electrical installation is expected soon. After the exterior work is completed, the site

fine grading will commence. Some new photos of the project have been posted to the Town website.

- The Brownfields Redevelopment Agency has received proposals for additional cleanup at the 13 Watrous site, which they will review at their upcoming meeting on Monday, September 23. Once a recommendation is received, action is expected to be placed on a Town Council agenda for consideration.

- Chair of the Brownfields Redevelopment Agency, Kelly Kerrigan, will be attending the national Brownfields conference in Los Angeles in December. At that conference, she is planning to present our 1 Watrous site to industry professionals for ideas on future reuse or redevelopment and as a possible means to market the site for outside interest.

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