



Town Administrator's Report Board of Selectmen's Meeting of March 21, 2011

Report covers from March 5, 2011 to March 18, 2011

Items requiring Board vote or discussion are noted with an asterisk (*)

A. Town Department Reports/Requests

No items.

B. Computer Systems

(1) Continued Expunging of Old Hard Drives

I have continued to expunge data from the hard drives of old client computers in preparation for the transfer of the systems to the schools in the future. I have expunged 3 additional systems including one additional server.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary. Total time – 1 hour.

(2) Network and e-mail Access, Assistant Building Inspector

The Assistant Building Inspector recently requested access to a Town e-mail account and to be set up as a user on the Town Hall network. I set up the various necessary accounts and configured his desktop on the second floor lobby computer.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary. Total time – ½ hour.

(3) Police/Fire Server Maintenance and File Restoration

A recent power outage required me to perform maintenance on the Police/Fire file server. I also needed to restore a file that had become corrupted for the benefit of the Harbormaster's Clerk.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary. Total time – 1 hour.

(4) Final Migration of Conservation Commission Computer

As the Board may recall, I had been waiting on a software vendor to release an Office 2010-compliant version that could be run on the Commission's new client computer. The Clerk had been continuing to use the old client. I assisted the vendor with the installation of the new software version during the week of March 7, 2011 and I migrated the remainder of the various computing functions, such as e-mail, from the old client to the new client.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary. Total time – 1 hour.

C. Personnel

(1) Letter of Thanks

The Selectmen signed a letter of thanks to Mr. Paul Doucette of the Essex Fire Department after 40 years of service to the Town of Essex. The Board will present a ceremonial copy of that letter at an event to be announced by the Fire Department.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

(2) Policy Regarding Circulation/Signature of Nomination Papers

The Board approved the subject policy at its meeting of March 14, 2011. The policy has been provided to all employees with regular paid hours and they are required to sign and return. The Town Clerk will also provide a sample copy of the policy to any party who obtains nomination papers for elected office in order to inform them regarding how paid employees must handle the issue.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

(2) Safety Committee Meeting

I participated in a Safety Committee meeting on March 16, 2011. The meeting featured a presentation from our insurer of a 2010 “Excellence in Loss Control” award. This is the fifth such award earned by the Town as part of its participation in the MIIA Loss Control Program. The representative present commented that the Town of Essex has the fifth highest ratio of awards to premiums of the over 300 municipalities MIIA serves. For a Town the size of Essex, the representative commented that such performance is especially outstanding.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

(3) Informal Staff Meeting

I hosted an informal staff meeting in my office on March 17, 2011 with various department heads as we do from time to time. We were able to update each other regarding important initiatives going on in the various departments and to discuss what is ahead. We will meet again in two months or so.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

D. Procurement/Ongoing Projects

(1) Camp Dory – Essex Summer Camp, Centennial Grove

At the Board’s meeting of March 7, 2011, the Board executed a contract with the YMCA of the North Shore for the provision of summer camp services at the Centennial Grove. The camp will be known as Camp Dory and information may be found at the following link:

http://www.northshoreymca.org/pages/105_camp.cfm
(or at the Town's homepage at <http://www.essexma.org>)

Those interested in seasonal employment at Camp Dory may e-mail Ms. Merri-Lynn Lathrop at: lathropm@northshoreymca.org.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

(2) Town Building Feasibility Study Update (*)

The Town Building Committee met with the Town's consultant on March 8, 2011 to discuss the status of the subject study. Our consultant has determined that the use of the John Wise Avenue site for a future public safety facility is feasible at a basic level and the consultant is now proceeding with other details concerning the site. Once additional details have been assembled, the consultant will meet with the Committee again to close out the first half of Phase 2 of the contract with an eye toward the second half (evaluation of the potential re-use of the existing public safety facility site at 24 Martin Street).

On March 10, 2011, Selectman O'Donnell, Conservation Commission Agent Jim Hankin, and I reviewed the DeRosa wetlands plan and the draft Reinhardt plan for the John Wise Avenue site in the office and then visited the site. It does not appear that filling all of the wetlands required by the draft plan would be very feasible given that opportunity for replication on the site is limited and the likelihood that the DEP would require us to look at alternative placement. That said, if the rear access road is taken out of the design, a much smaller area of wetlands is impacted. To the extent that the building can be moved up toward the highway, that would impact less wetland area still. It was evident that stormwater management will be a challenge on this site, something already underscored by our consulting engineer, John MacMillan. For wetlands replication, it appears that a narrow strip of land between the cemetery road and the existing wetland and a portion of land behind the large cemetery building would be adequate.

Recommendation: **Board discussion as necessary.**

(3) Pocket Park/Causeway Design Update (*)

Selectman O'Donnell and I met on March 10, 2011 with the MassDOT field staff, MassDOT managers, and the designer of record regarding the issues that had been raised by the LTPC in the recent past.

Regarding the potential reconfiguration of the pocket park at the Village Corner, MassDOT expressed some concerns regarding whether the wider shoulder would create a potential problem with vehicles doubling up in one lane, regarding whether snowplowing would be adversely impacted, and regarding whether an individual choosing to park on that corner might inadvertently open a car door

into traffic trying to negotiate that stretch of roadway. The concept is on its way to the Projects Division, which will review the above along with all of the necessary traffic design standards and MassDOT will offer an opinion on whether the new configuration may be approved. If the design is approved, it will be necessary for the Village Restaurant to work out a suitable agreement to utilize a small portion of the State land for the front end of the proposed parking spaces.

Regarding the guardrail along the Paglia Park, the rail is needed for the bridge approach but can be shortened. Regarding the guardrail along the Spar Pond, the State is willing to keep the existing configuration, and not lengthen it. The post and wire type guardrails cannot be considered in this area since they don't meet the safety standards met by the steel units. All guardrails may eventually be able to be painted to blend in with the surroundings better (not by the contractor – after the fact).

Regarding the lighting boxes, the designer is willing to consider minor box moves if a plan is presented to him. Selectman O'Donnell and the LTPC can provide that proposal. The boxes are not watertight and, in fact, don't even have a bottom. They are designed to straddle the conduit. However, the conduit is PVC and is watertight. None of the components will have a salt water corrosion problem since they are all types of plastic.

No other shoulder areas will be widened and no grass strip for planting will be entertained (each of these would cause too many other design changes). Similarly, no new recessed planters will be entertained. However, in suitable areas, the Town could place free-standing planters in the future. The type and number of street trees is somewhat flexible, so long as the amount of money allotted for trees in general is not exceeded.

***Recommendation:* Board discussion regarding provision of information and guidance to our pocket park consultant and completion of that design project.**

(4) Assessors' Remapping Project (*)

The contractor who is creating revised Assessors' maps for the Town over a four-year period has requested a time extension associated with the year-two scope of services. The contractor has been working directly with the Manchester Essex Conservation Trust regarding property information in the southern area of Town. That process has been tremendously fruitful but has taken an unanticipated amount of time to work through. As such, the contractor has requested an extension through August 31, 2011. The Board of Assessors is in agreement.

***Recommendation:* Board vote to extend the contract deadline and to approve encumbrance of the necessary funds.**

(5) Potential Lease/License of Causeway Parking Area

The owner of a parking lot adjacent to the causeway has indicated that the area could be leased to the Town or other interested entity for \$1,000 per month. The property is on the market and the owner would reserve the right to withdraw that offer if it becomes part of a real estate deal of some kind. The Board asked at its meeting of March 14, 2011 that I place the matter on the warrant for the Annual Town Meeting (both for lease authorization and for funding).

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

(6) Route 133 Reconstruction Project Season Kickoff Meeting

The subject meeting will occur on March 24, 2011. The contractor will present to the Chamber's Task Force, Selectman O'Donnell, and me their plan for construction between now and this coming fall. Officials from Mass DOT will also be present.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

(7) Fourteenth Biweekly Construction Update

I issued the subject update during the week of March 14, 2011. The update indicated that the Route 133 Reconstruction Project will soon come out of its winter shutdown. Utility pole crews are continuing to make progress and should be completely out of the way when construction crews begin work. Additional seawall work is also continuing.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

E. Insurance

(1) Freeze-up Prevention Checklists

I completed the subject checklists for the final month of this winter season during the week of March 14, 2011. I will resume this practice next winter.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

F. Facilities

(1) Replacement of Air Conditioning Units

The air conditioning unit for my office, which is relied upon heavily during warmer weather to cool computer servers, has ceased to function (compressor has failed). As such, I ordered a new unit to replace the failed unit and a second new unit to replace a failing unit in the Town Clerk's office. I will pick up both units as soon as they arrive for the season.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

(2) Field of Dreams Sign

(*)

The Selectmen asked at the meeting of March 7, 2011 whether the Field of Dreams sign could be restored or removed. The original sign is in severe disrepair. I reached out to the Essex Shipbuilders Athletic Association (main benefactor of the Field of Dreams and the sign in question) and learned that the Shipbuilders will be assessing the situation and will report back their recommendation.

Also, I located in the Town Hall basement the Centennial Grove sign that was knocked down a number of years ago. That sign is in decent shape but is chipped around the edges (particle board) and is in need of posts. It is possible that wide posts could be used to cover the chipped areas.

Recommendation: **Board discussion as necessary.**

G. Fiscal/Budget

(1) Finalization of Budget and Override Discussion

(*)

It will be necessary to discuss further the Town's operating and capital budget proposals for fiscal year 2012, including override planning.

Recommendation: **Board discussion as necessary.**

H. Complaints

(1) Additional Shellfish Residency Complaint

At the Board's meeting of March 14, 2011, the Board asked me to review a recent anonymous complaint received March 9, 2011 alleging that many licensed clambers do not reside in Essex. However, that complaint, and several others not concerning residency were retracted in writing on March 15, 2011.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

(2) Boat/Trailer Parking, Conomo Point

(*)

The Board was made aware of a practice that involves boat owners leaving their trailer and boat (with no vehicle attached) at the end of Sumac Drive. This practice has been disruptive to the neighborhood and has resulted in tire tracks on leased land. The Board asked that no parking signs be erected in that area. I visited the site with the Superintendent of Public Works during the week of March 14, 2011 and he will be posting appropriate signage. While we were at the Point, we viewed Conomo Lane and the Superintendent provided me with his plans for smoothing and grading that road. We noticed that boats on trailers are also parked across from Clammers' Beach.

Recommendation: Board discussion relative to whether boats with trailers, and no vehicle, should be left by boat owners on non-leased land across from Clammers' Beach.

I. Meetings Attended

No items.

J. Final Judgment

(1) Quarterly Report (*)

I have prepared the Quarterly Report for the period ending March 31, 2011.

Recommendation: Board approval to transmit the report to the DEP.

K. Town Meeting, By-Laws, and Regulations

(1) Coordination of Southern Conomo Point Bylaw Presentation (*)

At the Board's meeting of March 7, 2011, it was suggested that the chairs of the Board of Selectmen, the Conomo Point Planning Committee, and the Planning Board discuss who will initially present the article for the proposed Southern Conomo Point Zoning District Bylaw and how that presentation may be supported by others. This discussion did take place during the week of March 7, 2011 and the Planning Board Chair will take the lead on the presentation.

Recommendation: Board discussion as necessary.

(2) Final Annual Town Meeting Warrant (*)

I have developed with Town Counsel a final version of the Annual Town Meeting warrant based upon the Board's guidance at its meeting of March 14, 2011.

Recommendation: Board votes to add all of the articles to the warrant as they appear on the final draft, to close the warrant, to approve the warrant, and to sign the warrant.

L. Legal Issues

(1) Request for Executive Session Minutes

A party had requested in writing the executive session minutes from March 22, 2010. The Board voted to release said minutes at its meeting of March 14, 2011.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

(2) Letter of Support for Register of Deeds Revenue Collection

At the Board's meeting of March 7, 2011, the Board agreed that a letter of support should be written in reference to Register of Deeds John O'Brien's effort to collect Community Preservation Act revenue for municipalities. Mr. O'Brien is of the opinion that a substantial amount of potential CPA revenue (over \$33,000) was not tendered to the Registry in the form of \$75 fees over the past decade. The Board signed that letter of support on March 14, 2011.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

(3) Request for Sewer Service

A party has asserted that even though a certain parcel that contains a structure is not in the Sewer Service Area, they have a legal right to connect the flow from that structure to the sewer system. At the Board's meeting of March 14, 2011, the Board agreed to have the issue review by Town Counsel. The matter is presently under review.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

M. Grants

(1) Coordinated Family and Community Engagement Grant

I have learned that the subject grant will not be able to increase the Ipswich Birth to Three Center's funding on behalf of the Town this year since the grant is in what is known as a "renewal year". However, allotting funding to the Center to help defray use by Essex families in the future may still be possible. I have asked the Center's director to reach out to the Selectmen, through me, in the future if he needs support for increased funding that may become available.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

(2) Emergency Management Performance Grant

(*)

A total of \$3,000 has been made available to the Town via the subject grant program. The Police and Fire Chiefs have agreed on some new, interoperable, emergency portable radio equipment that will fully utilize the available funds. Since the grant program carries a 100% local cost match, we offered our recent purchase of the Code Red system to meet that criteria. MEMA has approved both the radio equipment and the cost match in concept and a formal application must now be processed. I have prepared the necessary paperwork for the Board's signature.

Recommendation: **Board signature of the referenced grant application paperwork.**

(3) Additional MIIA Rewards Grant Program Funding

As the Board may recall, the Town was the recipient of \$2,500 in funding via the subject grant program for the automation of our Town Hall clock winding function. Our insurer has recently announced that an additional grant has been offered that will cover consultative services (as opposed to equipment or infrastructure). The Chief of Police is investigating whether a consultant would be available to help the Department with the certification process. If so, we may prepare an application for that purpose. If not, it is possible that the DPW could benefit from the grant.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

N. Emergency Planning

No items.

O. Other Items

(1) Annual Easter Egg Hunt (*)

This year, the Manchester Essex Rotary Club will be running the Annual Easter Egg Hunt. The Club will team up with other volunteers from the community to offer the hunt on Saturday, April 23, at 12 noon, in Memorial Park (directly behind the Town Hall).

Recommendation: **Board discussion as necessary.**

(2) Metro Boston Consortium for Sustainable Communities Agreement (*)

The subject agreement was crafted in order to provide communities access to potential funding from the \$4 million Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grant. The grant is focused upon the implementation of the plan known as *MetroFuture: Making a Greater Boston Region*. In January, the Board determined that the Consortium organization and leadership structure was acceptable – a step that was taken as the Consortium prepared the subject Agreement.

Recommendation: **Board approval and signature of the subject Agreement.**

This report is available at www.essexma.org on the morning after any regularly scheduled Essex Board of Selectmen's Meeting.