



Town Administrator's Report Board of Selectmen's Meeting of May 18, 2009

Report covers from May 2, 2009 to May 15, 2009

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

A. Town Department Reports/Requests

(1) Commencement of Summer Program Administrative Audit

I have been in touch with Mr. Rusty Harnish who has volunteered to conduct an administrative audit of the Youth Commission Summer Program. Mr. Harnish has compared the present requirements of the Department of Public Health to his understanding of our program's administrative aspects and he will meet with the Youth Director and me on May 20, 2009 to discuss and collect whatever additional information he requires.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

(2) Typical Summer Program Activity Schedule

At the last meeting, the Board asked that I obtain from the Youth Director a typical summer program activity schedule for informational purposes. The Director provided that information and I distributed it during the week of May 11, 2009.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

(3) Town Building Committee Meeting

I attended the subject meeting on May 11, 2009. The Building Committee asked me to look into whether a move of the Fire Station to the Town's property on John Wise Avenue would be feasible given the need for a stoplight. In discussing that issue with a private highway design engineer whose firm contracts with MassHighway, I learned that stoplights serving fire stations on State highways in rural areas are fairly common (even with posted speed limits of 40-45 m.p.h.). I have also posed the question to a contact at MassHighway and he will be getting back to me.

Also at the request of the Committee, I contacted Mr. Kurt Wilhelm of the Essex Historical Committee to learn the extent of interior renovations that would be allowed under the present historic preservation restrictions that are in place. He indicated that he will research that question and will get back to me.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

(4) Long Term Planning Committee Village Initiative

The Long Term Planning Committee has been working with Planner Carolyn Britt to revise and improve their Village Initiative document. Ms. Britt has provided comments to the LTPC and continues to work with the Planning Board and, via her associate, with the Conomo Point Planning Committee to eventually arrive at a unified set of Town planning goals.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

B. Computer Systems

(1) Water Filtration Plant Server Tape Drive

After experiencing trouble with the subject tape drive during the week of April 27, 2009, the drive failed again. I cleaned and re-seated the drive's connections and re-tested the unit. The drive appears to be working again but I will monitor the situation. If the drive fails again I will replace it.

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

(2) Planning Board Laptop Repair

The Planning Board Clerk reported a power problem with her laptop computer during the week of May 4, 2009. I reviewed the issue and it appeared to be due to faulty equipment. I contacted the manufacturer's technical support line and the technician agreed that it was likely the motherboard. A field technician was dispatched the next business day to replace the motherboard under warranty and the system is working well.

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

(3) Replacement of Assessors' Server

The server that is running the Assessors' software is very old and needs to be replaced proactively. I contacted the software vendor for their current recommended server standard and I have priced out new equipment. Sufficient funding still exists in the 2005 Town hardware and software appropriation and I have ordered the new system.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

(4) RevenueSense Update

Our accounting software vendor released an update to our RevenueSense software during the week of May 11, 2009. I downloaded and installed the update and performed some required procedures. Upon completion, a technician from our vendor performed other required operations to make the updated software update fully operational.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary. Total time – 2 hours.

(5) Cable I-Net Maintenance

The Cable I-Net signal linking the Fire and Police Headquarters to Town Hall kept dropping off intermittently. After the Comcast technician checked all of the equipment at the headend in Gloucester, he suggested that we simply replace the cable modem in the Fire and Police Headquarters. I had a spare modem that had been supplied by Comcast in the past and, after the technician provisioned the system for the new modem remotely, I installed the new device. The system appears to be working well.

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

C. Personnel

(1) Teamsters Collective Bargaining (*)

The Management Team participated in continued collective bargaining with the Teamsters on May 11, 2009.

Recommendation: **Board discussion in executive session.**

(2) Appointed Town Clerk (*)

The recent Annual Town Election determined that the Essex Town Clerk position will be converted from an elected position to an appointed position after the present elected term expires in May of 2010. Various parties have asked whether there will be a search committee for a new Clerk and, if so, how they might become involved.

Recommendation: **Board discussion relative to the overall process for converting to an appointed Town Clerk.**

(3) Corridor Advisory Group Representation (*)

The Board had asked me to contact Chairman Drake and Mr. Holton of the Planning Board to determine if someone could serve on the Essex National Heritage Commission's Corridor Advisory Group. Mr. Holton has agreed to serve in that capacity and I have informed the Commission that the Board will likely appoint him at the present meeting. The Group will help direct the creation of a Corridor Management Plan for the relatively new Essex Heritage Scenic Byway.

Recommendation: **Official appointment of Mr. William Holton to the Corridor Advisory Group.**

D. Procurement

(1) Lease-Purchase of New Water Filtration Plant Generator

The recent Annual Town Meeting approved funding for the lease-purchase of a new generator for the Water Filtration Plant. In preparation for that purchase, I connected the Superintendent of Public Works with a vendor which will be able to offer the equipment and installation as part of a pre-bid, State-wide contract starting in June. The Superintendent will work with the vendor to generate a quotation and the order will be placed through the Selectmen along with the approval of the necessary lease-purchase financing paperwork at the appropriate time. The order must be time correctly so that the second payment is due in fiscal year 2011.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

(2) Lease-Purchase of New Mini-Loader for DPW

The recent Annual Town Meeting approved funding for the lease-purchase of a new mini-loader that will mainly assist with sidewalk snow and ice clearing operations. In preparation for that purchase, the Superintendent of Public Works is soliciting a current quote from a vendor who can offer the equipment as part of a pre-bid, State-wide contract. Once the quotation has been finalized, the order will be placed through the Selectmen along with the approval of the necessary lease-purchase financing paperwork. The order must be timed correctly so that the second payment is due in fiscal year 2011.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

E. Insurance

No items.

F. Facilities

(1) Route 133 Reconstruction Project Pre-Construction Conference

I attended the subject conference in Arlington along with Chief Silva and Superintendent Goodwin on May 7, 2009. At the conference, we met key project contacts with MassHighway and with the contractor, J. Marchese & Sons. The following issues were discussed:

- ◆ Construction will likely begin in mid-June with drainage and waterline improvement work and seawall work will soon follow.
- ◆ The relocation of utility poles by National Grid in order to commence the seawall replacement work is critical at this point. I indicated at the conference that I would contact the two National Grid contacts who we have been working with on this issue to get a status update and to indicate

that the relocation must occur soon. I have since made contact with National Grid and staff from that utility will be getting in touch directly with the Route 133 Project's General Manager immediately to coordinate the pole relocation work.

- ◆ The field office location has not yet been established.
- ◆ The MassHighway Resident Engineer is Mr. Michael Cannata and he agrees that the Town, MassHighway, and the contractor should work very closely on a daily basis to make the project as problem-free as possible.
- ◆ A portion of water main and associated water services will be replaced but water service will not be interrupted. No gas main work is planned.
- ◆ At least one-way traffic will be maintained at all times and two-way traffic will be restored during all non-work periods. At least one sidewalk will remain open at all times.
- ◆ The project designer is presently working on the potential to add underground lighting conduits for future lighting into the project scope.
- ◆ The project designer is conducting additional field work regarding the feasibility of increasing the roadbed elevation in the Perkins Marine/Fortune Palace area.
- ◆ When the project begins in earnest, the contractor will provide regular updates on progress and on the expected schedule and I will disseminate that information via the Town's website.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

(2) Memorial Park Restrooms

The Memorial Park Restrooms will be open for the summer season seven days per week starting on Memorial Day (May 25) from 8:30 a.m. until 8:00 p.m. through September 30.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

(3) Movie Production Power Needs

In the past, the Board had authorized the issuance of licenses for the installation of pad transformers on the ground at Centennial Grove to support the power needs of the movie production (if necessary). The production company recently informed me that all of their power needs can be supplied by mounting equipment on existing poles and that pad transformers will not be necessary. As such, no Selectmen's licenses or eventual easements will be necessary.

Also, the production company has installed an underground conduit to serve the various trailers and equipment that will be located in the Field of Dreams parking lot. National Grid's facilities actually end at the beginning of this private conduit and it is possible that the conduit can be used in the future to serve the outbuildings at the Field of Dreams once the movie production has been completed.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

(4) Potential Future Wind Turbine Project

At the last meeting, the Board agreed that limited Town funding (approximately \$6,000) should be sought at the next Town Meeting to serve as a local match for a wind turbine feasibility study grant. The total project would cost about \$45,000 and would represent the first step toward the siting of a new wind turbine, likely at the Town landfill site. The turbine would provide power and defray the cost of the loan payments in the early years and would become revenue-producing after about fifteen years. I have added the topic to my list of potential articles for the next Special Town Meeting and I have asked the Superintendent of Public Works to provide me with the Board of Public Works' perspective regarding such a project.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

(5) Placement of Sand at Old Town Beach

The Conservation Commission has approved the placement of sand above the high water line at the old Town beach off of Red Gate Road. As such, I have lined up a contractor to do that work using the reserve fund transfer that was recently approved by the Finance Committee. I expect that the work will be completed before the Memorial Day weekend.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

(6) Use of Memorial Park for the Essex Music Festival

I met with Essex Music Festival organizer Dana King, Superintendent of Public Works Goodwin, and Youth Director Klypka-Simpson on May 12, 2009 to discuss the MusicFest in a preliminary fashion. Mr. King understands that a tent will already be on site for the Summer Program and he will contact the movie production company directly to express his preferences for the tent (since the Summer Program does not have any special requirements). We showed him how power will be fed from the pump station and showed him the restroom facilities that are available. We will continue to coordinate this event in conjunction with the various sports programs that will be ongoing at Memorial Park as well as the Summer Program.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

G. Fiscal/Budget

No items.

H. Complaints

No items.

I. Meetings Attended

No items.

J. Final Judgment

No items.

K. Town Meeting, By-Laws, and Regulations

(1) Conomo Point Preliminary Subdivision Plan Development

At the last meeting, the Board voted to choose the Conomo Point subdivision option known as option B.1 going forward. This option seeks to convert all of the leasehold lots to legally-recorded lots and retains the current mix of seasonal and year-round occupancy. At the last meeting, the Board indicated that a special meeting of the Selectmen, the Planning Board, and the Conomo Point Planning Committee should be held on May 13, 2009 to kick off the development of the preliminary subdivision plan that will conform to option B.1 and the associated zoning by-law amendments that will be necessary for implementation.

At the referenced meeting, our consultant reviewed the differences between a zoning overlay district and a simple zoning district and recommended the latter since it removes all underlying zoning in favor of its own standards. By contrast, and overlay district retains the underlying, pre-existing standards and approvals become more complex. An initial draft of the zoning district for the southern area of the Point was offered by our consultant to include a “by-right” section that would accommodate all existing lots and structures with limited capacity for renovations and a special permit section that could be used to regulate more major renovations.

The group determined that a subcommittee known as the Southern Conomo Point Committee will work with our consultant to tailor the draft zoning district by-law for review by the various boards involved. The first meeting of the Subcommittee has been set for May 26, 2009.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

L. Legal Issues

(1) Renewal of Prisoner Lockup Agreement (*)

Every five years, the towns of Essex and Manchester have renewed an agreement that allows Essex prisoners to be locked up in Manchester for a fee and the present Agreement expires on June 30, 2009. I have discussed the potential renewal of the Agreement with Chief Silva and he would like to discuss its terms with Manchester officials and get back to the Selectmen in the near future.

Recommendation: **Board discussion relative to the renewal process.**

M. Grants

(1) Federal Stimulus Grant Update Webinar

I participated in a webinar sponsored by the State Department of Energy Resources on May 15, 2009. The webinar highlighted how a portion of the Federal Stimulus dollars for energy conservation are likely to be allocated for communities with less than 35,000 in population using block grant programs. I will review the various grant program offerings to determine if our goals will be eligible. Presently, it is my understanding that our Town Hall exterior renovation project is likely to be listed as an eligible project for the Governor's discretionary funding (a separate potential funding avenue).

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

(2) Seaport Bond Bill Feasibility Study Grant Application (*)

I have made contact with Salem State College regarding the possibility of the College writing a grant application for a feasibility study relative to public access infrastructure along the Essex Causeway. Ms. Brewer Doran, the Dean of the Business School, indicated to me that Ms. Laurie Krebs in the College's Center for Economic Development and Sustainability (CEDS) may be able to assist us. CEDS would likely partner with another State school such as the UMASS Lowell for the necessary engineering components. Ms. Krebs will visit my office on May 18, 2009 to discuss the potential project further.

Recommendation: **Board discussion at the present meeting.**

N. Emergency Planning

No items.

O. Other Items

(1) Potential Small Business Assistance Funding

Recently, Representative Ferrante connected me with two individuals to inquire about potential small business assistance funding for Route 133 businesses that might be financially impacted when the Route 133 Reconstruction Project begins. I spoke with Ms. Margaret Somer of the Northeastern Massachusetts Small Business Development Center and Mr. William Luster of the North Shore Alliance for Economic Development.

Ms. Somer explained that she has seen funding for businesses to assist with the impacts of natural disasters but has nothing currently for construction-related disruptions. Mr. Luster visited Town on May 12, 2009 to get a feeling for our project in the event he can identify a funding source. Both individuals will continue to monitor various funding sources in the event that assistance funding of this nature becomes available (perhaps through the Federal Stimulus package). However, at this time, no readily-available funding sources have been identified.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

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