



## Town Administrator's Report Board of Selectmen's Meeting of August 6, 2012

Report covers from July 21, 2012 to August 3, 2012

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

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### A. Town Department Reports/Requests

(1) Conomo Point Planning Committee Meeting (\*)

The Conomo Point Planning Committee met on July 26, 2012 to discuss the scope of work for a waterfront access planning and design project. The Committee reviewed the past report from Taintor Associates, including some enlarged, conceptual planning maps from that report, along with other past planning materials.

*Recommendation:* **Board discussion as necessary.**

### B. Computer Systems

(1) Addition of Network Attached Storage Device, Police Office

The vendor that installed the various security cameras at the police station recently returned to install a storage device that will archive various video feeds. I assisted the vendor with the proper configuration of the device for use on the Town's network.

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

### C. Personnel

(1) Informal Department Heads Meeting

I hosted the subject meeting on July 26, 2012 in my office. The meeting featured a discussion regarding present projects and initiatives including the upcoming Town Hall improvements and various matters at Conomo Point. I will continue to hold informal meetings every other month or so in an effort to maintain good communication and cover new ideas and initiatives.

*Recommendation:* No further action is necessary.

### D. Procurement/Ongoing Projects

(1) Route 133 Reconstruction Project Final Items Site Visit

I met with personnel from MassDOT on July 25, 2012 to discuss various remaining items that must be addressed to close out the project. The Department has been working internally to provide an alternate solution to the Village Corner sidewalk slope issue and is also interested in addressing a variety of lingering

construction issues such as: replacement of dead or dying roadside plantings (which has now been completed); cleanout of catch basins with one-way tide valves to improve the performance of those valves; and other miscellaneous items.

Relative to the final solution for the Village, the Department's design team is working on a design and the Department may even hire a separate contractor for construction, once the project has been approved. Relative to the roadside plantings, when we walked the site with the landscaping subcontractor, we spoke to various proprietors of abutting businesses about other plant choices that may be more appropriate for the conditions in the area. Some plantings have been replaced in kind and others were replaced with other species that are expected to be more tolerant of local conditions. One tree that had leaned over again was straightened back out. The Department will be sending maintenance crews for a full cleanout of the catch basin system that discharges through the one-way tide valves since it appears that paving operations may have spilled material into the structures and pipes, which is obstructing proper flow and operation.

*Recommendation:* No further action is necessary at this time.

(2) Designer Assistance Regarding Town Hall / Library Project (\*)

The Town Building Committee met on July 30, 2012 to interview three finalists for design assistance with the construction project that will improve health, safety, and the working environment in the Town Hall / Library building. The Committee ranked the three finalists as follows: 1. Meyer & Meyer of Boston; 2. Austin Design of Colrain; and 3. Reinhardt Associates of Agawam. The Town of Essex Designer Selection Procedures require the Board to request a cost proposal from the highest-ranked firm unless another course of action can be substantiated. As such, the Board should request a cost proposal from Meyer & Meyer for review at the next meeting.

When the chosen designer begins to consider the scope of work to be included in the ultimate set of bid documents, repair of the ramp into the library will be added as a possible work element, along with a potential evaluation of the bell tower's structural integrity.

*Recommendation:* **Board discussion relative to the overall project scope and vote to request a cost proposal from Meyer & Meyer.**

(3) Southern Conomo Point Road Work Pre-Bid Conference

Consultant Horsley Witten hosted a pre-bid conference on August 2, 2012 at southern Conomo Point to review the project requirements with interested construction contractors. I also attended the conference and two contractors participated (of a total of five contractors who have picked up bid documents to date). Horsley Witten personnel pointed out various key elements of the project and contractors had the chance to ask questions. Bids for this project are due by

10:00 a.m. on August 20, 2012. We are anticipating a final approval of the project by the Essex Conservation Commission on August 7, 2012 and that approval may require the installation of two, 8-inch culverts instead of one, 12-inch culvert to replace an existing, undersized culvert. All final Conservation Commission specifications will be transmitted to all bidders before the bid submission deadline.

*Recommendation:* I will update the Board as necessary.

## **E. Insurance**

No items.

## **F. Facilities**

### (1) Strengthening of Town Hall First Floor Load-Bearing Capacity

The Treasurer/Collector is receiving funding for the purchase of fireproof cabinets in fiscal year 2013. However, in order to bring those units into the Town Hall, the first floor load capacity needs to be increased. Selectman O'Donnell, who is a Registered Professional Engineer (Structural), has met with a contractor to describe what will be necessary to carry the load (each cabinet weighs 500 pounds) and the contractor is presently developing a proposal for the work. Generally, new column supports will be required in the basement to support the added weight.

*Recommendation:* I will update the Board as necessary.

### (2) Town Hall Bell Tower Structural Review

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In the early 1990's the Town hired a structural engineer and a contractor to install structural steel in the Town Hall bell tower since the tower had begun to sag and pull away from the main building. Recently, we have noticed that the tower may be settling further. Unfortunately, we cannot locate any contracts or design plans for the work in our archives. I researched the past work via Selectmen's minutes and was able to contact the architect who supervised the past work under the auspices of William Rowe Associates. Since he was not the actual designer, he referred me to the past principal of that firm (Mr. William Rowe – now retired), who most likely designed the necessary structural alterations. I have left messages for Mr. Rowe and I am awaiting his response.

*Recommendation:* **Board discussion as necessary.**

### (3) Herbicidal Spraying of Town Property (Gas Line Easement)

A resident recently contacted me to indicate that she had received a letter from the Tennessee Gas Pipe Line Company regarding their planned use of herbicides along the pipeline. She was concerned about any impacts on Chebacco Lake and

her private drinking water well. The company explained to her that the entity that owns the land underlying the easement is allowed to ask for a spray-free zone. In this case, the resident abuts the pipeline but does not own the land – the Town of Essex does. In addition, even though the Town is the landowner over which the easement runs in that area, the Town did not receive information about the planned spraying.

I contacted the company and asked why the Town had not been notified. Apparently, the company had sent a letter that never arrived as intended. I asked that all future correspondence be made by U.S. Mail to my attention to ensure delivery. After receiving the company's maps relative to the pipeline and cross-referencing them to our Assessors' maps, I was able to request that the company not spray on any Town property in this area (which also included land along Harry Hohman's Drive and Centennial Grove Road). I also informed the Superintendent of Public Works about the situation since the Town's public wells are in that general vicinity. He and his staff will review the company's written plan to ensure that all public water supply rules and regulations are adhered to.

*Recommendation:* No further action is 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**

No items.

**L. Legal Issues**

(1) Release of Purchase and Sale Agreements, Southern Conomo Point

At the last meeting, the Board voted to release individual purchase and sale agreements for 38 properties in the southern area of Conomo Point and, if

interested in a purchase, existing leaseholders have 60 days from the date of receipt of the offer to sign the agreement. The Board voted that an additional southern leaseholder will receive an offer under identical terms if that leaseholder elects to file a stipulation of dismissal, with prejudice, from his involvement with a lawsuit that was recently brought against the Town regarding home ownership.

The Town has reserved two parcels for future use in the new subdivision and two leaseholders elected to leave leased properties quietly at the end of 2011 (rounding out the total of 43 lots in the southern subdivision). The Board has invited the current leaseholders and any interested members of the public to an informational forum concerning the purchase and sale agreements as part of the present Selectmen's meeting.

*Recommendation:* I will update the Board as necessary.

(2) Review of Draft Solid Waste Disposal Successor Contract

Town Counsel has completed review of the subject draft contract with Covanta Haverhill. I have forwarded Counsel's comments to Covanta and the company has begun its consideration of the proposed changes. I plan to work out language that is mutually acceptable to Town Counsel and Covanta and bring the contract to the Selectmen for signature at a future meeting. The successor contract will carry an effective date of January 1, 2013.

*Recommendation:* I will update the Board as necessary.

**M. Grants**

(1) Asbestos Evaluation and Operations/Maintenance Plan Grant (\*)

The consultant recommended by our insurer to conduct an evaluation of existing asbestos in the Fire Station provided a proposal to us during the week of July 23, 2012. The consultant's base fee is just over \$3,800 and additional services such as labeling of asbestos-containing areas may be necessary. As such, after receiving permission from the Fire Chief, I informally asked our insurer whether they will support the consultant's services via a \$5,000 grant and he determined that such a proposal would be reasonable. As such, I have developed an application for a \$5,000 Risk Management Grant for these services.

*Recommendation:* **Board vote to approve the grant application.**

**N. Emergency Planning**

No items.

## O. Other Items

### (1) Metropolitan Area Planning Council Zoning Maps/Database

MAPC has launched a new initiative to update their various zoning and development maps for the various communities they serve. For Essex, MAPC only showed one general zone and no zoning overlay districts were depicted. I informed the agency that we have a new District with two sub-districts at southern Conomo Point (which I provided to them) and that we have had for years a Water Resources Protection Overlay District, a Wetlands Overlay District, and a Flood Plain Overlay District.

I was able to provide MAPC with a copy of the Water Resources Protection Overlay District map and explained that the Wetlands Overlay District is only available on one set of very large aerial photographs from the 1970s. The Flood Plain data is available from FEMA. MAPC had also asked for a map of our Sewer Service Area, which I have offered to send to them by mail. I will continue to work with the agency to ensure that the Essex maps get updated as part of this important initiative. New maps will carry notes about districts that MAPC cannot acquire digitally so users will at least know that other districts do exist. I also asked the Chair of the Planning Board and the Planning Board Clerk to review my submissions for accuracy and to recommend any changes that are necessary.

*Recommendation:* No further action is necessary at this time.

### (2) “Up With People” Community Service and Involvement (\*)

Up With People is an organization that tours the globe with about 100 young people 17-29 years of age from diverse cultures and countries who perform shows and offer community service. The group will be performing at the Hamilton/Wenham Regional High School and will be involved in that school system from September 3 through September 10, 2012 (via support from the Hamilton Wenham education fund). One of the group’s organizers met with me during the week of July 30, 2012 to determine if Essex could benefit in some way from a community service project and whether Essex residents would be interested in hosting group members while they were nearby.

Since the group only has one crew, it is relatively unlikely that the group will be back in this area for some time to come. Hamilton/Wenham supporters of the experience are interested in getting neighboring communities involved. If the Board is interested, I can envision these volunteers organizing and repacking the various records in the upstairs balcony storage area in Town Hall in preparation for an eventual move to the Town Hall basement (after the water problems have been addressed). The organization can also forward information regarding how families could host group members, if desired.

*Recommendation:* **Board discussion as necessary.**

(3) Town Administrator Leave

I was out of the office on vacation leave all day on July 23, 2012.

*This report is available at [www.essexma.org](http://www.essexma.org) on the morning after any regularly scheduled Essex Board of Selectmen's Meeting.*