



Town Administrator's Report Board of Selectmen's Meeting of August 23, 2010

Report covers from August 7, 2010 to August 20, 2010

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

A. Town Department Reports/Requests

(1) Joint Selectmen, Finance Committee, Essex School Reps. Meeting

At the request of the Board, I worked with the Finance Committee and Chairman Randall to develop a list of agenda items for the subject joint budget session that will occur at the present meeting. I circulated the agenda to the School Committee Members and staff during the week of August 16, 2010 to provide them with an opportunity to prepare for the session. The group should also provide agenda ideas for the upcoming session involving Manchester officials on September 8, 2010. The Chairman and I can work out the final, September 8 agenda with the Manchester Selectmen Chairman and the Manchester Town Administrator.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

B. Computer Systems

(1) Assessors' Printing Configuration

Our Assessors' Office infrequently has a need to print a summary record card from our accounting system. Other documents from that system print on their older model printer very well. However, the summary record card does not. The fix for this type of issue usually involves upgrading the printer. However, since the need for the card is so infrequent, I shared a more modern printer out from the Collector's Office and the output to that machine works fine.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

C. Personnel

(1) Massachusetts Municipal Personnel Association (MMPA) Data

Each year, the MMPA requests each of its member communities to update wage and salary data on its on-line database. The database is useful for all members when it is necessary to conduct research regarding wage and salary comparables. I entered the Town's FY11 data during the week of August 16, 2010.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

(2) Centennial Grove Committee

(*)

The Board had asked that I advertise the availability of seats on the subject, new Committee to include: two at-large seats, a member of the Open Space Committee, a member of the Board of Public Works, a member of the Conservation Commission, a member of the Finance Committee, a member of the Playing Fields Committee, an officer of the Essex PTO, a former EYC member, and a member of the Long Term Planning Committee. The deadline for the at-large and former EYC seats was August 16, 2010. A total of seven individuals applied for the two at-large seats and a total of three individuals applied for the former EYC seat. Also, we are still awaiting the names of the delegates from the Finance Committee, the Playing Fields Committee, and the Long Term Planning Committee (these may be available by meeting time). Selectman O'Donnell has asked if a Planning Board seat could also be discussed.

***Recommendation:* Board discussion relative to the selection of at-large and former EYC members and the potential for the addition of a Planning Board seat.**

D. Procurement/Ongoing Projects

(1) Request for Pedestrian Traffic Signal

At the last meeting, I informed the Board that the Massachusetts Department of Transportation had denied the Town's request for a pedestrian traffic signal near the Main Street/Martin Street junction for a variety of reasons. The Board determined that no further action should be taken and that the Federal safety regulations regarding crosswalks will need to suffice relative to the crosswalk in question.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

(2) National Grid Pole Moves

At the last meeting, the Board discussed the apparent lack of responsiveness by National Grid regarding the need to move utility poles in concert with the ongoing Route 133 Reconstruction Project. Despite planning and coordination that began long ago, National Grid had not engaged crews to keep pace with construction. The Board asked that I appeal to National Grid again and to elevate the matter to the State level if crews were not rapidly engaged. I made the requested appeal and National Grid did respond – crews began work during the week of August 16, 2010. We have worked out a system that will be coordinated among the utility, MassDOT, and myself to ensure that pole work continues as construction plans progress.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary at this time.

(3) Modified Curb Review

At the last meeting, the Board asked that I write to the District Highway Director relative to the potential to change the curbing design along a particular stretch of roadway. The abutters are interested in granite curbing as opposed to a Cape Cod berm. I consulted with the Resident Engineer about the issue and drafted the necessary letter during the week of August 16, 2010, after the abutters visited my office to point out their wishes. The letter included a “mark-up” of the 25% design plan to illustrate what is desired. The Resident Engineer will hand-carry the request through the MassDOT system.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

(4) Paglia Park

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At the last meeting, the Board decided that the addition of the ship’s wheel monument that is presently at the Town Landing to the Paglia Park is not advisable at this time. At the request of the Board, I informed parties that were interested in potentially moving the monument about that decision.

Also, an individual has inquired about potentially locating a bench, in memory of a loved one, at the Paglia Park.

Recommendation: **Board discussion relative to the bench proposal.**

(5) Roadbed Elevation Increase Status Update

We are still awaiting Right of Entry documents from several abutters to the Route 133 Reconstruction Project in an area that is proposed for additional roadbed elevation (to alleviate flooding under some conditions).

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

(6) Northern Conomo Point Planning Contract

At the last meeting, the Board approved our consultant’s plan to complete a detailed fiscal review and report on revised planning options by early September for review and comment. After an upcoming meeting with the Board and a planned design charrette, the consultant plans to hold the third of three public meetings on October 14, 2010. I have contacted the consultant to inform her of the Board’s approval of that course of action.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary at this time.

(7) Phase 2 of Assessors’ Mapping Project

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As the Board may recall, the Assessors’ used a special appropriation to begin the digital re-mapping of the Town last fiscal year. At this past Annual Town Meeting, the budget included a new line item for the second of four phases necessary to complete the digital re-mapping over a four-year period. The

consultant working on the project presented a draft contract to the Assessors and, after minor revisions in accordance with Town Counsel's past comments, the final draft is ready for the Board's review and approval.

Recommendation: **Board signature of the phase 2 contract.**

(8) Town Building Feasibility Study Draft Contract

Reinhardt Associates has assented to the Town's preferred contract language for the subject study (language has been approved by Town Counsel). As such, if the Special Town Meeting in November votes to fund the study, the contract can be executed rapidly for work to commence soon thereafter.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

E. Insurance

(1) MIIA Loss Control Grant Application

At the last meeting, the Board agreed that I should apply to the subject grant program for the automation of the Town Hall clock weight winding. The clock presently requires weekly, manual winding and must be accessed via ladders and hatchways that pose safety issues. I documented our situation with photographs and completed and submitted the application during the week of August 16, 2010, after our clock contractor submitted a cost proposal for the work. We expect to hear about this year's awards sometime in September.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

F. Facilities

No items.

G. Fiscal/Budget

No items.

H. Complaints

No items.

I. Meetings Attended

(1) Town Building Committee Meeting

I attended the subject meeting on August 16, 2010 along with Selectman O'Donnell, who chairs the Committee. The meeting featured a discussion regarding the Committee's continued effort to research and answer questions

asked by the public at the last forum, in preparation for two additional forums – September 20 and October 25, 2010. After the meeting, I provided the Committee members with additional information about the commercial property that abuts the Fire and Police Headquarters. This information will be useful to those with questions about how that property might factor into the process (indications are that it will not likely be of practicable use).

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

J. Final Judgment

(1) Conomo Point Tenants' Meeting

I attended the subject meeting on August 19, 2010 and presented on behalf of the Board the procedures to be followed upon expiration of the Conomo Point leases (separate procedures for properties north and south of Robbins Island Road). The meeting went well and tenants asked a wide variety of questions relative to the procedures. The meeting satisfied a major milestone required by the DEP in the Conomo Point Plan.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

K. Town Meeting, By-Laws, and Regulations

(1) Revised Shellfish Regulations

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At the last meeting, I provided to the Board a variety of comments from Town Counsel, the Town Clerk, the Selectmen's Assistant, and the public regarding the proposed changes to the subject Regulations. I also reported at that time that the Shellfish Advisory Commission (SFAC) had supported all of the draft changes. I have now revised the draft document again, incorporating Counsel's comments and the Board's input, for further review and discussion.

Recommendation: **Further review of the draft changes by the Board with the potential to have a final draft reviewed by the SFAC prior to promulgation.**

(2) Title 5 Questions from Conomo Point Tenants

A group of Conomo Point tenants had several questions regarding the State on-site wastewater disposal regulations (310 CMR 15.00 – Title 5). The Board asked that I provide responses to those questions based upon our present understanding. I provided that response during the seek of August 9, 2010.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

(3) Draft List of Potential Special Town Meeting Topics (*)

The Board received the subject list of topics at the last meeting for further review at the present meeting. A Special Town Meeting could be held in November (perhaps November 15, 2010).

Recommendation: **Preliminary Board discussion relative to the list of topics.**

(4) Alcoholic Beverages Licensing Rules and Regulations Revision (*)

At the last meeting, the Board asked me to request the Chief of Police to research possible annual alcoholic beverage training programs that licensees could enroll in for a fee as a condition of re-licensure. I referred the Chief to organizations purported to offer such training by the ABCC and he is developing a preliminary report regarding availability, cost, and duration. The thought is to revise the regulations to require training as a condition of re-licensure with an effective date of the November, 2011 re-licensure cycle.

Recommendation: **Board discussion as necessary if the Chief's report is available by meeting time.**

L. Legal Issues

No items.

M. Grants

(1) Sustainable Communities Grant

The Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) recently sent a request for support for a \$5 million grant application that, if funded, will provide technical support to MAPC communities regarding regional planning and sustainable development. I completed the letter of support using an on-line form provided by MAPC in my capacity as Grants Coordinator. If the grant application is successful, MAPC will ask the Town to formalize its participation in the various planning activities.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary at this time.

(2) District Local Technical Assistance Grant (DLTA) (*)

The Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) has announced that the agency will cover various planning topics for the towns of Essex, Ipswich, and Littleton in one, combined technical assistance effort, under the subject grant program. The Town of Essex applied for the subject grant (combined with Ipswich) via Consulting Planner Carolyn Britt's efforts to secure assistance with zoning bylaw development (as part of her recent planning assistance contract with the Town). MAPC will contact the Planning Board Chair to get the necessary players engaged (I have forwarded the award letter and the original application to the Planning

Board Chair for her information). This project is slated to be completed before the end of the calendar year and, in Essex, we are seeking recommendations on creating zones for rural corridor areas that can provide some protection for land uses and views.

Recommendation: **Board discussion as necessary.**

(3) Safe Routes to School Infrastructure Grant Design Review (*)

The various Town departments and the school principal have completed their reviews of the subject, preliminary design. The design is generally agreeable but we did ask the designer to verify that the design will not impact the way that the catch basin and drainage system currently works in that area. We have learned that drainage will be reviewed in a comprehensive fashion at the next design level should the project advance to the next step.

The Massachusetts Highway Department will now evaluate our project against other, similar projects that are vying for funding after receiving a letter of support and commitment at the conceptual level from the Board of Selectmen (which I have prepared).

Recommendation: **Board review and approval of the subject letter.**

N. Emergency Planning

(1) Cape Ann Emergency Planning Team Meeting (*)

I attended the subject meeting on August 12, 2010 along with other Town employees. The meeting featured a discussion regarding upcoming training and drills including a comprehensive, two-day Emergency Operations Center training on September 8 and 9, 2010 and an emergency tabletop drill on October 29, 2010. The first event will include a two-hour, executive summary session for executive-level staff that may not be able to commit to two days of training. The second event will feature individual emergency operations commands in the morning and a regional emergency operations command drawing upon the four communities' commands in the afternoon. I am in the process of determining which of the Town's staff members can make it to each of these important events.

Recommendation: **Board discussion relative to potential participation in these upcoming events.**

O. Other Items

(1) Alewife Brook Channel Clearing

At the last meeting, the Board received a letter from the Chebacco Lake Association inquiring about the possibility of again clearing the channel in the Alewife Brook since the brook is presently very constricted. The last clearing

effort was undertaken in 2007 when I produced a Request for Determination of Applicability for consideration by the Essex Conservation Commission due to the likely interruption of alewife fish migrations. The Commission at that time issued permission to perform this ongoing maintenance (a negative determination) in the interest of the fishery and work was completed in November of 2007.

I learned that the past determination is valid for three years, with an expiration date of October 4, 2010. After discussing the situation with Commission Member Brophy, he organized another cleanout, which he, various State fisheries officials, and a group of other volunteers completed on August 20, 2010. He may also propose to the Commission that the original determination be extended since this type of maintenance activity will need to be repeated in the future.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

(2) Town Administrator Leave

I was out of the office on vacation leave on August 13, 2010.

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