



Town Administrator's Report Board of Selectmen's Meeting of Nov. 30, 2015

Report covers from November 14, 2015 to November 27, 2015

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

A. Town Department Reports/Requests

(1) Hearing Regarding Removal of Evergreen Trees

The Selectmen's Assistant and I have worked with the Superintendent of Public Works to set up a public hearing concerning the removal of the two, large spruce trees that are presently in front of the Town Hall. The hearing will be held on December 15, 2015 at 10:00 a.m. at the Water Filtration Plant and will be duly advertised and posted pursuant to the Public Shade Tree statute. Anyone not able to make the actual hearing may provide written comments in advance. Barring any change in plans, the trees could be removed after this year's Memory Tree lighting but before the contractor takes over the property on February 1, 2016.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

(2) Strategic Planning Committee Meeting

(*)

Chairman O'Donnell and I attended the Strategic Planning Committee meeting on November 23, 2015. The meeting featured a discussion relative to finalizing the first draft of the overview of the Town's Strategic Plan so that it may be released for public comment by December 11, 2015. The Committee would like to use the Department Head/Board Chair quarterly appointment with the Selectmen on January 25, 2016 to discuss this document and may offer a separate public session devoted to the topic on January 28, 2016. The Committee is also working on a master list of action steps that will eventually assign various Town entities with implantation of the Plan's goals along certain time horizons.

Recommendation: **Board discussion relative to the overview document and what the Board's role will be in relation to the Plan in the coming months and years.**

B. Computer Systems

No items.

C. Personnel

(1) Informal Department Heads Meeting

I hosted the subject meeting in my office on December 19, 2015, as I do from time to time. The meeting featured a discussion regarding final preparations for the Town Hall and Library moves into two, separate, temporary locations.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

D. Procurement/Ongoing Projects

(1) Emptying of Town Hall Basement

Originally, we had envisioned not having to empty the Town Hall basement of its contents, since work in that area would be focused on one end of the space, concerning the new elevator. However, now that some additional structural work is necessary, steel posts will be installed in several locations. We are told by our architect that this work will require us to empty the basement. As such, I have arranged for the delivery of two, forty-foot storage boxes that will be placed in the Town Hall parking lot for the duration of the project. We will use Essex County Sheriff's Department prison work teams to move the contents of the basement into those boxes on December 22 and 23, 2015.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

(2) Quotation for Appraisals of Robbins Island Properties (*)

Now that Town Meeting has approved the property line between the Town's property on Robbins Island and private property abutting the Town's property, the Board can proceed with the procurement process to hire an appraiser to value the various Town properties for sale. Any actual sales would occur during 2016 and would be subject to an Annual Town Meeting authorization that could be considered by voters in May of 2016. To that end, I have begun work with Town Counsel on the procurement package necessary to hire the appraiser.

Recommendation: **Board discussion relative to moving forward with the appraisal process.**

(3) Resumption of Planning for Robbins Island Subdivision (*)

As the Board may recall, planning for the Robbins Island Subdivision had been placed on hold while an issue regarding the boundary between Town property and abutting private property was being worked out. Now that the Town Meeting has approved a settlement of that dispute, our consulting engineer can resume the development of a draft subdivision plan for the area. As noted above, appraisals of the various Town-owned Robbins Island properties will be necessary to provide Town Meeting with property value information and a subdivision plan will be necessary to provide Town Meeting with the exact nature of the properties that will potentially be sold. The subdivision process can resume now and can be wrapped up well in advance of the Annual Town Meeting in May of 2016.

Recommendation: **Board discussion relative to the plan moving forward for the Robbins Island subdivision process.**

E. Insurance

(1) Builder's Risk Insurance Policy for Town Hall/Library Project

The magnitude of the upcoming Town Hall/Library Renovation Project requires that the Town acquire a builder's risk insurance policy to cover any peril that might cause damage to the building during construction (as opposed to liability insurance, which the contractor must have anyway). Although this type of policy can be purchased by either the owner or the contractor, it is generally more economical for the owner to purchase it, eliminating it as an unpredictable component of the construction bid. Both the Town and the contractor will be named in the policy, regardless, and our project budget did carry a line item for this policy. Since the value of the construction contract will exceed \$3M, our insurer cannot write the policy directly. However, our insurer will assist us to obtain a policy from a third party. Now that we have some preliminary construction cost estimates, I have approached our insurer by completing a builder's risk policy questionnaire.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

F. Facilities

(1) Short-term Preparations to Make Folsom Pavilion Useable by June, 2016 (*)

Now that the Town Meeting has voted a small amount of funding to make the Folsom Pavilion safe and useable for the summer, 2016 season, it is necessary for the Board to provide guidance on how the matter should be approached. Options include temporary shoring and eventual preservation or major alteration with replacement in the future. The Historical Commission favors preservation to replacement, even if an exact replica.

Recommendation: **Board discussion as necessary.**

(2) Carpeting of Front Sections of Temporary Library Facility

The two front rooms of the temporary library facility will require carpeting, since programs will be run in these areas. As such, I have made arrangements with a carpeting contractor to have carpeting installed during December.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

(3) Installation of Gate at Entrance to Centennial Grove

At the last meeting, the Board agreed that a gate should be installed at the corner of the Field of Dreams, just after the Water Filtration Plant, so that the entirety of the Field of Dreams and Centennial Grove can be closed to vehicular traffic each night. The Superintendent of Public Works assisted by working with a contractor to quote and then install the gate. It is my understanding that this work is pending.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

(5) Further Discussion Regarding Town Landing and Municipal Lot Parking (*)

At a previous meeting, the Board reviewed the two sets of regulations governing the Town Landing and the Municipal Parking Lot. I have now generated color images of both areas so that the Board can discuss how the rules and signage may be better coordinated for next season.

Recommendation: **Board review of the aerial images and further discussion relative to potential regulatory and signage changes.**

G. Fiscal/Budget

(1) School Budget Group Meeting (*)

I met with officials from the Town of Manchester and the Manchester Essex Regional School District on November 23, 2015 to discuss how the fiscal year 2017 budget planning process is shaping up. The meeting featured a discussion regarding the District's schedule for releasing the Tentative Budget (via public hearing on December 9, 2016) and how the various officials from both towns will be able to provide input and ask questions between that release and the final hearing on January 26, 2016. The parties also discussed the possibility of funding a feasibility study for the replacement of the Manchester Memorial School. If the State determines that this project is a good candidate to move forward during the next approval round, the feasibility study funding would be required during fiscal year 2017.

Recommendation: **Board discussion as necessary.**

H. Complaints

No items.

I. Meetings Attended

(1) Meeting with Essex Historical Commission, Renovation Project (*)

I attended a meeting of the Essex Historical Commission on November 19, 2015, along with our project architect for the Town Hall/Library renovation project. The purpose of the meeting was to go over the status of the project design, including a discussion regarding bid alternates. At the meeting, the Commission asked if our architect could price out a modification to the shingle replacement alternate that would also replace the window casings. The thought is that this strategy will add longevity to the building. By meeting time, our architect will provide cost information and information on the flashing method to be used if casings are not to be replaced. The Chairman of the Commission will attend the present meeting to discuss the two options with the Board, so that a decision can

be made. Also, the Commission began to discuss their interest in a future conservation restriction on the building.

Recommendation: Board discussion relative to the finalization of the scope of Alternate 1 (shingle work) and regarding the Commission's interest in a future restriction.

J. Final Judgment

No items.

K. Town Meeting, By-Laws, and Regulations

No items.

L. Legal Issues

No items.

M. Grants

(1) Massachusetts Downtown Initiative and/or Local Technical Asst. Grants (*)

Our Town Planner has indicated that two grant programs, the Massachusetts Downtown Initiative (MDI) Grant – through the State, and the District Local Technical Assistance (DLTA) Grant – through MAPC, have deadlines approaching for this grant round. These programs may offer vehicles to begin implementation of some aspects of the Town's Strategic Plan.

Recommendation: Board approval of applications for these grant programs if the Town Planner can identify likely successful topics that can be developed in time to meet grant deadlines.

(2) Massachusetts Coastal Zone Management Grant Monthly Report

I worked with our two vendors to obtain a report on grant activities for the month of November for the subject grant. The grant is focused on public outreach regarding coastal resiliency and complements the work being conducted under the Super Storm Sandy Federal grant program.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

(3) Mass Bays Program Research Grant, Letter of Intent (*)

Mr. Peter Phippen of Eight Towns and the Great Marsh is interested in collaborating with the Town on a grant application under the subject grant program. Specifically, Mr. Phippen hopes to conduct research on the Essex marsh that assesses how the marsh rebounds when various types of soil/sediment are

placed on active growing areas. This type of research may be very instrumental toward someday being able to case dredge spoils onto the marsh, eliminating the need for a land or offshore disposal site (greatly reducing project costs). Mr. Phippen has prepared a letter of intent for the Chairman's signature.

Recommendation: Board approval of the letter of intent to collaborate with respect to this research.

N. Emergency Planning

(1) Regional Dispatch Center Monthly Meetings

I attended a meeting of the Finance Advisory Board – FAB (which I chair) and a joint meeting of the FAB and the Police and Fire Advisory Boards on November 20, 2015. The FAB meeting featured preliminary discussion regarding the Center's fiscal year 2017 budget. The joint meeting featured discussion relative to the overall operation and administration of the Center and the potential to move to a new records management and dispatch software vendor.

Recommendation: No further action is necessary.

O. Other Items

(1) Thanksgiving Holiday

The office was closed on November 26 and 27, 2015, in observance of the subject holiday.

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