



MEMORANDUM

TO: Board of Selectmen

FROM: John C. Curran, Town Manager

CC: Susan Aker, Cathy O'Dea

SUBJECT: Town Manager's Report, January 28, 2019

DATE: January 25, 2019

Permit Alley

The Demolition for Permit Alley (Phase I) is complete to this point. In the next week the ceiling grid will be installed followed by data, lighting and electrical. The Town is also soliciting quotes for finish work such as counter tops, cabinets, flooring, paint, trim work and furniture. The storefront door for the hallway is on order as of today. The timeline for the completion of this Phase is late April or sooner depending on materials and suppliers. The Town has spent \$17,204.01 on this project to date. Moving forward the Town will be reorganizing the school department storage, Historic commission and other associated areas. An integral piece of this project is implementing a completely new filing system that will facilitate collaboration between departments – this change necessitates all of the storage changes.

Fire Hydrants

Recent events has prompted the Town emphasize the importance of educating the public on Fire Hydrant safety and access. The current practice for the Town is that the Fire Department will go around Town and clear as many hydrants as possible. They usually will begin this process after plowing operations have been completed by the Town. Due to the severity of the storm and the sub-zero temperatures the clearing process had not started.

A public effort including a CODE RED was done by Chief Cole to remind residents to please help in clearing any snow from the hydrants.

Old Ditson School FIOA Request

This office received a public information request for some old concept plans created to explore the concept of low density Town House units at the site of the old school. The parameters given to the Town Consultant were that no access should be provided on Sheridan Street, that public park and recreation space be preserved or enhanced and that access be provided from the traffic signal on Boston Road. These plans were produced in August of 2017.

These renderings are intended to provide the BOS with information about potential uses of the property that may improve the neighborhood with no significant investment from the Town. This area of Town experiences some of the highest accident rates and fatalities including pedestrians and motorists.

It is important to note that no decision has been made on the future use of this site by the BOS because it will be needed as a temporary site while Station 3 is rebuilt. The Town very often produces documents like this to help in the decision making process. The concepts and this disclaimer will be posted on the Town website to prevent any misrepresentation of the origin or purpose of these concepts.

Public Nuisance

Baby and Me, 744 Boston Road, and 697 Boston Road.

This office spoke with Town Counsel about the possibility of taking action against the above properties. The Building Commissioner, BOH, Fire Department, and Town Engineer recently visited all the properties and are in the process of writing a report of violations. Town Counsel is also currently reviewing past enforcement orders and to see if we could take possible action on the properties. Since the Town visit, it appears that 2 of the 3 properties are now under purchase and sale agreements (Baby and Me / 697). 697 Boston Road will be going in front of the Zoning Board of Appeals shortly for a variance.

Recreational Marijuana

This office recently learned that all by-laws and map changes made at Town Meeting were approved by the Attorney General. This is good news since the moratorium on marijuana ended on Dec 31st. Multiple companies have shown interest in siting in Billerica but none have been able to acquire a lease or a purchase and sale agreement to take the next steps in the process. This office and other department heads will also be touring a cultivation and dispensary facility early next month to continue learning about this new industry.

CPC Update

I attended the CPC meeting last night with Town Counsel to help provide clarification about the administration of CPC awards. There was some confusion by some members about the role of the CPC in these matters. Generally, the role of the CPC is to recommend projects to Town Meeting. After this task the administration of the CPC awards is overseen by the Town and Town Officials.

Currently, we have three grant agreements and four internal MOUs. The grant agreements serve as the contract between the awardees that are not Town entities. The MOUs documents that provide clarity of expectations to Town agencies that have been awarded funds.

Vaping Regulations

This Office recently met with the Director of the Board of Health, Board of Health Chair, and the Substance Abuse Director. The Town will be moving forward with their plans to only allow Electronic Cigarettes and Cartridges to be sold at Adult Use Tobacco Stores. The Town currently has only one of these types of stores and it is located in the Billerica Mall. The Board of Health will send out letters to all 38 stores that sell tobacco to make them aware of the potential new regulations, and invite them to the March public hearing. If approved the measure would go into effect in July.

Plowing, Sanding, Salting – Town Practice

Every forecasted snow storm is treated differently based on staffing level, the time of day, air temperature, pavement temperature, intensity, duration of snow storm and the expected accumulation of snow. Prior to the snow starting, the Department of Public Works pretreat the roads and continue to do so during the storm, once the accumulation reached over 2 inches, we change from treatment of roads to plowing operation where contractors are called in and get a route assigned to them.

In some plowable storms not enough contractors responds, this creates a challenge where some routes have to wait until we can free contractors who finish with their route early. In storms where air

temperature goes below 15 degrees, DPW will mix the salt with sand to create some traction between tires and pavement as salt becomes ineffective.

Annual Community Service Award (Formerly Senior of the Year)

Now in its 13th year the Community Service Award, has recognized stalwarts such as Kay Mullen, Fred Kenyon, Kay and Jerry Johnson and Doris Pearson. Winners have been residents of Billerica, 60 years and older who have made outstanding, long term contributions to the Town of Billerica, the Billerica Council on Aging and the Friends of the Council on Aging. These residents have also served as a standard bearer for excellence in volunteer services to help local seniors better their lives, dedicated their time and talent to making the community a better place. The Council on Aging will be accepting nominations between February 1st and March 30th The winner will be announced at Awards Night, May 3, 2019, hosted by the BCOA and the Friends of the BCOA.

Budget Meetings

This office has started the process of meeting with Departments Heads to go over their budget request for FY20. Many budgets have stayed level funded this year, but some Departments will see increases due to collective bargaining agreements. The Police and Fire are expected to see larger than usual increases due to these contracts being settled. The Town also expects Health Care and Pension cost to continue to rise. The budget book will also continue to evolve with updated descriptions and additional sections that will make us eligible to apply for Distinguished Budget Award from the Government Finance Officers Association.