



## TOWN OF EAST LONGMEADOW

### Town Manager's Report

October 13, 2020

Good Evening:

Work continues on a variety of long term projects, Capital Improvement Plan, Master Plan, Open Space and Recreation Assets and Uses, Employee Guidelines Handbook, Refunding bonds, new Bonding and Financial policy updates, etc. I have begun the preliminary data collection to create a comprehensive Capital Plan, starting with a centralized compilation of the Town's fixed assets. This compilation was attempted in 2016, but not completed and is an essential prerequisite of the comprehensive Plan.

I signed a contract with the PVPC to act as our consultant with the Town's Planning Director and Steering Committee to complete the Master Plan by June, 2021. Bethany Yeo will be soliciting community members to participate on the Steering Committee for this endeavor.

The Town (through the efforts of the COA) has also entered an agreement with the Commonwealth of Massachusetts to initiate a Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) in the community. The contract provides reimbursement of approved budget items on a percentage basis.

I have received and reviewed the MSBA Initial Compliance Certificate (ICC) as well as the School Building Committee form with Gordon Smith. Those documents were forwarded to you for your information and review. Completion of the ICC is the first step in the process for invitees into the Eligibility Period.

I have appointed Christina Cooper to the Board of Library Trustees, subject to your review.

Further to that issue, my office has posted a current listing of vacant positions on all Boards and Commissions on the Town website; I'm aware of several third party comments regarding these vacancies, mostly about why they are not filled, however, they are volunteer positions and will remain vacant impairing the ability of several of our Boards to function unless our request for Community involvement is successful. I'm researching whether or not certain Boards can be reduced in size to facilitate quorum requirements.

The Treasurer/Collector page has been updated to further clarify the fees charged for online and telephone payments in response to the fee issue discussed at a recent Council meeting.

Our Planning Board conducted a second public hearing on September 29, 2020 regarding the Pease Rd. Solar farm site plan approval request, subject of ongoing litigation. The Board voted 3-1 to deny site plan approval. The decision has been filed with the Land Court on October 6, 2020.

Finance, with a great assist from EMD, continues to work on reporting for FEMA reimbursement for Covid expenses not covered by the Cares Act. We continue to encounter adverse consequences of the ADP project, recently having been advised of a penalty from the IRS for ADP's failure to pay withholding taxes on a timely basis, which may be the subject of a future free cash request and potential litigation.

Many of our staff regularly attend Zoom informational meetings, training sessions, conference calls, etc. as we continue to operate under the constraints imposed by the health emergency. We continue to monitor community transmissions, number of infections etc. and be mindful of the difficulties this situation presents for all of us on a daily basis.

Speaking of zoom meetings, ELCAT is now hosting such meetings for 19 Boards and Committees that meet bi-weekly or monthly. In addition, ELCAT, through the services of Jamie Rooke, has also begun live streaming of JV and Varsity games, with play by play, allowing family members near and far, to experience the events, at least virtually. The service has been enthusiastically received. The Department also participates in a number of community events, including the Intergenerational conversation meetings sponsored by Recreation, (most recently last Thursday), fire safety videos presented by Captain Beecher for school use in October and has recorded work from the Shared Streets and Spaces grant. The Broadband Committee, chaired by Don Maki, will meet tomorrow for the first time to develop a framework to assess the community need for broadband access into the future and to establish what role Town government can play in assuring that access is available to all Town residents. Mr. Maki is also working remotely with his class of 16 video production students studying film and learning how to create and edit short films on their iPhones.

Our Town Clerk applied for and received a grant (\$6,205) to assist with additional election expenses caused by Covid concerns. This grant application is an excellent example of a Department Head taking the initiative to address and solve a problem. Many thanks to Jeanne and her staff for their continuing efforts to be efficient and effective during this most unusual pandemic voting cycle.

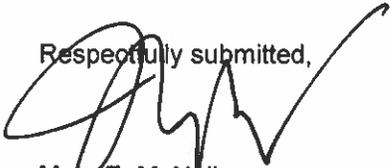
The Recreation Department had some excellent publicity in September regarding its new 7 week program, Afternoon Escape. It's a camp for kids from age 3-12 and runs from 3-6 p.m. at Pine Knoll. The camp offers an opportunity for children to participate in sports, games, arts and crafts and other activities and provides socialization with peers. The program had 20 attendees this week.

Soccer, field hockey, football skills and drills, Tee ball and other activities continue as well. In the near future, there will be a Halloween house decorating contest, Christmas house decorating contest and a Paint the Plow activity as well.

The Rotary Club plantings of trees and flowers around the perimeter of Heritage Park took place on the weekend of September 26, 2020, assisted by the DPW. Many thanks for their contributions to the beautification of the Heritage Park landscape.

My office will soon be posting for a new Police Chief as Chief Dalessio has tendered his resignation. This and several other HR matters of significant importance continue to require a substantial investment of time on a daily basis.

Respectfully submitted,



Mary E. McNally  
Town Manager