



Town Administrator's Report Board of Selectmen's Meeting of Sept. 11, 2017

Report covers from August 26 to September 8, 2017

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

A. Town Department Reports/Requests

(1) Designation and Management of Conservation Land (*)

Chairman O'Donnell and I met with Julie Scofield (Chairman of the Open Space Committee) and Michael Burke (Chairman of the Conservation Commission) on August 28, 2017. We discussed the fact that the Conservation Commission already has custody of many vacant parcels that were designated as "conservation land" in the past but does not necessarily have the means to properly manage these areas. The Open Space Committee would like to see additional properties designated in this way. The group determined that it may be best to seek some assistance from a local conservation group. Such an organization could take conservation restrictions on the parcels (still in Town ownership) or perhaps enter into a Memorandum of Understanding with the Town so that the parcels could be better managed.

Two types of parcels now exist: those already voted into the conservation land status by Town Meeting and those that have been identified by the Open Space Committee as good candidates for future protection. In speaking with Town Counsel, there is probably a way to improve the management of the parcels in the first category with the help of a conservation group and a way to transfer new parcels into protected management without involving the Conservation Commission in the future (also with help of a local group). Town Counsel's property and environmental divisions are looking at the questions presently and I will be able to provide their recommendations at the next Board meeting.

Recommendation: **Board discussion as necessary.**

(2) Town Building Committee Update, Public Safety Building(s) (*)

I attended the Town Building Committee meeting on August 29, 2017, along with Chairman O'Donnell (who also chairs the Building Committee). The Committee met with Greg McIntosh from Lincoln Architects, who was beginning to prepare visual renderings for two possible future public safety building scenarios. The firm presented some photos of the area and some examples of past work that will help to inform the final style of the Essex work.

The Committee was presented with two choices for format: a virtual sketch-up model that can deliver instantaneous views from any angle or elevation versus photo-real images with virtual buildings placed within. The second option would only be able to produce a set number of images and would not have the rotatable

flexibility of the sketch-up platform. The Committee opted for the sketch-up platform and the example public safety buildings used in the renderings will be provided in three different architectural styles, to show the public a range of possibilities. Mr. McInstosh will meet with the Committee again in mid-September to present progress on the work and the receive additional guidance based on additional feedback from the Committee.

Recommendation: **Board discussion as necessary.**

B. Computer Systems

No items.

C. Personnel

(1) Volunteer and Employee of the Year Awards

I have circulated an announcement that the Selectmen are again considering nominations for the Essex Volunteer of the Year and Employee of the Year awards. These awards are presented during the Fall Town Meeting and the nomination period runs through September 30, 2017. The Town also presents years of service awards at the Meeting. This year, we have five employees with 20 or more years of service arriving at five-year increments (three employees at 20 years, one at 30 years, and one at 45 years).

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

D. Procurement/Ongoing Projects

(1) Request for Proposals for Centennial Grove Master Plan (*)

At the last meeting, the Board agreed that a fourth rating criterion should be added to the RFP before it is released. The document needs to have a way to gauge how well a proposer may be able to use a novel, “out of the box” approach to tackling this planning work. Chairman O’Donnell worked on some language between meetings and the Board can arrive at a final RFP at the present meeting for potential release in the near future.

Recommendation: **Final Board review of the fourth rating criterion and approval of the RFP for release.**

(2) Status of Conomo Point Waterfront Park Project

Our project contractor began work on the installation of the park’s decorative railing system during the week of September 4, 2017 and will also soon begin construction of the water access stairs. The three memorial benches that have been donated so far arrived during the same week and Selectman Spinney is presently working to assemble those. The benches will be set on new concrete

pads that our concrete contractor plans to begin forming during the week of September 11, 2017.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

E. Insurance

No items.

F. Facilities

(1) HVAC System Training

I attended training presented by the HVAC subcontractor for the Town Hall and Library renovation project on August 30, 2017. The technician reviewed basic function of the new heating and cooling systems in the building. He will return with the manufacturer's representative in October for detailed training concerning the programmable aspects of the split system heating and cooling units present in all building spaces.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

(2) Cleaning Historic Safe Doors & Straightening Lamp Posts, Town Hall (*)

At the last meeting, the Board discussed the possibility of requesting Community Preservation Act funding for the two subject projects. The historic safe doors that have been mounted in the Town Hall lobby need to be cleaned, with some fine inpainting work, and then sealed with a clear sealant. I contacted a preservationist suggested by the Board (who happened to be the same preservationist who had quoted on this work in the past). The finished doors will NOT need to be surrounded by a case, as originally thought, since the clear sealant would provide ample protection and is not toxic after it cures. Work could be done during off-hours, to eliminate public exposure to solvents. The total cost of this work would be \$3,400.

Our project contractor had quoted a price of \$6,500 for the straightening of the lamp posts. I asked a smaller contractor for a price on the same work and he declined to quote. However, it is possible to seek quotes from others to determine whether the \$6,500 figure could be decreased. Once final figures are arrived at, the Board could request Community Preservation funding through the Community Preservation Committee and the Fall Town Meeting.

Recommendation: **Board discussion as necessary.**

G. Fiscal/Budget

(1) School Budget Collaboration Group Meeting (*)

I attended the subject meeting on September 8, 2017 along with Chairman O'Donnell, Essex Finance Committee Chairman Dyer, and personnel and officials from the Regional School District and the Town of Manchester. The purpose of the meeting was to coordinate operating budget summary and five-year projection presentations that were to be given by each of the three entities on September 13, 2017. However, the group has determined that it will be best to have District officials meet separately with each of the town finance committees before arriving at a new date for those presentations. This course of action will allow each finance committee to ask questions and to provide further input regarding how the operating budget meeting planning and formatting process should unfold.

Recommendation: **Board discussion as necessary.**

H. Complaints

No items.

I. Meetings Attended

No items.

J. Final Judgment

No items.

K. Town Meeting, By-Laws, and Regulations

(1) Further Review of Preliminary Fall Town Meeting Topic List (*)

At the last meeting, the Board briefly discussed the subject preliminary list. I have made some additions and changes and the Board should begin making decisions relative to the topics that are supported at this time.

Recommendation: **Further Board discussion and review of the preliminary Fall Town Meeting topic list.**

L. Legal Issues

(1) Town Counsel Review of Harbor Regulations

At the last meeting, with agreement from the Harbormaster, the Board asked that the Harbormaster's proposed revisions to the Essex Harbor Regulations be reviewed by Town Counsel. The draft document was provided to Counsel during the week of August 28, 2017 and the review is underway (Counsel was on

vacation at the time of transmission). Counsel's recommendations on the Regulations will be available by the Board's meeting of September 25, 2017.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

M. Grants

(1) Implementation of FY18 Coastal Resilience Grant

Personnel from the Massachusetts Office of Coastal Zone Management (CZM) provided a project kick-off meeting on August 28, 2017. I was in attendance, along with personnel from the National Wildlife Federation (NWF), the Cape Ann Emergency Planning Team (CAEPT), and the Plum Island Ecosystem Long-Term Ecological Research Site (PIE-LTER). The grant has three basic purposes: 1) create a Coastal Hazard Atlas and compendium of ongoing coastal resiliency projects for the Great Marsh; 2) work closely with CAEPT to demonstrate to the public that emergency preparedness/planning and coastal resiliency planning and implementation are very much interrelated (while educating the public on both topics); and 3) place new signage along the Essex Causeway and perhaps at Conomo Point relative to the anticipated effects of climate change and sea level rise in our area. Presently, I am working to finalize the Town's contract with NWF that the Board has authorized the Chairman to sign.

Recommendation: I will update the Board as necessary.

(2) Massachusetts Downtown Initiative Grant (Mixed-Use Zoning) Update

On August 31, 2017, personnel from the Harriman consulting firm interviewed various stakeholders over the course of the day concerning how a mixed-use zoning overlay district might be helpful to the Town from both housing and economic development perspectives. I attended a session along with the Town Planner and other Town officials and stakeholders and the consultant worked to collect background information from a variety of viewpoints. One important piece of the discussion was centered around how lot sizes could possibly be reduced to allow mixed use by right in the district. Other discussions focused on the Town's wastewater flow rules and what standard should be set for parking requirements. The Town Planner will attend the present meeting to update the Board further.

Recommendation: Board discussion with the Town Planner at the present meeting.

N. Emergency Planning

No items.

O. Other Items

(1) Labor Day Holiday

The office was closed on September 4, 2017, in observance of the subject holiday.

(2) Town Administrator Vacation Leave

I was out of the office on vacation leave on September 1, 2017.

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