



## Town Administrator's Report Board of Selectmen's Meeting of Sept. 25, 2017

Report covers from September 9 to September 22, 2017

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

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### A. Town Department Reports/Requests

#### (1) Essex Youth Commission Status Report

The recently-reconstituted Essex Youth Commission met on September 19, 2017 to begin to develop a position description for a new Youth Coordinator or Youth Director and to discuss ideas for potential future programming. The Commission also established staggered terms as required by State Law. The Commission will meet again in about three weeks to work on the position description in a more detailed fashion.

*Recommendation:* I will update the Board as necessary.

#### (2) Future Development Plan for Site of Former Fortune Palace Restaurant (\*)

At the last meeting, the Board suggested that this topic be added to the agenda for the present meeting, since it appears the former Fortune Palace property has been sold and it would be helpful to understand what the future plan for the property might be. I reached out to the Building Inspector, the Planning Board, the Board of Health, the Conservation Commission, and the Department of Public Works about this matter. While some departments have heard informally that the owner desires to construct a brewery and pub on the site (likely demolishing the existing structure), no formal Town applications have been submitted and no formal actions have been taken to date.

*Recommendation:* **Board discussion as necessary.**

### B. Computer Systems

#### (1) Replacement of Battery Backup Unit Battery

A battery in the uninterruptible power supply (UPS) that is protecting some fire/police network equipment failed during the week of September 13, 2017. I replaced the battery with a spare that I had on hand and ordered a new spare.

*Recommendation:* No further action is necessary. Total time – ½ hour.

#### (2) Restoration of Connectivity to State Criminal Justice Computer Network

An officer noted that he could not connect to the subject State resource. After doing some remote testing, I visited the police station to check the physical equipment. The power supply to one of the two State routers had been dislodged. I reconnected the power and service was restored.

*Recommendation:* No further action is necessary. Total time – ½ hour.

(3) Cutover to New Virtual Server Hardware

As the Board may recall, I had been working with the City of Melrose and a vendor to configure new virtual server hardware in Essex to become the new primary live instance of our virtual server infrastructure. That live instance has previously existed only in Melrose, with disaster recovery being possible only via archival backups. The migration process has now been completed and users will soon be pointed to the new Essex infrastructure. The Melrose infrastructure now hosts a secondary live instance. With this change, users will experience better performance and, in the event of the loss of infrastructure in Essex, users can be repointed to the secondary live instance in Melrose (without the need to spin up the system from archival backups).

*Recommendation:* No further action is necessary.

(4) Configuration of Printer for Building Department

The Building Department was in a need of new printer that could handle various types of paper and cardstock. I had a printer on hand that I configured for the office.

*Recommendation:* No further action is necessary. Total time – ½ hour.

**C. Personnel**

(1) Safety Committee Quarterly Meeting

I attended the subject meeting as a member of the Committee on September 21, 2017. The former Chairman, Officer Rob Gilardi, retired from the Town recently and the Committee has chosen Firefighter Westley Burnham as the new Chairman. Officer Alex Edwards is the new Clerk.

The meeting featured a discussion regarding ongoing efforts to self-inspect Town buildings for safety hazards on a quarterly basis and a discussion relative to desired training for the balance of the fiscal year.

*Recommendation:* No further action is necessary.

**D. Procurement/Ongoing Projects**

(1) National Grid Program to Convert Streetlights to LED (\*)

At the last meeting, the Board agreed that the Town should explore whether National Grid will convert the Town's streetlights to LED via a program that the Metropolitan Area Planning Council suggested exists. I contacted National Grid and have learned that this new program was only added to their State-approved

tariff structure in 2016 and that National Grid has been working lately to actually offer the conversion. The utility has provided us with three different spreadsheet packages that contain updated information concerning: 1) the cost for the Town to purchase the street lights in the event the Town still wishes to undertake its own conversion and commit to ongoing ownership and maintenance; 2) the estimated annual cost savings for the Town if it does undertake its own conversion; and 3) the estimated savings if the Town just elects to have the utility convert and continue to own the lights.

While the annual savings for purchasing and then converting the lights on our own are substantial, those savings will be offset by the need to have a third party on retainer for emergency service (vehicular pole strikes, weather problems, etc.) and eventual maintenance and lamp replacement. Savings under this scenario are also predicated upon getting all or most of the actual conversion work paid for by State grants. If Grid converts the lamps and continues to own, the Town will still save some money each year, but the savings will be less, all things considered, than the purchase route. No out of pocket costs are required if Grid does the conversion. It is also worth noting that owning the lights will require the Town to sign numerous legal agreements that place any liability associated with the lights on the Town (requiring additional insurance).

*Recommendation:* **Board discussion as necessary.**

(2) Release of Request for Proposals for Centennial Grove Master Plan

At the last meeting, the Board agreed that the subject RFP should be released as soon as possible. As such, I was able to place an advertisement in the *State Goods and Services Bulletin* on September 18, 2017. I have also posted the procurement locally and I am reaching out directly to firms that the Town Planner has indicated may have an interest in this type of project. Six firms have requested documents to date. The deadline for proposals is 10:00 a.m. on October 19, 2017. Board members will have a week to review proposals individually so that a vendor can be Selected at the Board's meeting of October 30, 2017.

*Recommendation:* I will update the Board as necessary.

**E. Insurance**

No items.

**F. Facilities**

(1) Placement of Concrete Pads, Benches, and Swift Boxes at Conomo Point (\*)

The Board and I visited Conomo Point along with our concrete contractor on September 12, 2017. We reviewed how the five memorial bench pads should be laid out at the Conomo Point waterfront park and agreed that we would work with

Derek Brown on the placement of the three chimney swift box pads near the parking lot on Conomo Lane. Our contractor has already completed all of the work.

Once the park benches are assembled, anchors can be drilled into the cured pads at the park for attachment. Also, some type of anchoring system needs to be devised for the chimney swift boxes (perhaps only one of which needs to be constructed this season).

***Recommendation:* Board discussion relative to next steps for benches and chimney swift boxes.**

(2) Library Ramp Lattice Replacement and Painting of Sprinkler System Pipes

As approved by the Board previously, a contractor has completed work on the replacement of the broken lattice work on the Library ramp and on the painting of the sprinkler system pipes that are exposed to outdoor atmospheric conditions at the Town Hall bell and clockworks levels.

*Recommendation:* No further action is necessary.

(3) Parking Signage at Conomo Point

At the last meeting, the Board agreed with recent suggestions that parking across from Clammers' Beach should only be for vehicles with trailers attached and that the first two spaces to the left of the Front Beach ramp (looking down ramp) should be reserved for loading and unloading only. As such, I am working with the Superintendent of Public Works to order the necessary signs and to have those posted.

*Recommendation:* No further action is necessary.

(4) Removal of Old Marine Railway System from Tidal Flat, Conomo Point Park

As the Board may recall, the old house at 153 Conomo Point Road had its own marine railway system for the hauling of a boat that was at one time stored in its garage. The system consists of two steel rails anchored to the rock below a thin layer of mud on the tidal flat. Also, some anchor points for the old dock system still exist in the area. The environmental permitting for the park project requires these remnants to be removed, but not until after the end of September (due to fish spawning considerations). Our project permitting engineer recommended a marine contractor to perform this work and it will be accomplished by the end of October, at the latest.

*Recommendation:* No further action is necessary.

(5) Startup of Senior Center Generator

As the Board may recall, the new generator for the Senior Center was set in place earlier in the year. Our gas contractor made the necessary gas connection and our electrical contractor has now also completed his work. As such, I contacted the generator supplier for that company to perform an official startup of the unit, allowing it to be in service for the upcoming winter season. We are presently working to arrange for a startup date and the Electrical Inspector will be present for that activity.

*Recommendation:* No further action is necessary.

**G. Fiscal/Budget**

(1) Risk Assessment and Monitoring Program Annual Update Meeting

As is the case each September, I met with Town employees relative to the Town's Risk Assessment and Monitoring Program. This program is designed to help prevent financial fraud by reviewing financial risks in each department and calling attention to proper protocols and procedures. Each year, Town personnel review the Program to determine if any particular aspects of daily operations have changed or new functions have been added (all which are then captured in the next edition of the document). This year's meeting took place on September 14, 2017 and a number of minor comments were made. For example, we were able to eliminate a section dealing with how the Town Clerk formerly had to pass through the Collector's Office to get to her office. The document has been updated and distributed.

*Recommendation:* No further action is necessary.

**H. Complaints**

No items.

**I. Meetings Attended**

(1) Great Marsh ACEC Regional Resource Management Plan Summit (\*)

I moderated the subject Summit in the new Town Hall Auditorium on September 20, 2017. Selectmen O'Donnell and Spinney were also in attendance. The Summit brought together municipal officials and many stakeholders in the Great Marsh Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC). Issues like invasive species, innovative coastal resiliency projects, public access structures, and others are all of interest to the various communities. However, a State-approved Resource Management Plan (RMP) is not a suitable vehicle to affect change in any State regulations beyond limited relief for private docks under Chapter 91. As such, the group is grappling whether the RMP, with all of the work that it will entail, is a worthwhile endeavor. It may be, if each community sees value in the

collaborative nature of the effort, which could be used to at least solidify regional positions to affect change via other processes (like working to change other State regulations).

The group agreed that this effort may need to be picked back up after the Great Marsh Regional Coastal Adaptation Plan (a product of the Super Storm Sandy Grant) is unveiled in November and perhaps after our present coastal resiliency grant produces a Coastal Hazards Atlas and compendium of ongoing work, in the spring. In the meantime, the five communities should work internally to really understand the level of support for an RMP from a variety of local boards, commissions, and officials.

*Recommendation:* **Board discussion as necessary.**

## **J. Final Judgment**

No items.

## **K. Town Meeting, By-Laws, and Regulations**

### (1) Zoning Prohibition Relative to Junk Yards

(\*)

At the last meeting, the Board asked that I look into how the storage of old vehicles owned by an automobile repair facility on Eastern Avenue is regulated (after several complaints were lodged). In discussing this matter further with the Building Inspector and the Chairman of the Planning Board, it appears that the practice is prohibited in the Town. Initially, the Building Inspector had questioned whether the practice was allowed to support the repair business, but has now visited the site to review the situation further.

While the repair business is allowed to have vehicles on the property that are owned by others and are waiting for repairs and, in this case, additional vehicles may be on the property for sale under the owner's Class II dealer's license, the presence of more than two junk vehicles owned by the business does not appear to be allowed under the Town's zoning bylaws. The Building Inspector plans to take this matter up with the owner of the repair business in the near future and excess junk vehicles will likely need to be removed from the property.

*Recommendation:* **Board discussion as necessary.**

### (2) Preliminary Draft of Fall Town Meeting Warrant

I have developed a preliminary draft of the Fall Town Meeting Warrant in accordance with the Board's guidance from the last meeting. Members of the Finance Committee will be in attendance to review.

*Recommendation:* Board review and discussion of this preliminary Fall Town Meeting warrant with the Finance Committee per the posted agenda.

## **L. Legal Issues**

### (1) Recommendations for Management of Town Conservation Land (\*)

As the Board may recall, Town Counsel had been asked to review options for the management of conservation land that the Town presently owns and that the Town may own in the future, via the tax title process. Counsel has now developed recommendations for the Town relative to each of those two categories.

Relative to property already owned by the Town in the care and custody of the Essex Conservation Commission, Counsel looked at a process for allowing a third party to properly manage these areas (since the Conservation Commission feels ill-equipped to do so). It appears that this could be arranged fairly easily, if all parties agree to move in this direction.

Relative to property that the Town could take ownership of via the tax title process, the Conservation Commission has indicated that it is not interested in supporting converting such property to conservation land using the traditional route used in the past. Instead, Counsel looked at a process for acquiring, preserving, and managing this land without involving the Conservation Commission, which also appears to be feasible.

During the initial review of these questions, the Board of Assessors commented that they are amid a process that will verify the location and boundaries of parcels that are already in conservation land status and parcels that could be converted to that status in the future. As such, until the Assessors complete that process, it would not be advisable to pursue third-party management further.

*Recommendation:* **Board discussion as necessary.**

### (2) Recommendations for Revisions to Town Harbor Regulations (\*)

The Board, with the concurrence of the Harbormaster, had asked Town Counsel to review proposed changes to the Essex Harbor Regulations that the Harbormaster had provided to the Board in a draft form. Counsel has now completed that review and the Board should discuss. The Harbormaster will provide any comments he has on Counsel's draft by meeting time. It is important to point out that Counsel's reference to non-criminal disposition of violations of the regulations may require Town Meeting action in November before being put in effect. Also, the Board should review the two existing sections of the Town Bylaws that deal with the Harbormaster's jurisdiction so that these sections may be harmonized with the regulations, both with respect to authority and clarity.

*Recommendation:* **Board review and discussion of Counsel's comments.**

## **M. Grants**

### (1) Mass in Motion – Cape Ann Quarterly Grant Coordination Meeting

I attended the subject meeting on September 12, 2017. The MiM-CA initiative is funded by a State grant which seeks to lower the risk of chronic disease by supporting equitable food access and active living opportunities in our region. Presently, the group is working on developing a “root cause analysis” in order to target the most important factors that detract from overall good health. In Essex, one important issue is the availability of transportation for elderly residents to access full service grocery stores. To that end, the Essex Council on Aging does offer periodic trips to stores. Also, statistics reviewed at the meeting indicate that the rate of hospitalization for hypertension in Essex is double the State average. I have passed along information regarding the group’s present focus to the Board of Health Administrator and to the Council on Aging Director.

*Recommendation:* I will update the Board as necessary.

### (2) Hazard Mitigation Plan Update Quarterly Report

I completed the subject report for the quarter ending September 30, 2017 and submitted it to the Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) during the week of September 18, 2017. The subject grant is just getting started and the report highlights our recent kickoff meeting with MEMA staff and the hiring of the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) as our prime contractor.

*Recommendation:* I will update the Board as necessary.

### (3) Coastal Resiliency Planning Grant Monthly Report

Our contractor for the subject grant, the National Wildlife Federation (NWF) completed a summary of activities under the subject grant for the month of September during the week of September 18, 2017. I reviewed and forwarded the report to personnel at the Massachusetts Office of Coastal Zone Management (CZM). The report featured discussion relative to the recent grant kickoff meeting and NWF’s review of databases and ongoing projects for the Coastal Hazards Atlas.

*Recommendation:* I will update the Board as necessary.

## **N. Emergency Planning**

### (1) Cape Ann Emergency Planning Team Meeting and Site Visit

I attended the subject event on September 19, 2017 at the FEMA training site in Beverly. The meeting was to feature a presentation from MEMA officials relative to disaster recovery. However, officials were busy with planning for possible Hurricane Jose impacts at the time.



I was also able to speak to the group concerning the recently-funded coastal resiliency grant awarded by the Massachusetts Office of Coastal Zone Management. Presently, our grant contractor has agreed to draft up a description of the type of information that members of the Team can provide to help connect coastal resiliency to emergency planning. I will send that around to the group once it is available.

*Recommendation:* No further action is necessary.

## **O. Other Items**

### (1) Town Administrator Vacation Leave

I was out of the office on vacation leave for a portion of September 15, 2017.

*This report is available at [www.essexma.org](http://www.essexma.org) on the morning after any regularly scheduled Essex Board of Selectmen's Meeting.*