



TOWN OF
AMHERST
MASSACHUSETTS

Office of the Town Manager
Phone: (413) 259-3002
townmanager@amherstma.gov

To: Town Council
Fr: Paul Bockelman
Town Manager
Dt: May 16, 2019
Re: Town Manager Report for May 20, 2019

Town Manager Update:

- Coffee with Town Manager: The last Cuppa Joe was on Friday, May 10th with Interim Finance Director Sonia Aldrich at Kelly's Restaurant. We had about ten people there. The next coffee will be on June 14th at Jakes at the Mill with Assistant Town Manager David Ziomek.
- Appointments:
 - I interviewed candidates and will be referring my appointments for the Conservation Commission, Council on Aging, Historical Commission, Human Rights Commission, LSSE Commission, and Local Historic District Commission to the Town Council.
 - Sitting with the designated Town Councilors, I interviewed candidates and will be referring my appointments for the Participatory Budgeting Commission and Ranked Choice Voting Commission to the Town Council.
 - I and the Planning Director sat in on Councilor interviews for the Planning Board and Zoning Board of Appeals.
 - Attached to this memo is UPDATED demographic data for all people who submitted a Community Activity Form (CAF) from December 1, 2018 through May 2, 2019. It lists, verbatim, the information provided by those who chose to answer the demographic questions.
- Community Participation Officers (CPOs):
 - The CPOs organized and worked the neighborhood cleanup day on May 4th. We all appreciate the Town Councilors who volunteered to be the leaders at each of three locations on such a busy Saturday. The clean-up teams collected over 340 pounds of trash and over 100 pounds of recyclables. We were very pleased with this first-time effort and have numerous notes on how to make it better. We are discussing whether to do this twice a year, once in the Fall and once in the Spring.

- CPOs have been attending meetings of the Residents' Advisory Committee. (New motto from one of the Committee members: "Better to do the work than talk about the work that needs to be done!")
- CPOs staffed a table and tent at the Sustainability Festival.
- CPOs participated in the garden party at Butternut Farm with representatives from LSSE and a Town Councilor. This event will help build the relationship with Butternut Farm management and residents.
- CPOs will attend the District 5 Councilor meeting at Butternut Farm on May 23rd.
- CPOs attended the District 4 Councilor meeting at the Bangs Community Center May 13th and did a short promo for boards/committees/commissions.
- CPOs attended the welcome party for the new director of the Amherst Survival Center.
- CPOs were guests on "Byline with Stan Rosenberg" on Amherst Media.
- Town-Gown:
 - Staff are meeting internally and with representatives of the University on a renewal of the Strategic Partnership Agreement negotiations.
 - Communications with Interim President Rosenthal are excellent. The College is holding its commencement on Saturday. It will be admitting only 15 students in the Fall of 2019. Major fundraising is ongoing.
- U.S.Census: The Town Clerk is working to ensure all residents are counted for the United States Census in 2020. She is an active participant in the Pioneer Valley Complete Count Committee organized through the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission.
- Sustainability: The Town has worked with Eversource to secure three additional electric automobile charging stations at no cost to the Town. These stations will be located in the Pray Street parking lot, the Ann Whalen parking lot, and the lower level of the Boltwood garage adjacent to the two existing stations.
- Conservation and Development: The Planning and Inspections Departments offered excellent presentations to the Town Council on the Master Plan and on Zoning.
- Public Safety:
 - The Police Department is working with UMass to review the plan that was put in place for the UMass graduation to determine if there need to be any changes to the traffic plan.
 - The Fire Chief has taken the lead as the Town moves to review its operations to comply with OSHA standards, which now applies to municipalities.
- Human Resources:
 - Human Resources is busy recruiting for summer positions and for full-time positions.
 - The Town is in competition with the City of Pittsfield to see which community can take the most steps. Employees in each community were given FitBits and the step totals are chronicled weekly. The competition lasts for two months and there are prizes for the winning community. The program is sponsored by our health insurer, MIIA.
- Public Works:
 - The Town has received national recognition from the National Complete Streets Coalition for its Complete Streets policy. The Town's policy was graded as one of

the top ten policies in the nation. This is especially notable as the Coalition adopted a new framework to grade policies that put a greater emphasis on social equity and implementation. Other communities recognized include Des Moines, Iowa; Milwaukee, Wisconsin; and Baltimore, Maryland.

- The Town will be recognized for its continued commitment to the care, maintenance, and planting of trees by the Department of Conservation and Development. The Town invests significantly in its urban tree canopy, which works every day providing innumerable benefits to the residents of Amherst.
 - The Town has received the Governor's proclamation for Drinking Water Week. Amy Rusiecki, Assistant Superintendent of Public Works, is the president of the Massachusetts Water Works Association and was honored as the recipient of the proclamation.
 - Next week is Public Works week and the Town will be spotlighting the different departments at DPW to thank them for their work.
 - Roadwork is nearing completion on West Bay Road and East Pleasant Street. Major work on Main Street will be initiated after the graduation season so as not to interfere with local business owners. Work in Amherst Woods continues.
 - Work on the multi-use path on East Hadley Road has begun. One of the goals is to create a safe route for users to get to the newly renovated Groff Park.
- We have begun receiving notices from vendors informing us that prices are being increased in response to the increase in tariff by the President. One vendor states: "As a result, price increases by many of our major vendors will be implemented and will become effective as soon as Wednesday, May 15, 2019. We have not been given specific information, but the increase will likely range from 10% to 25% from current costs." Decisions in Washington definitely have a direct impact on the cost of doing business for the Town of Amherst.
 - Community Services:
 - LSSE: Working with the School Department, LSSE will again provide free breakfast and lunch to all day camp and sports program participants. Lunch will also be at Mill River Recreation Area via the UMass Food Trucks program. LSSE is also working with the School Department to ensure that no children are turned away from the School's summer program due to lack of resources.
 - Senior Center: The retirement reception for Director Nancy Pagano will be held on June 14th. I hope you can all attend!
 - Health Department: The Health Department is working closely with the School Department educating the community about communicable diseases, especially measles which is one of the most contagious diseases. The Public Health nurse presented at the last Regional School District meeting. The Town and School District have established a good integrated system that has maintained excellent public health in the Town.

Major Capital Projects:

- North Common Restoration/Main Street Parking Lot: On hold.
- Groff Park: The play structures and equipment have been received. Work has begun and we are hoping the project will be completed by July.
- DPW/Fire: Developing options for a site for the DPW.
- Schools: Awaiting word from the MSBA, which is due in December.

Project Update:

- East Street School: With the Council's vote on the East Street School, we are preparing a Request For Proposals, which will be issued within the next few weeks.
- Station Road Bridge:
 - The Town submitted plans to the Department of Transportation on December 20th for the proposed temporary bridge. DOT has reviewed and returned comments with the latest comments coming from the hydraulic and design sections on March 25th. They state "Boston Bridge has reviewed your concept and considers it acceptable at this time." This acceptance is conditioned on addressing comments made previously by DOT. They note that the geotechnical report is still being reviewed in Boston. A bridge has been identified and has been purchased.
 - We have completed the bidding and procurement of a new bridge and have purchased a bridge. Fabrication and delivery of the bridge should happen in the next couple of weeks. We remain hopeful that the bridge can be obtained and installed by the end of May.
- Downtown Parking: Parking study is progressing. We anticipate a near-final draft in the coming weeks and the second public meeting later in June. The issue will likely come to the Town Council after Labor Day.
- Puffer's Pond Parking and State Street Changes: DPW has begun the work to change the direction of State Street, create a turnaround area, and rationalize the parking around Puffers Pond.
- Mill Street Bridge: We anticipate the State will open the Mill Street Bridge in the very near future. There will be a ribbon cutting and Town Councilors will be invited once we know the date from the State. Once the State completes its work on the bridge – and this is strictly a bridge project for the State – the contractor will remove the barriers they installed. Town barriers will remain. Once the State clears the site, the Town will move in to install a pathway and adjust signage.
- North Amherst Library: I have integrated the proposed changes into the Town's capital plan in a future year. A group of residents has expressed interest in raising funds privately to help pay for this project.
- Downtown Recreation Working Group: The final report should be coming from the consultants by the end of the month. The Town and schools have received a lot of comments on the conditions of the fields, which have a hard time sustaining extended use due to the very wet conditions.

- Dog Park: The Town's grant application to the Stanton Foundation was rated very highly. We anticipate funding so that the project will go out to bid in July. Council action may be needed to permit construction of parking within the public way.
- Solar on the Landfill:
 - The timeline for the project is attached to the end of this report.
 - The company has run into an unforeseen engineering delay that may delay this schedule several weeks.
 - Eversource conduct a detailed impact study which can take several months.
 - Environmental permitting is moving forward. There may be some coordination with the Dog Park project to expedite permitting.
 - Site studies have confirmed the site/cap is suitable to hold the racking systems.
 - The Kestrel Land Trust Board voted to approve being the conservation restriction holder.
- Medical Marijuana: Herbology on University Drive will be before the ZBA on Thursday for its special permit for both medical and recreational marijuana stores.
- Recreational Marijuana:
 - Next round for retail were announced in April with proposals due by June 1st. I will use the same process as last time with the goal of signing HCAs (if any) in July.
 - A cultivation of marijuana establishment has been proposed for 555 Belchertown Road. A community outreach meeting was held on April 10th. The project is being reviewed for a host community agreement and will be working its way through permitting.
 - RISE on Meadow Street opened on May 12th and there were no incidents or traffic concerns.
 - The Town has been listed as one of the first communities to serve as a pilot for social consumption. The Cannabis Control Commission voted to authorize a limited number of communities across the state to host marijuana establishments in which adults ages 21 and older could consume cannabis on site. Licenses for primary-use locations and events sanctioned by a municipality would be exclusively available to licensed Microbusinesses and Craft Marijuana Cooperatives as well as certified Economic Empowerment Applicants and Social Equity Applicants for an initial period of two years. The pilot would permit licensees to operate in up to 12 municipalities statewide. North Adams, Amherst, Springfield, Provincetown, and Somerville, which participated in a Commission-led working group on social consumption, would be among those able to opt-in to participate.

Finances and Budget:

- Audit: The audit has been approved.
- Amherst Community Television: We will be meeting with Amherst Community Television to discuss cable casting and recording Town Council meetings and committee meetings.

- FY19 Budget: We anticipate closing out FY19 with a balanced budget. There will need to be some transfers between departments to cover the snow and ice deficit of \$114,622. We will review these actions with the Finance Committee in June. The full Town Council will need to vote on these transfers.
- FY20 Budget: Finance staff finalized work on the FY20 budget. I will be giving a detailed presentation at the Finance Committee's public hearing on May 21st.
- Community Service Funds: An RFP to establish a summer drop-in program at Groff Park has been issued. This grant would go to a local nonprofit organization.
- PVTA Funding: I have agreed to a contract with the PVTA to extend the service with later runs on two routes (30 and 31) from May 10th to September 2nd. The cost to the Town is \$12,931.
- Room Occupancy Tax: On the Town Council agenda on May 20th.

Upcoming Meetings and Events:

- May 21st at 6:30 p.m. – Finance Committee public hearing on FY20 Budget (posted as a full Town Council meeting) – **Note: public hearing to be held in Bangs Community Center**
- May 23rd at 2:00 p.m. – Finance Committee – Capital Plan and CPAC (posted as a full Town Council meeting)
- May 27th – Memorial Day Holiday
- May 28th at 2:00 p.m. – Finance Committee
- June 3rd at 6:30 p.m. – Town Council meeting
- June 10th at 6:30 p.m. – Public Forum on the Capital Improvement Plan
- June 17th at 6:30 p.m. – Town Council meeting
- July 4th – Independence Day Holiday

Other events:

- May 22-26 – Town Fair
- June 13-15 – Taste of Amherst
- June 21 – Community Band concert
- July 18 – BID Summer concert series
- July 25 – BID Summer concert series
- July 26 – Community Band concert
- August 1 – BID Summer concert series
- August 8 – BID Summer concert series
- August 16 – Community Band concert
- August 27 – First Day Celebration
- September 19 – BID Block Party

Community Activity Forms

Demographic Information as Reported Voluntarily by the Applicants

December 1, 2018 through May 2, 2019
[Updated May 16, 2019]

Community Activity Forms (CAFs) were submitted by 131 people from December 1, 2018 through May 2, 2019.

Of those people, 116 people filled out some or all of the optional demographic data.

A review of those 131 CAFs showed the following information:

- Age (113 answered this category):
 - 10 self-reported in the 18-29 age range;
 - 16 self-reported in the 30-39 age range;
 - 22 self-reported in the 40-49 age range;
 - 16 self-reported in the 50-59 age range;
 - 27 self-reported in the 60-69 age range;
 - 18 self-reported in the 70-79 age range;
 - 4 self-reported in the 80+ age range;
 - 18 left the field blank.

- Gender: (111 answered this category):
 - 56 self-identified as male;
 - 54 self-identified as female;
 - 1 self-identified as a transgender man;
 - 20 left the field blank.

- Racial/Ethnic Background: (94 answered this category):
 - 70 self-reported as White/Caucasian;
 - 1 self-reported as white/caucasian (sic)
 - 2 self-reported as Caucasian (sic)
 - 1 self-reported as Caucasian/Jewish/members of the JCA
 - 1 self-reported as English
 - 1 self-reported as European
 - 1 self-reported as Northern European
 - 1 self-reported as white/non-Hispanic
 - 1 self-reported as white Austrian Romanian Jewish Earthling
 - 1 self-reported as white//Dutch/Scandinavian
 - 1 self-reported as white, Jewish
 - 1 self-reported as Ukrainian/Bavarian
 - 1 self-reported as Asian

- 1 self-reported as Black
 - 2 self-reported as African-American;
 - 1 self-reported as Hispanic/Latinx Descent;
 - 1 self-reported as Puerto Rican/Cuban
 - 1 self-reported as Puerto Rican/Cuban/ raised in MA
 - 2 self-reported as Indian-American;
 - 1 self-reported as Asian-American;
 - 1 self-reported as Salvadoran;
 - 1 self-reported as Australian
 - 37 left the field blank.
-
- Languages Spoken: (96 answered this category):
 - 46 self-reported being proficient or familiarity with one or more of the following languages (in addition to English):

- 26 in Spanish;
- 11 in French;
- 3 in German;
- 3 in Italian;
- 2 in Arabic;
- 2 in Bosnian;
- 2 in Some Sign Language;
- 2 in Croatian;
- 2 in Japanese;
- 2 in Latin;
- 2 in Russian;
- 2 in Serbian;
- 1 in really bad French;
- 1 in Armenian;
- 1 in Farsi;
- 1 in Hebrew;
- 1 in Portuguese (rudimentary);
- 1 in Science;
- 1 in Yiddish;
- 1 in Swahili;
- 1 in Arabic (proficient)
- 14 multi-lingual (3 or more languages);
- 85 left the field blank.