



To: Town Council
Fr: Paul Bockelman
Town Manager
Dt: September 9, 2021
Re: Town Manager Report for September 13, 2021

All Town Manager Reports are available on the Town's website here:
<https://www.amherstma.gov/Archive.aspx?AMID=240>

Town Manager Update:

- Top Line Updates:
 - Block Party: The Business Improvement District's Block Party scheduled for September 17th has been canceled. The BID consulted with public health experts as well as businesses and community members, and determined that while they were confident that being outdoors without masks is safe, they did not want to build an event that could be responsible for any rise in numbers and therefore create a stricter mask mandate or gathering restrictions. Also, they did not want to add to the stress of its small businesses by asking them to staff outdoor tents while keeping their establishments open.
 - COVID-19:
 - Case counts:
 - Cases continue to rise, primarily in the college-aged population.
 - Daily case counts along with 14-day average incidence rate are provided here: <https://www.amherstcovid19.org/>
 - The Health Department has tightened its indoor mask requirement as of September 9th.
 - In an email to University students on September 9th, the University stated:
 - *The uptick in cases is predominantly among off-campus students and has been connected to indoor social activities, including visits to crowded downtown bars and attendance at parties. While there is presently no university prohibition on students gathering to socialize, we want to remind you that the safest place to gather is outdoors with limited contacts, and if you do get together indoors, you should do so wearing a mask. With virtually the entire UMass*

community vaccinated, indoor mask wearing and avoiding indoor un-masked crowds are critical additional steps you must take to protect yourselves and those around you from breakthrough infections.

- *We also recognize that there is still significant risk of transmission, even outdoors, if social distancing is not possible. It is with this risk in mind that the decision has been made to limit tailgating at this Saturday's home football game only to those with valid game-day parking passes. Campus organized, student game-day activities in lot 11, next to the stadium, have been cancelled for Saturday's game to minimize the density of students gathering prior to kick-off.*
- *In a near-fully vaccinated population such as ours, positive tests results are predominantly breakthrough cases. The hospitalization rate in Massachusetts among breakthrough cases is just 0.02%, and on our campus there have been no COVID-related hospitalizations to date. The vaccines are working as designed — they prevent severe illness and hospitalizations. While in our planning process we anticipated case numbers in the range we are seeing this week and have prepared for it, we nonetheless are concerned about any increase in cases. For this reason, we ask you to please do your part to ensure the health and wellbeing of your fellow students and every member of the UMass community.*
- Vaccination: The Town's vaccination rate, as reported by the State, is misleadingly low.
 - We have spoken to the State Epidemiologist who has confirmed this. As a result, the Board of Health has recalculated the vaccination rate for the Town and it is 76%
 - Let me explain. During the Fall of 2020 and the Spring of 2021, many students were living away from Amherst and learning remotely because of pandemic restrictions at the colleges. They received COVID vaccinations where they were living and were counted in the percentage of vaccinated people in the communities where they received the vaccination. It makes sense that students learning remotely would have given their hometowns as their place of residence when receiving the vaccine and that they would be counted as residents of those other cities or towns.
 - However, most students were in fact already counted as Amherst residents for census purposes.
 - Therefore, the resulting impression is that there is quite a large number of college age people living in Amherst (according to the census) who are unvaccinated. This incorrectly affects the rate of COVID vaccinations in Amherst, giving us the low percentage.
 - It has been recommended that, in collecting vaccination data, we should use the state's average vaccination rate percentages for those age groups. The data shown on the Town's website reflects what would happen if

Amherst had the same percentage for the vaccinated residents in the typical college age groups as the state.

- The spreadsheet and supporting assumptions and documentation can be found here: <https://www.amherstcovid19.org/vaccine> and a more detailed analysis can be found here: <https://amherstma.gov/DocumentCenter/View/57698/9-2-21-Amherst-Vaccine-Rate-Calculation->
- Testing:
 - The University of Massachusetts continues to provide testing for members of the community. It has relocated the testing site from the Mullens Center to the Campus Center. They are encouraging people to utilize the new self-test drop-off system. More information may be found here: <https://www.umass.edu/coronavirus/coronavirus/covid-19-testing>
- School Vaccination Requirement:
 - At its meeting on Wednesday night, the Regional School Committee unanimously agreed to inquire about whether the Health Department was considering adding the COVID-19 vaccine to the list of vaccines required for students to attend school. This is consistent with the [School Committee Policy](#) on vaccines, which states, “No child shall be admitted to school except upon presentation of a physician’s certificate that the child has been successfully immunized against diphtheria, pertussis, tetanus, measles, and poliomyelitis *and such other communicable diseases as may be specified from time to time by the department of public health.*”
 - The Regional School Committee was raising this concern due to the rising numbers of positive cases of school-aged children, both in Massachusetts and nationally. We are seeing other districts and the [Massachusetts Teachers Association](#) supports taking this action.
 - If such a requirement is recommended, the Health Department will need to determine if the requirement should include all eligible children or only those old enough to take a vaccine that has been fully approved by the FDA.
 - At its meeting on Thursday, the Board of Health voted to require the vaccination. More details to come.
- University/College Relations: All campuses have returned to fully in person teaching and learning for all students.
 - Amherst College:
 - Classes began on August 30th and the semester ends on December 7th.
 - Vaccination was required for students returning to campus. For those students who do not have access to full vaccination with an approved vaccine prior to their arrival, the Health Center helped with obtaining the vaccine in the Amherst area upon the student's arrival. There were more students returning to campus than there typically are, so the College will be making some adjustments to the housing stock, including converting some singles to double occupancy rooms and some shared space into residence rooms.

- After arrival testing, all students are tested two times a week. Faculty and staff who work on campus the better part of three or more days will be tested two times per week as well; others will be tested one time per week. The College anticipates moving to weekly testing after September 13, depending on campus and local health conditions. Initially, all members of the community must wear masks indoors at all times unless they are alone in a private space (defined as fully enclosed). This protocol will be revisited for vaccinated individuals once they have established that they have not begun the term with significant spread. Community members who are not yet fully vaccinated or are exempted must wear masks outdoors when a distance of six feet cannot be maintained. All community members need to wear masks when part of a gathering of more than 25 people if a distance of at least three feet cannot be maintained.
 - Visitors will be allowed access only to outdoors on campus, and only visitors who are part of the College’s testing protocol and have negative test results will be allowed into buildings. Campus buildings will be accessible by key card only.
 - Hampshire College:
 - Classes began on September 1st and the semester ends on December 10th.
 - All students were required to be fully vaccinated before their arrival. Students who received their vaccine in Massachusetts did not need to send anything. All Massachusetts vaccine information feeds into Health and Counseling Services electronic health records automatically. Students who receive any of their vaccine doses in a state other than Massachusetts or internationally were required to submit a copy of the vaccine record after their vaccines are complete.
 - Everyone must wear a face covering indoors on the Hampshire College campus, except when alone in a private office or private room with the door closed. This requirement applies to everyone, regardless of vaccination status. Further guidance for specific venues and activities may follow as appropriate.
 - University of Massachusetts at Amherst:
 - Classes began on September 1st and the semester ends on December 8th.
 - All students were required to be fully vaccinated. Students were required to login to the UMass Patient Portal to upload their records.
 - All members of the UMass community — students, faculty and staff — as well as contractors and visitors are required to wear face coverings in public indoor spaces on the UMass Amherst campus. The requirements applies to vaccinated and non-vaccinated individuals. Face coverings must be worn in nearly all indoor public spaces. Face masks may be removed only while eating in dining areas. Face coverings are not required: in personal offices when alone; in research spaces when alone; when eating in the dining halls or other campus eateries; in residence hall rooms; outdoors; for children under the age of 2; and for anyone with a medical condition that prevents the use of a face covering. Masks are not required outdoors. The campus will re-evaluate the face covering requirement in mid-September. Students and employees who are vaccinated are not required to test regularly for COVID-19. Students granted medical or religious exemptions are required to be tested twice weekly if they are teaching, conducting research, learning or visiting on campus. Faculty and staff granted medical or religious

exemptions are required to be tested weekly. Optional asymptomatic testing is available to all members of the campus community and the general public at their discretion. Symptomatic testing is available through University Health Services. In addition, individuals can obtain a COVID test kit from the Public Health Promotion Center, conduct a test at home and then drop off the kit at designated kiosks across campus. Details will be forthcoming.

- Visitors are welcome on campus. All visitors must follow the current UMass Amherst face-covering policy. Events at the Mullins Center, the Fine Arts Center and other performance venues will return to normal activity following recommended public health protocols and guidelines. Multiple smaller events will be offered to allow flexibility for any public health and safety COVID-19 guidance.
- Racial Equity:
 - Community Safety Working Group: The Working Group held a public forum on September 9th to hear public input on the implementation of the community responder program.
 - Reparations: I have submitted names for the Town Council's consideration for service on the African Heritage Reparation Assembly. I thank the interview team of Barbara Love, Sid Ferreira, and Keisha Dennis for devoting the time and energy to interviewing all of the applicants and make their recommendation.
- Outreach:
 - Community Fair: The Community Fair was held on August 25-29 on the Town Common. The Building Commissioner worked with the Amherst Farmers Market to accommodate both events on the Town Common. With the Community Fair, the Farmers Market relocated to the north end of the Town Common and utilized the row of parking on the south side of the Spring Street lot.
 - Community Breakfast: The University held the annual Community Breakfast on August 31st at the new Student Union.

Departments:

- Finance:
 - Community Preservation Act grant applications process for FY23 funding is now open and will close on October 1st at 4:30 PM. The application can be found at the following link: <https://www.amherstma.gov/3511/Propose-a-Project>
 - The Community Preservation Act Committee will ask the relevant boards, commissions and committees for their input on proposals and encourages applicants to consult with them before submission. Typically, we refer open space proposals to the Conservation Commission, recreation proposals to LSSE, historic preservation proposals to the Historical Commission, and community housing proposals to the Amherst Municipal Affordable Housing Trust and the Amherst Housing Authority.
 - The Committee plans to schedule presentations of projects at our meetings in October and November.
- Public Works:
 - Sewer Line Repair – August 11th on Nutting Avenue:
 - Excellent work by our public works employees sometimes goes unrecognized. But I wanted to share an example of the great work our crews do every day. I'm going

to get detailed here because I think it is important to fully understand what it takes to maintain our utilities.

- On August 2, 2021 during a preventative maintenance sewer line inspection with the town sewer camera, the wastewater department found a very large problem area that was allowing large amounts of ground water into the sewer system and posed potential collapse issues.
- The wireless transmitter on the town sewer camera was used to locate the exact position of the camera near the major pipe issue at the ground surface and a large sink hole was found. In addition to the very large hole, there was another hole that was a bit smaller with a void that likely would lead to the eventual formation of another sink hole at the ground surface.
- The line was initially inspected as preventative maintenance to check its condition because it is almost 110 years old and is made of vitrified clay (VC). Older clay pipe is prone to fractures, root intrusion, and other issues which can lead to sewer blockages, backups, and overflows. Older clay pipe is also often subject to high amounts of Inflow and Infiltration (I&I) which is non-metered water entering the sewage system. I&I and other non-metered flow in to the sewer system costs a lot of money because it must be pumped and treated and so it adds costs in terms of electricity for pumping, wear and tear on equipment, and adds to chemical treatment costs, etc.
- Time was sensitive for this issue because there was a sink hole forming at the surface and staff realized that the area would soon get busy once the students started moving back. A lot of prep work was required over multiple days to complete this job efficiently and effectively with major collaboration between the Wastewater Department, Highway Department, and Engineering Department of the town DPW.
- First, a few missing/hidden sewer manholes had to be found. One so it could be plugged and the other so it could be used as part of a pump around to isolate the section of pipe that had to be replaced all while maintaining sewer service and flow. The Highway Department helped to find the first sewer manhole by helping the wastewater department clear a huge brush area that had overgrown the manhole that would need to be plugged. The large hydraulic boom mower was needed to clear this heavily overgrown area. The wastewater department then had to use the sewer camera and locator to find and dig up a sewer manhole that may have been buried for decades in a wooded area by a brook.
- New pipe material was ordered and the site was prepared before digging could start. Dig Safe was contacted and all utilities were marked.
- The driveway area was milled the day before the dig.
- On August 11th the replacement project and digging started. The day of the dig required a lot of hard work and was one of the hottest days in August, but the project was time sensitive and needed to be done. A large trench was dug and the Highway Department replaced about 80 ft. of 100+ year old clay pipe with brand new SDR-35 PVC sewer pipe. This replacement will hopefully last for another 100+ years and should provide significant costs savings due to the reduction in inflow and infiltration it will attain.

- Kudos to the team effort brought to this project by all members of the Public Works Department.
 - Shade Trees:
 - The Shade Tree Committee and Town staff will be planting new trees near the Bangs Community Center where the construction happened that took out some significant trees on September 11th from 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 noon. All volunteers are welcome.
 - The group will also be planting on North Pleasant Street to replace trees that have failed.
 - Northampton Road: The State Department of Transportation intends to begin the reconstruction of Northampton Road from South Pleasant Street to University Drive. This will be an extensive construction project that includes replacement of Town utilities, relocation of poles, installation of a multi-use path, and other work. This project will be disruptive to vehicular traffic and will go on for a long time. You will likely see some preliminary work (pavement markings, tree trimming/removal, etc.) in the coming weeks.
 - Paving: The Town’s paving contractor will return one more time to place the final coat on Snell Street, Henry Street, and Bridge Street. The contractor will also be paving the new basketball courts at the Mill River Recreation area. Line painting will follow this work later in September.
 - Waterline Extension to Leverett: Work has begun to extend the water line from North Amherst into the Town of Leverett.
- Town Clerk:
 - Census: The Districting Advisory Board is meeting weekly to consider mapping out 15 precincts, in addition to a 12 precinct option (so that there are an even number of precincts in each district). The Town Clerk and I.T. staff are supporting the work of the Board.
 - Elections: The Town Clerk has posted the deadlines for nomination papers, etc. on the Town’s website here: <https://www.amherstma.gov/1079/Running-for-Elected-Office>
 - Early Voting: The Town Clerk is recommending that the Town Council vote to hold in-person early voting to be located in the First Floor Meeting Room of Town Hall for the following dates and times:
 - Monday, October 25, 2021; 8:30 am to 4:00 pm
 - Tuesday, October 26, 2021; 8:30 am to 4:00 pm
 - Wednesday, October 27, 2021; 8:30 am to 4:00 pm
 - Thursday, October 28, 2021; 8:30 am to 8:00 pm
 - Friday, October 29, 2021; 8:30 am to 4:00 pm.
 - Candidate Statements: In accordance with Charter Section 7.6, “...the Town Clerk shall email all persons who filed nomination papers with the Board of Registrars for the elected offices outlined in Paragraph 3 above a URL that shall be used to submit the Candidate Statement as defined in Paragraph 2 above.” See Policy here: <https://www.amherstma.gov/DocumentCenter/View/48810/Policy-on-the-Publication-of-Candidate-Statements-FINAL>
- Sustainability:
 - Energy Conservation: Utilizing a State grant, the Town changed lighting in the Town Hall, Police Station, and Munson Memorial Library. The project replaced over 800

ballasts and tubes with high-efficiency ballasts and LED lights. We project a 30% savings in energy use as a result of this change.

- Economic Development:

- Amherst Center Cultural District:

- The Amherst Center Cultural District (ACCD) has been renewed for 5 more years by the governing Board of the Mass Cultural Council. The Council voted unanimously last week to redesignate Amherst's district.
- The Amherst Center Cultural District has members representing the town center's cultural entities such as the Emily Dickinson Museum, the Mead Art Museum at Amherst College, the Jones Library, the Amherst Cinema as well as town committees such as the Public Art Commission, and Amherst Cultural Council. The Amherst Business Improvement District (BID) manages the ACCD.
- For the past 5 years, the Amherst Center Cultural District has used the funds to help promote, connect and engage artists, create a district-wide map, and hold Celebration of the Arts events. In the past 2 years, annual funds were used to get money directly to artists during the pandemic. In 2020, the ACCD held a COVID-19 Artist Contest, open to musicians, poets, dancers, storytellers and multi-dimensional artists with submissions reflecting the impact of the pandemic.
- This past summer, funds were used for the Windows Into Art display throughout town and the live Celebration of the Arts on the town common with artists and artisans displaying their work and performers on stage representing performative winners of the COVID-19 Artist Contest.
- Funds also went to the Public Art Commission directed installation of Amherst-resident Benjamin Cowden's Interstitial Zigzags at the new Portal Gallery at Boltwood Plaza. The public is welcome to attend this opening reception at the Portal Gallery, to be held on September 10th from 6 – 7 pm.
- Here is a link to the [Amherst Center Cultural District](#)

- GreaterAmherst.com campaign: The Amherst Area Chamber of Commerce and Amherst Business Improvement District launched a state-funded marketing campaign to attract tourists to Amherst and surrounding communities.

- The "What's Next" initiative, along with the greateramherst.com website, is being launched using an \$116,655 state Travel and Tourism Recovery Grant.
- The campaign builds on the Town's "Destination: Amherst" initiative to improve the downtown area.
- The grant money is paying for increased staffing at the Visitor Information Center and a marketing initiative, put together by Tigerweb, an Amherst-based marketing company.

- Adventure into Amherst: The Business Improvement District and Chamber of Commerce sponsored the annual "Adventure into Amherst" on August 28th as a promotion to college students to explore downtown Amherst.

- Cannabis: We have been informed that Rise is modifying its operations at its location on Meadow Street by focusing exclusively on sales of medical marijuana. Rise operates a co-located Marijuana Treatment Center at 169 Meadow Street, on the same Premises as the adult use marijuana retailer. This is being done so the business can purchase a different retail operation. Rise ceased all adult use cannabis sales and operations on August 27th.

- Licensing: The Board of License Commissioners is considering the idea of prorating fees for liquor licenses depending on when they come in during the year. Enacting this policy would be beneficial to businesses seeking to purchase a liquor license during the year but would have a bit of a negative impact on the Town's revenue.
- Band Shell: The Downtown Amherst Foundation continues to develop plans for a band shell on the South Common. They will be bringing the conceptual design to the Town Council in the near future.
- Concerts on the Common: The Business Improvement District has held four concerts on the Town Common, all with alcohol service. All were well attended and brought in a large crowd, many of whom purchased food from downtown restaurants to eat as they enjoyed the concerts.
- Block Party: The Business Improvement District Block Party is now being planned for September 17th. Note the change of date.
- Public Safety:
 - Fire Department:
 - The Town has filled the two current vacancies with strong candidates who will be starting their duties in September. Both have excellent paramedic backgrounds. The two new firefighters will be sworn into on September 13th.
 - Four additional firefighter/EMTs are on duty to support the Department's response to the Covid-19 pandemic.
 - Community Responders:
 - The Town is seeking funding from the Massachusetts Department of Public Health's Equitable Approaches to Public Safety (EAPS) grant program to support the Community Responder initiative.
 - Police Department:
 - The Town is recruiting strong candidates for the Police Department and one candidate has been interviewed and offered a position.
- Human Resources/Human Rights:
 - The Town is experiencing a very large amount of change among staff right now. Coming out of the pandemic, we see staff making important work/life decisions that may have been forestalled or accelerated by the pandemic.
 - The Director of Human Resources and I met with the Personnel Board to discuss the turnover at the department head level. While each of the departures has its own story, we are investigating if there are patterns that might identify things that need to be fixed in our leadership, supervision, work culture, etc. All employees are asked to meet with Human Resources for an exit interview. Additional follow-up interviews have been conducted several months after the departure. Human Resources presented several strategies to the Personnel Board including: continuing with exit interviews adjusted to seek out patterns; "stay" interviews to interview people who have been hired and decided to stay working for the Town; formalizing a mentoring program so that new department heads – and others – are not overwhelmed by the new job; and other support techniques to support leaders in their positions. Constructive feedback and new ideas were provided by members of the Personnel Board.
 - I have submitted an appointment for the Recreation Director which the Town Council will review at its meeting on Monday.

- We continue to work on filling the Health Director and Director of Senior Services positions. I have appointed Jennifer Brown to serve as the Temporary Health Director and have engaged former Health Director Julie Federman to provide additional guidance and support during this intense time. I have appointed Helen McMillan to serve as the Temporary Director of Senior Services.
- Community Services:
 - Health: See above.
 - Senior Center:
 - Age and Dementia Friendly Community:
 - The Town’s Senior Center and Planning Department are working together to secure support from the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission to identify the Town as an “Age and Dementia Friendly Community”, a designation that was included in the previous Town Manager’s budget presentation.
 - The Town Manager will designate a working group to develop an implementation plan.
 - Funding is being provided by the Tufts Health Plan Foundation through the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission.
 - Unhoused Population:
 - Attended regional meeting of municipal leaders today on Zoom to discuss current state of homelessness in the region. Broad discussion of options as winter approaches but concerns raised about influx of new people and uptick in violent behaviors.
 - The new Homelessness and Rehousing Task Force report is being prepared and should be finalized in the next couple of weeks.
 - A location for the congregate shelter operated by Craigs Doors has been identified. The property owner is reviewing the request and we are hopeful this new location will be available prior to the opening of the shelter on November 1st.
- Information Technology (I.T.):
 - I-Net: We continue to drive to have the project completed by October 15th.
 - Remote Meetings: The I.T. Department continues to work on technology and procedures for conducting in-person, fully remote, and hybrid meetings. Hybrid (Zoom and in-person) can only be held in the Town Room due to the required equipment. Additional staff will be needed to support the operation of these meetings.
 - Reprecincting: Town I.T. staff are providing important technical support to the Districting Advisory Committee.
- Conservation and Development:
 - Affordable Housing:
 - East Street School/Belchertown Road: The Request for Proposals is being finalized and is expected to be issued for these two sites shortly. We anticipate serious interest from non-profit affordable housing developers in this area.
 - Strong Street: The Affordable Housing Trust is exploring a Town-owned site on Strong Street as a new location for affordable housing.
 - Zoning: Here is the Planning Website on the zoning amendments currently being considered: <https://www.amherstma.gov/3603/2021-Zoning-Amendments>



- Conservation: Town staff designed and constructed new trailhead parking for Sweet Alice Conservation Area on Bay Road. The parking area now provides easy access to trails leading to the Mt. Holyoke Range State Park. Funds are from the Town’s Community Preservation Act.

Delegated Authority:

- Short-Term Event Uses of Town Commons:
 - August 25-30; Community Fair (shared with the Farmers Market on August 29)
- Short-Term Parking Requests: None
- Short-Term Road or Sidewalk Closures:
 - ~~September 17; 1:00 – 9:30 p.m.; North Pleasant Street from Main/Amity Streets to Triangle Street; Amherst Business Improvement District Block Party Canceled~~
- Other:
 - September 10; 6:00 – 7:00 p.m.; Boltwood Plaza; Public Art Commission art opening of “Portal Gallery”

Major Capital Projects:

- Jones Library:
 - On August 19, 2021, the Hampshire Superior Court (Carey, J.), issued two rulings: one vacating its earlier expedited scheduling order and one denying the plaintiffs’ motion for preliminary injunction. The Court’s rulings were based on the Town Council’s August 2, 2021 vote to place a question concerning the Jones Library renovation project on the ballot for the November 2, 2021 election.

- Although the plaintiffs objected to the form of the Council’s question, the Court found that “the question approved by the Town Council will appear on the ballot, and will provide the outcome the plaintiffs aim to attain through the requested preliminary injunction and what they sought in signing the Voter Veto Petition: placement of the library renovation measure before the voters of Amherst.” Although the Court did not directly address the merits of the plaintiffs’ claims, it found that the plaintiffs will suffer no irreparable harm if the November 2, 2021 election proceeds with the Town Council’s question on the ballot.
- Through the orders issued on August 19, 2021, the case is returned to the original Tracking Order issued by the Court which established deadlines of June 26, 2023 for the completion of discovery, July 26, 2023 for the service of motions for summary judgment, and July 5, 2024 for final resolution of the case. In the meantime, there is no judicial order which would prevent the Town from moving forward with the project or the November 2, 2021 ballot question.
- As of today, no appeal of the Court’s August 19, 2021 has been filed.
- The Town filed a cross-motion for summary judgment, arguing that the Court should enter judgment for the Town. The status of the court’s consideration of the summary judgment materials is uncertain at this time.
- **DPW Building/Fire Building:** Staff are exploring multiple options for a new site for the Department of Public Works, including the Town-owned Ruxton site.
- **Schools:** The MSBA designer selection process requires the Request for Services (RFS) be advertised in the local newspaper. The Town advertised it in multiple locations but mistakenly did not advertise it in the newspaper. The deadline for submitting designer applications has been extended until September 9, 2021 so that the RFS can be advertised. We have had significant interest in this project from a wide variety of designers. We are now scheduled for designer application review at the MSBA Designer Selection Panel on November 2nd, and interviews on November 16th.

Projects Update:

- **Kendrick Park Playground:** We held a wonderful ribbon-cutting ceremony that was well-attended and populated by dozens of children.
- **Dog Park:** The weather has delayed the construction of this project.
- **Performing Arts Shell on the Town Common:** It sounds like this proposal will be coming to the Town Council for a “first look” in the near future.
- **North Common Restoration/Main Street Parking Lot:** Awaiting action from Congress.
- **Hickory Ridge:** A Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILOT) agreement is being negotiated with the property owner for the solar that is proposed for the site. The solar project and its final approval by the State is the major issue still in play for this project. We anticipate closing on the project this Fall.
- **North Amherst Library:**
 - We are developing construction documents and have funding available through bidding. I anticipate construction documents will be completed by the end of September with bidding to take 6-8 weeks after that.
 - The project page is now up and available for public comment. It can be found here: <https://engageamherst.org/north-amherst-library-project>

- Pomeroy Village MassWorks Grant: The Town Council approved the development of plans for a roundabout at this intersection. Town staff are working on drawings and will return to the Town Council in the near future with plans that are 25% complete.
- Solar on the Landfill: The “real” construction work is scheduled for August, along with the fence around the Southern Landfill.
- Belchertown Road/East Street School: Town staff are preparing an RFP that will be issued by the end shortly. We anticipate a fair amount of interest from non-profits in this opportunity to create additional affordable housing in Town.
- Downtown Improvements:
 - Pleasant Walkway: The Pleasant Walkway that connects North Pleasant Street with the Bangs Parking Lot is nearing completion.
 - Bangs Center Ramp: A new, grant-funded ADA ramp at the Bangs Community Center is being installed now. Concrete for the new ramp and repaired steps is being poured today. The ramp is located south of the Bangs Community Center and north of Johnny’s. It will provide access from the upper Boltwood parking lot to the Musante Health Center, Clark House, and the courtyard.
 - Crosswalks and Pleasant Walk: Work to rebuild three existing crosswalks on North Pleasant Street continues. These projects are funded by a grant obtained by our grant-writers combined with some capital funds allocated for sidewalk improvements.
 - Street Furniture on Boltwood Plaza: The Town has secured a grant to purchase and install new street furniture (tables, chair, benches) on Boltwood Plaza. We hope this furniture will help activate the valuable resource in the downtown area.

Upcoming Meetings and Events:

- September 27th – Town Council meeting
- October 4th – Town Council meeting
- October 11th – Indigenous People’s Day holiday
- October 18th- Town Council meeting
- November 2nd – Election Day
- November 8th – Town Council meeting
- November 11th – Veterans Day holiday
- November 15th – Town Council meeting
- November 22nd – Town Council meeting
- November 24-25 – Thanksgiving Day holidays
- December 6th – Town Council meeting
- December 20th – Town Council meeting