



To: Town Council
Fr: Paul Bockelman
Town Manager
Dt: March 18, 2022
Re: Town Manager Report for March 21, 2022

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

COVID-19

- **Mask Mandate:** The Health Director and Board of Health lifted the mask mandate for indoor public spaces effective March 10th. The decision was made in response to declining public health COVID case numbers, a high vaccination rate of 88%, and to be in alignment with the recently updated CDC and Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH) guidance.
 - Masks are no longer required in Town buildings and facilities. Businesses and other organizations may determine their own paths forward regarding masks to protect staff and patrons and may choose to continue with their own masking requirements.
 - Amherst aligns its policy with the recent guidance of both the Centers for Disease Control ([CDC](#)) and Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH) recommending masks be worn by vaccinated individuals if they have a weakened immune system or they, or a family member, are at increased risk for severe disease. Unvaccinated individuals are advised to continue to wear a mask indoors.
 - DPH continues to require mask for both vaccinated and unvaccinated individuals in certain situations such as on public and private transportation (MBTA, Uber and Lyft services), in healthcare facilities including nurses' office in public schools, for home health care workers, in congregate care facilities, and in emergency shelters. Masks are also required when completing isolation up until day ten if outside the home.
 - A combination of preventative strategies, which included mask use, vaccination, booster shots, and testing, along with the community's cooperation helped get Amherst through the last two years. As evidence continues to show, vaccinations and boosters remain the best defense against the virus.
 - The capacity limits in public buildings remains in place.

- Stop-the-Spread Testing: The State Department of Public Health has decided the Stop-the-Spread Testing program will downsize to 11 sites, effective April 1, 2022. The testing site in the Town of Amherst hosted by the University of Massachusetts will discontinue operation as a Stop-the-Spread site. Eleven 11 sites will continue to offer PCR testing, free to any Massachusetts resident, with no insurance or ID necessary. There are only two sites in Western Massachusetts, both in Springfield.
 - The Council President, Health Director and I have written to Secretary of Health and Human Services Marylou Sudders requesting that the State continue to operate the site in Amherst, at least through May.
 - We argued that the availability of PCR testing has been an important tool as we layer and deploy our public health strategies to manage the pandemic. And we have done well, so far. The UMass testing site has proven invaluable to the Town and the entire region, processing thousands of tests weekly. The site has conducted over 21,000 community tests since the first of the year, over 2,300 community tests per week.
 - Amherst, as the largest community in Hampshire County and the home to one of the largest employers in the Western Massachusetts, is a logical location for a major testing facility. Tens of thousands of Western Massachusetts residents live or work in the Town and the site provides easy access to all of Hampshire and Franklin counties. While the demographics of the Town of Amherst are relevant, the Department of Public Health must also take into consideration geographical equity. Your decision, as it stands, locates no testing sites in Berkshire, Franklin, or Hampshire counties.
 - The discontinuation of this program comes at a critical time as the population is transitioning from mask mandates to navigating risk reduction. Approximately 30,000 students and other members of our community will be returning to Amherst from spring break this weekend. It is crucial to understand the direction of the disease in regard to case transmission, as well as new variants that may have different virulence or fitness. This can best be achieved by sentinel surveillance via robust community testing. Without testing, we are flying blind.
 - Our State legislators have also advocated to keep the community testing site open.
- Rapid Antigen Testing:
 - The State is sending the Town an allocation of 6,120 tests (3,060 kits) for a ‘month’s bridge’. These Rapid Antigen tests will be distributed from the Bangs Center only 10:00 – 2:00, Monday through Friday, and will begin on April 1st and end when the supply is depleted.
 - This Rapid Antigen test distribution differs from the previous tests distribution in December that emphasized individuals and families facing financial hardship. This will be a hybrid model that will include walk-in pick up at the Bangs and working with our partners who work with vulnerable populations such as Amherst Survival Center, Craig’s Doors, and business’s such as in restaurant workers. The Amherst Regional Public-School System will continue with their Rapid Antigen testing as they have outlined.
- The Town updates the public dashboard daily during the week, so please feel free to check here <https://www.amherstcovid19.org/home>
- The Town has links to the websites of all three institutions of higher education here: <https://www.amherstcovid19.org/schools>

University/College Relations

- **University of Massachusetts:**
 - Strategic Partnership Agreement: Active discussions with the University for a Successor Strategic Partnership Agreement continue.
- **Amherst College:**
 - Strategic Partnership Agreement: Active discussions with the College for a Strategic Partnership Agreement with the College continue.
- **Hampshire College:**
 - Strategic Partnership Agreement: Discussions with the College for a Strategic Partnership Agreement with the College have begun.
 - The College has received a number of proposals to develop the land they own adjacent to Atkins Market. They are currently reviewing these development proposals.
 - The College is reviewing options additional actions that would help stabilize its finances.

Racial Equity

- **Reparations:**
 - The Town has contracted with the Economic and Public Policy Research group (EPPR) at the University of Massachusetts Donahue Institute (UMDI) to help provide basic demographic and geographic data and relevant maps on the African American/Black population in the Town. This work will begin in mid-March and end several weeks later.
- **Community Responders Program:** The new Director begins work on March 21st and already has been in Town meeting people and preparing to hit the ground running.
- **DEI Department:** The interview team has begun the review and interview of candidates for the Director position.
- **CSSJC:** Appointments for the Community Safety and Social Justice Committee have been submitted to the Town Council.

Outreach and Advocacy

- **Swim Team – State Champs!:** The Amherst Regional Public School high school Women's Swim and Dive Team won the State championship! To honor this great accomplishment, the School District held an indoor parade and then meeting in the gymnasium to hold a celebration. The Town Council was well represented.
- **Spring Clean-up:** The Community Participation Officers, working with the business and college community are working to hold the Spring Clean-up on Saturday April 30th from 10am – Noon with lots of satellite locations all over Town. We will be inviting Town Councilors to participate as site leaders if you are available.
- **Charter Discussion:** Councilor Hanneke represented the Town at the McCormack Institutes of International and Public Service on “Modernizing Massachusetts Municipal Government: A Conversation on City and Town Charters, Local Services, Democracy, and Power in the Twenty-First Century”. She was joined by Michael Ward, Director of the Edward J. Collins, Jr. Center for Public Management, Sarah Concannon, Director of Municipal Services at the Collins Center.

- MMA Committees: Three's Company! The Town has a strong presence on policy committees of the Massachusetts Municipal Association. The Town has members on three of the five MMA policy committees:
 - Councilor Steinberg is on the Fiscal Policy Committee,
 - Councilor Hanneke serves on the Municipal and Regionalization Policy Committee, and
 - I serve on the Public Works, Transportation and Public Utilities Policy Committee.
 - Assistant Superintendent of Public Works Amy Rusiecki also serves as a technical consultant to the Public Works, Transportation, and Public Utilities Policy Committee.
- ICMA Conference: I and Police Captain Gabe Ting will be speaking at the International City Management Association (ICMA) Regional conference on April 7th. Out session topic is titled: "Organizational Change in Policing"
- Community Chats: The next Community Chat will be on March 25th (a Friday) at 12:00 noon and feature a discussion about the Jones Library Building with special guests Austin Sarat, chair of both the Jones Library Trustees and the Jones Library Building Committee and Library Director Sharon Sharry.
- Public Meetings: We are reviewing options for continuing public meetings through July 15th.
- Dignitary: U.S. Secretary of Education Miguel Cardona visited the Emily Dickinson Homestead. The Police Department was contacted about providing logistical support, which turned out to be minimal.

In the Wings

- Sewer Regulations: Updated and revised sewer regulations are being prepared and will be scheduled to be presented to the Town Council at its next meeting.

Department Updates

- Finance: The Finance Department and Town Manager are dedicating many hours to reviewing capital and operating budgets with departments.
 - ARPA Funds:
 - The Amherst Survival Center will continue its grocery delivery program for Amherst residents adversely affected by the pandemic that was launched during the pandemic. These funds will help the Survival Center deliver monthly groceries to Amherst residents of low and moderate income or that experienced unemployment or food insecurity due to the pandemic, increase the quantity of healthy food to a full two weeks of groceries to all households, expand diversity of healthy food options to provide more culturally appropriate food, and expand the prevalence of doorstep delivery routes to accommodate more locations and schedules.
 - The Amherst Business Improvement District will be running an economic support program that will include startup grants for new businesses growth grants to existing businesses, technical assistance to provide an initial review of available commercial space; by various professional consultants to ensure it meets the needs of prospective businesses and may also include other services to support business planning.
- Information Technology:
 - The I.T. Department received a Municipal Cybersecurity Awareness Grant which is designed to support the Town's efforts to improve overall cybersecurity posture through

comprehensive online end-user training, evaluation, and threat simulation. The Town will receive licenses for end-user training, assessment and phishing simulation procured by the Executive Office of Technology Services and Security. We project that 425 employees will be trained.

- Public Works:

- Street Sweeping: The Department of Public Works has begun sweeping the Main routes and hills that receive the most sand during the winter months. After completing these areas, the DPW will begin sweeping the various sections of town, if all goes well this will start on April 4, 2022.
- Below are the areas that will be swept and the order they will be done in.
 - Main Roadways: Amity Street, Bay Rd, East Hadley Rd, East Leverett Rd, East Pleasant St, Henry St, Leverett Rd, Meadow St, North East St, North Pleasant St, Pelham Rd, Pine St, Rte 9 from Amherst Center to Belchertown town line, Rte 116 (Snell to Country Corners Rd), South East St, South Pleasant St to Snell St, Sunderland Rd, Triangle St, West Bay Road
 - Central – East includes Chestnut, High, Canton Ave., Churchill, Clifton Ave., Cottage, Dickinson, Eames Ave., East St. Common, Gray, Grove, Harvard Ave., North Whitney, Hills Rd., Red Gate Lane, Kellogg Ave., Lessey, South Whitney, Spring, Taylor, Mt. Pleasant, Pleasant Court, Pokeberry Ridge, Salem, Seelye, Shumway, Smith, Strong St, Maplewood development , Windridge Terrace, Hedgerow, Arbor Way, and Wildwood Lane
 - Central – West includes Lincoln Ave. and all streets in between the boundary of Massachusetts Ave and Northampton Rd. (Allen, Beston, Blue Hills Rd., Cosby, Cows Lane, Dana Pl., Dana St., Elm, Fearing, Gaylord, Hallock, Kendrick, McClellan, McClure, Nutting Ave, Paige, Phillips, North & South Prospect, and Sunset.), Butterfield Terrace, Greenleaves,
 - East Side route includes all of Echo Hill, all of Amherst Woods, Logtown Rd., Hall Dr, Jenks, Ward, Thayer, Bayberry Lane), Old Belchertown Rd., Old Farms Rd., Station Rd., Cortland Dr., Iduna Lane, Stanley Street & Misty Meadows, Valley View Circle.
 - South Amherst. All streets proceeding from Northampton Rd. (south), Baker, Blakefield, Canterbury Lane, Carriage Rd., Columbia Dr., Country Corners Rd, Elf Hill, Farmington Rd., Glendale Rd., Harris Mt., Hillcrest, Hitchcock, Hulst Rd., Jeffery Lane, Longmeadow Dr., Memorial Drive, Middle St., Mill Lane, Mount Holyoke Dr., Orchard Dr., Pomeroy Lane and developments off Pomeroy Lane, Pondview Dr., Potwine Lane, Rambling Road, Shays St., Stagecoach Road, , West Pomeroy Lane, Woodside, Walnut
 - North Amherst. All streets proceeding from Berkshire Terrace, Blackberry Lane, Bridge St., Cherry Lane, Cows Rd., Fairfield St., Farview Way, Fisher, Flat Hills Rd., Grantwood Dr., Harlow Dr., Harris, Hitching Post, Hobart Lane, Lilac Lane, Market Hill Rd., Moorland, Old Montague Rd., Old Town Road, Plumtree, Puffer Circle, Pulpit Hill Rd., Rolling Ridge, Rosemary, Russellville Road, Sand Hill Rd., Sheerman Lane, State St., Summer Street, Shutesbury Rd., Valley Lane and Van Meter.

- Trees: The Tree Warden has determined that the Merry Maple on the North Common is beyond repair and will need to be taken down. I anticipate a public hearing on the decision in the coming months.
- Roads:
 - Potholes: There has been an explosion of potholes in our Town roads as a result of the freeze/thaw cycles of the winter.
 - Northampton Road: Caracas Construction working on road construction along Northampton Road. The first week will include project layout, silt fence installation, tree protection, and fence installations. The following weeks will include test pits and some water main work. This project is part of the Mass DOT roadway reconstruction project, that extends between University Drive and South Pleasant Street. This work will be a major disruption to local travel. Town staff met with District Councilors to discuss how the work will impact their constituents.
 - Snell Street and University Drive South: The developer of the project at the intersection of Northampton Road and University Drive South will begin construction of a new mini-roundabout at the intersection of University Drive South and Snell Street.
- Economic Development:
 - Pleasantrees:
 - The Cannabis Control Commission approved a license for Pleasantrees, Inc. to operate out of its location at 422 Amity Street. This is the old Rafters building. Here is a link to the executive summary of the establishment: <https://masscannabiscontrol.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/FL-XS-PLEASANTREES-MR282036-v.3-1.pdf>
 - I was able to attend the Amherst Area Chamber of Commerce hosted a grand opening on March 5th.
 - Concerts: The Business Improvement District will again host concerts at Sweetser Park on June 24, July 30, August 19 from 5:30 – 7:00 p.m.
- Public Safety:
 - Bears:
 - The Animal Welfare Officer has been fielding calls about a family of bears who have made the Town their home.
 - The State Black Bear & Furbearer Biologist Dave Wattles has been aware of the bears for some time and the mother bear has an electronic tracker.
 - He said this does not represent a public safety threat. It is a very common occurrence, and in Northampton there has been resident bears for decades.
 - The reason they are so comfortable in yards and neighborhoods is because they spend so much time there taking advantage of all the foods we and our neighbors provide around our homes. The only way to prevent them from spending time there is for us, as a community, to remove the food sources. If that is done, the bears will revert to finding food in forests and wetlands.

- Relocating the bears to the Quabbin area wouldn't do anything, they would just return. It also isn't such a simple thing to capture a family of four and relocate them. If they did not return, other bears would simply take their place.
- There are increasing numbers of bears in the greater Amherst area and more and more bears are going to be using the neighborhoods in the coming years if the food sources aren't removed. If residents continue to provide food to them, there will be bears in the neighborhoods. He believes this does not serve the bear population well.
- A side note, he is aware of the yearling cub with a limp and has been monitoring the bear since mid-December. Bears with limps, unfortunately are very common in Massachusetts. Given the areas these bears move through, vehicle collisions are very common. The good news is that that can cope with severe injuries if they can get around enough to find food. He has seen video of the bears and the bear with a limp which he said is, relatively speaking, fairly mild. The cub has also been moving around for three months now, demonstrating the fact that it can move around enough to find food. Because the bears have been active all winter his team has not had the opportunity to attempt to capture them in the den as they typically do in the winter. They have continued to be active due to the abundance of food.
- "First Weekend in March": The Town and University managed the events that have historically occurred on the "First Weekend in March", March 5th. There were dozens of parties and a couple very large parties. The Police Department with additional mutual aid support managed the events well. There were a large number of medical calls that required significant response from the Fire department.
- Fire Chief Legislation: H. 4356, the legislation that the Town Council submitted to permit the Fire Chief to continue employment beyond his 65th birthday, completed a hearing in front of the Joint Committee on Public Safety.
- Town Clerk:
 - Reprecincting:
 - The reprecincting maps prepared by the Town and submitted to the State have been approved by the State.
 - We have received the Secretary of State's update of the Voter Registration Information System (VRIS). Town Clerk and I.T. staff reviewed the update for accuracy and returned the file to the State. The State will make the changes in the resident/voter database, and then we'll be able to get the census form mailing out.
 - Once we receive final approval from the Secretary of State's office, all residents of the Town will receive a mailed notice of their precinct and voting location. All residents will have new voting precincts due to the renumbering of the precincts (from precincts being numbered 1-10 to precincts being numbered 1a, 1b...5a, 5b). We expect to do this mailing in April.
 - The Town Council has been asked to review and confirm the voting locations at an upcoming meeting.
 - Dog Licenses: The Town Clerk is reminding dog owners that it's time to obtain their 2022 dog tag and license. The licensing year starts April 1st and ends March 31st of each year. Current tags will expire as of March 31st. State law requires all dogs six months of age or older to be licensed and wearing a tag (MGL c. 140, s. 137).

- Human Resources:
 - We will again be training Town staff in “Alice” training. This training offered by trained police officers prepares Town staff for potential violent situations. This training is available to the Town Council and other committees, if desired.
 - The department continues numerous ongoing collective bargaining negotiations including preparing for collective bargaining for FY23 and addressing impact bargaining rights of the employees as we discuss ARPA premium pay and introducing the new CRESS Community Responder program and Police Resident Oversight Board.
- Conservation and Development:
 - Affordable Housing:
 - East Street School/Belchertown Road: The Town has selected Way Finders, Inc. as the developer for two new affordable housing projects in Amherst. The Town and Way Finders will construct approximately 70 units of affordable housing at two sites in East Amherst owned by the Town.
 - The former East Street School site includes a new building with approximately 23 units that will complement other existing structures in the historic village center. The plan also calls for the adaptive re-use of the former school building with six new units. The goal on this site is to connect the old with the new with similar height, massing, and a welcoming New England style architecture.
 - The property at 72, 76, and 80 Belchertown Road would locate over 40 units in a three-story building. The proposed site plan takes advantage of the proximity to the East Amherst village center with sidewalks, bus routes, shops and stores while also celebrating the features of the adjacent land with trail connections and views of the conservation area to the east.
 - Overall, the preliminary concept design calls for 18 units at 30% Area Median Income (AMI), 27 units at 60% AMI, 15 units of “workforce housing” at 60%-100% AMI, and 10 units of market rate housing at 100% AMI. The final concept plan and unit mix will evolve over time with input from the Town, Affordable Housing Trust, neighbors, and various other stakeholders.
 - Both developments will have on-site management, a community room, laundry, bike storage, and a mail area. Where possible the design will create shared outdoor spaces for residents and their guests to enjoy.
 - The review committee was chaired by Assistant Town Manager David Ziomek and was comprised of Town staff and members of the Amherst Affordable Housing Trust. The review committee reviewed materials, plans and proposal references; met with each project teams as they presented their proposals; and reviewed references and finances.
 - Way Finders, Inc., a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, will be celebrating its 50th anniversary in 2023 and has been developing and managing affordable rental housing in western Massachusetts for more than 35 years. With two developments in Amherst already, Butternut Farms and Olympia Oaks, Way Finders is very familiar with Town government, understands

local permitting, and has a strong network of partner agencies that provide resources to residents.

- The Town and the Amherst Affordable Housing Trust have been working collaboratively for years to develop more affordable housing in the Town. In the fall of 2021, the Town issued a Request for Proposals inviting developers to submit plans and a narrative outlining a vision for affordable housing at the former East Street School and three municipal parcels located nearby in the East Village Center on Belchertown Road.
 - Way Finders intends to move as quickly as possible from developer designation to project completion with stakeholder engagement planned for each stage of the process. Construction completion and full occupancy is anticipated in 2026.
 - 132 Northampton Road: Valley CDC is preparing to begin construction of 28 small studio apartments for low-income individuals, including more than a third that will be set aside for those who have recently been homeless, in March. Named “East Gables”, the development will build on the site acquired by the agency three years ago, and which received a comprehensive permit from the Town in November 2020.
- Planning:
 - Parklets Grant: The Town was awarded a Regional Economic Development Organization Grant (REDO Grant) for \$80,750 to install two ADA accessible parklets in downtown Amherst in order to create permanent outdoor dining/retail spaces. Each 36-foot long parklet would take over two on-street parking spaces in front of a restaurant or retail shop. The adjacent sidewalk to each parklet location will be maintained as a pedestrian pathway. This grant is administered through the Massachusetts Office of Business Development and Economic Development Council of Western Massachusetts (EDC). The selected sites, if intended to be permanent, would be reviewed with the Town Council.
 - Making It Public Grant: The Town was recently selected as one of eight municipalities in Massachusetts to participate in Making it Public, a free training designed to equip administrators to strengthen local capacity to support, create, and promote public art. At the conclusion of the training, participants will have the tools needed to create their own call for Temporary Public Art and will be eligible to receive a \$10,000 grant from the New England Foundation for the Arts (NEFA).
 - Sustainability:
 - Solar Study: I will be recruiting members to serve on the solar bylaw working group in the coming days.
 - Sheltering:
 - 132 Northampton Road: Construction is getting ready to start on the proposed development of 28 studio units of affordable housing on a .88-acre lot at 132 Northampton Road. The project includes a new 12,564 square foot 2 ½ half story building with apartments on 3 levels will be constructed. The building is accessed through a main at-grade lobby with an open stair leading down to the walk-out basement level and up to the first floor. Egress stairs at each end provide direct access from all floors to the exterior. A 4-stop elevator connects the lobby and all

floors. Interior common and support spaces include a resident common room, resident services coordinator office, property manager office and laundry room. Site features include parking, connecting walkways, covered bike storage area, shed, dumpster enclosure, and covered smoking area.

- Lutheran Church: Craig's Doors is operating its congregate site at the Lutheran Church up to a maximum number is 23 guests. The Church continues to permit the building to be used 24 hours/day so guests can remain safe, warm, and fed.
- University Motor Lodge: The motel is at capacity with 34 guests.
- Unitarian Church: The Unitarian Universalist Society of Amherst is providing space at its location at 121 North Pleasant Street as an overflow shelter with a focus on sheltering women. There are 14 beds available at this location.
- Town Support: The Town is committing \$1 million for permanent shelter/supportive housing and \$1 million for affordable housing. We continue to have regular meetings with the leaders of Craig's Doors about possible locations to find a permanent shelter site.
- Community Services:
 - Senior Center: Livable Amherst Community Survey Age & Dementia Friendly Community Project: The Town is working with staff from Pioneer Valley Planning Commission who are assisting with the project. Additionally, I formed working group to provide oversight of this work. The working group will assist with community engagement strategies and development of a community assessment and action plan. The working group will meet monthly throughout 2022. The Town has developed a site on Engage Amherst site for the Age-Friendly and Dementia-Friendly initiative where people can check for updates and engagement opportunities. It can be found here: www.engageamherst.org/agefriendly

Delegated Authority:

- Short-Term Event Uses of Town Commons (Section 1a of the Town Council Policy):
 - August 22-29, 2022: Community Fair by Amherst Rotary Club (South Common)
 - May 19-21, 2022.: Plant Sale by Garden Club of Amherst (South Common)
- Short-Term Parking Requests (Section 2a of the Town Council Policy):
 - April 24, 2022: Big Brothers Big Sisters for annual Daffodil Fun Run (25 parking spaces on Boltwood Avenue on Sunday)
- Short-Term Road or Sidewalk Closures (Section 3b of the Town Council Policy):
 - April 24, 2022: Big Brothers Big Sisters for annual Daffodil Fun Run includes reserved metered parking on Boltwood Avenue and use of roads for 10k and 5k races including Main Street, North Whitney Street, Strong Street, East Pleasant Street, and North Pleasant Street starting and ending at the Town Common
- Placement of Road and Temporary Signs (Section 3d of the Town Council Policy):
 - Stop sign on Potwine Lane at West Street
 - Yield signs (4) on cut-throughs on South Amherst Common between Shays Street and South East Street

Major Capital Projects:

- Jones Library: The Jones Library Building Committee is meeting every two weeks.
- DPW Building/Fire Building: Staff are exploring multiple options for a new site for the Department of Public Works.
- Schools: The Elementary School Building Committee is meeting every two weeks. Updates can be found on the project's [new webpage](#)

Projects Update:

- Dog Park: No updates.
- North Common Restoration/Main Street Parking Lot: No updates.
- Hickory Ridge: The Town is the new owner of the 150-acre parcel of land on West Pomeroy Lane in South Amherst, formerly home to the Hickory Ridge Golf Course.
 - After almost four years of planning, the Town recently paid \$520,000 for the land, a bargain sale negotiated with the owner, Fort River Solar 2, LLC. The land has been appraised at \$5,025,000. The seller will retain the option of leasing 26 acres of parcel from the Town for 20 years to install a solar array that will produce 6.44 megawatts of electricity annually. The solar array will include a 3,500-kilowatt battery storage system.
 - The land will increase the amount of solar power generated in the region; protect the riverfront and important habitat for common and rare species; make over 100 acres of open space available to the public including miles of cart paths and walking trails; offer land for potential future development to meet community needs; and provide a safe pedestrian connection for residents on East Hadley Road to access the newly created open space and the Pomeroy Village Center shopping district.
 - The Town will now move forward to develop a master plan for the site, with a vision for how the site will be programmed, managed, and funded for the foreseeable future. The Town has already begun to solicit resident input and involvement through online and in-person surveys and forums. Amherst will also receive an annual Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILOT) for the solar project.
 - The Town kicked off a public planning process in October 2021 with a series of events called ‘Discover Hickory Ridge’ which were attended by over 200 residents and provided those in attendance an opportunity to learn more about and explore the soon-to-be public land and to offer ideas, visions, and suggestions for how the land should be used and managed. Town officials held similar events at the Mill Valley Apartments which abut Hickory Ridge to the north.
 - Outreach is also happening online with a new tool called ‘Engage Amherst’, which allows residents to share ideas and suggestions on a dedicated website for Hickory Ridge, engageamherst.org/hickory To date, over 285 ideas and comments have been contributed by community members about future land uses and ideas for Hickory Ridge – including walking trails, housing development, mountain biking trails, disk golf, and theater/entertainment space.
 - [View Project Page on Engage Amherst](#)
- Pomeroy Village MassWorks Grant: Additional design work by the Public Works Town Engineer has addressed most of the concerns of the abutting property owners. Plans continue to be developed.
- Solar on the Landfill: The work will be able to continue through most of the winter.

Upcoming Meetings and Events:

- April 4th – Town Council meeting
- April 18th – Patriots Day holiday
- April 25th – Town Council meeting
- May – Memorial Day holiday
- June 19th – Juneteenth celebration
- June 20th – Juneteenth holiday