



To: Town Council
Fr: Paul Bockelman
Town Manager
Dt: June 12, 2020
Re: Town Manager Report for June 15, 2020

Town Manager Update:

- Top Line:
 - Downtown and Business Reopening: Town staff have been aggressive in processing applications for restaurants to reopen in accordance with the Governor's directives.
 - Restaurants opening June 12th with expanded outdoor seating and alcohol service:
 - The Hanger
 - Bistro 63
 - Johnny's Tavern
 - IYA
 - The following are approved and setting up but decided to wait until next week to open:
 - Mission Cantina
 - The Harp
 - Jake's at the Mill
 - This is an incredible accomplishment and the Town staff, led by the Building Commissioner, overcame incredible hurdles to get the proposals in, reviewed, approved, licensed, and inspected within in a very short period of time.
 - In accordance with the Governor's COVID-19 Order No. 35, the Town is accepting requests from restaurants to provide temporary outdoor dining. Inspection Services Department will assist restaurants in creating and expanding temporary outdoor dining areas both adjacent to their businesses and in other possible designated locations. An expedited application process will be coordinated by professional Inspection Services staff and will include building, health and fire code review by the submission of one application.
 - Temporary outdoor dining will include restaurant dining on a sidewalk, patio, deck, lawn, parking area, or other outdoor space. Applications will require a sketch of the proposed location which can be either hand drawn or created using the Town's GIS mapping system. Related documents including specifications of furnishings, perimeter barriers, and decorative elements are required parts of the

application. Town staff will review the application to ensure appropriate access, surfaces, ADA access through and around the proposed outdoor dining areas, and health and fire safety. All approvals will be conditioned with the Massachusetts Safety Standards checklist for Restaurants and the ABCC Patio Guidelines, if applicable.

- Proposals will be reviewed by scheduling site visits or virtual meetings to discuss the application. Inspection Services will coordinate other approvals including proposals for alcohol service to the Board of License Commissioners and for use of public way to the Town Manager.
- The Board of Licensing Commissioners met Thursday and approved all liquor license requests under this scenario.
- The Town has placed picnic tables on the Boltwood Garage to establish a convenient place for people to eat when purchasing take-out food.
- Summer Events Summary: This is an update on Town activities this summer. Please note that all activities, if they are happening, will be different than they have been in previous years. We will put in place precautions to minimize the likelihood of spread of COVID-19, but it will take a community effort of conducting ourselves responsibly for this to be a safe summer. We thank the Town staff who are taking on other duties to ensure the facilities that can be opened with proper social distancing will be opened with adequate staffing.
 - Camps: There will be no LSSE summer camps. Given COVID-19 related concerns and the complexity of keeping campers and staff safe as defined by the Governor's guidelines, LSSE's municipal day camps in Amherst will not be operating this summer. Instead, LSSE staff will focus on operating the Mill River and War Memorial pools.
 - Town Pools: Town pools will be open. The Department of Public Works has been working to ready our pools for use this summer. Our goal is to open both Mill River and War Memorial Pools by July 3rd. Hours will be limited. LSSE has developed plans to safely manage these facilities and users will be required to follow specific safety protocols. For instance, those using the pools will need to arrive in their bathing suits, as changing spaces will not be open. Bathhouses at Mill River and War Memorial will be for bathroom use only. Social distancing on the pool deck will also be in place.
 - Puffer's Pond: Puffer's Pond will be open. Conservation staff, supported by other Town departments, will open the main beach at Puffer's Pond. The North Beach area will be closed. To achieve social distancing on the beach, the number of parties/individuals allowed on the beach at one time will be limited. Attendants will be present to provide guidance and monitor usage. Watch for an announcement on the Town's web site with more details. Trails around the Pond will remain open.
 - Playgrounds: Town playgrounds are now open. Playgrounds are open. Residents using these structures should wash hands frequently and follow social distancing protocols of wearing masks and/or maintaining six foot distance from non-household members. The Town will not be sanitizing equipment and surfaces between uses.
 - Recreation Fields and Team Sports: Recreation Fields are closed to organized team play. The Town's recreation fields remain closed to organized team play but we anticipate that they will open for limited use soon. For now, groups of 10 or fewer

may use the fields but no scrimmages or games are authorized until the Town receives more guidance from the State. All summer sports programs including Adult Softball are cancelled. LSSE will be looking at offering various sports clinics during the summer that are held outside and limited to 8 children at a time.

- Cherry Hill Golf Course: Cherry Hill Golf Course is Open. Cherry Hill Golf Course opened after the Governor gave permission for golf courses to open. We have reassigned full-time staff to the golf course and will not be hiring part-time staff this year. The Governor's order has strict rules of how golf courses may operate.
- Independence Day Fireworks and Celebration. Independence Day fireworks and celebration are canceled. Please observe this important holiday safely.

○ COVID-19:

- Reopening Committee:
- The staff reopening committee led by the Director of Human Resources and includes staff from throughout the building and the Town's maintenance manager.
- Most staff from Town Hall, Bangs Center, and LSSE will be back in the office beginning June 15th. Procedures have been put in place for entrance to the building and Standard Operating Protocols are reviewed with each individual to ensure a common understanding of what we all need to do to ensure each other's safety.
- We have installed Plexiglas at some of the counters and high traffic areas.
- Key Points:
 - DPW staff returned to a regular schedule on May 18th.
 - Department Heads who had been working remotely returned on June 1st.
 - Other staff who had been working remotely are scheduled to return on June 15th.
 - There is no date set for Town Hall to reopen.
 - The Jones Library (not the branches) are scheduled to open on a modified basis next week.
 - There is no date for the Senior Center to reopen. I believe the Senior Center will be closed for the rest of the calendar year.
 - I do not anticipate opening buildings to publicly accessible, posted, in-person public meetings any time soon. I will reevaluate this around Labor Day.
- In the meantime, staff have done a superb job of serving customers remotely and through curbside pick-up/drop-off. There are other services we may begin to provide as systems are put in place.
- My approach is that we will be operating in some kind of social-distancing fashion for a significant amount of time – months, not weeks – and that it makes sense to get it done right.

○ Town Zoom Committee:

- A team from I.T., Town Clerk, Town Manager, and Clerk to the Council are aware of the concerns expressed by Town Councilors and members of the public to be able to see participants in meetings. There are trade-offs between the security and being able to view all people in the audience.

● Outreach:

- Coffee with Town Manager:
 - The last Cuppa Joe was on Friday, June 5th with Finance Director Sean Mangano and Comptroller Sonia Aldrich.

- The next Cuppa Joe will be on Friday, July 10th at 8:00 a.m.
 - These sessions are expertly organized and managed by our Communications Director
- Call-in shows: We continue our Community Chats on a weekly basis. We have had the Police Chief, Director of Senior Services, and the Emergency Management Director/Fire Chief, the Assistant Town Manager/Director of Conservation and Development, and Superintendent of Public Works. Thursday's Chat had LSSE Director Barbara Bilz as the guest. These call-in shows are all available for viewing by going here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ySXkNrb1J1g>
- Appointments:
 - I have submitted the second group of reappointments for July 1st to the Town Council for its review.
 - I am seeking members to serve on the Elementary School Building Committee. This Committee is required by the Massachusetts State Building Authority with specific roles designated such as the principal, superintendent, town manager, etc. I have forwarded names to fill the designated roles required by the MSBA to the Town Council. I have requested members from the Town Council and the School Committee I will continue to do outreach to create a broad pool of applicants for the other seats.
- Outreach and Community Participation Officers (CPOs):
 - There has been an overwhelming response to the initiative by the CPOs to make and distribute masks and face coverings which are now required for being in public when social distancing is not possible. Many people have jumped into action by making masks and donating them or material to the Town, which we then distribute for free to those in need.
 - Complete Count – United States Census: The Town received a grant of \$25,000 from the Secretary of State's office to expand our efforts to ensure all people in Amherst are counted. Our Census team is working with the Secretary of State's office to determine how to utilize these funds in a relatively short timeframe. These funds must be expended by the end of the fiscal year.
 - The CPOs have hired a summer intern from Amherst College to work on engagement, research, youth strategy, etc. The position is funded by an AC Houston Scholarship. The intern selected will be a great addition and bring the perspective of being a first-generation college student.
- Town-Gown:
 - Hampshire College: The College expects to open to its residential students as scheduled in the Fall.
 - Amherst College held its virtual commencement on May 31st. A link to the event is here: <https://www.amherst.edu/news/specialevents/commencement>
 - University of Massachusetts at Amherst: The University released a preliminary plan for a limited return to campus in August.

Departments:

- Town Clerk:
 - The Town Clerk has been on State-wide calls with her colleagues to discuss modifications necessary for the September and November elections. In addition, we are reviewing locations in the Town, recognizing clear concerns over holding elections in school, fire, and other buildings. We are exploring alternatives over the next several weeks.
 - The Town Clerk is leading a team that includes the Fire Chief, Superintendent of Public Works, and Facilities Manager to determine alternatives to voting in the usual precinct

locations. Any change would require approval from the Town Council in advance of the election.

- Public Safety:

- Multiple protests have occurred decrying the murder of Mr. George Floyd. All have been peaceful.
- The Police Chief and Captain Ting and I participated in a session with members of the community to discuss multiple issues including:
 - What are our use of force policies, including reporting of use of force?
 - Do we require de-escalation, if so in what manner?
 - What is our policy for 911 operators in regards to determining if the person in need is experiencing a mental health crisis? Do we implement a different protocol involving mental health professionals and ambulances when this need is identified?
 - Is there any citizen oversight of the department in place?
 - How are resident complaints collected, are they made available to the public and what accountability system is in place for the officers involved in those complaints?
 - Is the town looking to shift funds away from policing and towards other human services such as affordable housing, youth programming, mental healthcare, education, etc?

- Human Resources:

- The Human Resources Director is leading the Staff Reopening Committee mentioned above.
- The Health Director announced her retirement effective in September or October. We are updating the position description in preparation for conducting a search.
- The Human Resources office has relocated to the first floor of Town Hall. This provides this important department with private offices for confidential conversations and direct access from the hallway for employees and the public.

- Public Works:

- Paving:
 - East Hadley Road. Sidewalk work is continuing by a private contractor.
 - South East Street. The paving is complete. Line painting is complete.
 - Pelham Road. The paving is complete. Line painting is complete.
 - Bids are being reviewed for new work utilizing existing funds including a full depth reclamation with asphalt injection of Henry Street.
- Downtown: DPW continues to work on a deep-clean of downtown sidewalks, street furniture, etc. by power-washing and then sealing the sidewalks to ensure a longer life-span. DPW placed picnic benches in the Boltwood Garage area

- Finance:

- Budget:
 - The finance department worked with the Joint Capital Planning Committee on a significantly modified capital list that was provided to the Town Manager for consideration.
 - The finance department is working on the FY21 budget, which is being unpacked and repacked after the reduction in funds available.
 - The accounting department has developed an important method of tracking all COVID-19 expenses to facilitate reimbursement from FEMA and the CARES Act.

- The Town submitted its first request for reimbursement from FEMA and the CARES Act.
- Sustainability:
 - Community Choice Aggregation: CCA has received funding through the efforts of our State Representative and State Senator. These funds will support the development of an aggregation plan that will be submitted to the Massachusetts Department of Public Utilities and the creation of a legal Joint Powers Agreement that would be entered into by the Towns of Amherst and Pelham and the City of Northampton. The purpose of the Aggregation is to reduce greenhouse gas emissions through energy efficiency and the development of local renewable distributed energy resources.
 - The Municipal Vulnerabilities Preparedness (MVP) Action Grant: This grant was received from the Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EOEA) to fund work by Linnaen Solutions for technical assistance, interpreters/translators, and to engage a community liaison in the development of a Climate Action, Adaptation and Resiliency Plan. These advocates and advisors will work closely with the Town's Sustainability Coordinator and other staff with advice from the Town's Energy and Climate Action Committee (ECAC).
 - ValleyBike: ValleyBike will start reopening on June 1st, although it will take a while to reset all the stations. The Governor's orders clearly allow essential transportation services. Technicians will wear safety equipment and they will disinfect any bicycle they service, relocate, or even touch. They will not be making extra trips to stations, however, just for cleaning bikes. Given CDC guidance about risks, and the experience from many urban area bike share, while any surface provides some risk, outdoor bikes where users follow CDC guidance are lower down on the list.
- Community Services:
 - Leisure Services: Staff have been reallocated to work at Cherry Hill, Puffers Pond, and Groff Park.
 - Senior Center:
 - The Director of Senior Services has been tapped to serve on the state-wide committee studying the circumstances under which senior centers may reopen. This will provide guidance for local senior centers that those centers can choose to follow or not.
 - The Senior Center continues to provide creative and innovative programming for seniors and offering home delivery of food.
 - We have reassigned parking enforcement officers to assist with the delivery of meals.
 - Health Department: With the announced retirement Health Director Julie Federman effective in the Fall, I will be developing a position profile for recruitment.
- Conservation and Development:
 - CDBG-CARES Act Funding: I submitted an application requesting \$400,000 in CDBG-CARES Act funding from the Department of Housing and Community Development. I note that the submittal differs from the recommendation of the CDBG Advisory Committee. The request includes:
 - \$200,000 for a Town-sponsored grant program for micro businesses in cooperation with Valley CDC;
 - \$100,000 for costs associated with increased demand for food at the Amherst Survival Center;

- \$63,000 for a caseworker position at Family Outreach of Amherst to help with COVID impacts such as rental assistance, budgeting, employment, and child care;
 - \$22,000 for support for the resource center to help those experiencing homelessness operated by Craig’s Doors; and,
 - \$15,000 for costs associated with distance learning and job training at The Literacy Project.
- Supportive Housing at 132 Northampton Road: Valley CDC has submitted its Comprehensive Permit application to the Zoning Board of Appeals for the supportive studio apartment project, including 28 units for low income individuals, proposed to be constructed at 132 Northampton Road. The public hearing will be held on June 25th at 6:00 p.m.
 - Emergency Rental Assistance program: The Town’s Procurement officer sent a Request for Quotation (RFQ) to four organizations that could become the administrator for this program. These organizations have been substantially informed about our planning since we initiated this process and will be able to respond very quickly. The tight deadlines and quick responses will enable the Town to get the program off the ground more quickly.
 - ADA Transition Plan: We are seeking input from the community, organizations assisting persons with disabilities, and Town Staff to assist in addressing and prioritizing current and future accessibility needs. Here is a link to the survey: <https://www.amherstma.gov/3530/ADA-Self-Evaluation-Transition-Plan> The deadline for completing the survey is July 11th.
 - Housing Choice Designation: The Planning Department is submitting an application to renew its Housing Choice Designation. This designation makes the Town eligible for funds that benefit low and moderate income people.
- Economic Development:
 - Staff presented a proposal to the Town Council that provides for a temporary moratorium to expedite the permitting of restaurants as part of the reopening of the local economy.
 - Staff and our business partners submitted an application to utilize CDBG funds to provide support for local businesses during this difficult time. The CDBG Advisory Committee supported this application and it was included in the application.
 - The Amherst Farmers Market opened successfully on May 30th.
 - Information Technology (I.T.): Even though the department has limited hours on-site, the staff is able to service all needs either virtually or through socially-distanced hand-offs. For instance, a server at LSSE was damaged by a leaky roof in the Middle School and I.T. were able to be on-site and work remotely to repair the damage so that registration for Cherry Hill Golf Course could continue.

Delegated Authority (May 2020):

- Short-Term Event Uses of Town Commons: None
- Short-Term Parking Requests: None
- Short-Term Road or Sidewalk Closures: None

Major Capital Projects:

- Groff Park: The New Spray Park and Playground will be open in the near future. The renovation of Groff Park is nearing completion and we anticipate opening by July 4th. We will be staffing

the new facility to provide guidance and information to users. Please see our web site for updates and current information about an official opening date.

- DPW/Fire: No developments
- Schools: I have submitted the first group of appointees to the Elementary School Building Committee.
- Library: The director met with the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners and requested a delay in awarding any grants for one year.

Project Update:

- Destination: Amherst!
 - Kendrick Park Playground: The project is expected to be bid this summer and construction is expected to start in late summer or early fall.
 - Performing Arts Shell on the Town Common: No developments.
 - Parking Structure on Town Land at North Pleasant Street Parking Lot: No developments.
 - North Common Restoration/Main Street Parking Lot: No developments.
- Hickory Ridge: No developments.
- East Street School: No developments
- North Amherst Library: We are working with procurement to move to the next phase for this project.
- Solar on the Landfill: Slow, steady progress continues to be made as we work through the permitting and interconnection approvals. We are projecting construction to begin in November of 2021 and operation to begin in April of 2022.
- Dog Park: The dog park is moving forward with significant funding from the Stanton Foundation. Bids for construction are in and an award will be made soon. The Amherst Dog Park Committee has created a superb website that you can find here: www.amherstdogpark.wordpress.com

Upcoming Meetings and Events:

- June 29th – Town Council meeting
- July 4th – Independence Day holiday
- July 13th – Town Council public hearing on the FY21 budget
- July 20th - Town Council meeting

Other events:

- June 18th – 12:00 noon – Community Chat
- June 25th – 12:00 noon – Community Chat
- July 10th – 8:00 a.m. – Cuppa Joe with Paul



Joint Statement by Town of Amherst

Town Manager Chief of Police Superintendent of Schools
Chair of Human Rights Commission
Amherst Police Supervisors Union Amherst Police Patrol Officers Union

May 31, 2020

We are haunted by the searing vision of a Minneapolis police officer kneeling on a subdued man's neck, as other officers watched the man die. We witnessed Mr. George Floyd's pleas for help be ignored by the very people who are trained to help and assist. We are haunted, too, by the knowledge that this was not an isolated incident in our country. The number of names and similar experiences is unconscionably long, and an undeniable part of the history of this nation.

First, we extend our collective condolences to Mr. Floyd's family and friends and to all who grieve his death. We offer our thoughts to the countless members of our community who have been personally impacted as well.

Second, we condemn the actions of the police officers involved. The Amherst Town Manager, Police Chief, and School Superintendent have joined with the chair of the Human Rights Commission and the leadership of the Town's two police unions – the Amherst Police Patrol Officers Union and Amherst Police Supervisors Union - to denounce in the strongest possible terms the actions and inactions by these police officers that resulted in Mr. Floyd's death.

Third, we feel compelled to say affirmatively and with real compassion that violence like this is yet another blow to black and brown people—particularly African-American men—who too often are told by our culture that they do not matter. It confirms the lived experience of black men – nationwide and, yes, in our own community. This is a wrong that needs to be righted, and white Americans need to join those who have been carrying this burden, and do the heaviest lifting to right it.

As public officials, this tragedy makes us reflect on our own practices, behavior, and attitudes. We question whether we are doing enough, are we vigilant enough, have we fostered a true culture of respect and honesty? We strive to remain ever thoughtful in our work – as public officials and police officers – to ensure that all members of our community feel part of Amherst and feel protected, listened to, and served by their public servants. We try to do this through training, listening, and learning, and by maintaining an attitude of humility and service.

As public officials, it is our duty to use our legal and moral authority to protect all members of our community no matter their race or color or where they fall on the power spectrum. It is our duty to foster a community free of fear, intimidation and violence – a community in which people are not targeted or hurt unnecessarily by law enforcement – and provide equal protection under the law.

We know we can do better as a country to confront the systemic racism that has brought us to this place of fear and distrust. We can advocate for the criminal justice system to take a firm stand against officers who use excessive force. Those of us who are white can demonstrate that protecting and promoting the rights of black and brown people in our community is integral to securing the well-being of our entire community.

We know many of the young people in our community have seen this video and other similar news, and are trying to process these traumatizing events with their families. However, the current public health situation makes it that much more difficult as they are unable to connect with friends, extended family, or school staff in-person. As such, Amherst Regional Public School counselors and Family Center staff will be available to support students in the coming days and weeks.

In the aftermath of this tragedy, we reaffirm our commitment to the larger goals of social justice and will focus on how we can deliver on the promise of good and fair public safety protection. Police and Town leadership will be meeting with community groups during the week. We welcome your thoughts and suggestions and are prepared to listen. We will work with our community leaders to determine the best ways for us to engage on this important mission as we continue to move forward.

Paul Bockelman
Town Manager

Scott Livingstone
Chief of Police

Dr. Michael Morris
Superintendent of Schools

Matthew Charity
Chair, Human Rights Commission

Amherst Police Patrol Officers Union

Amherst Police Supervisors Union