



November 1, 2013

Honorable Selectboard;

Please accept this as an abridged version of the work being performed in South Hadley Town Hall by myself and more often by other dedicated employees. As I imagine you can appreciate it has been a fairly frenetic time in Town Hall, the FY 15 budget about to start, getting ready for the licensing season, planning for a STM on November 19, preparing for bonding and meeting the day to day demands. I appreciate both your understanding and patience during these periods.



Fibermark RFP; The request for proposal for the demolition and development of the Fibermark property has been submitted to the state registry by the Assistant Town Administrator. It also is on our website and we have forwarded it interested parties. Article 1 on the upcoming STM will declare the parcel surplus and our intent is to attract a group who will include the demolition in their development plans, possibly negating much or all the need for a town expenditure. The property has been certified as clean and all the contaminants have been abated (\$77,000). We think that with a beautiful new library across the street it will be attractive parcel to host a two or three home residential cluster.

We have included in the RFP for Fibermark a “no build” restriction on the corner to improve sight distances (roughly denoted in red). We have not received any inquiries or proposals on the Bardwell St Library as of this writing. In conversations with potential developers they expressed some level of reluctance in regards to the evacuation date and some limits on what it could be used for in respect to zoning. I am not overly concerned remaining hopeful that there is a partner out there for this property. I will be asking the ATA to review the RFP with me and we will consider any changes to increase awareness of the availability of the property. It is likely we will seek more proposals in January 2014. It is my belief, being closer to the date of evacuation and trying to send the message to some new potential developers may produce some concepts.

Board of Assessors: On October 28th I was graciously invited to attend a meeting of the South Hadley Board of Assessors to generally discuss the reorganization and changes which may affect the Assessors Department. The changes to increase staff hours, contract for data collection (which is a common practice) and adjusting of office hours were all topics of discussion. I cannot speak for the BOA, but

from my perspective the contemplated changes were received well and there seemed to be support for a new approach to operations. I thank the BOA for their insight and input on these changes.

There also was conversation about the process for setting the tax rate and there did not seem to be a concern that DOR would not have the values certified in time for the public hearings. Once these hurdles are cleared the SB can move to set the rate, hopefully December 3rd.

CEDC; There was recent meeting of the commission in the SB Office. The members seemed happy in regards to the progress being made by Town Hall Departments and staff in regards to creating opportunities for development. The Redevelopment Authority article presentation was met with a certain level enthusiasm and concern. There was interest and conceptual support for the Medical Marijuana zoning by-laws. I believe most saw it as an opportunity for South Hadley to grow.

We also touch upon the grants, studies and initiatives which are ongoing in respect to SoHa Falls revitalization. I explained how we are assisting the Congregational Church to make contact with some people/organizations who may help them establish an arts community at their property as they move on to greener pastures. Using the creative economy to spur growth in the Falls would be great option to explore and one we will continue to strive to understand.

Siemens/ESCO; Beth Greenblatt of Beacon Consulting along with Siemens representatives, Chief Labrie, Town Planner Richard Harris, Candace Walczak, Bruce Maihott (Schools) and I to discuss the punch list of items which are in need of attention to finalize this work in progress. It was a very informative meeting and lead to a number of concerns in the various systems. It is apparent that going forward the Town would be wise to continue the services of Beacon Consulting.

There will be a set of sensors installed to help with hallway lighting at Town Hall, as that has been a concern. A number of occasions lights in the hallways have been left on overnight or for entire weekends, the additional controls should help eliminate some of those occasions.

Another observation is that sometimes we need to adjust our levels of expected conservation to match our capacity to utilize systems. This is particularly evident at the Senior Center where the complexity of the controls demand seemingly constant adjustments to meet the comfort needs of the facility users. We have had several of the contractors back to adjust the airflow, control settings and beyond a great deal of finger pointing we still are suffering some issues. We will persevere!

Special Town Meeting Packets; The packets for each Town Meeting Member were mailed on November 1st. I thank Allyson Craven (SHHS intern) and Laura Krutzler for their hard work in making sure everything went out to members. As per usual we would have like to get them out earlier, but we had material added as late as Thursday afternoon. It is our hope that all members receive them no later than Tuesday and some or most receive them by Monday. We will also post it to the website by the close of day.

Insurance; As part of the numerous changes we are making to the payroll/benefits we have started conversations with the various companies to coordinate the enrollment periods. We also have requested that HCHIT adjust their April sign up to coincide with a July 1 enrollment period. This will give a more seamless standard, allow a better employee outreach and give us a better budget process. I would like to thank Jen Wolowicz, Julie Gentile, Mike Fitzsimmons and Jen Jernigan for their efforts and team work in making this work. Great progress is being made, I can state that with conviction.

The changes to payroll processing and other human resource changes has been proceeding well, the Selectboard support of the Article 7 on the November 19 warrant will be critical to the continued progress. I appreciate your efforts in that regard. As this unfolds we see more and more ways this enhanced system will benefit us long term.

The Season of Leaves; There has been an uptick in the number of tree complaints brought to our door. I have explained the policies as they are written and have let people know that the Tree Committee are updating the South Hadley Tree Policy presently. I have been informed by our representative to the Tree Committee, Superintendent Jim Reidy that those policies will be complete for the first of the calendar year. The group has taken much time and care in updating the policy and I look forward to seeing the final product.

It is quite evident this time of year how much people hate their trees, but if they are removed they will be equally distressed at the lack of shade in the summer. Sometimes you cannot win.

This upcoming week includes meetings with District 2 Prudential Committee, Appropriations and the Selectboard. I am happy to report that it would appear that your meeting will be least stressful. Have great weekend!

Respectfully submitted,

Michael J. Sullivan

Town Administrator, South Hadley