

Ira Brezinsky, Chair
Andrea Miles, Vice-Chair
Jeff Cyr, Clerk
Sarah Etelman,
Bruce Forcier

Michael J. Sullivan
Town Administrator

June 15, 2018

Honorable Selectboard Member:

Please accept this report as an abridged accounting of activities the hardworking town employees and I have been addressing on behalf of the Selectboard. There is a lot happening, I hope this report will frame some of the more contemporary and demanding tasks at hand.

As always, thank you for the support, direction and leadership you provide!

Golf Commission Chair Meeting; Chairman Mark Dubois recently requested a meeting to discuss some observations and ideas about the Ledges operation. The Chair presented some ideas and concepts which have great merit and I believe should be considered.

Mr. Dubois was effusive in his praise for the work Director Roger's and the Ledges staff has put forth and especially their effort to economize without making allowing the Ledges to become a second rate golf experience. We discussed how the operation seemed to be hitting a good stride, food, rounds, course management all in fluid motion. It was acknowledge that staffing for IGM may have caused the course to have some very minor defects, keeping it just short of pristine.

He was very frank about the challenges he has had getting a quorum. I thought he had a great suggestion to officially make the size of the commission smaller (5). We also touched upon the important role the Golf Commission would play in respect to the contractor. Having five additional sets of eyes watching the taxpayers investment cannot hurt and having them work with management is invaluable.

Mark was impressed with Collier's and in particular Allen Depuy. One suggestion was to engage Mr. Depuy in a consultancy role to assist the Town in understanding the ever evolving world of golf management. I do believe there could be great value to such an arrangement.

Like many of us, Chair Dubois was hoping we would get more fruit from the tree in terms of proposals. We also agreed the silence spoke from the industry in respect to Ledges, sent a significant message. The Ledges is not and will not be a honey hole for any organization. This is as more of a statement about the industry than the Ledges. An

116 MAIN STREET, SUITE 109, SOUTH HADLEY, MASSACHUSETTS 01075-2896

operator will have to be skilled and there will be little room for error in the golf course business.

It is a more complex issue than will be revealed at the Egg and I or the deli counter at Big Y in polite conversation. How to make money in a declining, weather susceptible, comparatively expensive sport is not for the faint of heart. It would seem if the conventional wisdom is to protect the historical investments, to lessen the exposure to financial and other risks, to preserve recreational asset and to have a professional influence then the contract is the way to go, but no matter what is decided it will not be without critics. Best of luck with you decision!

Self Service Kiosk; Recently, the IT Coordinator, ATA and I attended a webinar with Advanced Kiosks. This is part of an on-going effort to allow more self-service opportunities for citizens. We continue to see growth in on-line payments, license applications and e-business in Town Hall, but will need to try to keep up with innovative practices.

The initial kiosk would be in Town Hal allowing visitors to pay bills, apply for permits, submit related documents and perform other on-line transactions. This will be particularly helpful when offices are temporarily closed (vacations, lunch, sick, training, etc.)

We discussed the possibility of a second location in the PD lobby which would offer 24/7 access to residents. The kiosks can accept credit cards, makes copies, scan documents, print permits and integrate with other systems (i.e. ViewPermit, Invoice Cloud, Kelly and Ryan) we use in Town Hall.

While this project is interesting, my position is we should complete the outstanding phone project, before moving forward in earnest on self-service kiosks, even though they present some great opportunities. It has been reported much of the work for the system has been completed by SHELD and we will now start on converting switches, with the new phones slated for August. This seems like it is taking forever, but maybe I just do not know enough about the process.

We will also have to consider the overall cost of the kiosks and do some projections as to use. There is security features built into the system. I will be back to the SB at a later date on both those important issues.

Mass Planners Grant, MassWorks Grants; There is a number of grants we are readying for submission over the next few weeks and months or have recently sent off. Recent history has shown some level of success in attracting grants to South Hadley, we hope to continue that momentum.

The most exciting is another MassWorks Grant for repaving of Lyman from Route 202 to Fulton Street, including bike path stripping where possible, a complete reconstruction of Dayton Street, repaving of Fulton and sidewalk improvement/ replacement along Lyman and Newton Street (where needed) from Berwyn to Stoneybrook Way. This also would include bike lanes and sidewalk repairs or replacement where needed along this section of Newton. We will seek recalibration and possibly replacement of the signalization through MassDOT at the appropriate juncture.

The Town Planner has also submitted a Mass Planners Grant to develop a strategy for the Route 202 corridor from Lyman/Route 33 to the Granby line. There is some engineering/surveying costs associated with the grants and the Planner has suggested the Selectboard approve \$40 K of the "Smart Growth" (balance \$184K) to cover the required technical services. Appropriations from this grant require only SB approval and does fall within the suggested guidelines to support development.

Loomis Communities & Diversity; Shirley Steiner a Loomis resident invited me speak with a group formed to discuss ways to make Loomis Village more inviting to persons of cultures, races, religions, ethnic heritage not represented in Loomis.

The community should be commended for taking on the issue of diversity in a serious and sober manner. Through internal discussions the residents and the organization clearly sees the importance of tackling this complicated issue now, not later. This may be a condition of their chronology or their understanding of change. By virtue of their age they have seen incredible changes in civil, gender, culture and religious acceptance in the United States and the world during their life time. Realizing there is more to do is praiseworthy.

My central message was acceptance of each other's differences is not something we can throw a bunch of people in a bowl add water ...and we instantly have utopia. I suppose it depends on how deep the water. This is a slow process these residents have been witness to, so I am confident they will continue the dream. Congratulations to Loomis Communities for thinking about who "Loomis" would like to be in the future.

Western Mass Economic Development Conference; Chair Brezinsky, Planner Harris and I were in attendance at the Western Mass Development Conference on Tuesday (June 12). Dominic Angelini and Rich Himmelwright had a booth selling the US Gaylord property to potential developers, companies or interested parties.

It was an opportune time to have a conversation with Secretary of Economic Development Jay Ash about the fact the Gaylord Improvement Project was about to begin construction and bear fruit. Oh and by the way Mr. Secretary, we are submitting a new MassWorks grant to make improvements in the Lyman/Newton smart growth area. He said he would love to come back out and hand us another (oversized) check

at the “most beautiful setting” he has ever made an award (his words not mine, although I agree).

Beyond the importance of networking there was an interesting presentation from a panel of successful CEOs Dan Butterfield US Tsubaki, Tricia Canavan United Personnel, Gary Bogoff Berkshire Brewing, and Alex Dixon MGM Springfield. Each had interesting stories to tell, the topics which I thought were most intriguing was the consensus about the talent level in Western Mass and what strategies they are using in their individual companies to attract and retain talent. Mr Dixon from MGM Springfield stated he was sending out 700 offer letters next week ...I cannot imagine.



Valley Bike Share; We are ready to receive the e-bikes for the Valley Bike Share. Richard Harris and Jim Reidy continue to work with Bewegen on the installation of the kiosks and actual bikes.

Each of the kiosks, across the valley, are scheduled to be replete with bikes by the roll out



event in NoHo which is scheduled for (11 AM) June 28. We will be working on strategies to get more information out to South Hadley residents, including MHC students and staff, in the interim we encourage people to visit www.valleybike.org the official site for information about VBS, about Bewegen (the contractor), and how to access bikes, where there are kiosks throughout the valley and rates for use or sponsorship. Thank you for your continued support on this project. Pretty cool stuff!

OSHA Training, due to recent changes in the state law municipalities will be required to comply with the Occupational Safety and Health Act for the first time in history. The ATA, DPW Superintendent, various key staff and I will be attending trainings from both the state and MIIA. This new requirement will have significant learning curve, but if we successfully implement the requirements we may benefit from a reduced number of comp claims. Either way it is required, so we must start getting prepared.

Under MGL 149 subsection 61/2 municipalities will be required to comply with OSHA. There will be separate trainings for police and fire. The sessions are being offered free of charge, I will be attending June 19 in Springfield.

MHC to Host Pro-Dev Day; On July 27 for the first time we will be on the campus for a Professional Development Day. We will hear from their faculty and staff about course offerings and professional training employees may utilize.

We will also hear about the historic and important relationship between the Town of South Hadley and Mount Holyoke College. There will also be some tours of the campus including some of the recent investments at the institution. The new director for inclusion and diversity training. We are very grateful for the growing relationship between Town Hall and MHC.

Updates, I also met with Mitch Resnick Chair of Canal Park Committee to discuss the strategies we would like to implore on Phase II. We have some cost estimates for trail rehabilitation, but concerned about some of the bog bridge cost estimates. I will continue working with the committee on the matter.

Selectboard Member Bruce Forcier and South Hadley Dog Park Chair Bob Berwick met with me to discuss the dog park efforts. We discussed the need to continue to grow the support from dog owners and non-dog owners. The Stanton Grant and the requirement the municipality must be the lead applicant. There should be a draft plan for moving forward available soon.

Thank you all for your support and guidance, it is appreciated. If there are any questions on this report or other projects please email me and I will do my best to get you an answer.

27 Bardwell Closing; the Chair has signed the documents and the closing on this property is Monday (June 18) and after an elongated, lengthy, extended, lingering, protracted (fill in your favorite) process it looks like the transfer will go through and the construction will begin (yet still subject to unexpected delays).

The plan is to have six units, 2 beds, 2 baths 1,250 or so square feet with off street parking. This will become a tax paying property, while the cost to sell the property will leave little if any return from the \$40,000 sale the Town has averted the cost maintaining, demolishing or refurbishing the old library. This in my estimation is a good thing!

Respectfully submitted,

Michael J. Sullivan
Town Administrator, South Hadley