



Town Administrator's Report Select Board Meeting of March 14, 2022

Matthew Coogan

Lincoln Hall Emergency Step Repair

Late last week, the DPW was notified that several areas of the front entrance concrete steps had broken off, creating a dangerous situation. DPW has made several repairs to the steps over the years. This week DPW tried to fix the spalling with concrete patches, but with the combination of the condition of the concrete stairs and the weather, they did not cure properly. Rather than closing off the stairs (which would have meant canceling Saturday's Chowder Fest), as a temporary solution, DPW installed Azek treads and risers over the concrete. This will improve safety in the time being until a more permanent solution is made.

School Budget, Capital, Site Projects

The Tri-Town Union Administration and the School Committee will present their budget and capital items at Monday night's meeting. As you can see in the meeting materials, they expect their FY23 budget to reflect a 2.92% increase from FY22. This is a reduction from their initial proposal of 4.76%. I expect there will be an update on the estimated cost and sequencing of the elementary school site projects for Monday night as well. At last night's School Committee meeting, the Administration confirmed that the Cole project would not begin until Summer 2023, and a special Town Meeting in January, 2023, would be necessary to have a contractor lined up to start right after the end of the school year.

Washington St. and Main St. Intersection Presentation – March 21

DPW Superintendent/Town Engineer Chris Olbrot has been working with engineering firm TEC on redesign concepts for the Washington St. and Main St. Intersection. TEC is ready to present their analysis of Bayside Engineering's preliminary design of the roundabout, specifically whether larger tractor trailers can maneuver safely through it. They will also present preliminary designs for a new signalized intersection. Their presentation will be the main focus of the March 21st meeting.

Congressman Moulton's Community Project Funding Requests

Congressman Moulton announced that he secured \$1.2 million towards the Massachusetts Department of Transportation's (MassDOT) engineering, design, and development of unfinished sections of the Border to Boston Trail in Peabody, Boxford, Georgetown, Newbury, and Marblehead. The Boxford portion totals \$250,000. If the Town is awarded a state MassTrails grant (to be announced in May/June), there should be enough funding to complete the design of the Rail Trail from Georgetown Road to Pond Street.

Cybersecurity grant award

On Tuesday, I attended the Cybersecurity Awareness Grant Program Awards Ceremony in Haverhill and received the Town of Boxford's award from Lt. Governor Polito. The program runs to the end of December and includes several assignments, trainings, and phishing simulations for our staff over the course of the year aimed to improve our cybersecurity knowledge in the workplace. We initiated the training this week.

Small repairs grant trust update

The Housing Partnership Committee has been working with Town Counsel on the warrant article and home rule petition for the Small Repairs Grant Trust. I sent the revised document to Senator Tarr's office for their review and comment. It should be ready to include in the Town meeting warrant, and could be discussed at the March 28th Select Board meeting. The Trust would oversee granting qualified seniors and residents with disabilities up to \$7,500 to make essential modifications to their home for health and safety purposes, in order to allow them to age in place in their homes.

Legislative Briefing – 3/14

I attended a legislative briefing for Essex County communities on Monday organized by the Massachusetts Municipal Association. This is a meeting to discuss budget and legislative priorities. The MMA is advocating on behalf of Massachusetts municipalities for the state legislature to increase Unrestricted General Government Aid (UGGA), Chapter 90 funds (roads), and Chapter 70 funds (schools) afforded to municipalities. This is in response to the State's \$4.145B revenue surplus. In addition, the MMA is advocating the legislature make certain COVID accommodations permanent, including the ability for towns to hold public meetings remotely.

MBTA Communities public comment

Land Use Director, Ross Povenmire, and I are working together to develop the most effective means to provide public comment on behalf of the Town. I have been in touch with the MVPC and several Town Administrators and Managers in the region, and we are working on a joint letter as well.

Facilities Maintenance Consultant

Chris Olbrot and I have shared our proposal to procure facilities management software and contract with a facility manager specialist with the Permanent Building Committee and Finance Committee. While no official actions have been taken, both boards were receptive to funding these initiatives for FY2023. We can discuss further during the DPW budget meeting Monday night.

Upcoming Meeting Schedule

- March 14, 2022
 - Tri-Town Council Update
 - Board of Assessors Warrant Article – Senior Circuit Breaker Ch. 69 Section 5 (57)
 - Draft Warrant Articles
 - Health Administrative Assistant
 - Budget Review:
 - DPW, PBC

- Elementary Schools
 - Fire
- March 21, 2022
 - Ch. 60 Sec 3F Veterans Assistance
 - Rt 133 Intersection Update – Roundabout vs. Traffic Signal
 - Draft Warrant Articles
 - FY23 Budget and Capital Update
- March 28, 2022
 - Community Preservation Commission warrant articles
 - Budget Update
 - Finalize CIP
 - Review Warrant Articles
 - Votes to support warrant articles
- April 4, 2022
 - Review Articles
 - Votes to support all warrant articles
 - Close Warrant