

## Town Manager's Report Monday, December 13, 2010

**To:** Board of Selectmen  
**From:** Christopher Whelan, Town Manager

**Following are some of the matters reported on this week by various Town Departments:**

### **FIRE**

**Station 1 renovation:** Beginning Monday, December 13, 2010 scaffolding will be erected around the perimeter of the building addition in preparation for bricklaying.

**Fire Prevention:** As was previously reported, Emerson Hospital is installing a new parking gate system in the area are of the maternity circle. Although they do have a well-documented parking challenge, any restriction in this already tight area needs to be carefully monitored to ensure access for emergency apparatus. Work began on the granite curb island this week and the Fire Department is working with the hospital to ensure we maintain acceptable accessibility in the event of an emergency.

**Emergency response:** Last Monday morning, the Fired Department responded to 152 Commonwealth Ave. for a fire on the second floor with moderate smoke caused by combustible insulation around a single wall flue pipe. The fire was quickly handled but the logistics of working a fire in that building along with the need to search the building (people were still going in and out) required the striking of a second alarm.

### **LIBRARY**

**Service Enhancement:** In January, the Minuteman Library Network will launch a new search interface called, "Encore." Offered alongside the current online catalog, Encore will offer a single search box which will facilitate bringing the entire library, books, articles, etc. to users with one search. Encore will also leverage Web 2.0 technologies by allowing community tagging, Additional features will include a *Did you Mean . . .?* prompt and relevance ranking. Recently nine CFPL staff members attended an orientation to Encore at the Network's headquarters in Natick.

**Successful Fundraiser:** Last weekend the Friends of the Concord Free Public Library held their holiday book sale. Proceeds over the three day sale totaled \$8,000, which breaks all prior year records. Revenue from the annual and holiday book sales fund the Friends' poetry series, author events, musical performances, outdoor concerts, children's programs, and the popular museum pass program.

## LIGHT DEPARTMENT

**West Concord Underground Project:** New primary cable for the West Concord Upgrade was received and the installation of this underground cable is expected to commence this week

**Power Outage:** We had a large power outage Sunday morning (December 12) at approximately 11:30 AM. There were approximately 1215 customers without power due to a branch getting across an arrestor and overhead conductor at the riser pole feeding Partridge Lane. The damage from the fault caused circuit breaker 223-H6 at substation 223 to trip and isolate the circuit. CMLP crews worked hard to repair the damage and restore power to the area. At approximately 12:40 PM, the circuit was reenergized and electric service was restored.

## PLANNING & LAND MANAGEMENT

### Natural Resources Division

**Natural Resource Commission:** Among other matters at the NRC meeting on December 15, the Commission will hold the continued hearing for the relocation of the Caesar Robbins house to 34B Monument Street.

**Walden Resource Management and Visitor Services Plan:** Natural Resources staff recently attended a MA Department of Conservation and recreation (DCR) public forum to gain public input on the new Resource Management Plan/Visitor Services Master Plan for the Walden Pond State Reservation to be developed this winter. The plan seeks to include guidelines for the operation and stewardship of the Reservation. Topics of discussion which may be included in the plan included rerouting Route 126 so that it doesn't bisect the visitor center/parking lot from the pond and trails, use of the now-vacant trailer park for expanded visitor services, determining a carrying capacity for the pond to maintain its water quality and ecological shoreline integrity, trail connections to other conservation lands in the area, and improving visitor experiences to the park. The DCR intends to prepare a plan over the winter, and release it in April for comment.

### Planning Division

**Regional Housing Services Program Meeting:** Last Wednesday Planning staff attended the informational meeting on the proposed Regional Housing Services Office. Members of the affordable housing and planning communities in Concord, Bedford, Lincoln, Lexington, and Weston were invited to hear about the proposed program from MAPC representative Jennifer Raitt and Sudbury's Affordable Housing Specialist Beth Rust. Ms. Raitt explained the background and intent of the program, which is focused on providing professional affordable housing services on a regional basis to the six member communities. Ms. Rust explained how the program would be established, the services to be performed, and how the time/funding would be divided between the six member communities. The next step for

the program will be meetings with each of the potential member community's Boards of Selectmen, with the goal of having an Intermunicipal Agreement in place by the end of January.

**Community Preservation Committee:** Last Monday, the CPC met to review this year's projects and determine their recommendations of funding for the 2011 Annual Town Meeting. Two projects - the Natural Playscape at Ripley School and the Barrett Farm Site and Bard Restoration were not recommended for funding at this time. The CPC will be meeting again next week to draft any conditions as well as the Warrant Article for the funding recommendations.

**HOME Consortium Membership:** Last year, Concord applied to join the WestMetro HOME consortium of communities which allows Concord to receive Federal HOME program funds for affordable housing projects and programs. Concord has now been accepted into the Consortium and will begin receiving funding in July 2011. In preparation for this next step, Planning staff met with the HOME Consortium administrators in Newton to review Concord's role in the program and the next steps. Over the next two months, the Planning Division will be working to establish project and program goals for the use of these housing funds, and will be working on a Fair Housing Analysis of Impediments as a required part of this work.

**Comprehensive Sustainable Energy Committee (CSEC):** Last Tuesday, the Committee had a brief conversation with Elise Woodward regarding her draft of the Solar Siting Committee Charge and agreed to provide comments to her by Monday, December 13. The Committee then discussed the steps necessary to finalize the 'draft' Energy Plan so they can vote to adopt it at their January meeting, and noted that they need to work towards a plan to accomplish the municipal sector carbon emission goal of 20% reduction in 2008 levels by 2015.

## **POLICE**

**Community Services:** Last week, the Department assisted with the motorcade for Lt. Scott Milley, the fallen soldier from Sudbury, MA. Officers blocked off the sections of Sudbury Rd. and Route 117 on Thursday in order to help facilitate a smooth, uninterrupted procession through Concord. On Saturday two Concord officers on motorcycles assisted Sudbury with the Funeral.

On Sunday, between the hours of 7:30AM and 9:30AM, officers responded to numerous motor vehicle crashes (over 20 crashes) that were caused by the wet cold rain that turned the roadways to ice. In addition on Sunday morning, the large power outage mentioned under the Light Department report affected the Police/Fire station as officers and dispatchers handled over telephone 200 calls during that time frame.

**Operations:** On Saturday night, the Department stopped a motor vehicle which resulted in the arrest of two individuals on outstanding warrants. The stop also yielded numerous DVD's, video games and a variety of electronics that were later determined to be stolen. The subjects were charged with receiving stolen property over \$250 and held for the weekend,

unable to come up with the money for bail. The Department continues to investigate this matter.

The Police Department was recently awarded a MA Executive Office of Public Safety, Highway Safety grant for traffic mobilizations. The first of these mobilizations is set to take place December 16, 2010 through January 2, 2011. It is the Drunk Driving, Over the Limit, Under Arrest, mobilization aimed at detecting drunk drivers.

## **PUBLIC WORKS**

**Community Outdoor Ice Skating Rinks:** Public Works staff have completed initial planning to coordinate the construction and maintenance of two outdoor skating rinks located at Emerson and Rideout Fields. Installation will begin following the receipt of adequate snowfall to establish snow containment berms. CPW staff will maintain these rinks throughout the winter season while temperatures are conducive for ice making. Ice rink maintenance activities will be delayed at times as staff resources are impacted by roadway and sidewalk snow and ice control activities.

**Wastewater Planning Task Force (WWPTF) Meeting:** The WWPTF met on Friday December 10 at which time task force members reviewed and discussed the criteria evaluation matrix which has been created to serve as a guidance tool to assist in the objective assessment of various wastewater treatment capacity alternatives. Staff will continue to refine the evaluation matrix based on discussion and comments received with a goal of finalizing the matrix in the spring.

**Hanscom Air force Base Privatization Evaluation:** Concord Public Works staff, along with the Town Manager and Finance Director, continue to evaluate the benefits of the government issued RFP for the privatization of water and wastewater utilities at Hanscom AFB. Staff will attend a pre-proposal meeting and site walk on December 14. An Initial evaluation indicates substantial benefits for Concord including 1) increased economy of scale 2) additional funding for ongoing and new initiatives for Concord's water and wastewater program and 3) outside funding for Town of Concord resulting in rate stabilization for Town of Concord water and sewer ratepayers. In the event it is determined that this opportunity is favorable, Concord Public Works will begin initiating actions required to support RFP response including: utility consultant selection, town counsel consultation board and committee discussions, and drafting of a Town Meeting Warrant article to authorize transfer of ownership interest of Hanscom's utility system and establishment of funding mechanism.

**Winter Weather Emergency Response:** As noted in the Police Department section above, early on Sunday December 12 Concord and the surrounding towns were hit hard by an unforecasted and unforeseen roadway flash freeze event causing hazardous roadway conditions. While Public Works personnel verified radar and meteorological reports at 3:30 AM on Sunday at which time no icing was evident, pockets of icing were indicated beginning at 4:30 AM in western Massachusetts, and CPW initiated its emergency response protocol. At 6:15 AM roadways remained passable with no accidents reported; however, within 15

minutes (by 6:30 AM) roadway conditions deteriorated significantly with several accidents reported. Sanding and salting crews were called to report with the first arriving at 7:15 AM. Between 7:15 AM and 10:45 AM sanding and salting crews treated all primary and secondary roads as well as sidewalks in the business areas and those adjacent to churches.

**Unwanted Medication Collection Gift:** Public Works recently received a gift in the amount of \$500 from Emerson Hospital to assist in the continued collection of unwanted medications during the bi-annual Drop-off event. This collection event continues to be extremely popular with the 4<sup>th</sup> collection now scheduled for May 7, 2011.

**DEP Water Conservation Grant Awarded to Concord:** On December 8, the Town was notified that its water conservation grant submittal was favorably received, and the Town will be awarded a grant in the amount not to exceed \$30,000. Forty-seven grants were received by the DEP this year and Concord's proposal is one of twenty-five which will be awarded funding.