

Town Manager's Report Tuesday, February 22, 2011

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

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

PLANNING & LAND MANAGEMENT

Health Division

Reason to “Think Spring”: The Health Division reports that plans have been submitted and approved for the layout of an ice-cream store at 110 Commonwealth Ave. Construction is anticipated over the next several months and the owner hopes to open for the Memorial Day weekend.

Building and Inspections Division

Comella's Restaurant, outside seating request: Town staff have started their review of Comella's proposal to eliminate one of their three outside parking spaces during the summer months and replace it with an outside seating area. The Comella's- Montague retail building is an existing nonconforming structure and use, because there are only (3) three parking spaces provided on the site while the Zoning Bylaw requires over 20 parking spaces. The uses on this site rely on nearby municipal parking. Comella's is seeking “relief from parking requirements” from the Board of Appeals in order to make this change during the summer months. The Planning Board will be making a recommendation to the Board of Appeals on this application. The proposed changes have already been approved by the Historic Districts Commission. Comella's also needs to seek an amendment to their liquor and common victualler licensing from the Selectmen.



The Old Manse, 269 Monument Street: The Old Manse is before the Board of Appeals next month seeking to hold a series of outdoor events on the lawn next to the Old Manse. Currently the site functions as an Educational-Philanthropic use. Any outdoor events like these require a Board of Appeals special permit as a “temporary accessory use”. These events are proposed to take place between May 1 and October 31 of each year. The anticipated events will include weddings, office parties, birthday parties, business meetings, fund raising events, concerts, and a fall festival. No farmers' market is proposed on the site

as part of their application. It is estimated that these events would provide approximately 8% of the Old Manse's income which will be used to continue the educational agenda. The Planning Board will be making its recommendation to the Board of Appeals on this special permit request. When liquor is being served as part of any of these events, the event organizer would also be required to seek and obtain liquor licenses from the Board of Selectmen.

Natural Resources Division

Crosby's Corner: The Natural Resources Director and Town Engineer attended a discussion with MassDEP, MassDOT, Lincoln Conservation, and the Army Corps of Engineers to discuss additional information needed for MassDOT to obtain a Variance from the Wetlands Protection Act and Water Quality Regulations for the Crosby's Corner project. The discussion focused on additional information needed for stormwater management compliance, clarifying Riverfront Area impacts and mitigation, and floodplain analysis of the Mill Brook south of Route 2. CPW and the NRC issued a joint letter of support for the project to MassDEP as part of the public hearing process on the Variance and Water Quality Certification. The schedule of an August bid date remains.

Natural Resources Commission: The NRC voted unanimously to support the Farming Bylaw article at Town Meeting after hearing a presentation from members of the Agriculture Committee.

Planning Division

Subsidized Housing Inventory; Concord at 11.7%: The Planning Division received notice this week that the State's Dept. of Housing & Community Development has updated the Subsidized Housing Inventory and Concord is now listed at 11.7%. The Town and Mill Creek Residential must begin issuing Certificates of Occupancy within 18 months of the building permit (issued December 2010) in order to retain the 350 rental units on the list, which is fully expected now that they've started construction. Planning Division staff will be working with the project manager this spring to assure that the lottery meets the State's Fair Housing and Affordable Housing requirements.

Solar Siting Committee: The Committee held its first meeting this week where three of the five members reviewed the charge, the Light Board's Utility-scale Solar Strategy and a map of the Town prepared by staff. The Committee elected its Chair, and the role of clerk will rotate among the other Committee members.

Metropolitan Planning Organization Presentation on the Long Range Transportation Plan: The Friends of the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail and Concord's BFRT Advisory Committee hosted a public forum at the Town House last Thursday evening to learn more about the MPO planning process in general and how the BFRT construction might be funded in the future. Over 70 people, representing several communities, attended the event.