

# Town Manager's Report

## Tuesday, November 13, 2012

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

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

### FINANCE

#### Assessing Division

The Assessors Division has been busy the past few weeks finalizing the FY 2013 values and preparing for the classification hearing to be held on November 19. The FY 13 Town-wide taxable assessed value has declined by 0.68% (a little less than 1 percent), based on market analysis for calendar year 2011 and an assessment date of January 1, 2012. Certain classes of property have increased with the largest increase coming in the apartment category, because of the new Concord Mews apartment complex. New construction is valued based upon what is completed by each June 30, but the valuation factors of the preceding January 1 are then applied, so that all taxable property is assessed on the same basis.

The overall residential value has dropped by 2.3%; however, certain market areas and price ranges have seen slight increases, particularly the \$500,000 to \$750,000 price range in the West Concord area of town experiencing rising sales prices.

General growth from building permits accounted for \$39,102,500 in additional value and the Concord Mews development contributed \$38,665,100 in new value. The commercial category had a small amount and Personal Property accounted for \$9,237,230 in growth value. The total value added from growth was \$87,138,130, equal to \$1,183,000 in property taxes.

The Assessors website has been up-dated with some of the FY 13 documents. Currently on the website is The Assessment Process FY 13, the FY 13 link to online values, the power point presentation used at the November 8 Public Forum of the Board of Assessors, and the notice of the November 19 Classification Hearing to be conducted by the Board of Selectmen. The notice for the Classification Hearing also appeared in the November 9<sup>th</sup> addition of the Concord Journal. The report of the Board of Assessors to the selectmen, TAX RATE ANALYSIS, FY2013, will soon be available along with values and sales spreadsheets (please check the town website later this week). Based upon the budget adopted by the 2012 Annual Town Meeting in April and the tax levy needed to balance the budget, the Board of Assessors is recommending a Uniform Tax Rate of \$14.07 per thousand dollars of assessed valuation. While the rate is higher than last year's \$13.58, the small decline in taxable assessed value for most residential properties means that the

majority of residential taxpayers will experience a tax increase of less than 2% and many residential taxpayers will actually have a FY13 full year tax bill slightly lower than their FY12 tax bill.

## **Town Clerk Division**

**Election Results in Concord – It’s all in the Numbers:** Concord experienced a busy Election Day on November 6, with a record 11,020 voters participating (84.7% of the registered voters in Concord). Although not a record in terms of percentage, the number of residents voting beat the previous record by 438 voters. These numbers will continue to rise slightly as provisional ballots are resolved and overseas ballots arrive. The Board of Registrars will meet on Monday, November 19 to count the final overseas ballots, and the Town Clerk will certify the Election results by Tuesday, November 20.

There were a number of “firsts” for this election. A total of 671 new voters registered between the September 6 Primary and the Presidential Election, including a number of newly naturalized citizens. For the first time we were able to offer electronic ballots to overseas residents—some who are former residents of Concord but are currently residing overseas, and others who are current Concord residents (including students studying abroad), who are temporarily overseas. We received ballots back 135 voters from six continents and 40 countries. The ease of distributing and returning these ballots made them very convenient. These were counted by the Board of Registrars on Election night, after the close of polls. Concord distributed a record number of absentee ballots to residents who were either out-of-town or otherwise unable to get to the polls on Election Day – 2,022, representing 18.3% of total ballots received.

Concord voters provided sizable margins of victory to the statewide/district winners in all of the races and in three of the four ballot questions. Concord differed from the rest of the State on Ballot Question 2 (Prescribing Medication to End Life) – Concord voters overwhelmingly voted in favor for Question 2, while the question was narrowly defeated across the State.

Final election results, including overseas and provisional ballots, will be posted on the Town’s Web Site on November 20 – [www.concordma.gov](http://www.concordma.gov).

## **LIGHT DEPARTMENT**

**Concord Light Provides Tools to Track Down Heat Loss in Your Home:** Find out where your home’s leaks are located by borrowing an easy-to-use, hand-held leak detector from Concord Light. Common places include small gaps where a wall and floor meet, or around recessed lights, fireplaces, electrical outlets, windows and doors. The detector can also identify cold spots where insulation is missing or inadequate. The detector shines a point of light on a potential problem area and compares the temperature of the area to your home’s interior temperature. When a cold spot is encountered, the light changes color, making the leak or the weak insulation easy to identify. To borrow a leak detector, send an email to [jaceti@concordma.gov](mailto:jaceti@concordma.gov) or call 978-318-3151. There is no charge.

## PLANNING & LAND MANAGEMENT

### Health Division

**THRIVE: Healthy Concord:** The Steering Committee met on November 8 to review the information gathered during the first survey, which asked residents “What would make Concord a healthier place to live and work?” Some broad themes are beginning to emerge: transportation, including better access for walking and biking; economic pressures and stress on residents; pressure on youth; a need for more unstructured and non-competitive recreational and social opportunities for youth and families; and basic needs such as the environment, housing, and healthy foods needed by residents of all ages. Residents are invited to take a second survey which will explore these and other topics in more depth. The survey, which will be posted in the next several weeks, will be available online with paper copies available at key locations around Concord, including the libraries, COA, Beede Center, Hunt Gym, and the Town House. Interested residents may also visit the Healthy Concord webpage: [http://www.concordma.gov/Pages/ConcordMA\\_Thrive/index](http://www.concordma.gov/Pages/ConcordMA_Thrive/index) to see the results of the first survey and other information about the project. The link to the second survey will be posted on the webpage as soon as available. Health Inspector Gabrielle White constructed, and continues to add to, this informative and engaging webpage.

**Housing Complaint, 80 Highland St.:** Assistant Health Director Stan Sosnicki responded to a complaint from a tenant that heat in the dwelling was insufficient. At the time of inspection, the building’s owner, who also lives in the dwelling, refused access for inspection. This necessitated having to obtain an Administrative Search Warrant at District Court to gain access to the property. A re-inspection was conducted with Concord Police and Public Health Director Susan Rask in attendance. Building Commissioner John Minty also attended to follow up on complaints that this might be an unlicensed lodging house being operated in violation of zoning bylaws. All housing complaints have been resolved at the property.

**Employee Flu Clinic:** The Town of Concord and the Health Division sponsored a flu clinic for Town employees on Friday November 9; 63 employees received free vaccinations.

### Planning Division

**Zoning Board of Appeals:** Thursday night, the Zoning Board of Appeals accepted the continuance requests for the proposed redevelopment project at 50 Beharrell Street and 13B Commonwealth Avenue. The Board then granted a special permit to make the proposed Colonial Inn summer and winter seating plans official, after reviewing new documentation indicating ways in which the owners will work with their neighbors to resolve parking issues identified at the September meeting and hearing positive feedback from these neighbors. The Board also granted special permits for the reconstruction of a single-family house on a nonconforming lot at 523 Bedford Street and for a special home occupation for farm-to-table cooking classes at the Saltbox Farm at 40 Westford Road.

**CHDC’s Small Grants Program:** The Planning Division is pleased to be assisting the Concord Housing Development Corporation to roll out their new Small Grant Program. The

purpose of this program is to provide financial assistance to rehabilitate existing housing units occupied by income eligible households to make them safe and sanitary. Grants of up to \$3,000 will be awarded three times a year beginning in January 2013. Information on the program, income eligibility requirements, and the application process are available on the Planning Division's Housing webpage at:

[www.concordma.gov/pages/ConcordMA\\_Planning/Affordable%20Housing%20Information](http://www.concordma.gov/pages/ConcordMA_Planning/Affordable%20Housing%20Information)  
or contact Senior Planner Lara Kritzer at 978-318-3293

**Planning for Millbrook Tarry Redevelopment Workshop:** Invitations and supporting documents were sent out last week for the Planning & Design Workshop for redevelopment of the Millbrook Tarry in concert with the 2007 Village Center Study. The workshop is scheduled for Wednesday, November 14 from 5:45 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. and will be held in the first floor meeting room at 141 Keyes Road. The workshop is open to the public.

### **Natural Resources Division**

**Natural Resources Commission:** At the November 7 meeting, the NRC heard the following continued hearings: a Notice of Intent to install an in-ground swimming pool at 1409 Monument Street, a Notice to construct a new garage and gravel driveway at 10 Wood Street, and a Notice of Intent from Concord Public Works to replace one culvert, clean out a second culvert, and dredge portions of wetland to create open water habitat for Blanding's turtles at Sleepy Hollow cemetery. The Commission continued the latter two projects to the January 2, 2013 meeting, and anticipates issuing an Order of Conditions for the swimming pool at the November 20, 2012 meeting. The Commission also heard an application to construct a screened-in porch with hallway connection to the existing dwelling at 101 Holdenwood Road, and issued a Negative Determination allowing the project to proceed without filing a Notice of Intent. Orders of Conditions were issued to construct an addition at 110 Channing Road, demolish an existing garage and construct an addition and new garage at 1 Revolutionary Road, tear down an existing single-family home and construct a new dwelling at 93 Pilgrim Road, and vegetation removal at 1861 Nashawtuc Road. The NRC also ranked CPA Open Space project requests, discussed Wetland Bylaw revisions for 2013 Town Meeting, and discussed revisions to the Agricultural Land Use Policy. Finally, the NRC agreed to consider an Amendment to an Order of Conditions to allow temporary snow storage within a Conservation Restriction at 203 Sudbury Road, which is expected to be filed in the next 2 weeks. One new application was received for the November 20 meeting: an Abbreviated Notice of Resource Area Determination from John Boynton of Fordbrad, LLC to confirm offsite wetland resource areas at 8A Bradford St.