



TOWN OF CONCORD

Office of the Interim Town Manager

Operational Status Reports & Departmental Updates

For the Period Ending January 14, 2022

Town Government & Finance Administration

- State representative Gouveia's office contacted the Town Manager Staff to report that the legislature was able to recently advance Concord home rule bill, S.2438 - An Act establishing a building permit surcharge in the town of Concord, which received a favorable vote from the State's Housing Committee. The next step will be to advance the bill in both the Senate and the House. Gouveia's office assured us that they will keep us up to date regarding this over the next several months.
- Sustainable Concord has set out to "assess and improve Concord's tree canopy." One of the implementation steps is to evaluate the costs and benefits of applying to be an Arbor Day Tree City. To do this, we need to revise Concord's current Town codes with the Tree City program requirements. If Concord were to become a Tree City, we would be eligible for Arbor Day Foundation grants and technical assistance. There is no cost to apply nor are there costs associated with maintaining the recognition. The Sustainability Director and the Manager's Office will be exploring the program and will report more as information becomes available.
- The Assessor's Office has been working with residents in Conantum, a neighborhood whose FY22 assessed valuation increased substantially over last year. In hindsight, the increase likely should have been phased in over a two-year period, but due to the transition in Assessors, the full increase was implemented this fiscal year. Yesterday, the Assessor's Office sent a letter to Conantum residents explaining the issue and advising them of their right to file an abatement. While the assessed values are good, we expect the Board of Assessor's to give special consideration to the manner in which they were implemented. The BOA will take this item up at its February 3, 2022 meeting.

Emergency Services

Fire Department:

- Burn season officially begins January 15; typically, there are over 300 permits issued for the season. Please see the Fire Department's webpage for more information.
- There have been a series of calls in the Nathan Pratt Drive complex relative to natural gas leaks. Nearly all have been attributed to residents inadvertently turning, or leaving, their stoves on, given the frequency of this occurrence. Fire Administration has contacted the State Fire Marshal's office who in turn has contacted the Consumer Product Safety Commission to open a formal case for investigation.
- Fire staff are training daily with many of the new Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus which, because of their differences from older models, require more training before they can be put into operation.

Police Department:

- The Police Department welcomed a new officer this past week, Brianna Rudolph. Officer Rudolph received her Bachelor's degree in Criminal Justice with a minor in Sociology in 2018, and earned her Master's degree in Criminal Justice in 2020, both from UMass Lowell. As an undergraduate, she played

on the UMass Lowell's basketball team and served as team captain in 2018. Prior to her time in Concord, she served as an officer with the UMass Lowell Police Department and with the Nashua, NH Police Department. We are very proud to welcome Officer Rudolph to the Concord Police Department!

Department of Planning & Land Management

Health Division:

- COVID update: Lab confirmed and probable COVID Cases Jan. 5-12, 2022. This does not include those cases who used an at-home test kit (which is estimated to double the numbers shown below).

	<18 years	>18 years	Total
Lincoln	19	38	57
Carlisle	33	40	73
Concord	51	92	143

- Public Health Nursing services to Concord dedicated to conduct Contact Tracing and Case Management for the above cases were approximately 25-30 hours this past week.
- The Health Division posted two items for News and Notices that are useful for residents and town employees:
 - Guidance for those who test positive via at-home test kits:
<https://concordma.gov/CivicAlerts.aspx?AID=1228>
 - Vaccination Records Access via State Web Portal:
<https://concordma.gov/CivicAlerts.aspx?AID=1226>

Economic Vitality & Tourism:

- What will April 19, 2022 bring?** Concord residents, businesses and visitors are eagerly awaiting news about 2022 Patriot's Day.
- Tourism Huddle** met on January 6 to share some celebratory news - excellent 4th quarter retail sales, Concord Players had a very good winter show and the Concord Museum saw record attendance to the Winter House Tours and Family Trees.
- Concord Art celebrates 100 years:** Economic Vitality & Tourism Manager Beth Williams is currently working with Concord Art to develop a new Women in Art tour to celebrate their 100-year anniversary.

Natural Resources Division:

- Land Acquisition/Assabet River Bluff:** The Natural Resources Director Delia Kaye has been involved in ongoing discussions with partners Concord Housing Development Corporation, Concord Land Conservation Trust and Sudbury Valley Trustees, in preparing a Memorandum of Understanding regarding acquisition of the 5+ acre site located at 2B Upland Road and 406 Old Marlboro Road. Acquisition of the property is being considered for both affordable housing purposes and open space preservation purposes.

Building Inspections Division:

- Concord Culinary Homes:** The Building Inspections Division issued 4 building permits to Concord Culinary Homes LLC for their 4-unit PRD at Hatch Farm Lane (also known as 430 Old Bedford Road). The

PRD was approved by the Board of Appeals on November 5, 2019. The project consists of the construction of two new single-family dwellings, the renovation of the existing single-family dwelling and the conversion of the existing detached barn to a single-family dwelling.

Planning Division:

- **Planning Board meeting of January 11:** The Board granted the release of 38 McCallar Lane (Lot 2) from the Restrictive Covenant so it can be sold. The Board finalized the draft warrant article for an amendment to Zoning Bylaw (ZBL) Section 4.2.2.2 Additional Dwelling Unit (ADU) to add a “grandfather provision” for the approximate 52 special permits issued for ADUs between 1974 and September 2020 to allow those ADUs to become legally conforming.
- The Board continued its discussion on a draft warrant article to ZBL Section 3.3 Formula Business to add the Thoreau Depot Business District and to determine the appropriate number of formula businesses to allow. The Board reviewed the latest draft of the Thoreau Depot Business District Zoning Bylaw amendment warrant article and discussed the provisions for affordable housing in a mixed-use commercial/residential project. The Town Planner will work further with the Regional Housing Services Office Director to refine the language.
- Lastly, the Board kicked-off its discussion on developing Site Plan Rules & Regulations. The Site Plan Rules & Regs will provide guidance on appropriate methods for various site plan elements such as parking lot layouts, landscaping, lighting, stormwater drainage and sustainability measures. Board members will be looking at other communities who already have regulations in place to create a list of elements and will discuss this topic again at the February 15th meeting.

Public Works & Municipal Light Plant

- CPW is beginning the process of performing an assessment relative to several longstanding security needs at their Keyes Road campus. Over the years, there has been an increased use and traffic around the site during normal work hours and into the nights and weekends. Additional traffic has been exacerbated by steady stream of visitors taking advantage of what has historically been a free cardboard collection service. Regrettably, this activity has not only created an operational challenge which requires reconsideration, but it has resulted in safety and property management issues that need to be addressed.
- Town crews reported to work at 0200 on Friday 01/07/2022 for the first real accumulation of snow in the region. Light snow started at 0215 and plowing began at 0400. Snow ended around 1500 with a total accumulation of 8”. Total cost of the storm response was approx. \$57,000. Over the past few weeks, crews have been busy responding to frequent precipitation events coupled with intermittent cold spells resulting in potentially hazardous roadway conditions.
- After receiving final approval from MassDEP, the Water Division re-activated Annursnac Hill Reservoir into the system without incident on Wednesday, January 12th. Concord Public Works crews will return to the site to perform final landscaping work to complete this important capital improvement project.

Human Services

Community Services:

- The extreme cold has triggered several requests for help in paying their heating costs. The *Concord Cares* program provides struggling residents with a one-time disbursement of 75-gallons of heating fuel. Those who may be in need of assistance, should contact the community services coordinator.
- Moderate to low-income residents may also receive assistance in paying their heating costs by contacting the Salvation Army in order to use their *Good Neighbor Energy Fund* which provides a grant to those in need up to \$500.00.

Senior Services:

- The COA held COVID booster clinics in partnership with the West Concord Pharmacy. During these, more than 400 Concord seniors received their booster shots
- An informational meeting was hosted by the COA for seniors learn about the Middle School project. The Garden Club hosted a Holiday Greens arrangement for Concord seniors and the Concord Friends of the Aging sponsored a Holiday Drive Thru lunch and gift giveaway for residents as well.
- In partnership with the First Parish, buckets of sand were delivered to seniors who made requests for assistance in avoiding any winter falls which may stem from unkempt walkways.
- Consistent with years' past, Art Space at Harvey Wheeler is offering residents an opportunity to display their work within Harvey Wheeler pending Committee approval.
- Lastly, there are several upcoming programs for Concord Seniors including: 30 minute consultations with an elder law attorney; a technology tutoring program where seniors can sign up for personalized instruction and assistance with home computers, tablets and cell phones; the opportunity to see a podiatrist at Harvey Wheeler for a low fee of \$35 and a drop in seamstress service for those in need which remains very popular to all.
- Thanks to the support of the Recreation Department, seniors now have two opportunities a week to walk safely indoors at the Hunt Gym, those interested can call the COA for more information.
- *Harvey's Treasure Chest* gift shop is currently featuring a large supply of yarn as well as several hand knitted hats, mittens and scarves.

Concord Free Public Library:

- The Main Library's expansion project reached an exciting milestone this week with the opening of the new Children's Library (at 151 Main St), the Garden, and the Commons, including the corridor that connects back to the Main Library at 129 Main Street. Families are now able to browse a selection of children's and teen books on temporary shelving. The opening was delayed by the steel shortages holding up the delivery of the permanent shelving. Construction continues with the creation of two study rooms, the Forum (the library's first dedicated large meeting room space), the Teen Lounge, Large Print, and the Special Collections' vault extension. The next major milestone will be the delivery of the permanent shelving for several areas of the library which is scheduled for mid to late February.
- Due to the recent surge in cases of COVID-19 the Main Library is reducing its hours temporarily. The Main Library will be open Monday 10am-6pm, Tuesday through Friday 9am-6pm, and Saturday 9am-5pm. The hours for Special Collections and Fowler remain unchanged. Eating is not permitted in the Library at this time, including the new Commons space.
- Meeting and study rooms are only available for single individuals on a walk-in basis and two-hour limit at this time. Group reservations are not permitted at this time. All programs will be virtual until further notice. See the library event calendar (available at concordlibrary.org) for up-to-date information.
- Library staff successfully migrated the popular Museum Pass and Room Reservation systems to a new software system.
- Fowler Library hosted a program called "Live Like Louisa May Alcott for a Day" that included roasting chestnuts, spinning wool, book making and butter churning.
- Curator Anke Voss wrote a fascinating article in the current issue of *Discover Concord* about Damon Mill (pages 26-27). "From the Special Collections" will continue to be a regular feature in the magazine. There is also an article about the new expansion that from the Library Corporation's Development Director, Marcy Eckel, on pages 46-47.

Recreation/Beede Center:

- Recreation staff worked with members of the Beede Swim and Fitness Center operational team to ensure smooth implementation of new membership and personal training rates which became effective the first of the year. For more information on the new rates, including punch cards, day passes and personal training packages, please visit Beede's website.
- Efforts to begin the recruitment and hiring process for the summer 2022 workforce and the 23=24 school year programs is underway. Registration for both these popular program areas will begin February 9.

Information Technology & Municipal Broadband Services

- The Town has, for its second year, been awarded a Cybersecurity Awareness Training grant from the State which provides a comprehensive training platform for Town email account holders. This comes at a savings of approximately \$12,000 per year for Concord. Town employees completed last year's program with a high degree of user participation and was recognized by the state as a Cyber Aware Community in an awards ceremony in November.
- The new year brings a new audit of accounts and access as part of the Town's adoption of the NIST Cybersecurity Framework, which recommends organizations adopt the principle of least privilege and that accounts are managed and documented.
- The Town is upgrading its phone system and plans for the cut-over are slated to occur by the end of February. Additional details will be released as the project advances. A News and Notices will be sent to all subscribers which details any expected outages during the final stages of the project. GIS Web Map training for several users
- Division staff were also busy preparing several laptops for use at next week's Special Town Meeting and continuing to deploy new systems to end users as part of the Town's computer and technology replacement program.

Facilities, Parks & Playgrounds

Buildings:

- The facilities crew completed a renovation to the second floor of the 55 Church Street facility which now has two additional private office spaces and a large public conference room outfitted with the technical capabilities to house Zoom, in-person, and hybrid meetings.
- The team also completed the bid process outlined by M.G.L. ch. 30B for new 3-year fire alarm and sprinkler testing services for 11 town buildings. The lowest responsible bidder was Fire Equipment, Inc. of Medford and they were awarded the contract.
- A large-scale and long-awaited HVAC replacement project was recently completed at the 141 Keyes Road property replacing the outdated heating and cooling systems with new electric air sourced heat pumps consistent with the Town's sustainability goals and GHG reduction efforts.
- The police and fire station also underwent a renovation to their heating system which replaced the stations' natural gas air handler with a new electric heat-pump system similar to the one installed at the 141 Keyes Road location.
- Two electric vehicle charging stations were also installed at 55 Church Street.

Parks & Playgrounds:

- Work on the Gerow Park has halted for the winter season. To date, an initial binder coat has been laid on the ADA pathways and the new driveway. Additionally, the bathroom building has been framed and roughed for plumbing and water. The restroom septic system has been installed and will undergo backfill and inspection this spring. Residents are reminded that the site is closed to the public; people should remain out of the area for their safety.

- The White Pond project continues as two large-scale stormwater management systems, including several subsurface infiltration basins, have been installed. Together, these systems will be able to capture and infiltrate more than 165,000 gallons of water. Efforts to lay out the new center-line stairway began in earnest this past week but was halted because of the extreme temperatures impacting the Northeast. Weather permitting, work will begin again next week.

Announcements

Special Town Meeting is scheduled to take place on Thursday, January 20, 2022 beginning at 7:00 PM. The meeting will be held at the Concord-Carlisle Regional High School. COVID precautions will be in place including multiple rooms to allow for social distancing and the ability for participants to be able to listen to speakers and article information from their vehicles.

Those in need of childcare for the meeting are encouraged to contact the Recreation Department who will be holding on-site childcare for the meeting at a very modest fee.