



Town of Sturbridge

Shaun A. Suhoski, Town Administrator
Email: ssuhoski@town.sturbridge.ma.us

MEMORANDUM

TO: Board of Selectmen
FR: Shaun A. Suhoski, Town Administrator
DT: September 16, 2011
RE: Town Administrator's Report for September 19 Meeting

Following please find my report and recommendations for your September 19 meeting.

GENERAL ITEMS:

Community Development Block Grant Status Update

Jim Mazik of the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission will appear to provide an update on the development of a CDBG to assist with wastewater compliance concerns at the Sturbridge Retirement Co-operative.

Liquor License Hearing – Empire Village

Empire Village, Inc. d/b/a Empire Village at 446 Main Street is seeking approval of a change of manager, new officer/director, new stockholder and transfer of stock from Dong Yeou Ying and Chin Lien Chen Ying (each 50 percent current owners) to Jin Ziang Ren who would become president of the corporation and the manager of the business. There appear to be no changes to the premises or operating hours. The Police Chief reports no substantive concerns. It may be worth asking whether the new manager is TIPS certified.

Recommended Action: That the Board of Selectmen approve the application of Empire Village, Inc. d/b/a Empire Village, 446 Main St., Sturbridge, for a new officer/director, new stockholder, transfer of stock, and for a change of manager to Jin Xiang Ren, of Malden, as detailed in application received August 25, 2011.

Discussion with Burgess School Committee Chair

Kate Alexander will be present to discuss the reasons that the Burgess School is not available for elections during the upcoming school year. A copy of an email from Ms.

Alexander detailing same, together with the correspondence from Supt. Durgin, are copied in your packets.

The Town Clerk and I have been in contact with the Host Hotel, and Old Sturbridge Village, to inquire of space availability in the event elections must be relocated. We plan to visit the locations next week and will share any information learned.

Tighe & Bond Update – Walker Pond Drainage

Dave Prickett of Tighe & Bond, and DPW Director Greg Morse, will present the stormwater study findings. In short, the preferred alternative is a series of five related projects totaling in gross \$1,904,000 (inclusive of 40% engineering and construction contingency). The key question here is not the need for improvements, but, the method by which to fund the improvements. Phasing is possible as is a mix of betterment, pond association and taxpayer funding.

A copy of the report will be emailed to your Board with a black and white hard copy placed in your packets.

NOTE: We can also update and generally discuss the Board's expectations with respect to a potential water line extension on Route 15.

Farquhar Road Drainage Discussion

Selectman Gimas, Greg Morse and I met with three residents impacted from a deteriorating drainage line along Farquhar Road. The DPW Director completed some field review late this week and will be prepared to discuss his findings on Monday night together with some initial cost estimates for replacement of the line.

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

1. Economic Development Matters:

A. Economic Development Committee Appointment Process: I am very pleased to report that there were seven individuals that expressed interest in participating on a re-purposed Economic Development Committee. I offered interviews to all seven persons. One withdrew, two did not respond and four residents met with me over the past 10 days. As indicated at your last meeting, I am now reviewing my notes from the interviews and will be prepared to present three appointments for your consideration on October 3.

B. Mission and Purpose of Economic Development Committee: In addition, current EDC member Don Miller and I had the opportunity to discuss the status of the committee (and other items) recently. Mr. Miller has initiated thoughts of a new "mission"

statement, a sentiment also expressed on several occasions by the Board's Chairman. Following are three examples of mission statements offered only to initiate the Board's thought process:

- **To develop and sustain a robust, diversified, growing local economy that contributes to making Sturbridge an attractive residential and business community.** (*D. Miller, Member, Sturbridge EDC*)
- **To plan, develop and implement activities that advance the quality of life and business climate in the Town of Ayer.** (*S. Suhoski, Director, Ayer Office of Community and Economic Development*)
- **To promote a healthy local economy and strong employment levels through the creation, retention and expansion of industrial and commercial businesses in the Town of Ayer.** (*S. Suhoski, Administrator, Ayer Industrial Development Finance Authority*)

C. Economic Development Tools and Resources: Late this week I also had the opportunity to meet at length with Rosemary Scrivens, the Regional Director of the Mass. Office of Business Development. Ms. Scrivens was able to bring me up-to-speed on the several changes to the Economic Development Incentive Program from 2010 and some of the key linkages that MOBD can provide for new, expanding or existing businesses.

A comprehensive program of community and economic development will offer the most balanced and successful approach towards strengthening the Town's tax base, stabilizing the employment sector and maintaining and improvement quality of life for the citizens.

2. FEMA Tornado Reimbursement Update: Attached you will find an email from me to Bruce Sherwood of FEMA discussing the status of reimbursement and outstanding items that are underway. In short, FEMA has submitted the "Category B" Emergency Actions request. The Town's gross submittal for fire, police and public works (including emergency contracted debris removal) was \$135,930.45 with an **anticipated FEMA contribution of \$101,947.83.**

As requested, the Finance Director has prepared an updated memorandum that further details the breakdown of the emergency costs above as well as additional work that occurred after the initial response. In sum, the Town's total out-of-pocket costs are \$155,988.68 with a currently estimated reimbursement of \$153,012.71. The rate is higher than 75 percent due to force account labor and equipment.

During the week of September 26, FEMA, Town officials and the Town's monitoring agent will meet in the field to review outstanding areas including the debris staging areas, and also to assess the Town Barn ballfields and portions of the trail system for possible eligibility for further debris removal reimbursement.

3. Miscellaneous Items: Following are some concise updates on other matters that are pending. The list is not all-inclusive.

- **Tropical Storm Irene – FEMA Reimbursement**: I have filed the Town’s intent to seek FEMA reimbursement for Category B costs associated with the emergency preparations and response to TS Irene. FEMA is expected to have a “kick-off” briefing sometime during the week of September 19. Although Town costs appear much less substantial (likely under \$30,000 total) than the tornado, the DPW Overtime account is under stress and we will vigorously pursue all potential reimbursement of disaster response costs.
- **Land Lease for Solar Power**: Distributed Addendum No. 1 to 26 interested parties. A key change was to open the door for respondents to offer other potential municipal sites that may be suitable for solar power systems. The deadline for submittals is 2:00 p.m. on Monday after which the Energy Advisory Committee will begin its advisory review as a precursor to Board of Selectmen action.
- **Walker Road Drainage**: CME has submitted a formal design and engineering proposal for Walker Road. Initial indications are a construction budget of \$600,000 to \$750,000 with the engineering proposal coming in at \$49,273.00. This is not before you tonight as the DPW Director, Finance Director and I need to further review the proposal and potential funding mechanisms. I plan to bring this forward for discussion on October 3.
- **Water / Sewer Rates**: TA still responding to calls and complaints about water and sewer invoices. I have issued your Board a memorandum concerning the initial flurry of calls.
- **Personnel Committee**: Revising draft Tree Warden job description per additional comments from incumbent and document will be proposed for finalization and classification rating at the Committee’s September 28 meeting.
- **Charter Complaints**: No complaints over past 14 days. Tom Cohan is scheduled to attend the October 3 BOS meeting.
- **Cable Advisory Committee**: Interviews with two finalist candidates were conducted by the Production Coordinator, the CAC’s Vice Chairman and Town Administrator earlier this week. A preferred candidate will be brought to the CAC on September 20 for advisory recommendation. I anticipate bringing a recommended appointee to the Board of Selectmen on October 3.
- **MIIA Insurance Matters**: Met with chief claims manager of MIIA further to damages at Public Safety Complex and to Library ceiling.
- **Meeting Participation**: Attended Land Use Division meeting; attended Burgess School Building Committee meeting; attended Central Mass. Chamber luncheon and discussion with Mass. Commissioner of Insurance; extensive meeting with Tree Warden, member of Tree Warden Advisory Committee and Town Planner to coordinate re-planting efforts and potential funding sources for spring 2012 effort.