



May 13, 2015

Honorable Selectboard;

Please accept this as an abridged accounting of recent activities of the Town Administrator on your behalf and related to various projects and initiatives.



Mohawk Paper, South Hadley Division; Having seen it for myself, I am now a believer. I had the opportunity recently to meet with Dom Angelini (Lakestar) and Patrick Lavigne the new Plant Manager at Mohawk Paper's specialty envelope plant on Gaylord Street in South Hadley on Gaylord Street.

When I arrived I recognized the significant work which had been performed over the last few months. The floors were immaculate, the walls painted, machinery was being assembled, overall the place was a beehive of activity. It should be noted I recognized many contractors and local tradesmen clipping wires and swinging hammers. There were also a number of freshly minted Mohawk uniforms being donned by locally hired employees.

It is exciting to hear from Mohawk officials they may have underestimated the market and are already looking at expansion (within the existing foot print). Local gas stations, restaurants, realtors and small businesses will all benefit from this new activity and investment.

Annual Town Meeting 2015; As the reviews are washing ashore of the recent Town Meeting, I would categorize them as fairly positive. Beyond the media maelstrom over six inch grass, I would suggest most citizens regard the changes to general by-laws and zoning by-laws as progressive and at least worth test driving, with the exception of doing away with the Town Meeting Ad-hoc Committee.

The public and TM members seem confident in the fiscal condition of the town, as the budget had little debate. It is my belief the concerted effort to get as much information regarding the budget as soon as

possible along with the Appropriations Public Hearing and the TA Review gave members some greater level of understanding. There were a number of members who also called or stopped into ask questions, all in all it is a testament to having different and various options for Town Meeting Members to get information.

There are a few process issues we will continue to hone, the election process of the Redevelopment Authority member by way of example. I believe the Selectboard will be discussing what time the Annual Town Meeting will begin on the second Wednesday in May next year. It has been suggested it should start at 5 PM, while the first reaction to this may be it is too early, "people will not be out of work", I think given that it is once a year that concern can be tempered and schedules adjusted. If it did start at 5 we could possibly be out in time for the 11 o'clock news, just in case we want to have the length of grass at nine inches. I thought it was interesting when it was mentioned when Vermont towns hold their annual meetings they close school and other activities ...hmmmm.

The Town Clerk has updated and created a mailing list to send emails to Town Meeting members, we will be testing this new list out in the next few days. Once we are more comfortable we will be able to more fluidly link the members with information which may help them make the decisions and therefore expedite the meetings.

Investigating Internal Complaints Training, Medway; Assistant Town Administrator Jennifer Wolowicz and I were able to attend a recent training in Medway on investigating internal complaints. The training was hosted by MIAA and the curriculum was presented by the Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination. It was both a measure in prevention and an opportunity for learning.

The subject matter covered a myriad of workplace topics, but focused on bullying, harassment in all its forms and how to successfully investigate those issues in the municipal workplace. Developing investigatory skill sets is crucial and the goal is to avoid being put into situations where the town has to make large payouts. The other upside is we receive MIAA Rewards which translates into discounts off of next year's P&C bill, let's hope we never have to use these new skills ...sort of like my Tia Kwon Do ability. Both the ATA and I are MCAD certified ...to conduct investigations, not Tai Kwon Do.

Town Hall Improvements: We are about a month out from the new keyless entry system being installed. The system will first be used on some specific interior doors. The new break room (check it out) on the lower level will be one of the first and the new copier room on the first floor will follow.

We will be moving the copier to a new space as we are aware there is no controls over printing right now, yes it will be a longer walk for the administrative office, which is probably a good thing. After we have some level of mastery over the system we will extend its use to exterior doors. This will eventually allow us to control the locking of doors remotely through a smart phone.

Starting on June 1, you will find the Main Street doors will be closed to entry (still used for exits). The Pleasant and the PD side doors will be open as well as the employee entrance during regular business hours. I expect there will be some minor complaining about this at first, but there are two underlying reasons, first the state police specialist who recently presented at PD Day) suggested this was a low hanging security measure and second it will hopefully reduce the number of broken door closures annually. We spent over a thousand dollars on door repairs last year, it seems expensive. It will also save on the keyless entry systems when they are installed.

“Take the Tiger to Lunch”; As you know we will be asking TH employees and any interested parties to join us Tuesday June 19 to “Take the Tiger to Lunch”. The Tiger Trolley will pick us up in front of the Police Station and we will go to the Village Commons for lunch. The Yee Family of restaurants will be making a donation for every participant who has lunch at one of their establishments.

The money will go to the Tiger Pride Fund which is looking to install some “Tigers” around town. After an unfortunate experience with a bad vendor this group now has the tigers in town and will be moving forward on the project soon. They continue to fund raise to offset their loss to the vendor.

The PVTA is working with area news outlets to try and promote the trolley through this gimmick ...I mean initiative. It also is National Devil’s Food Cake Day, a holiday which is very important to me personally.

Nuisance Ordinances; There has been a number of calls placed to Town Hall trying to sift through the “long grass” by-law. I understand the media tactics, negative sells and positive sits on the shelf for most news outlets. The trouble is this strategy cast well intended changes in a negative light and has some sad consequences.

We had one television outlet measuring the grass at the rotary and reporting the “town” will need to cut its own grass, only to be disappointed to hear it was a state responsibility. Another unprepared person came into Town Hall to argue the snow shoveling, after the same individual coming to my office this past winter to ask why we did not give out tickets like Springfield. His argument was clearly at cross purposes, particularly when he stated the South Hadley Police Department “do nothing”.

One citizen could not sleep because of the media hype and was upset with the news reports after I explained, even if we wanted to give out a ticket we could not do so until the AG’s review is completed (reported to be delivered approximately August 11 to the Town Clerk). I still truly believe overtime this will help us to reach our mutual goal of improving the community. The media will likely not be available for comment. I was glad NPR pointed out this type of by-law/ordinance is quite common and cited Boston, Worcester, and Springfield. While it is true South Hadley does not want to be any of these places, it is also true, and that is why we need these types of by-laws to prevent it.

Another incident was recorded by the police where a property owner was out after 9 at night cutting the lawn in fear there was going to be a fine. As you know if people are cooperative there will not be a problem, the last thing we want to do is actually give out a fine, but we do need reasonable compliance.

Last chance for the floral couch after several calls the Westfield property owner has committed to remove the couch after four weeks of sitting out on the curb, remember no cushions, but it is free.



We did receive several calls this week to the Police Department, we want to encourage citizens if they would send an email to the Health Department or the TA the inquiry will investigate the issue, I cannot imagine how long grass would become an emergency in respect to the Police. The police were listed only in case there is situation where the Health Agent is not available, the PD is strictly back up in this case.

Chamber of Commerce Breakfast; This annual event was attended by about 35 members and guests of the Chamber. Bob Desnoyers did a great job as President and Dale Johnston's work in coordinating the event was superior. Most of the question were posed to our legislators, Senate President Stan Rosenberg and State Representative John Scibak, they did an impressive job addressing a myriad of issues. Chairman Frank DeToma was very entertaining as he explained the "sliding scale" for grass measuring. Vice Chair Brezinsky and Selectboard member Forcier were both in attendance.

A new addition to the dais was representatives from Granby, both Town Administrator Chris Martin and Selectmen Lou Barry attended and brought greetings from our neighbors. Thankfully there was only passing comments regarding Districts, sewers or any other uncomfortable subjects which are better left to be negotiated elsewhere.

Thank you again for all your support and participation, the ATM and South Hadley as a whole would not be nearly as successful without your leadership.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael J. Sullivan
Town Administrator, South Hadley