



May 28, 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.

**8 Graves Street;** Unfortunately we have now spent over \$5,000 just removing the trash and the debris which included couches, beer cans, tables, tools and at least one gun (properly disposed of by South Hadley PD). Considering just twelve weeks ago there were people living in this squalor is almost unimaginable and indefensible to allow from a humanitarian perspective.



No operating plumbing, inhabitants using electric heaters as their only means of warmth, no running water and garbage and debris strewn in every room. Recently the town was chided by some for putting some basic standards into a by-law in hopes we would have one more tool to halt the slide which could become the next 8 Graves Street, they may have a different opinion if they took the tour. The Selectboard's support and understanding of these issues is greatly appreciated.

Presently, I am trying to work out with the Attorney Peter Brown and Zekos Associates an auction for late June. There are a few land issues we are trying to clean up at East Street, Granby Road and Lawrence Avenue parcels before we call a date.

The expectation remains the auction will recover all costs for Graves Street (and all the other properties) and produce an earning above those costs. We also will be getting these properties back on the tax rolls. As bad as Graves Street is right now, if someone picks it up for \$50K or so and puts in \$80 - \$100K they will have an income positive with two apartments, or even better a nice neighborhood for a first time home buyer with a similar investment. The place needs some vision and TLC, but still the new owner will end up with a solid house in a good neighborhood and in a great community.

**DPW Management Training;** Parks Supervisor Bill Simard, Highway Supervisor John Broderick have recently completed a comprehensive forty-eight hour training program for managers at Princeton (the town, not the university).

The attendees ranged from municipal Human Resource Directors to Fire Chiefs to Town Managers. There was role playing and personality analysis, these and other trainings are intended to allow better understanding of work place relationships. When a manager understands the employee better it can only improve the dynamics on the job.

**“Take the Tiger to Lunch”;** While this transportation option is available to all, the Town Hall employees recently to a trip from the Town Hall to the Commons for lunch. The PVTA handled the media advisories, unfortunately the television outlets were unavailable at the time. Next time I will make sure there is some long grass for them to report on as they seem to have ample time for such an exercise.



The Yee Family of Restaurants will make a donation for those who took the trolley to lunch that day to the Tiger Pride Fund. We always appreciate their generous community support. We will likely plan another excursion in July to highlight the Trolley as we try and get a little roar into the “Tiger”.

I would like to thank Representative John Scibak for taking time out from his busy schedule to participate, he continues to demonstrate his hard work and dedication whether in South Hadley or Boston.

**Redevelopment Advisory Board Meeting;** I attended the inaugural meeting of the RDA advisory board. The RDA Chair presided over the meeting and an excellent presentation was given by McCabe Associates. It was an effective gathering and the ideas presented bode well for the future of the South Hadley Falls.

The Selectboard was well represented as you know, and the conversation was “idea” rich. There was a diverse representation of the citizenry, residents from the Falls, the Village, Loomis and all across South Hadley were welcomed and encouraged to participate.

The true test will be develop a plan which is effective at thwarting decay or blight and be both affordable and sustainable from an economic standpoint. I believe the process will be able to produce such a strategy for redevelopment in South Hadley. This is a very exciting time and I commend the RDA for their efforts. It is always challenging to create a future which has a vision of unanimity and shared purpose.

**Selectboard in the Community;** Despite threatening weather there was the largest crowd so far at these neat little meetings, one couple, new to the community (6 weeks) were quick studies of South Hadley. They inquired why Red Bridge Lane which is actually a circle, is divided into East Red Bridge and Red Bridge. They suggested there should be a sign denoting the division. After explaining neither have been accepted as a town way, I ran out of any good reasoning why a circle is divided and numbered in such an odd way.

Chairman DeToma and Selectboard Member Forcier were well received and the other subject matter ranged from compressors at the Mosier School to the size of the Ledges sign to the future of the Senior Center to the issue of the artificial turf. There were a number of good discussions and hopefully some of the easy issues will be readily resolved. We will order an East Red Bridge Lane sign, to check that off the list.

**TA’s Goals FY 16;** Selectboard Member Etelman and Hine met with me to discuss adjustments and changes to the Performance Based Evaluation standards for FY 16. We had a very productive meeting and have nearly completed three of the four categories for the full board consideration. I believe there will be an initial draft delivered to you soon, if not by the next meeting. We agreed there should be one more meeting before sending the final draft to the Selectboard for the June 16 meeting.

I believe the SB will be pleased, especially with a new category to take a focused look at organizational structure, both internal to the municipal function and external to boards and commissions.

**MIAA Rewards;** I recently sent to the Selectboard the information from MilA about our successful round of training in FY 15. The “reward” will be applied our overall premium for P&C in FY 16. This program has been successful for two reasons, oversight of the Administrative Assistant Laura Krutzler and the participation of numerous department managers and staff. I would like to especially thank DPW Superintendent Jim Reidy and Police Chief David Labrie for their diligence.

The \$3,772 discount for attending free training seems like a gift that keeps on giving. The range of classes were from the safe use of firearms to the safe use of chainsaws to how to conduct a workplace investigation (attended by the TA and ATA). Thank you for all who have helped to keep our P&C costs below our 2012 expenditure.

**State and Local Inspector’s Zoning Symposium;** It was pleasure to attend a symposium on code enforcement and zoning presented by Attorney Donald Dubendorf. Town Planner Richard Harris and Building Commissioner Charlene Baiardi were also in attendance.

The subject matter the frontage rights for “paper streets” (there are none) and the various difference between sub division plans, unaccepted ways and private ways. There also was an interesting

conversation about the use of drones to enforce code and one of Richard's favorite subjects "Air B&Bs". I found the symposium to be both entertaining and informative. Attorney Dubendorf knows his audience and knows his subject matter.

The importance of professional involvement with peers and experts at these types of symposiums are invaluable. I thank the Building Commissioner for participating and inviting the Planning Director and I.

**Riverfront Park, Texon Mill Park;** I was pleased to be informed by the HG&E manager that the "Texon" park would be open for the Memorial Day Weekend. It will be open from 8 AM until 6 PM (officially) daily. There will be no dogs allowed and the park will be closed when river conditions warrant the closure or threaten public safety. I feel it is important to allow the property owner to find their comfort level before we start asking for significant changes.

The cooperation of the HG&E is greatly appreciated and I understand their want to have somewhat of an understated opening initially, as they work to understand the function and use of the park for South Hadley and surrounding communities.

Thank you for your continued support and guidance, I wanted you all to be aware I will be away June 3, 4 and 5, but I am always available to the Selectboard by phone or email if it is less urgent.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael J Sullivan  
Town Administrator, South Hadley