



November 13, 2014

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.

Canal Park: on the afternoon of Friday November 21st, I joined, Conservation Director Janice Stone, Conservation Commission Members, Bill Bacis, Jim Canning, Jack Fleming, and Emergency Management Director Sharon Hart along with representatives from HG&E and Dave Foulis from MassDEP for a “close out” inspection of Canal Park (Texon). The bad news is Mr. Foulis quickly determined the work was not completed to the plan and could not be closed out at this time. The good news is HG&E understood what deficiencies still needs attention and were reticent about doing so. All in all, the work is progressing nicely.

The even better news was just how spectacular this property will be and how it will quickly become a South Hadley tourist destination and another source of pride for the community. It is not open for public use and will not be until next spring, although there is signs of trespass. I would caution those who disregard the signs, the property is not safe, as there are rails and other protections still not complete and they should be aware their actions may cause others who may not be as careful to enter and respectful of the work to venture in ...the “if they can then I can syndrome”. The end result may delay the park opening for all to enjoy.





The view of the library (right page one) is spectacular. Even though my limited photography skills does not fully convey the perception. You also can see the group huddling together in right-hand photo in an attempt to stay warm ...I believe they got the idea from the Canadian Geese hanging out on the river. The lesson is what works for fowl, may not work for you.

Below may give you an idea of just how spectacular the vistas will be:



This was taken from a lookout near the Gatehouse area.

PVPC, Chris Curtis; as you can see in your packet we have gotten the final draft of the PVPC agreement to start the Bike/Walk Plan's initial steps. Chris Curtis stated they would be placing their group at PVPC together for this review, are anxious to work with all parties in South Hadley to provide blueprint for a Bike/Walk strategy, concept and a comprehensive look at the challenges. Mr. Curtis is fully aware of the work already started by the Bike / Walk Committee and quite aware of adjacent projects in other communities which may add synergy for all the similar initiatives along out border and within.

The SB will be appointing the "team" to help steer the process. You received some suggestions about the make-up of the "team" and I am sure everyone agrees the charge must be clear. The team must assist in helping PVPC understand and access as many constituencies as possible, to ensure that other transportation assets are incorporated into the study and there is in the end a strategy which is within

the realm of possibility for a pedestrian and bicycle path the Town of South Hadley to utilize, afford and complete.

The project will start in January 2015 and be completed for the 2016 Annual Town Meeting, with a "draft" available a couple of months before. As has been stated before, this is not only a third party expert study, but a means to create more interest and augment the work of the SEC and finally have a comprehensive plan for going forward.

Budget 2016; This process is starting to pick up momentum. I meet with the Superintendent of Schools this past week and have several department scheduled for the next two weeks to have their "initial" review of the respective budgets.

The schools increase looks like it will be in the area of \$360K or about 1.75%. The Superintendent and I did discuss some new "school safety" needs, primarily to retrofit the vestibules at all schools, with the exception of Plains. Unfortunately in today's day and age, schools need to be thinking more about security in ways 20 years ago no one could imagine. From bullet-resistant glass to vestibules which do not allow interior access all call for significant protocols, physical upgrades, complex designs and emerging technology. These improvements will likely be in the \$280,000 range and will be sent to Capital Planning for review and discussion.

As discussed at the last SB meeting local revenues continue to trend well, due to the work of T/C Baldini, but issues the state is facing are ominous at best. Even with those looming danger signs, I am confident the Town of South Hadley will be able to continue to offer services, but they may be packaged and shaped in different ways to remain affordable to the taxpayers.

Mohawk Fine Papers; Our EDIP joint application was completed and delivered to Mike Vedovelli in person at his Springfield Office. Mike is the Senior Regional Director for Mass Office of Business Development. Chicopee submitted an application as well.

I am proud to say the Town of South Hadley did all it could to entice Mohawk. The fate of this project now lies in the hands of the property owner. I remain cautiously hopeful in regards to this opportunity, but fully realize it is now out of our control.

Tiger Trolley; I would like to offer a resounding round of applause for Selectboard Member and PVTA Representative Marilyn Ishler. It can be said without any caution, the Trolley would not have happened ... as the old saying go without a "Tiger in the tank". Marilyn has been the tiger!

This innovative transportation option will increase availability for bus service dramatically in South Hadley. The Williamansett Street Big Y will now have a bus stop, as will the Woodlawn Plaza, the Library and PD. The new transit access points (TAP) will be at the Raymond Center, Wingate and the Senior Center.

What is the difference between a bus stop and a TAP? A bus stop has a regularly scheduled time for pick up and drop off, the transit access point or TAP is a call service. If you want to be picked up at a TAP you simply call a half hour before the schedule route start to the PVTA (number to be provided) and they will come to your neighborhood TAP and if you would like to be dropped off at a TAP simply tell the driver and as long as it is ahead in the route he/she will drop you off. It is not perfect but it is an exciting experiment. It is slated to begin December 8th and as soon as I get pamphlets I will get them out.

1 Canal, Bardwell Library; as most of you know by now, there were qualified bids for each of these properties which will be reviewed by the SB at your December 16 meeting. The proposers have agreed to do some conceptual drawings and engineering reviews of the Bardwell Street Library and make those part of their presentation on the sixteenth.

We are anxious to return these properties to the tax rolls and prevent them from becoming a further blight on the surrounding neighborhoods. I also look forward to reducing our costs and exposure to risk related to the properties.

I hope everyone enjoyed the Thanksgiving Holiday with their families. As a little reminder we will be having our Forty Force South Hadley Day of Giving on Monday December 1 (5ish) and hope to see many of you at that event. We will be encouraging people to bring canned goods to help Neighbors Helping Neighbors. There will be a blood drive from noon to five on the same day ...all at the library.

Thanks for allowing me to work for you and South Hadley, I sincerely appreciate and enjoy the work.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael J. Sullivan

Town Administrator, South Hadley