

Welcome to the 1st edition of the South Hadley Redevelopment Authority's newsletter! Our intent is to provide the community with current information about the people, projects, and events in South Hadley Falls.

## Main Street Improvements Under Design

**Main Street is enrolled in the Regional Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) for a full re-design and reconstruction.**

The Town has been working with the engineering firm Tighe and Bond, the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MDOT), and the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission on the design. A public hearing for the plans will be held later in April 2025 for public comment. Thereafter, the design process is anticipated to be completed by November 2025, and construction to begin in the Spring 2027.

Reconstruction will stretch from the South Hadley Public Library south to the Chicopee city line. Improvements will include a full depth pavement reclamation, sidewalks and a multiuse path for bicycles, streetscape improvements including benches, street trees and other landscaping, new street lighting, and new signage. The Town will stay in communication with businesses and residents along the corridor as the project moves forward to mitigate possible disruptions during construction.

## Directory of Municipal Resources for Residents

See our Directory of Municipal Resources on the last page of this newsletter for information on some of the following services for residents:

- Free water saving shower heads, faucet aerators and dye tablets to check for toilet leaks
- Free Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Alarms Installation
- Residential Lock Box
- South Hadley Public Library Services
- Property Tax Exemptions
- Motor Vehicle Excise Abatement
- Tree Planting Program



## Falls Business Directory - Get Listed!

Use the QR code (bottom of page) to enter your business' contact information in our new Falls Business Directory. This will help us stay in touch with you about resources available to support business growth and development, and be shared with the public in upcoming Falls marketing features

## E-Newsletter Sign Up

Use the QR code to sign up for our e-newsletter and stay up to date on happenings in South Hadley Falls:

- Municipal Projects
- Falls Business Directory
- Services & Assistance for Residents
- Other tidbits from the neighborhood

"Falls Digest" is a new quarterly newsletter by the South Hadley Redevelopment Authority.

### Questions?

South Hadley Planning & Conservation Department  
acapra@southhadley.ma.gov 413 538 5030 x6128

Use this QR Code to sign up to receive an electronic copy of the Falls Digest and/or to sign up for the Falls Business Directory.



# falls digest

## Feature: A Valued Business in the Falls

O'Brien Family Funeral Home & Cremation Services

### Every community has one—a steadfast presence that often goes unnoticed until it is needed most.

Funeral homes provide an essential service, guiding families through the difficult process of honoring and remembering loved ones.

South Hadley is fortunate to have O'Brien Family Funeral Home & Cremation Services, located at 33 Lamb Street. As the only family-owned and operated funeral home in the area, the O'Brien family is deeply committed to the community it serves. TJ, Mary, and Marty O'Brien took ownership of the business following the closure of Ryder Funeral Home and chose to make South Hadley their home. They understood the importance of being not just service providers but neighbors—offering comfort and support during life's most challenging moments. Every member of their staff also resides in town, reinforcing their dedication to the community.

Over the years, the O'Briens have seen shifts in how people choose to honor their loved ones. Celebrations of Life have become increasingly common, and more individuals are taking an active role in planning their own arrangements.

Today, nearly a third of the O'Brien Family Funeral Home's services involve pre-planning, which can range from a simple outline of preferences to fully pre-paid arrangements, ensuring peace of mind for families.



What truly sets the O'Brien Family Funeral Home apart is its personalized approach. Families can always expect to work directly with an owner, ensuring compassionate, respectful, and attentive care. Their commitment to honoring those in their care shines through in every service they provide. They even have a comfort therapy dog!

For South Hadley, the O'Brien family is more than just a funeral home—they are a trusted presence, offering kindness and guidance when it is needed most.

## Feature: A Dedicated Resident in the Falls

South Hadley Falls Dedicated Volunteer  
Mike Adelman

Mike Adelman has been a dedicated resident of the Falls for the past four years but his connection to the neighborhood began even earlier. Originally from South Jersey, Mike has called Massachusetts home for the last decade. He now lives on Bardwell Street with his daughter, who is studying at Holyoke Community College.

Mike volunteers at Neighbors Helping Neighbors Food Pantry and helped to transform the Fred M. Smith park on North Main Street. Volunteering at the food pantry marked Mike's introduction to the welcoming spirit of the Falls. "It's a fun place to volunteer, and I think everyone can agree that getting food to people who need it is worth doing," he shares.



His involvement at the pantry inspired further community engagement, including joining the neighborhood association. He serves as a Ranger at the Fred M. Smith Park, saying, "At the neighborhood association tag sale, Phil [LaRoche] laid out his vision for the park. I asked if I could help, and a few tons of compost later, I think it looks pretty good."

Mike worked tirelessly through the heat of the summer, hauling compost, planting, mulching, and watering to help bring the park to life. His hard work has made the park a welcoming space that reflects the care and dedication of the community.

When he's not volunteering, Mike enjoys walking through the Falls and soaking in its natural beauty. He especially loves the park along the canal and the Black Stevens Conservation Area off Newton Street, where he can often be found birdwatching or fishing. "Where else can you see an eagle in the suburbs?" he says.

His favorite business in the Falls is Stop and Go. "I'm in there every day, and they always have the random things I need. Everyone who works there is great." Community members like Mike play an essential role in bringing these redevelopment goals to life, demonstrating the power of grassroots efforts in shaping the future of South Hadley Falls.

*"Community members like Mike play an essential role in bringing these redevelopment goals to life"*

# falls digest

## Feature: A Stroll Down Memory Lane

A history of markets and grocery availability in the Falls

To build a list of the many food markets that were once located in South Hadley Falls might empty the ink from your pen. Throughout the years when “the Falls” was a robust business district, it seemed that there was a market on every street corner. There was no need to jump in the car and drive to get some milk and a loaf of bread, just a short walk through the neighborhood. Some were specialty markets, focusing on meats or various ethnic foods, while others carried just the basics. Pelland’s, Frodyma’s, Art and Elaine’s, and K and M Market were just a few of the places where Falls residents got what they needed. In more recent memory, Lane’s Market and Michael’s Market were friendly neighborhood fixtures.

Michael’s Market was located on the next block from Lane’s, at 92 Main Street. Originally called Falls Supermarket, the store was purchased by Michael Murdza in 1992 and was renamed Michael’s Market.

Michael’s Market offered free deliveries for seniors, homemade Polish specialty foods, and even offered a post-office substation. Difficulties for the market came soon, however, with disruptions caused by the fire that destroyed the adjacent Cowan Block building, followed soon after by the construction of the new Veteran’s Memorial Bridge between South Hadley and Holyoke.

“...when “the Falls” was a robust business district, it seemed that there was a market on every street corner.

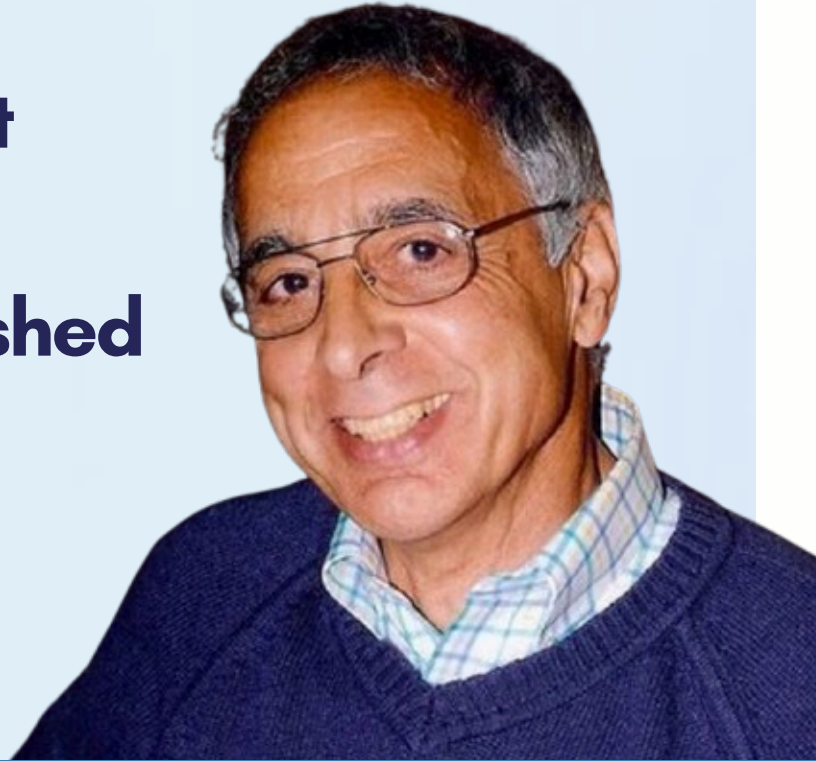


In 1904, Avel Lane opened a grocery and meat market in the brick building at 20 Main Street. Lane operated the market until 1925, when he sold it to Daniel O’Connell, who continued operating it under the same name. George O’Connell purchased the business in 1950 along with Aime Capistrant, and they operated Lane’s Market until 1971, when it was purchased by an Agawam company called F.J.S. Very shortly thereafter, the building underwent foreclosure and the market ceased to exist. Lane’s Market took a beating repeatedly from flooding in 1927, 1936, and 1938, but each time, the market was rebuilt and continued as a beloved neighborhood food market. The final loss of Lane’s market was deeply felt by the neighborhood.

Bridge construction virtually shut down traffic through South Hadley Falls, and customers who once found Michael’s Market to be a convenient stop were rerouted to other locations. Michael Murdza closed his market in 1995. The building was sold to a corporation owned by Kathleen Dinn and Carol Robinson. The building remained vacant for several years and was ultimately torn down in 2008.

# falls digest

**The Redevelopment Authority of South Hadley has established a memorial fund to honor the legacy of Frank DeToma.**



## Frank DeToma South Hadley Falls Redevelopment Fund

Frank passed away in 2024 after a two-year battle with cancer. He was passionate about local politics and civic engagement, serving as a Selectboard member, 30-year District 2 Water Commissioner, and multiple town committees, including the Redevelopment Authority.

The Frank DeToma South Hadley Falls Memorial Fund seeks donations to further Frank's vision for South Hadley Falls - redevelopment, beautification, and community engagement. Projects supported by this Fund may include property acquisition and/or redevelopment, creation of housing, business growth and development, and public parks and recreation facilities.



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**Donations by Check - Payable to:  
South Hadley Redevelopment Authority**

**Mail to:**  
South Hadley Redevelopment Authority  
c/o Planning & Conservation Department  
Town Hall  
116 Main Street,  
South Hadley, MA 01075

# falls digest

## Directory of Municipal Resources

Service	Description	Contact Info
<b>Free water saving supplies</b>	Free water saving shower heads, faucet aerators and dye tablets to check for toilet leaks	Pick up supplies at: <b>Water Department Fire District No.1, 438 Granby Road</b> available while supplies last!
<b>Free Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Alarms Installation</b>	Free installation of smoke and Carbon Monoxide alarms. Program offered through the American Red Cross -- only for homes that have battery powered devices.	Contact <b>Fire District 1 Captain Jason Houle</b> (413) 533-7112 or jhoule@shdistrict1.org  More info: <a href="https://www.redcross.org/local/massachusetts/about-us/our-work/home-fire-campaign.html">https://www.redcross.org/local/massachusetts/about-us/our-work/home-fire-campaign.html</a>
<b>Residential Lock Box</b>	A key box containing the homes keys is installed next to the front door and allows the Fire Department to enter the home in an emergency where the caller may not be able to get to the door. The access keys are only on the ambulances and Fire apparatus.	Contact <b>Fire District 1 Captain Jason Houle</b> (413) 533-7112 or jhoule@shdistrict1.org
<b>South Hadley Public Library Services</b>	The Library offers free WiFi, children's storytimes, youth afterschool programs, free library cards, meeting space for community groups, warming center	<b>South Hadley Public Library</b>  <a href="https://www.shadleylib.org">https://www.shadleylib.org</a>
<b>Property Tax Exemptions</b>	Property Tax Exemptions available for: Widows, Legally Blind, 70 and Older, Surviving Spouse, Service Connected disabled-Veterans, and others.	See the South Hadley Town Website "Personal Exemptions"  <b>Direct Link:</b> <a href="https://www.southhadley.org/648/Personal-Exemptions">https://www.southhadley.org/648/Personal-Exemptions</a>
<b>Motor Vehicle Excise Abatement</b>	Motor Vehicle Excise Abatement available if vehicle sold or traded, vehicle totaled, gifted etc. along with registration transfer or cancellation.	See the South Hadley Town Website "Motor Vehicle Excise"  <b>Direct Link:</b> <a href="https://www.southhadley.org/655/Motor-Vehicle-Excise">https://www.southhadley.org/655/Motor-Vehicle-Excise</a>
<b>Free Trees!</b>	See details and applicatoin about the South Hadley Tree Planting Program on the Town website (see link)	Contact: <b>Tree Warden Rebekah Cornell</b> rcornell@southhadleyma.gov (413) 538-5030 x6129  <b>Details:</b> <a href="https://www.southhadley.org/1063/Tree-Planting-Program">https://www.southhadley.org/1063/Tree-Planting-Program</a>