

Manager's project update: September 21, 2020 meeting

Below please find a brief summary and update of on-going projects.

Highlights: A few key items, which are discussed further below:

- We expect to hear on the CDBG grant for Orchard Hills within 2 weeks.
- The STEAP Grant for the landfill venting and fields is pending at OPM with an Oct. 1 announcement date.
- Continue to work with the Softball Committee on their preferred site on surplus land at the WWTP. They have been provided a concept plan with the cost of one or two fields. Additionally the Recreation Commission has a master plan, which shows other elements for a full park including river access, dog park, playscape, picnic area, bathrooms/snack shack.
- CLCC's Neighborhood Assistance Act was approved for a tax credit, but they need to find a business partner by Oct 1 who wants the tax credit.

Public Works/Engineering

- 1) Lotcip grants: CDM is continuing minor signal designs to comply with State changes. We are working in earnest on reaching agreements in obtaining the required easements, and title searches are complete. Construction is slated for April 2021 to August 2021. We are concerned that the lead times on the signal poles are 8 months.
- 2) Folly Lane Bridge work has started, and the spans ordered to allow a December completion. We continue to work on the load rating of Pucker Street Bridge. What we believe are final design calculations that meet code have been forwarded back to CTDOT from their consulting engineers. We are waiting for final word. We will then close that grant out.
- 3) Northfields drainage work is complete with the remaining milling scheduled very soon. Curbing with back filling and seeding is planned for October. All areas will get final paving mid-October. Paving of Pine Lake Shores Drive, Old Eagleville and Depot Road is complete. Pine Lake Shores Drive still needs chip seal later this month. Several dirt lake roads have been paved with a pug mill mix, and then the roads will also be chip sealed later this month to give a strong cap. This will pretty much finish up the summer road work for this season.
- 4) Town tree work with Tenant and Distinctive Tree is underway, as well as Eversource using Asplundh. We used up all funds carried over from last year and are well over half way expended with this year's tree money.

- 5) We have preliminary design work completed for the Community Connectivity grant for sidewalks on Main from Hemlock Point Lane to approximately Winterberry Lane. We will meet with a handful of other property owners. This will slip to a spring project. We hope to have a public involvement meeting in fall if allowed to gather folks.
- 6) The softball committee has prioritized the WWTP parcel as the preferred location. We received Anchor Engineering plans, which includes additional design work to look at the whole parcel for future river access, other community uses and to fine-tune pricing. We resolved the lien concern with Federal EPA, and had a meeting with the abutter concerning access rights. We await a response. The committee will review the concept and is now considering a price break out for softball-only pricing with one or two field options. The Recreation Commission reviewed the park Master Plan.
- 7) Todd Penney has submitted a revised plan for the crosswalk light on Main at Ripley Hill. We still await a State response.
- 8) Laidlaw Park deep-hole tests were conducted and look good. A septic system using the toilet trailer, which we acquired through State surplus, should be possible to install. Permits to allow the existing well to be used for the bathrooms have been submitted to the State Department of Public Health. We are still waiting for comments from them.
- 9) LOCIP-funded field irrigation of the Miller Richardson baseball infield on the major league field is complete, waiting for the town to have time to move and set up the water tank. It is moving up the list.
- 10) The Public Works and Recreation Department has finished the 9-hole disc golf course at Creaser Park. A couple issues like benches and three more signs are in progress. So far it has been well received.
- 11) We have been awarded submitted a Lotcip grant for the intersection of Swamp and South including the South Street curves, and a dip in Swamp Road. We will need to hire an engineering firm and appropriate funds. Construction in summer of 2022.
- 12) To repair the turf issue at the Miller Richardson football field we applied for a STEAP grant based on Anchor Engineering's report. We have State permits and have asked Anchor Engineering to prepare bid specs pending the Oct 1 grant announcement. Anchor Engineering has recommended some vent piping be installed and the clay cap in the damaged areas be repaired. COVRRRA funds will be required to implement corrective action to provide a venting system. It will be done in a manner to enhance the playing fields. The budget would not allow for including an all-purpose softball field in the base bid, but we can add it as an alternative.

Grants

- 1) The DEEP Microgrid project (\$4,000,000 grant) continues to move forward. We are still a bit away from a point where pricing can be finalized. All parties will then need to reach an agreement for the power purchase. We continue our weekly conference calls with all parties. A virtual net metering application for the two school solar arrays was accepted as complete and is in the queue. It is likely that we will need to wait until more projects are authorized by the State. A PURA application was accepted to allow a different metering system to have all buildings under a main meter with sub meters for each building. A technical review hearing was held on July 1 and follow-up responses are still underway. We are looking at options that could transfer some capital expenses to Eversource and lower project costs. We received a 90-day extension to the process and are seeking legislative relief in the upcoming special session. Revised plans have been submitted to DEEP for review and comment.
- 2) We submitted a STEAP grant last week, per the Council's guidance, for the landfill venting and recreational enhancements as a project with a budget of \$215,000 (\$128,050 grant). An add alternative to include an all-purpose softball field could be included, but a lot of fill will be needed. The State will announce awards on October 1.

Public Safety:

Police: Both new cruisers have been ordered (one last fiscal year and one this year) and are not expected until January. We are actively training new dispatchers and searching for two police officers. We continue to screen the existing list and may re-open it, but we will need to wait for the January academy class. We are also looking for one recently retired officer or transferring officer since we are running thin.

Fire EMS: We continue working on rebranding issues for Department 18. Signs changes are awaiting our approval, but will recognize both the old and new. The required ordinance changes were approved on September 8 to define the new structure. The Association contracts are next on the list. Refurbishment of the engine tanker is now underway and on schedule, but it will be out of service for at least two more months. We have ordered the replacement of the small rescue truck. The old truck may be converted to a bush truck to replace the current vehicle, which is having electrical problems. You don't really want a new truck to go out into the woods. Door locks have been ordered and will coordinate with the Town Hall system. We have received balance of the tactical EMS equipment to allow EMTs to enter a "Hot Zone" in an active-shooter situation. Work of the transition committee continues with tentative plans for a Council update on October 19th on incentive plans for consideration in the upcoming budget process.

Finance: Biggest news is we received the GFOA's CAFR award for excellence in financial reporting. July tax collection went well and we are close to our reduced collection estimate.

The audit has started and will be virtual and remote this year, so we are working on year-end close out. FEMA and State forms are taking up time from other projects. The banking RFP will be restarted. New door locks are being installed on the Town Hall, along with a couple of camera upgrades, including one for the rear door that will pick up the new ballot box. Should finish up the locks soon. We are making progress with the grant final reimbursement for Safe Routes to School, and we are working on closing out the Lake Gate grant and Pucker Street Bridge grants too. Looking into applying for GFOA budget award this year. The office has hired a company for cyber security training and review.

Development group: EDC continues working on follow up to several business visits and outreach to landowners and interested developers. Nichols College interns will be back working with new businesses to help with marketing, social media and financial planning. We continue to prepare additional information to address CT DEEP's requests on the connection to the Bolton Lakes sewer system. CERC (now AdvanceCT) has given us the final draft of the regional Econ-dev multi town study. The four towns are kicking off the action plan and my UCONN intern will be helping on this. Caprilands seems to be making progress on a new future. Dollar General was approved on Rt. 44 across from CVS and plans to be open by Christmas. We are waiting on word of a possible medical building next door to this site. COVID financial impacts may put this on a back burner, but the former office may come back on the market with a financial business. The former Muldoon's is being occupied by Nathan Hale Farm and Feed. Lizzy's catering will be there for a few months for breakfast and lunch.

The Farmers Market operating committee have made some changes to allow buying on site from your cars, which was added to current call-ahead procedures.

Staff has met with DEEP and the landowner on Woodbridge Road to attempt to resolve the ongoing fishing easement conflict. Hull Forestry has agreed to submit a proposal for forestry management of the Nathan Hale Greenway (Rt. 6 parcel). A formal proposal will be submitted in several months after a full tree survey is completed. The tree survey is now underway. This should bring in funding for signage and amenities, but not really trail development. A skid road which would allow emergency access is all that is anticipated. But that is not far from our well-worn path goal. At this point Bolton will also participate and Andover will survey forest but using a different approach. We are interviewing for a new ZEO late this month.

The Annual Lake Forum is being scheduled as a Zoom meeting this fall. The final Hydrilla treatment is being scheduled for late September.

The Neighborhood Assistance Act tax credit for the CLCC project was approved, so they are looking for a partner to take the tax credit. CLCC has teamed up with the Corporation of Independent Living to help obtain construction funding for the housing. They also are

looking at going back to Planning and Zoning for plan changes to reduce construction costs and create a more village-style complex of small hamlets.

HR issues:

Personnel rules appendices are being working on with the draft of an updated Affirmative Action plan completed by our UCONN intern. We have started negotiations with the Town Hall and Supervisors unions for July 1, 2020 and will start with all Afscme groups for pension. We are recruiting for a Public Works Director, and several part time Senior Center positions as we move toward reopening the Center slowly. A public works vacancy is also anticipated with the resignation of a Mechanic I. We also need more help in the Town Clerk's office now that we have to process all of the absentee ballots. State money will pay for this. We are also bringing back former Town Clerk Susan Cyr to help out. Many issues on COVID-19 leave and travel policies are being digested and information distributed.

Other projects:

We continue to work with CRCOG and neighboring towns on the crumbling concrete foundation issue. We now have over 154 households tested under the CRCOG program. A low-interest loan program is also available for uncovered costs.

The Walls Committee met and decided to ask for proposals from DiBlasi Engineering to move onto the smaller areas of the complex and look for solutions. The School Building Committee has approval for the fire door projects, and the bid came in on budget and was awarded. The asbestos project is complete. The HVAC RFP bids were received, evaluated, and rejected due to pending changes in the codes. We have awarded bids for just the middle school gym units and CHS front office controls to be replaced. There is an 8-week order time for the units. The Special Town Meeting on 8/27 was held and a vote scheduled for 11/3 for two questions: 1) school roofs and alarms, and 2) library renovations. We will start the search for an architect for school roofs. so if it is approved we can get moving.

The Stewart parcel agreement was also approved, so after a bit of final survey work we can close that deal.