



A Message from your Town Administrator

January 2019

COUNCIL OAK LAND MANAGEMENT OPPORTUNITY

The Conservation Commission purchased Council Oak II in December of 2017. After a year of rest, the land is ready to be farmed again! We are currently soliciting Requests for Proposals. Visit https://www.dighton-ma.gov/department/procurement_opportunities.php for important documents. But hurry! Proposals are due February 14 at 12:00 p.m. We look forward to celebrating our agricultural history.

TOWNWIDE PARKING BAN IN EFFECT

Per the Town's Bylaws, there is no overnight parking from November 1 to April 1. Thank you for your compliance with this directive.

It's a new year and thus begins a new budget season – we're onto Fiscal Year 2020. The Board of Selectmen, at their last meeting, reviewed and voted on all of the budgets that come under their purview. Viewers and attendees to future meetings will also hear discussions on the budget as a whole. The Finance Committee will review the budget at their meetings this spring and provide a final recommendation to Town Meeting for our voters. Also in the new year, we've implemented the performance evaluation process for non-union employees. This new process was devised and implemented in the fall of 2018. To read the policy, visit our website at <https://www.dighton-ma.gov/government/policies.php>. I would like to thank all of the employees who underwent this process.

I'd also like to thank Mr. Peter Benvie and Mr. Robert Adams. Both have served the town well on the Planning Board and Zoning Board of Appeals, respectfully. They have resigned from their posts and we wish them great success and happiness in their future endeavors. We appreciate their service to the Town in these capacities and will miss their contributions. A small town like Dighton relies on volunteers to public service, both elected and appointed. If you'd like to be appointed to a town board or commission, visit https://www.dighton-ma.gov/government/job_vacancies.php for a list of vacancies.

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IT'S NOT EASY BEING GREEN

At their end of last month, the Town was awarded over \$143,000 in Green Communities designation funds to increase energy efficiencies throughout town-owned properties. The Board of Selectmen identified four projects that we will finance through this funding. These include installing a new energy efficient heating/cooling system in Town Hall which would also link up to wifi thermostats, replacing windows on the lower level of Town Hall, installing energy-efficient attic insulation, and purchasing two electric vehicle charging stations to be installed at Old Town Hall and Town Hall. Each project requires a specific scope and identification of energy savings. I would like to thank the Building Commissioner's assistance as well as the Town Electrician as we develop

these reports and scopes for an application due on February 8. Collectively, these projects will substantially propel the Town toward our goal of a 20% reduction in energy use.

The Regional Agreement Task Force committee was created by the DR Regional School Committee as a sub group to work specifically on the Regional Agreement and any proposed changes to the Agreement presented by the School Committee, Dighton and Rehoboth. Dighton's contingent for this endeavor is Board of Selectmen Chairman Brett Zografos and Finance Committee Chairman Ed Swartz. Thank you for your efforts in this capacity and thank you to the School Committee for hearing the concerns, comments and questions from both towns.

This month, the Board of Selectmen reviewed each Department Head's five-year wish list, a plan we asked them to submit to determine what their needs were, what their plans for the next five years may be, and any new programs they wish to provide to the Town. From those lists, the Board voted on their own five-year to do list which resulted in a plan to make all town-owned buildings ADA compliant, a plan for a new library versus than a renovation to the existing building, a plan for an addition for Fire Station 1, a plan for a new highway garage, a plan to reallocate and/or create more office space in Town Hall, and to study sewer expansion. This is definitely a buildings-focused list that is the result of many years of not tracking and keeping up with maintenance and needs. For this, and many other reasons, we have also added facilities management tasks to the Building Commissioner's job description to help us prepare and plan for large-scale projects and capital expenditures with fiscal prudence. I have also worked with Robert Rendon to devise an updated Capital Plan Committee By Law to ensure that whatever Capital Plan that is approved is current, has been discussed by those with an understanding of municipal finance and taxpayer constraints, and that has been created in conjunction with efforts by the Board of Selectmen, Finance Committee, and town employees during the budget formulation process.

We've also been working vigorously to update the Policy Manual for the Town. You'll see on several Board of Selectmen meetings that we have gone through to revise and in many cases strike policies altogether that are outdated or simply a restatement of state law. We are also writing new policies, the next of which to be released is the Computer Use Policy. I have once again been working with the Policy Review Board to roll out a new policy governing use of Town-owned computers and network infrastructure. This will ensure security and professionalize the use of our technology. I appreciate very much the work and effort of the Policy Review Committee members and take their opinions and ideas seriously. It has been an excellent way to develop and craft new policies that address everyone's concerns. Thank you to my colleagues on that Committee.



In the same vein, we have continued professionalizing all our departments by developing and approving updated job descriptions that reflect the hard work of our department heads. We've also just completed our first professional evaluation process. My hope for the coming year is to develop an organizational chart for the Town as well.

JANUARY NEWS

Old Town Hall was officially welcomed open in a beautiful ceremony planned and organized by volunteers: Selectman Nancy Goulart, Selectman Ken Pacheco, Town Clerk Sue Medeiros, Town Treasurer Mary Hathaway, Town Historian Myrna Santos, Building Commissioner James Aguiar. The ceremony took place on January 27. Senator Marc Pacheco and Representative Patricia Haddad were in attendance and shared comments about how wonderful it is to see Dighton celebrate the feats and good work of its own town and employees. Special recognition was given to Mr. Michael Berube of

IMPORTANT DATES

February 13 – Selectmen's Meeting

February 18 – Town Offices Closed
(President's Day)

February 21 – Make Fleece Blankets at
the Library!

February 27 – Selectmen's Meeting

the Town's Highway Department who did yeoman's work on the interior. His craftsmanship is highlighted throughout the building. Building Commissioner James Aguiar was also recognized for his significant efforts in managing the construction process and coordinating the move of five departments. The Cable Committee was present recording the ceremony – be sure to check it out on Channel 9 and swing by for a visit! It truly is a beautiful building with a gorgeous meeting space for the community. Well done to all involved!

The Open Space Committee is in receipt of a grant in the amount of \$2895 Taunton River Stewardship Council to assist in paying for appraisal and title services for proposed land acquisitions. The Open Space Committee has also been busy finalizing details on the Open Space Plan with the help of Regional Planning agency, SRPEDD, which has been made possible through technical assistance grant funding. I not only thank the Open Space Committee for their efforts and diligence in exploring alternative funding opportunities, but also their hard work in progressing the town's Community Compact of devising this plan.

Congratulations to Officer Mike Marshall! He has recently completed the Police Academy and has returned to the Department as a full time police officer. We look forward to all the good work you'll do for us, and you are just in time for the new station!

COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Town is in need of Snow Plow Drivers either with or without their own plow. Please contact Highway Superintendent Thomas Ferry at 774-218-5339 to sign up!

The Lions Club is kickstarting two old but good programs: the People Locator and the File for Life. The People Locator program is a bright orange sign that affixes to your bedroom windows to allow firefighters and other life-saving emergency response professionals the ability to know where the people are in your house in an emergency. The File for Life program is a card and a file for your refrigerator that lists your blood type, any medical conditions you have, allergies, or other special, lifesaving information that would be critical to an emergency responder in the event you were incapacitated. All they need to know to further assist you in a medical emergency would be right there. Reach out to Lions Club members Ed Olney or John King to learn more.

The Dighton Public Library is gearing up for its Random Acts of Kindness week which will celebrate the kindness in Dighton and the Dighton Public Library. One such activity is Making fleece blankets for residents of New Hope, a non-profit organization that assists survivors of violent and sexual assault. Dighton is part of their service area. That will take place on Thursday, February 21 at 6:30 p.m. Contact the Library for more information and for other acts of kindness at 508-669-6421. Ask for Jocelyn.



TOWN ADMINISTRATOR'S FUN FACT

Next month we'll be celebrating President's Day and I have to share some fun facts. Presidents are fascinating to me and serve as a wealth of fun trivia. For those that have visited my office, you'll see a John Adams bobblehead proudly displayed. Though unpopular during his time, he is quite the legend these days. He's my favorite president due to his staunch belief in our governmental system and unwavering support of the government design he crafted. He chose to do the right thing, rather than the popular thing, with a clear understanding of the lasting impact his decisions would make on our country. This is showcased in his decision to defend the British soldiers involved in the Boston Massacre, a choice he made in the face of extreme disfavor. Such moral convictions are admirable. So fun fact time: John Adams and Thomas Jefferson were bitter political rivals. They eventually became friends, when they both were removed from public life. They wrote to each other in their older years and ended up dying on the same day: July 4, 1826. James Monroe, our nation's fifth president, died five years later, also on July 4.