



Shaun A. Suhoski, Town Manager
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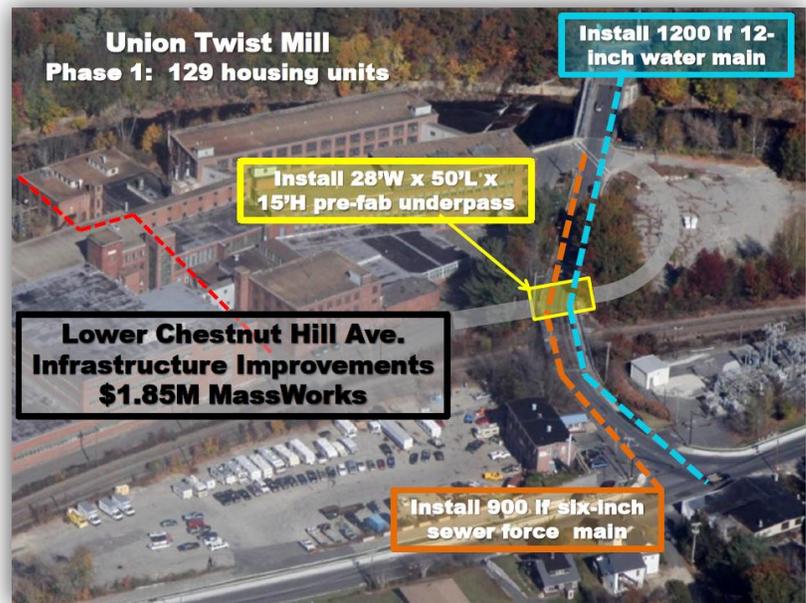
MEMORANDUM

TO: Athol Board of Selectmen
FR: Shaun A. Suhoski, Town Manager
RE: Town Manager’s Report
DT: September 2, 2016

Dear Board: Please see the following report for your meeting on Tuesday tonight:

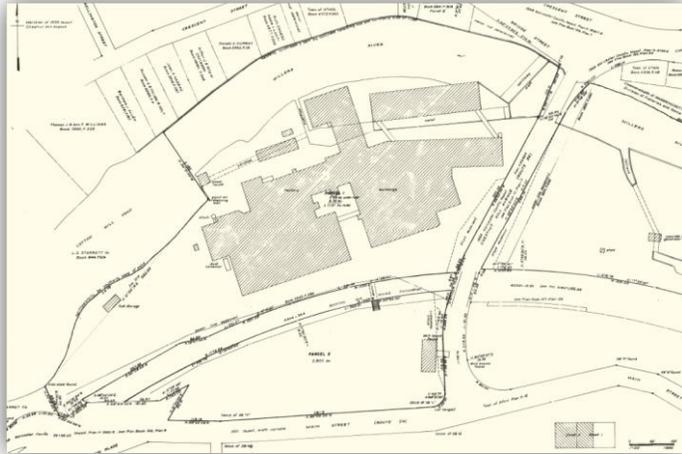
\$1.85 Million MassWorks Grant Application Filed: With a great team effort by Eric Smith, Doug Walsh, and Cindy and Chuck Hartwell, I filed a \$1.85 million MassWorks grant application that would both improve aging Town infrastructure while enhancing the “readiness-to-proceed” of the proposed Union Twist Mill redevelopment. The grant would fund the following improvements within Chestnut Hill Avenue:

- replace 1,200 lf of a century old, tuberculated eight-inch water main with a new 12-inch main from Main Street to Crescent Street (capacity for mill redevelopment and improves water volume to neighborhoods north of the Millers River),
- install 900 lf of six-inch sewer force main to service any future redevelopment of the mill and any abutting parcels,
- install a pre-fabricated underpass beneath Chestnut Hill Ave. that will provide access for autos, emergency and commercial vehicles between both sides of the Union Twist Mill property,
- full-width resurfacing of the disturbed areas of Chestnut Hill Ave., and
- survey, design, engineering and other soft costs associated with the project.



No other Town projects meeting the grant criteria were ready-to-proceed.

The planned first phase of mill redevelopment by Historic Preservation Partners, and the Purple and Hartwell family, is to renovate several buildings along the Millers River into 129 units of one- and two-bedroom, market rate housing with amenities such as health and fitness room, lounge area, billiards and more. The second and third phases of work would focus on mixed commercial, light industrial, restaurant or institutional uses with a job creation goal of 80 to 300 FTEs.

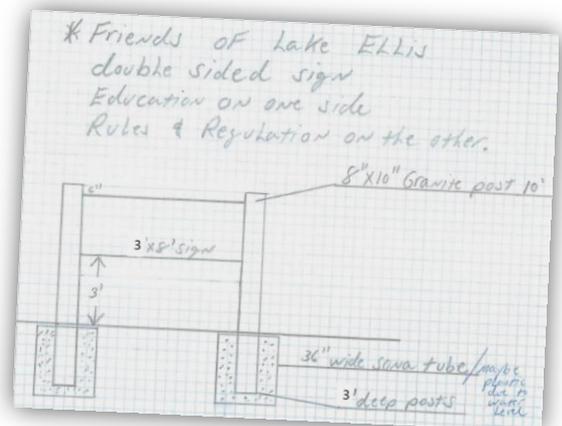


The timing for any mill redevelopment hinges upon the release of historic tax credits by the Commonwealth of Mass. The latest application for these credits was filed in late August. Once a sufficient value of credits has issued, the private developer can package the balance of equity, bank and other financing sources to initiate the project, likely in the next 24-36 months. The MassWorks program guide states that grant awards are made eight weeks after the Sept. 2 submittal deadline.

Lake Ellis Association: Doug Walsh and I met with John Robertson and another member of the Lake Ellis Association to review and approve the design and location for the new signage at the boat ramp for Lake Ellis. The only change from the information previously presented to the Board is that the sign will be erected on granite posts... very tasteful. Copies of the proposed signage design were distributed to the Board which voted at your last meeting to accept the gift of this sign subject to the DPW Superintendent's final review.

The group has also received the go-ahead from the Conservation Commission to erect the sign which will include all Town regulations on one side and educational materials for boaters on the other. This is turning out to be a very well executed project.

Doug Walsh is taking a lead with the Association to develop the scope of weed treatment. He and Mr. Robertson traded additional information this past week and that project will continue to move along.



Lastly, I am working with "Miss Brenda" Piro and Mr. Robertson to seek state funding to install a boat ramp at the existing location. We have made contact with the Office of Fish and Boating Access to initiate this effort, and, state Rep. Whipps Lee has engaged top officials at the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs to help move the project forward.

CDBG One-Year Action Plan Comments: The state Dept. of Housing & Community Development released a list of proposed changes for the upcoming CDBG round. In my 20-plus years of experience, I have never seen such a major shift in language.

CDBG consultant Linda Overing, Planning Director Eric Smith and I met to review the language and issued (through the planning office) a commentary letter. There are public hearings and explanations scheduled in September and we will continue to track the direction of the CDBG program. A copy of Mr. Smith's letter was emailed to the Board.

Miscellaneous Items:

- Participated in police contract mediation
- Attended portion of police TASER training
- Attended regional dispatch meeting concerning radio coverage and needed improvements in Athol
- Attended MART Advisory Board meeting
- Met with energy consultant (Power Management) to review current and projected electricity market and costs
- Worked with planning, public works and mill ownership to develop, write and file \$1.85M MassWorks grant application
- Participated in negotiations with Principal Assessor, BOA chairman and solar field developer regarding 20-year tax agreement
- Met with Orange town administrator and new Erving administrative coordinator to discuss various issues including Route 2 needs
- Met with residents of Pleasant Street, owner of rooming house and Chief Kleber regarding operations and neighborhood relations
- Attended Senior Picnic at Silver Lake Park... **kudos to Cathy Savoy** for another great event!
- Offered welcoming remarks to regional school district teachers and para-professionals at district-wide startup event