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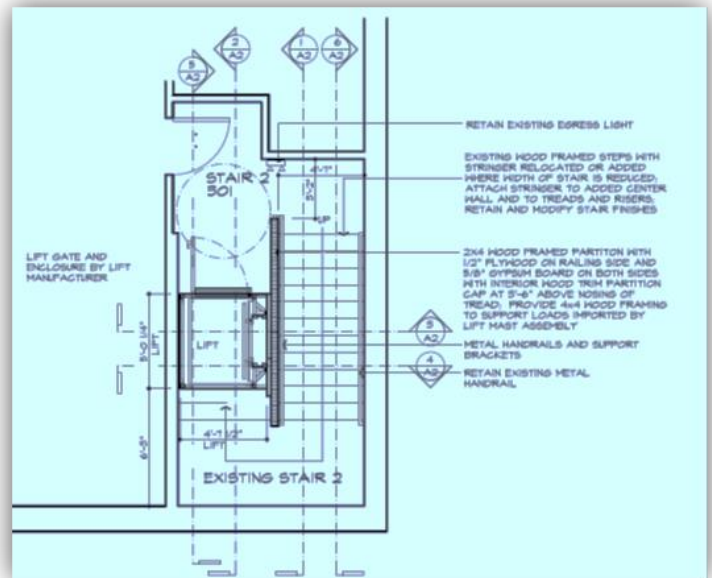
MEMORANDUM

TO: Athol Board of Selectmen
 FR: Shaun A. Suhoski, Town Manager
 RE: Town Manager’s Report
 DT: December 4, 2018

Dear Board: Please see the following brief update for tonight’s meeting.

Invitation for Bids Issued for Accessible Lift at 100 Main Street: The IFB was advertised in the Central Register and Daily News for bids to install “a three stop vertical wheel lift in an existing stairwell, reconstruction on a half flight of existing wood framed stairs, fire rated stairway enclosure walls, fire rated doors, and related work” at the Millers River Environmental Center. Bids are due on December 19 with the work estimated to begin in January and be complete by May.

The plans were prepared by Haynes, Lieneck and Smith who will oversee the project along with Dave Small of the lessee Athol Bird and Nature Club. Mr. Small has been instrumental in pushing this and other improvements forward in the former school building.



Downtown Safety Issues: Either Chief Lundgren or Lt. Cote will update the Board to additional enforcement actions requested of the department relative to the safety of pedestrians in the downtown district, including the crosswalks, and to the speed of vehicles through this area.

With respect to the status of the streetlights, I’m pleased to say that both National Grid and the DPW made substantial progress in advance of the holiday shopping season downtown including the “Midnight Madness” event this weekend.

Based upon valid concerns raised by members of the Board of Selectmen and the Downtown Vitality Committee a walking survey of streetlights on Main and Exchange Streets was conducted with disappointing results (six NGRID cobra heads and nine Town ornamental lights were not functioning).

NGRID responded last week and repaired lights on Main, Traverse, Marble and Exchange Streets. Also, the DPW tasked Lafleur Electric to get a handle on the ornamental lighting after several attempts to motivate the prior vendor. Lafleur was able to restore all but three of the ornamental lights (those require more in-depth repairs) and installed a test fixture in front of Hometown Realty on Main Street.

The test light is a noticeably brighter and whiter 45-watt LED fixture. But, it comes at the cost of being directly visible through the lamp fixture, shedding additional light into upper floors of buildings and with some glare to drivers. We could seek to budget replacement of the lights at approximately \$550 each, but the retrofit lamps would be installed on aging lampposts for which parts are no longer available. We will look to include lighting upgrades in either the town-wide LED conversion next spring/summer, or in a future downtown streetscape improvement project under development.

Status of Liquor License Quotas and Inquiries:

Special legislation to increase all-alcohol pouring licenses from 14 to 20: further to the Board's direction, Town Counsel provided the revised language to increase the all-alcohol pouring license quota to 20 to Rep. Whipps' office. We will work with the legislators and House counsel in hopes of getting it through the informal session which ends at the end of the month, otherwise the next session begins in January. The state rep's office confirmed that the Town's vote authorizing the legislation is valid for both the current and ensuing session. Hopefully, this will pass promptly as we are ready to reach quota.

All-alcohol pouring license requests: the current limit is 14 licenses and with Mahoney's Pub opening there are 12 licenses currently issued. This past week – as we discussed several months ago – we received direct inquiries from the proposed Asian style restaurant on Market Drive, and from the owner of the Main Street Grill, on how to secure licenses for the proposed and existing restaurant. If approved, these would fully exhaust our licenses. The owners of the proposed brewery on Marble Street are continuing renovations but have yet to apply for the license.

Also, during your renewal process tonight you will find that while Mahoney's Pub has applied for renewal, a creditor of the former business has a Court ordered auction of the premises scheduled in December. And, the general manager and owner of the Blind Pig are planning to renew for 2019 but also to take a few months to fully renovate the facility.

Wine and malt package store licenses: the Town's quota is five wine and malt package stores. On December 4 you will see renewal requests for three wine and malt package store licenses. The Board will hold a public hearing on December 18 in response to the application for a fourth wine and malt package license for the proposed gas station and convenience store at Exit 18 which, if approved, will leave one wine and malt license available.

All-alcohol package store licenses the Town's quota is three full package store licenses which is already filled. Kayrouz Realty has requested information on how to secure a full package store license for the new 26,000 sf Dollar Tree development proposed on Market Drive. And, the owner of a convenience store with a current wine and malt package store license stopped in to ask about the process to secure a full package store license. Both parties have been provided the same information, namely, (1) request whether the Board of Selectmen would to agree to place an article on a future Town Meeting warrant to seek approval to increase the full package store quota, (2) receive majority vote of approval from Town Meeting, and (3) file special legislation and receive approval of same at state level.

Impact on quota for retail marijuana establishments: Currently, there is a limit of two retail marijuana establishments in Athol. Section 3.29.7 of our Zoning Bylaw spells out the limit: "*The number of Licensed*

Marijuana Retail Establishments in the Town of Athol shall not exceed 20% of the number of licenses issued for the sale of alcohol not to be consumed on the premises under Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 138, Section 15, said number to be rounded up to the next whole number.” Currently there are eight combined package store licenses and 20 percent is 1.6 (which rounds up to two).

Members of the Board and others have asked what happens to the retail marijuana quota if we raise the package store quota. Based upon our Zoning Bylaw, the Town could add no more than two additional package store licenses without also increasing the quota on marijuana retailers (eg. ten total licenses @ 20 percent equals two marijuana licenses).

Marijuana Retail License Quota and Inquiries

Selectman Chauvette queried the status of Elev8 Cannabis at your last meeting. I followed-up with Seun Adedeji who emailed me to advise that licensure is proceeding with the state CCC and that he will be on site on December 10 when his contractors begin renovations to the former Mr. Mike’s Mobil. He hopes to have construction complete within 60 days and to begin operations by the end of February 2019.

Principals of Blue Jay Botanicals are seeking a special permit for the site on Chestnut Hill Ave. that has housed Victory Lane Motors. A community outreach meeting was held earlier today in Liberty Hall and the Board of Planning and Community Development has its Public Hearing on Wednesday, December 5 at 7:50 p.m. in Town Hall. If approved by the BPCD – and should the Board of Selectmen approve a host community agreement – the two retailer limit under Athol’s Zoning Bylaws will be exhausted.

I would note that last Thursday a local business operator came into the office to inquire about the process to acquire a retail marijuana establishment license. I provided the relevant zoning and procedural information and referred him to the Town Planner.

Be assured that given the heavy traffic counts at Leicester and Northampton the traffic safety team will be reviewing circulation patterns and pre-planning to avoid congestion and safety issues. The Board’s thoughts on this are most welcome. Of course by the time retail operations begin in Athol (Elev8 hopes for early spring 2019; Blue Jay suggests summer to fall 2019) the market will have settled out and crowds dispersed as additional retailers come on line.

Miscellaneous:

- Participated in AOTV annual auction with Sen. Anne Gobi
- During the auction I accepted a donation challenge from Selectman Caldwell and sang “Jingle Bells” live, albeit falling woefully short of Steve Raymond’s inspired interpretation of “I’m a Little Teapot” a few years back
- Met with Finance Team and reviewed data for tax classification hearing
- Met with ARRS administration officials regarding FY20 budget timeline and initial expectations (proposed date for “All Boards” meeting is Weds., January 23 at 6pm at ARMS)
- Held meeting of Permit Authorizing Committee to review initial plans for the “Dollar Tree” 26,000 sf building (public hearing is Tuesday, December 11 at 5pm in Liberty Hall)

