

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

TO: Honorable Town Council Members

FROM: Karl F. Kilduff, Town Manager

DATE: February 16, 2022

Please find my report concerning various items of interest to the Town Council and community.

1. Council Business:

- State Budget – As a part of his budget proposal, the Governor proposed to lower the mill rate charged for motor vehicles. When presented, this program was meant to provide a degree of property tax relief. The details of the proposal are problematic. First, the replacement revenue which is supposed to make all towns whole is short as it is based on the current fiscal year not new mill rates or growth in vehicle values over the past year. Further, it builds in structural changes to how the motor vehicles are valued and taxed. This change too can create holes in municipal budgets.
- Planting Complaint – I have been asked to report on the complaint raised at a Council meeting regarding replanting of dead plants at the CVS. As I noted before, the zoning violation was issued and acknowledged. Replanting was not anticipated to take place during the winter. Replanting was anticipated for the spring when the weather is more conducive.
- Beneficial Re-use of former Landfill Site – As I noted previously, I have been trying to identify an approach that will allow the town to have a beneficial reuse of the former landfill site. Any reuse on the site has not been further considered by the Town given the cost to cap the site. I have had discussions with one firm that has an approach that might work for the town and has been used in other communities. I want to discuss this with the Council at your meeting and will be looking for direction/interest. The next step would be to issue a request for proposals to assess market interest.

Assuming we get beyond this step, after the site is capped, the Town could consider other beneficial reuses including solar which I know already has strong market interest.

2. River COG:

River COG held a special meeting on February 9, 2022. With a primary focus on making decisions regarding the future of the household hazardous waste program. The program can be run at a lower cost relying exclusively on satellite collections rather than a fixed point in Essex and satellites. The proposed change is to shift to a series of satellite collections that would be spread throughout the region. The all satellite model allows anyone in the COG region to go to any other satellite collection.

Clinton has hosted satellite collections in the past and ours would continue to operate. There is some potential savings for Clinton in that our base fee for the program could drop. We would still have to pay for waste generated by Clinton residents.

3. Miscellaneous:

- Building Permit Fees – We will be looking for the Council to take action modifying the fees charged for building permits. The Town's ordinances do not call for a specific rate or process to amend fees. It simply states that there shall be a permit fee and the consequences associated with not having a permit. The reason for the clarification is to extract the part of the building permit fee that is remitted to the State. It is buried on the Town fee. Most other communities have the local fee and the State fee is separately added. We need to update our fee calculation to aid in the online permitting system at a minimum. Additionally, when we are asked to waive a building permit fee for a municipal/school project or other entity, it is easier to simply waive the local part and convey the State portion of the fee rather than breaking down the permit fee manually. I will have something for your consideration at a future meeting.
- UCONN Climate Corps – I reported previously that the Town was interested in utilizing UCONN Students through their Climate Corps program to aid in data collection for the first steps of a resiliency plan. This type of work was described as an action step in the Natural Hazards Mitigation Plan. Clinton was selected as a town to participate in the program and there is interest from 2 students and possibly 4. We are refining the scope of work that the student will complete. Their work will focus on an initial resiliency plan which would identify critical infrastructure, vulnerable habitats, assess risks and provide recommendations to help adapt to climate change impacts.

This type of planning activity helps the Town in a few ways. First, it helps with future planning and other larger resiliency efforts. Second, it helps respond to questions from bond rating agencies who are looking at climate resiliency planning for coast communities. The rating agencies are looking for steps taken and any reserves or designated fund balance set aside to respond to climate challenges (or to serve as a source for local match for resiliency grants).

- COST Appointment – I have been selected by the Council of Small Towns (COST), to serve as one of their representatives to the State Advisory Council on Intergovernmental Relations. The committee exists by statute to study issues between state and local governments and recommend solutions as appropriate.