

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

TO: Honorable Town Council Members

FROM: Karl F. Kilduff, Town Manager

DATE: March 16, 2022

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

1. Council Business:

- ARPA Funding Applications – Following the Special Town Meeting which appropriated some of our ARPA allocation, the Town's website added an ARPA application page for non-profit entities, arts organizations and small businesses. Applications are starting to come in for different organizations. Those applications are currently under review.

Human Services is also standing up its process to provide direct assistance to members of the public as allowed under the program as well as the documentation that will be necessary.

- Regional Housing Plan Update – Previously I have reported that the Council of Governments is performing regional Housing plan that will also include individual town affordable housing plans. A local affordable housing plan is a state mandate and must be in place by June 2022 (although reasonable time extensions are allowed). The local committee that will work with the COG's consultants to develop the Clinton plan had its first meeting to receive a presentation on affordable housing information, town demographics, housing market and local survey input. As a follow-up to that meeting, I am working with the consultants to put together a menu of policy items for discussion with the group. The intent of the State mandate is to have a plan that charts a course forward to provide housing diversity. Ultimately, this plan will come to the Council for ratification.
- Masking at Town Hall – As the Council is aware, masking in Town Hall was recently lifted. CDC guidance for Middlesex County suggests a "Low" level risk which allows us to light masking requirements. Indoor masking for someone who is not positive or symptomatic is a decision based on their comfort level. People with symptoms, a positive test, or exposure to someone with COVID-19 should wear a mask. This means that meetings can be conducted without the need to wear a mask.

Additionally, for the Council's awareness, the authorization for electronic meetings is also due to expire. Such meetings were initially permitted by Executive Order. An extension of that authorization was adopted by the General Assembly in the budget that was passed last year until April 30, 2022.

2. Miscellaneous:

- Carter Hill Bridge – I advised the Council previously that the Carter Hill Bridge would be authorized to proceed (in order to secure our 80% grant funding for the project). The bridge had been previously approved as part of a bond authorization that was approved by the voters. The project unfortunately will coincide with the end of work on the Pleasant Valley Road Bridge. As originally conceived, it was anticipated that more early work would have been performed on Pleasant Valley which would have delivered a completed bridge ahead of the contracted schedule. That did not take place. Efforts are underway to facilitate coordination on the two projects and detouring, so either new work can be done that does not shut down the bridge until Pleasant Valley is open or Pleasant Valley is open for cars while non-road work continues. The detour plan will be advertised to provide as much advance warning as possible given the time constraints.
- Hiring – As noted previously, backfilling a number of vacancies is consuming my time as we try to fill positions. Interviews were started for vacancies in Finance and Land Use. Additional interviews need to be scheduled for the WPCC clerk vacancy. The review process needs to start for the Senior Program Coordinator and Program Coordinator in Human Services. The Charter requires that Council to ratify hiring choices made by the Town Manager. The hiring process will ultimately be brought to the Council to affirm the successful candidate in these selections.
- Façade Program – The first application for the façade improvement program has been submitted and was complete. The proposed scope of work needs to be reviewed by the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) as the area is part of a declared historic district and state funds trigger their review. The proposal will involve more engagement by SHPO. I have alerted the property owner to this next hurdle which needs to be cleared.
- Commerce/Leffingwell Historic District Grant – The Council has finally received its formal grant contract for the funds we were awarded. This lets us move forward with the grant project and start the procurement for a consultant that will document the historic assets of the proposed district. I will prepare a Request for Proposals soon (which also requires State approval of the draft).