

Ira Brezinsky, Chair
Andrea Miles, Vice-Chair
Jeff Cyr, Clerk
Sarah Etelman
Bruce Forcier

Michael J. Sullivan
Town Administrator

January 14, 2019

Honorable Selectboard,

Please accept this abridged account of projects and initiatives my colleagues and I are engaged in on your behalf in town hall and throughout South Hadley. We collectively appreciate your support.

Regional Age Friendly, Dementia Friendly Project; As you are aware, we have been accepted to be a part of DLTA Grant with PVPC to partner with Holyoke and Chicopee to create a regional plan for Age Friendly and Dementia Friendly practices. I have to say, South Hadley was very well represented at the inaugural meeting and, more importantly, we are at pace or ahead of our partners in practices and programs related to these important initiatives.

The only Holyoke person was Pat Beaudry, who works at PVPCand me, unfortunately. Pat accepted the task to make sure the key players in the Paper City will be filled in on the proceedings. A number of interested Springfield officials and some agencies were in attendance as interested parties.

There will be an AARP-based survey circulated shortly to attempt a baseline for needs. It will be critically important South Hadley does our best to participate. The survey will be available online, and the COA and hopefully the library will be able to assist the participants in filling out the survey.

The focus will be on creating communities which consider the needs of every age group for projects, programs and policies equitably. It encourages, when adopting planning or designing, consideration of all various demographics of age and ability.

Open Space Plan/Master Plan Update; Tracy Adamski (Tighe and Bond), Emily Innes (Harriman), Town Planner Richard Harris, and I met with the consultants who are charging ahead on the Open Space Plan and the Master Plan Update.

There was significant discussion on the need to ensure all citizens are given a variety of ways and multiple opportunities to provide input to either of the documents. I made it clear that the present MPIC should be used to the greatest extent as a resource. They know what worked and what has not, where we have made progress and where we flamed out, what should be kept in and what should be jettisoned.

Both Tracy and Emily were interested in the Public Building Analysis, the BWC (PVPC) Study, and the upcoming ADA Plan, as these each have relevance. We also discussed the new Senior

Center, VBS, PVTA, the library, the South Hadley schools, SHELD, Woodlawn Plaza and other projects. Surprise! The meeting went over the allotted time...or no surprise to some.

Senator Comerford ; I was happy the senator took us up on the offer to host the “People’s Office,” where she will meet with South Hadley constituents to discuss issues of the day. The concept is that the “office” is wherever she can meet with her constituents.

Senator Comerford and staff will be in South Hadley Town Hall from 11 a.m. - 2 p.m. on Wednesday, March 27 and Wednesday, June 26. The meetings are tentatively earmarked for the Selectboard Meeting Room, but subject to change.

Recently, District Director Elena Cohen visited South Hadley Town Hall to scope the place out for the “People’s Office.” Her exuberance radiated from her being. I believe Senator Comerford and staff will serve SoHa well.

Capital Planning; There was a recent meeting of Capital Planning called by Chair Boulais. I demonstrated the new budget feature where departments can make “Capital” requests. Some rise to the level of interest of the Capital Planning parameters, and some are smaller durable goods departments are seeking. They need to be durable and likely to last over several cycles, but may be under the threshold for CPC.

There was discussion about my favorite - repointing town hall. Everyone agreed it was needed and not getting cheaper year after year. I accept and agree it is a bear of a project and will be complicated to even coordinate ... if we can even find an interested mason, as you may recall from the most recent brick repair.

We also discussed the need for two cruisers to be purchased in the spring, due to the fact we did not do any capital at the last STM. I suggested we should buy two, as the quicker we can put the gas-guzzling Crown Vics out of their misery the better off we will be. The new “Interceptors” are more energy efficient and the next generation will be hybrids, making idling a net zero proposition in most cases.

There was also some discussion about school needs, particularly the stove at the high school, and whether students still use lockers. I am sure there will be more to come on Capital Planning.

South Hadley/Granby Chamber Annual Meeting; Tony Cignoli ; Willets Hallowell hosted the Chamber Annual Meeting and I was swayed to attend when I heard longtime political consultant and prognosticator Tony Cignoli, of A.L. Cignoli, was the featured speaker. He did not disappoint.

He presented artful description of the present climate in the nation’s capital, highlighting how important South Hadley’s Congressman Richard Neal would be in Washington as the House Ways and Means Chair.

He spoke about the talent drain from the western part of the Commonwealth with the loss of so many state elected officials (Kocot, Scibak, Rosenberg etc.). However, he was very

complementary to Senator Comerford in particular. He clearly sees her as a rising star ... and said she was a super star before she stood for election, due to her previous work.

Kim Prough was also introduced as the new executive director. Anyone who has met Kim in her short history in town knows she is a dynamo - one of those people I need a two-hour nap after I meet with her for a half hour. I think the South Hadley/Granby Chamber of Commerce will be a community force very shortly under her tutelage.

Bylaw Review Committee; There was successful meeting of the ByLaw Review Committee (BRC). Charles Miles was elected chair, Anne Awad vice chair and Jay Bruer as clerk. Vern Blodgett participated as well.

There remain three more openings under the revamped bylaw governing the BRC. The police chief, town counsel and the town administrator no longer are “ex-officio” members, but I assured the committee I would attempt to provide them as much access as possible, and any department head or legal counsel as necessary and appropriate moving forward. I also suspect I will remain deeply involved.

We discussed the historical way the committee operated. There were some questions about their function. I explained it was my view that the BRC is an “advisory” board tasked with making suggestions to the SB for potential warrant articles which effected bylaws. There were some questions about “zoning bylaws.” I explained that it was my understanding they are exempt from review not by South Hadley bylaws, but by state law.

Furthermore, I did not see anything that suggested the BRC was prohibited from making suggestions to the Planning Board, which they could ignore or consider. It still is a free country!

PVTA Federal Funding; Thank you for your support in allowing to quickly get a letter out to MassDOT about the need to consider increased funding in Western Mass. The most important point is that South Hadley should not suffer any further cuts, as we received two years in row, in respect to service.



Bird Scooter; I had an opportunity to meet with Bird Scooter - another Shared Mobility Device. As you can see from the picture, the scooters are well constructed and easy to ride.

Bird is interested in doing a pilot program for the area with MHC and SH. My intention is to give the concept more thought and research. I will also have additional conversations with MHC about their take.

Bird and VBS will, in my estimation, leverage each other and quicken the public acceptance. These units are another “last mile” option, but can be a year-round option. I promise the Selectboard this is not a lame attempt by me to decrease my exercise by eliminating pedaling.

O-Zones; I have been invited to a meeting in Holyoke to discuss with Mayor Morse and his team some possible partnerships to spur investment in the Flats and the Falls. This will be my first visit to my old office and only my second trip back to City Hall since I left in 2010. Hopefully they will let me in.

I believe this is a program where partnering with Holyoke and/or Chicopee will greatly benefit South Hadley. I am sure you will hear more ...

Respectfully submitted,

Michael J. Sullivan
Town Administrator, South Hadley