

To our fellow Washington residents:

March 2015

The Pipeline Working Group sponsored by BRPC has engaged legal and engineering resources to make sure that the Town has full participation in the approval process and to put ourselves in the best position to thwart its construction or take maximum benefit if we cannot block it and the route – which may not be settled until 2016 – comes back to Washington.

- The Group now has at least ten members which means that the Town's cost will be less than \$6000 in calendar 2015 – and Kinder-Morgan may pay for all of this expense.
- A pdf document "FRCOG – Community Talking Points" outlining possible objections and suggested by-laws that could delay or hinder the pipeline's construction is available on the Town's website. We urge all those who oppose this pipeline to familiarize themselves with it, but don't take it as "gospel" – check the facts yourself.

DOT makes a practice of demanding compliance on bridges the Town owns but continues to shirk its own responsibility for the bridge that spans the CSX tracks on Summit Hill Road. DOT knew that the bridge needed to be replaced over six years ago, and has ignored the recommendations for repair made by its inspector in 2012. We have demanded remediation if not replacement of the bridge immediately – not when they get around to it. We have also reached out to our legislators, the new Secretary of Transportation and our new Governor for help.

Please plan to attend a Special Town Meeting on March 16 at 7:30. The warrant items include borrowing authority for the replacement of the temporary bridges on Middlefield Road and Cross Place Road as well as for the Town's portion of the restructuring of Frost Road where it crosses Depot Brook to supplement the \$788,350 grant from FEMA.

- We are working with BRPC to apply for a Grant to fund part of the work needed to address the overall Depot Brook drainage basin.
- From an engineering perspective removal of the Eden Glen Dam makes sense but has not yet been decided and we hope to get a sense of the community during the meeting.

We may have two volunteers to serve on the Board of Health. We are still looking for someone interested in becoming Tax Collector. If no one comes forward we may need a warrant item to make the position appointed instead of elected.

If you haven't seen the WiredWest letter yet it should be in your mailbox soon. Please respond by signing up for high speed internet and making a small refundable deposit. After 40% of our households sign up we will have a warrant item at town meeting to approve the town's share of the financing. Our new Governor strongly backs the project and has confirmed a significant amount of its cost will be funded by the Commonwealth. Construction will begin as soon as this summer.

It's no secret that the Berkshires have been losing population – especially young adults – over the past decades. BRPC has commissioned a survey to help understand why and what can be done about it. If you, or anyone you know, is between 18 and 39 and lives or has lived in the Berkshires please take it and/or forward the survey link. Answers will help us all understand what we can do to promote long-term growth and stability. The following link is also available on the Town's website: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/BerkshireYoungAdults>.

This winter just won't let go! Stay warm, plan your garden and remember that mud season always get here – whether we want it to or not.

Jim Huebner
Select Board Chair

Shaun Lennon
Select Board Clerk

Mike Case
Select Board