

To our Washington neighbors:

January 2016

Thanks to Sean Connors for offering a suitably large and beautiful slab of granite for the expanded Veterans memorial. This will help the ongoing design work immensely.

A large DOT contingent presented the “25% design” for the Summit Hill bridge over the CSX tracks. Over three dozen residents attended and raised a number of issues with DOT’s plan:

- 1) Use of Middlefield Road as a detour is completely unacceptable and alternatives, including use of Bullard’s Crossing, were suggested;
- 2) The length of time that the bridge will be closed creates access issues for residents as well as school buses, emergency vehicles and plows;
- 3) Closing the bridge in the summer months would effectively shut down the Summit Hill Campground;
- 4) The bridge will actually be slightly *narrowed* instead of widened to two full lanes as common sense and safety would seem to dictate.

The Board has sent a response letter to DOT demanding that these issues be resolved. DOT has known that the bridge needed repair since 2008 and we had expected better of them now that they have finally gotten around to it – with completion not expected until 2017...

The Board received an astonishing letter from MBI threatening to withhold state funding for high speed internet construction if the Town goes forward with WiredWest. This high-handed bureaucratic attempt to thwart the will of the voters – not only in Washington, but all the municipalities who have banded together to get this vital technology – will not stand. The Board has sent a letter protesting MBI’s actions to Senator Downing who chairs the legislative committee responsible for oversight and copied the Governor, MBI’s board and our sister towns. Bad enough that no commercial enterprise saw fit to bring us broadband; now it seems we have to battle through a government agency that is supposed to help us.

Two bits of good news on the pipeline: Kinder-Morgan has been told by FERC, the federal agency responsible for approving their plan, to consider other routing because of the fierce opposition from Western MA citizens and officials; and K-M’s financial position has been weakening. It’s way too soon to declare victory and the Town will sign up for “intervener” status as part of the Pipeline Working Group, but bad news for K-M is good news for our environment.

The Conservation Commission has given the go-ahead for the clean-out of the Eden Glen Dam. This is a first step towards reclaiming the area for the Town’s recreational use. Any construction will be folded into the reconstruction of the Frost Road culvert next year.

Balthazar Construction – hired by DOT for the reconstruction of Washington Mountain Road - has already done some beautiful work on the culvert by the Little Red Schoolhouse! We look forward to them completing the all reconstruction work next year. Other road and bridge work for next year will include repaving Blotz Road and replacing both the Middlefield Road bridge and the Cross Place Road bridge.

We hope that all the Washington community along with friends and family enjoyed the holiday season and had a safe New Year. The Select Board’s first meeting of 2016 will be on January 11.

Jim Huebner
Select Board Chair

Shaun Lennon
Select Board Clerk

Mike Case
Select Board