

To our fellow Washington residents:

August 2011

After a lively and informative presentation by Jim Barry, Regional Coordinator, Green Communities Division of MA Department of Energy Resources on July 11, the Select Board voted on 7/18 to pursue a Green Communities designation for the Town. Thirty-five MA communities have already achieved this designation, including our neighbors in Becket, Lenox and Pittsfield.

- The Town will need to meet five criteria, including the adoption of by-laws and expedited permitting for renewable energy sources, committing to reduce the Town's energy usage for both buildings and vehicles, and requiring any new construction to demonstrate energy efficiency.
- The work already by the Planning Board on our by-laws and the already improved efficiency of our lighting, heating and hot water at the Town Hall and the new garage doors at the Town Garage stand us in good stead.
- Outside of lowering costs and fossil fuel usage, as a Green Community the Town would be eligible for grants for further improvements.

On 7/18 the Select Board established an Ad Hoc Committee headed by Shaun Lennon to address issues of safety and access at the Town Hall and plan better use of its space. The first meeting of the committee will be Thursday August 4 at 7 at the Town Hall. As with all our meetings we would welcome anyone who wants to participate.

A few updates:

- The new boiler and hot water system have been installed in the Town Hall.
- The emergency generator for the Town Hall has been repaired.
- We received one bid for the insulation/siding of the Town Hall; the amount exceeds the funds available from the Federal EECB Grant by a considerable amount. Negotiations between our project manager at Berkshire Regional Planning and the MA Department of Energy are underway to see how we might use our grant money in other ways or if additional funding might be available.
- Thanks to Dave Fish for donating much of the old metal playground equipment he removed from the Town Hall grounds to the Parks Committee who plan to install at least some of the items at the Town Park.
- Maplewood's grounds have been spruced up, all of the debris and furniture has been removed from the interior and the culvert at the entrance will be replaced in anticipation of the Nursing Home Committee's issuing a Request for Proposals for its sale.
- The Select Board/Board of Health has agreed to enter into an Inter-Municipal Agreement (IMA) with twenty other Berkshire communities to regionalize many Board of Health services. The IMA sets up a governing board which will work out the details over the coming year. More information can be found at <http://bcboha.org/>. Click on Berkshire Public Health Alliance.

There have been hints – amid the fire of excessive heat and the rain that seems to pop up when least expected – that we are finally into the sunny days and cool nights of a true Berkshire summer. Let's hope they last. Enjoy them.

Jim Huebner,
Select Board Chair

Shaun Lennon
Select Board Clerk

Mike Case
Select Board