



TOWN OF
AMHERST
MASSACHUSETTS

To: Amherst Town Council
From: Lynn Griesemer, President
Re: President's Report
Date: December 18, 2022 (Since October 13, 2022)
(Note: this report covers 2 months.)

My monthly report includes meetings with highlights as appropriate. While my goal is to communicate what I have been doing as President of the Town Council, the report also creates an opportunity for Councilors to ask questions and communicate with me regarding various meetings – this can be done during our Council meetings or in a separate email. In many instances, the Town Manager's Report provides significantly greater detail and links.

Separate from this I will continue to provide information to the Town Council as it becomes available.

Meetings (Please note: Meetings may be in person or virtual.):

Agenda Setting Related Town Council Meetings:

- October 26, November 8, and 23, and December 7 and 21, 2022 – **Plan future TC Agendas** – Meet with Town Council Vice President, Town Manager, Assistant Town Manager, Clerk of the Council, and Assistant to the Town Manager to begin to firm up Town Council Agendas for November 7 and 21, and December 5, 12, and 19, 2022 and January 9, 2023.
- November 2, 17 & 18, and 30, and December 21, 2022 – **Finalize Town Council Agenda** – Meet with Vice President and/or just the Clerk of the Town Council to finalize the agendas for upcoming Council Meetings on November 7, 21, and December 5 and 19, 2022, and January 9, 2023.
- October 17, November 1, 7, and 21, and December 5 and 9, 2022 – **Rehearsal for Council Meeting** – Meet with Clerk of the Town Council to make sure all was set for the Town Council meeting that evening.

Town Council Meetings and Four Towns Meetings

- October 17, November 1, 7, 14, and 21, and December 5, 12 and 19, 2022 – Town Council Meetings
- December 17, 2022 – 4 Towns Meeting

Meetings with Town Manager and other Town Staff

- October 19 and 26; November 2, 3, 9, 10, 16, and 30, and December 7, 14, and 21, 2022 – **Meet with Town Manager** – weekly meeting sometimes including other staff.
- November 10, ALICE Training
- November 28 and December 12, 2022 – Meet with Town Manager and Clerk of the Council regarding the Clerk’s evaluation and job description
- November 16 and 29, December 1 and 2, 2022 – Meet with various members of the Police Department
- December 1 and 14, 2022 – Meet to discuss Elementary School financing and sequence of votes with Councilor Cathy Schoen, Town Manager, and Finance Director, and consultant.
- December 1, 2022 – Visit DPW and Central Fire Station
- December 9, 2022 – Cuppa Jo
- December 14, 2022 – Meet with Town Manager, Finance Director, and Chair of Finance Committee to prepare for 4 Town’s Meeting

Meetings regarding Jones Library Cost Estimates

- November 4 and December 2, 2022 – Meet to discuss coordinated effort regarding Library funding from MBLC with state legislators, library director, advocated, and fund-raising representatives.

Meetings with Town Council Committees (and Chairs) and other Town Committees – as member or attendee.

- African Heritage Reparations Assembly (AHRA):
 - October 17, 2022 – AHRA Committee Meeting (in audience);
 - October 27, 2022 – AHRA Listening Session
 - November 7, 2022 – survey discussion with members of AHRA and consultant
- Finance Committee Meetings –
 - October 18, 2022
 - November 8, 22, and 29, and
 - December 6, 15, and 20, 2022
- TSO Meeting
 - October 20, 2022 – TSO Meeting
- GOL regarding Town Manager Goals
 - November 30 and
 - December 14, 2022
- District Meetings;
 - October 23, 2022 – District 4
 - October 26, 2022 – District 2
 - December 3, 2022 – District 3
- October 31, 2022 – Meet with CSSJC Co-Chairs regarding upcoming Town Council Meeting (Vice President Ana Devlin Gauthier joined in the meeting)

- December 7, 2022 – Budget Coordinating Group
- Note: The Vice President of the Town Council and I meet regularly either in person or by zoom or phone. In addition, I regularly meet with individual Councilors.

Meetings with Groups and People outside of Town Government

- December 8, 2022 – regular meeting with Senator Comerford and Representative Domb. Usually attended by **Senator Comerford, Representative Domb**, and/or their staff, and I am joined by the Vice President, and Town Manager. (See Attached notes)
- October 27, November 22, and December 22, 2022 – Meet with **BID Director and Chamber Director** and Town Manager and Assistant Town Manager – in general, this group meets every 2 - 4 weeks (sometimes not all can attend).

Highlights:

- Proclamation for Small Business Saturday
- Events:
 - November 11, 2022 – Breakfast at Bangs and Flag Raising.
 - Tree lighting – December 2, 2022 (Friday) – lighting of the Merry Merry Maple.
 - December 3, 2022 – Merry Day
 - December 15, 2022 – Sip and Shop Stroll
- Gift card match and presale – December 1, 2022
- Three grants
 - Belchertown Road
 - Town Common Sidewalks – Spring St to College St
 - Street Scape standards for Downtown
 - Chamber got a grant for extending Home of Campaign.
- Pause on fundraising for Performance Shell until after Library decision.
- Some of restaurants want all employees to be trained in Heimlich Maneuver. Town can provide training with Board of Health. Every restaurant is required to have a certified person on choking; but that does not mean someone is always there. Also, each should have Narcan. BID/Chamber to pull together a meeting with all restaurants in January. Perhaps there should be something similar with large landlords.
- Town will not be dispatching CRESS until January.
- November 9 (Cancelled) and December 14, 2022 - Amherst Media and Town of Amherst

Events Attended Representing the Town often with other members of the Town Council

- October 14, 2022 – MMA Legislative Breakfast, in person
- October 15, 2022 – Dickenson Trail Rededication (Groff Park), Fire Station Open House (Central Fire Station), Latinx event (Kendrick Park), Mill District Fall Festival
- October 16, 2022 – Hitchcock 60th Anniversary event
- October 19, 2022 – Chamber Celebration of Savannah's 1st year
- October 27, 2022 – Amherst Education Foundation Annual Trivia Bee
- October 28, 2022 – Amherst Regional Chamber Legislative Breakfast
- October 28, 2022 – Inauguration of Dr. Michael A. Elliot, President of Amherst College
- November 5, 2022 – South Asian Culture and Cuisine event – Unitarian Church

- November 7, 2022 – UMass Architecture Class – Review of individual class member designs for Fire Station south of downtown.
- November 9, 2022 – Donuts and Dinos: Town of Amherst & Amherst College Meet and Greet
- November 11, 2022 – Veterans Day Breakfast and Flag Raising
- November 14, 2022 – Solar Land Fill Ribbon Cutting
- November 17, 2022 – Chamber A+ Awards Dinner
- November 21, 2022 – BID Annual Meeting
- November 22, 2022 – Monte's March and Proclamation Reading
- December 8, 2022 – Attend Business West's Women of Impact Dinner
- December 10, 2022 – Human Rights Day and Proclamation Reading
- December 14, 2022 – Chamber Annual Holiday Party
- December 17, 2022 – International Appeal for a Christmastime Peace in Ukraine

Meeting with Senator Jo Comerford and Representative Mindy Domb – December 8, 2022

NOTES:

1. MSBA reimbursement rate (have 3 years of catch up for increases, but appears they will only do 1 year of catch up.)
MSBA will meet this month. Stopped repair program. Senator Comerford and Representative Domb to follow up regarding reimbursement rate.
2. Library/MBCL Funding – Timing – ARPA funding – Anything before October 2023
House trying to get ARPA funds in the next session.
Senate – Chair of Ways and Means Rodriguez will meet with Senator Comerford in the New Year.
3. Timing on filing special legislation – actual legislation or placeholders
 - a. Refile Ranked Choice Voting – *We do not need to revote at the Town Council level. This was confirmed with Clerk's Office.*
 - b. Tax/Fee on Sale/Transfer of Property – Deadline for legislation or placeholders. *Because it is a Home Rule it can technically come in anytime. However, the earlier the better so that hearing on Amherst is held at the same time as Boston, Nantucket, Somerville (all of which filed in the 2021-22 session). There is a little east/west difference regarding the price threshold (i.e., Boston wants \$2M which would not help Amherst.) Early is at least April; if house lifts February deadline as they did during COVID, then could be April. They will know about deadline once back in session on January 3.*
 - c. Reparations – *deadline is not as critical because there are no others who are filing.*
4. Cannabis Regulations and any advice you may have.
The spirit of the law is not to redo the existing agreements although we keep hearing that the 5 dispensaries may not want to stick to that. Amherst wants our existing contracts to be honored. When contracts come up for renewal then it is all back on the table. The bill that came out and was voted on did not have the redo of the existing. Some establishments are withholding payments and Boston and Northampton have stopped collecting fees. Senator Comerford has already weighed in with the CCC. MMA has this as their number 1 priority.

Notes on Background: The Cannabis Control Commission (CCC) will soon begin its process to promulgate new regulations to implement various provisions of the recently passed cannabis law, Chapter 180 of the Acts of 2022: An Act Relative to Equity in the Cannabis Industry.

The MMA has written the following:

Protecting Existing Host Community Agreements and Moving the Industry Forward
Cities and towns led the way in deciding whether to open neighborhoods to commercial marijuana enterprises and have negotiated in good faith to execute host community agreements (HCAs), including mutually-agreed-to provisions on community impact fees. More than 1,000 such contracts have been put in place, establishing the platform for growth of the industry in Massachusetts. While constitutional tenets protect existing contracts from statutory encroachment, the process outlined in Chapter 180 has opened the door to interference in these properly executed HCAs by licensees and special interests in the cannabis industry.

As the CCC moves forward in the regulatory process in relation to HCAs within the context of this new law, MMA is strongly urging a two-tiered approach: one for renewal of existing HCAs, which were negotiated in good faith and are protected by the Contract Clause of the Constitution, and one for the licensure and renewal of new HCAs, executed after the new law's effective date. This would move the industry forward by avoiding statutory encroachment of existing HCAs, prevent extensive legal challenges, and match the intent of legislators by holding municipalities and their taxpayers harmless.

5. *PILOT Legislation – separate efforts for public and private IHEs; how is state land determined for appropriation; urged factors such as the development of the land or the effect on Town services. MMA is interested in this. We will continue discussion in January.*
6. *Amherst is buying a site for a permanent Homeless Shelter – Former VFW – Main Street just down from Town Hall; approximately 1 acre; used ARPA funds to buy the land so it is town-owned; received approval up to the state level of VFW; agree it will include some veterans; concept is that it will be Day, Overnight. Just the first step. Senator Comerford stated that this was really extraordinary. There is a large shelter in Northampton and we should connect with them.*
7. *Options for municipalities with CPA funds, mentioning projects to mitigate or respond to climate change.
Last year, Representative Domb explored the question with CPA organization regarding another category of funds. The CPA state organization and legislation were formulated with three original stakeholders. Politically hard to add a category. If the Town is interested in grants regarding climate issue that should continue to apply for MVP program – which we have and received several. Could also be in the upcoming Climate Bill.*
8. *How charter school tuition or other tuition is determined. – Our legislators are trying to fully fund the Charter School reimbursement rate. The old administration was not willing to open this up. Hope the new administration will and also cap the number of charter schools.*
9. *Reimbursement for Special Education – tuition in. Western Mass legislators have been discussing the special education formula which is really broken. Will be submitting various bills. Will need major advocacy.*
10. *Millionaire's tax – Do not have a handle on this yet. Will need to make sure Western Mass gets its share. How will it be distributed – grants, allocations, etc.?*
11. *Setting a date for talking about our 2023 Priorities – January meeting.*