

At the Regular Meeting of the Town Council of the Town of North Kingstown, County of Washington, and State of Rhode Island, held in and for said Town, County, and State this 28th day of September, 2020 at the Municipal Offices Court/Meeting Room, 100 Fairway Drive, and via Zoom (a virtual meeting platform), at 7:00 p.m.

PRESENT WERE: Gregory A. Mancini, President  
Mary Brimer  
Kevin V. Maloney  
Kerry P. McKay  
Richard A. Welch

ALSO PRESENT: A. Ralph Mollis, Town Manager  
Jeannette Alyward, Town Clerk  
Susan A. Murray, Deputy Town Clerk (via Zoom)  
Matthew F. Callaghan, Jr., Town Solicitor  
James Callaghan, Assistant Town Solicitor (via Zoom)

An audio recording and video recording of this meeting was made to supplement the written record.

1. Call to Order

The Regular Meeting of the Town Council of the Town of North Kingstown held on September 28, 2020 was called to order by President Mancini.

2. Notice of Meeting being posted

Pursuant to R.I.G.L. 42-46-6(c), notice of this meeting has been posted on the Secretary of State's Website.

3. Salute to Flag

President Mancini led those in attendance in saluting the flag.

President Mancini led those in attendance in a moment of silence in memory of Kelly Kilday who recently passed away.

**I. SPECIAL BUSINESS**

4. Introduction of new Director of the North Kingstown Free Library

Library Board of Trustees Chair Lori Vernon introduced Susan Straub as the new Director of the North Kingstown Free Library. Susan worked for the library many years ago and has returned to the Library in this capacity. Ms. Vernon further stated that the Library Board of Trustees is very excited to have her back.

5. RI Department of Transportation Update – Brown Street, Phillips Street, and Boston Neck Road Intersection

Town Manager Mollis stated he would like to thank the Department of Transportation (DOT) and Steve Pristawa for their responsiveness in this matter and many other matters within North Kingstown. The North Kingstown Police Department will also be available to answer any questions. In early September, there was a meeting of the State Traffic Advisory Commission and during that meeting, Council President Mancini asked the DOT to attend a Council meeting to provide information and answer any questions. Sean Raymond from DOT is on the zoom to provide commentary and answer any questions regarding this intersection.

Sean Raymond thanked the Council for the opportunity to provide an update regarding this intersection. He stated that he is a managing engineer at RIDOT and serves as secretary of the State Traffic Commission. He assumes everyone is familiar with the intersection which is unconventional. Basically, Brown Street and Boston Neck Road are the main lines with cars taking lefts onto Boston Neck Road or taking a right from Boston Neck Road onto Brown Street, and Phillips Street is considered a side street.

The State Traffic Commission is a legislative body that has representation from the State Police, the National Highway Traffic Safety Commission, and the Governor's Office and is the body that approves anything related to traffic control. We put out a study late last year which has been discussed at recent meetings with input from the Town Manager and the Council President. Originally one of the thoughts was to make the Boston Neck Road approach a stop control while leaving the Brown Street approach to remain free which was discussed at the September meeting. There was concern regarding pedestrian safety and drivers not being familiar with the intersection. One of the other things we are looking at is potentially recommending that all three have stop controls which is more uniform and beneficial for pedestrians. Those are the types of discussions that we have had and also had some input from the public. We want to get further input from the Council tonight as we want to make a decision that is acceptable with the Town. The next meeting of the State Traffic Commission is October 7<sup>th</sup> at 10:00 a.m.

President Mancini stated that a recommendation was based on the report and asked Mr. Raymond to explain the process and what the outcome was. Mr. Raymond stated that we have consultants to perform these studies and they look at crashes, speeds, site distance and things like that. Crashes are looked at over a 3-year period. At this intersection, there were 14 crashes, 8 were "rear ends", 5 angle crashes, one off the road, and one head on accident. The rear ends were associated with the Phillip Street approach. The angle crashes are the ones that are more concerning as they typically cause more injuries. However, none of these crashes at this intersection were severe.

Councilor Maloney stated that the report talks about the other end of Brown Street being similar and asked if Mr. Raymond has any accident data for that intersection. Mr. Raymond stated that he does not but can provide it to the Council at a later date.

Councilor Maloney stated that he would be interested in seeing that data as there is more pedestrian activity at that intersection.

President Mancini opened the floor for public comment.

George Brennan, 70 Boone Street, read the following letter from the Wickford Advisory Committee:

"The members of the Wickford Advisory Committee would like to thank the Town Council for holding this public hearing on the circulation and safety problems of the intersection at Brown Street, Phillips Street, and Boston Neck Road.

This is a very dangerous and confusing three-way intersection for both drivers and pedestrians. Currently, one direction has a stop sign, one has a yield sign, and one has nothing. As a result, we have accidents, frequent near misses, and many incidents of road rage. With drivers thus confused, it is also an extremely dangerous situation for pedestrians in the crosswalks.

From the most recent meeting of the State Highway Commission we learned that this is one of only two intersections in all of Rhode Island where the traffic coming into a T intersection has a right of way to proceed through the intersection without stopping.

Simply changing the existing yield sign on northbound Boston Neck Road to a stop sign, as proposed, will do little to improve the issue. The same confusion will remain regarding who has the right of way through town. A similar problem exists at the north end of Brown Street where it intersects with Main Street and West Main Street.

We would ask the Town Council and the State Highway Commission for a three way stop in all directions using either a stop sign or a traffic light. This would also enhance pedestrian safety for those crossing in all directions.

If we can be of any assistance, please let us know. Thank you for considering our recommendations. Please note that the Wickford Advisory Committee will be forwarding additional concerns and recommendations as part of a more expansive review of circulation with Wickford Village in the upcoming weeks".

Suzanne Mancini, 61 Main Street, sole proprietor of the Sew Op, which is located at this intersection has seen over the last four years too many near misses. She further stated that she teaches sewing and her students typically walk to her store from schools and sports teams run through that intersection. She is very concerned one of the young adults is going to be hit and she has almost been hit on several occasions. The biggest issue is the cars that are coming from Brown Street heading down Boston Neck Road. It appears that drivers speed up making the turn and do not pay attention to the crosswalk. She also stated that from 2:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m. she regularly witnesses road rage. Her main concern is pedestrian safety especially with beach traffic and during the school year with the school buses. We have been in discussion with the Town Manager, the Chief of Police, and the DOT, and she believes that is why the study was conducted. Initially, she thought a stop sign would be sufficient. However, at this point, she feels a stop light would be the most appropriate solution.

Jean Ronci, owner of Impressed Olive located on the corner of Phillips Street and Brown Street, stated that in the past they have seen people from the DOT observing the traffic. Her and her husband have seen many near accidents and road rage. She said her recommendation is a three-way stop.

Mike Donohue thanked Mr. Raymond for the presentation and he also participated in the meeting with the State Traffic Commission. He is concerned about the rate of speed of the vehicles turning onto Boston Neck Road from Brown Street. Many people stop on Brown Street because they think it is a three-way stop and the people behind them get angry. He is also concerned about the intersection at West Main Street, Brown Street, and Main Street and asked that his concerns be considered.

Amy Sonder stated that she agrees with what has been said tonight. She was wondering if the intersection could be videoed during the weekend. She walks through this intersection with her grandson and people do not stop for the crosswalks. She is worried about a three-way stop as people will be confused and traffic will be backed up. She believes that more investigation is needed.

President Mancini stated that this issue has been considered quite a bit by the State but is not sure if they have considered a video.

Fire Chief Kettelle stated that after 32 years of being on the Fire Department and responding through Wickford, he can say that the increase in traffic volume is precipitating the issue we are seeing here. He recognizes the problem and feels something has to be done but he is not in a position tonight to support a traffic light versus a three-way stop as he doesn't know enough about it. President Mancini asked Chief Kettelle if he would support a three-way stop. Chief Kettelle stated he does not know enough about how it would affect his resources responding and what the back-up would be. A three way or traffic light will have a negative effect on their ability to get through that intersection during heavy traffic times. He feels something needs to be done.

Police Chief Flanagan stated that he and the Deputy Chief spoke with Steve Pristawa and originally it was presented as a three-way stop. The only problem is with the width of Brown Street where the stop sign would be placed there are trees and a parking spot. The sign would be too far to the right and could not be seen. There was also a suggestion to put an island on Brown Street with the stop sign place there; however, that would cause a problem for fire trucks and trucks making the left-hand turn as well as the locations of the crosswalks which would be difficult to relocate. He further stated that he understood that there would be two stop signs with a yield. The stop light only came into discussions last week. He further stated that traffic lights would result in major back-ups in Wickford.

President Mancini stated that he understands the Council's role is to provide input to the State Traffic Commission and then it is ultimately their decision to make.

Councilor Welch stated that he is concerned with back-up of traffic on Brown Street and causing a major issue for emergency vehicles.

Councilor Brimer stated she is okay with a three-way stop; however, she is concerned about losing parking on Brown Street and suggested a stop sign with flashing lights.

Councilor McKay stated that his first concern is pedestrian safety and traffic would be his second concern.

President Mancini stated that he agrees with Councilor McKay that pedestrian safety should be the first concern.

Councilor Maloney stated that there is conflicting information and agrees that this is a serious safety issue and he isn't sure what the solution is.

Councilor McKay suggested maybe signage indicating that there is a stop ahead.

Councilor Welch asked if there would be a problem with the ladder truck going through that intersection if there were stop signs or traffic lights. Chief Kettelle stated yes.

Sean Raymond thanked the Council for their input and concerns and will bring them up for discussion at the next meeting in November and will keep the Town Manager updated on the process.

#### 6. Public Comment

Amy Sonder stated that you can't see people crossing at the Brown Street and Phillips Street intersection on the East side. The same problem exists at Spink Street. She is concerned that if they change things, they will lose a parking spot by the intersection and people will use Elam Street as a cut through.

Barry Gross stated he has a concern with his boatyard in Wickford (Northwick Boatyard formally Johnson Boat Yard). He stated that about a year ago his neighbor started the process for a no parking ordinance for the area directly abutting his business. He stated that he knew nothing about it until one day no parking signs were posted. This is causing an issue with parking for the boatyard. He talked to town staff and is looking into a modification but in the meantime, there is a proposal for an adopt a spot. He is asking for a hard stop on this proposal.

## **II. CONSENT AGENDA**

Motion by Councilor Welch, seconded by Councilor Brimer and unanimously

VOTED: To approve Consent Agenda Item Numbers 7 through 16 as presented with the exception of Agenda Item Numbers 7, 9, 13, and 15.

#### 7. Approval of Minutes

Motion by Councilor Maloney, seconded by Councilor McKay and unanimously

VOTED: To approve the minutes of the Regular Meeting of July 13 as submitted by the Office of the Town Clerk, the Special Meeting of July 27 as amended, and the Regular Meeting of August 17, 2020 as amended.

#### 8. Letter of Resignation

VOTED: To accept the letter of resignation from Kenneth Proudfoot, resigning from the Library Board of Trustees, and that the Town Council send a letter of appreciation to him for the dedicated service he gave to the Town of North Kingstown.

Councilor Maloney requested that Item Number 9 be moved to the end of the meeting.

The Council took Item Number 10 next.

10. Annual Exhibition License (renewal) (no vendors)

VOTED: To approve to December 1, 2021 the renewal application for an Annual Exhibition License with no vendors by the North Kingstown Senior Association, Inc., dba Friends of Beechwood, 44 Beach Street, to hold a Spring Bazaar on the grounds of 36 Beach Street, on Friday, May 21 and Saturday, May 22, 2021, from 8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m., and a Fall Bazaar on the grounds of 36 Beach Street, on Friday, November 5 and Saturday, November 6, 2021, from 8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m., subject to taxes and water paid to date and compliance with the recommendations of the Fire Department, the Police Department, the Building Official, and the Planning Department.

11. Dance License (new)

VOTED: To approve to December 1, 2021 the application for a Dance License by Grooves on West, LLC, 1 West Main Street, subject to taxes and water paid to date and approval from the Planning Department, the Building Official, and the Fire Marshall.

12. Holiday Sales License (new)

VOTED: To approve to July 1, 2021 the application for a Holiday Sales License by Northland Hearing Centers, Inc., dba Ascent Audiology and Hearing, 70 Romano Vineyard Way, Suite 149, subject to taxes and water paid to date.

13. Acceptance of RIDEM Open Space Grant Program

Motion by Councilor Brimer, seconded by Councilor McKay and unanimously

VOTED: To accept the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management Open Space Grant for Assessor's Plat 11, Lot 2; Assessor's Plat 12, Lots 1 & 2; and a portion of Assessor's Plat 24, Lot 1 and to authorize the Town Manager to continue further negotiations related to these parcels.

14. Acceptance of Summer Academy for Interactive Learning Grant

VOTED: To accept the Summer Academy for Interactive Learning Grant in the amount of \$45,000 to support the cost of additional supplies and staff due to COVID for the North Kingstown Summer Camp.

15. First Reading – Amendment to Chapter 5, Article II

Fire Chief Scott Kettelle respectfully requested that this item be tabled and brought back to the Council at a later date.

Motion by Councilor McKay, seconded by Councilor Welch and unanimously

VOTED: To table the First Reading of an Ordinance in Amendment of Chapter 5, Article II of the Code of Ordinances, Town of North Kingstown, entitled, "Regulation of Open Fires".

16. First Reading – Amendment to Chapter 20, Article III; Section 20-90; and Section 20-116

VOTED: That this shall constitute the First Reading of an Ordinance in Amendment of Chapter 20, Article III of the Code of Ordinances, Town of North Kingstown, entitled, "Sanitary Sewers", Section 20-90, entitled, "Definitions", and Section 20-116, entitled, "Assessment of Charges", and that this be advertised and referred to the Regular Town Council Meeting of October 19, 2020 for Second Reading and Consideration of Adoption.

### **III. REPORTS**

17. Report by the Town Manager

Town Manager Mollis gave the following report:

- I spoke with DOT regarding various matters the Council inquired about during our last meeting. The Post Road/Essex Road project is scheduled to be advertised in December with construction beginning in the Spring pending available funding. I've asked exactly what is meant by pending available funding and am waiting for them to get back to me. The weight limit restriction on Devils Foot Road Bridge is currently in design with DOT's Project Management Group. Coordination with Amtrak continues. They will provide me with updates as the process moves along.

I am waiting for information as to advice and next steps from DOT regarding a continued analysis of the Post Road Diet.

I am attempting to get a progress update on the West Main Street/Post Road Sidewalk Project that was pushed to Fiscal Year 2022 which is months away. I am attempting to coordinate a meeting with DOT for an overview and options we may have. I will update you on this matter.

- As you know, we closed on the Annex Sale last week. We are working on gathering all of our internal costs. In conformance with the Attorney General's opinion, we are able to recoup up to \$6,000 in costs and provide the remaining \$94,000 to the Library. I will have a written Agreement drawn up relative to the \$94,000 so that it is in conformance with the Attorney General's opinion as to how it can be spent and to insure it does not affect our Maintenance of Effort. Once completed, we will schedule a check presentation.
- A reminder that Motor Vehicle Tax Bills have been sent out and in an effort to assist taxpayers, the due dates for Motor Vehicles are slightly different than Real Estate. The first quarter is due October 31st while the second quarter is due November 30th.
- We are making great progress on the Wickford El project. We are days away from having the Purchase & Sale approved and signed which will then lead to them submitting applications for our review followed by meetings before the Planning Commission and Zoning Board.
- We are also making progress on the discussions with National Grid relative to the possibility of utilizing their property on Phillips Street for parking in Wickford. We will have the internal drawings which is required by National Grid completed within this week. We will then submit and discuss with National Grid and CRMC. The initial drawings show the possibility of 25 or more parking spaces.
- As was discussed during the budget process, we will be going through a full revaluation in 2021. We expect the RFP to be complete by the end of this year or beginning of next followed by an award by the Council and revaluation work to take place throughout 2021. Depending on the statewide or national restrictions that are in place, as well as reluctance on behalf of some taxpayers, this revaluation process will be unique and challenging due to COVID.
- The Finance Department initiated an effort to locate taxpayers who had overpayments on record that the taxpayers were not aware of. This is obviously something unique. Our Tax Collector Stephanie Armstrong and the Tax Office have been reaching out to taxpayers since June and have refunded over \$19,000 in overpayments to our taxpayers, receiving many positive responses from these individuals. I want to thank Stephanie and her staff on a job well done in making this possible.
- Due to the weather forecast for Wednesday night, the Wickford Waterfront Project Site Visit and Discussion scheduled for 5:30 in the Municipal Parking Lot by the Anchor will be moved to Monday night, October 5th at 5:30.

- We continue progressing on schedule with the 80 Boston Neck Road Town Hall Restoration Project. We had a Zoom Meeting on September 16th with various staff and the Architect to review the plans. Public Works and our Police Department have been advising relative to interior and exterior security, door locks, and entranceway issues. We continue to work on the specs with various meetings taking place on site. We are engaging a firm for an environmental study. All of this in line with having construction documents completed by the end of the year, bidding and negotiations completed by April of 2021 with occupancy for the summer of 2022.

In answer to Councilor Welch's question on where we stand on the solar, Mr. Mollis stated that we are working on finalizing the contract with Kearsarge. Our solicitor has been very helpful with this process. One minor issue is the rent for the lease, and he is speaking with another community on how they drafted their contract. The project still has to go to the Planning Department and start construction.

Councilor Welch stated that he is glad to hear we have communication regarding the Davisville bridge; however, we need to do something forcibly to get them to understand the urgency that it affects our public safety. He strongly feels that this needs to be taken care of sooner rather than later. Mr. Mollis stated it is the Federal Government that implemented this restriction. The DOT has been proactive with AMTRAK. Councilor Welch stated that we have two senators and feels maybe we should get them involved. There are 1,100 people who live on the other side of the bridge.

Councilor Welch asked if we have any say on how the \$94,000 going to the Library from the sale of the Brown Street property is to be used. Mr. Callaghan said the court judgement stated that it is to be used for Library expenses.

Councilor McKay stated that there was a great article in the paper about Mr. Mollis's grandson.

#### 18. Report by Council Members who serve on various Committees

Councilor McKay reported that the golf course has had a record year so far and the course is in great shape. There is a lot going on at QDC:

- Pier 2 reconstruction
- Phase 2 dredging
- Sea Plane ramp near Electric Boat for the barge coming in
- Gateway Office Building 5 is 75% complete
- Infinity Meat is scheduled to open in the next couple of weeks
- Several buildings that RI National Guard have are under construction
- Port Activity is back to normal

Councilor McKay also reported that the Audit Committee and the FY2020 Audit is completed and we received a clean audit.

Councilor Brimer stated that the Arts Council is working on an Art Appreciation series. The Arts Council is trying to work out the logistics of displaying the student's artwork. The Economic Development Advisory Board is meeting tomorrow night and the Information Technology Advisory Committee has not met since COVID.

Councilor Maloney stated that the Conservation Commission and the Harbor Management Commission held a joint meeting regarding the blasting issue which is on our agenda. The Harbormaster reported that the statute in the harbor will be removed due to the lighting on it which causes confusion. The Harbormaster's boat will remain in the water until the blasting is complete.

Councilor Welch stated that the School Facilities Subcommittee has not met.

Councilor Welch asked if the Charter Review Commission will be meeting and have recommendations ready for the Special Election that is being considered in February. Ms. Alyward stated that is her plan; however, her first priority is the November election.

President Mancini reported that the Veterans Day & Memorial Day Parades Committee and the Groundwater Committee have not met. The Wickford Advisory Committee discussed the Brown Street intersection and composed the letter read earlier in the meeting.

#### **IV. OLD BUSINESS**

19. Authorization to Purchase Streetlights from National Grid in association with previous award

VOTED: To authorize the purchase of streetlights from National Grid in the amount up to \$286,126.00 funded from the Town Capital Account, which authorization shall supersede all prior authorizations regarding purchase of streetlights.

The Council recessed the meeting at 8:48 p.m.

The Council reconvened the meeting at 8:57 p.m.

#### **V. NEW BUSINESS**

20. Coastal Resources Management Council Application 2017-03-066, RIDEM Water Quality Certification Number 17-059 and Dredge Permit Number 17-156

Councilor McKay suggested that the Council include numbers 1, 2, and 5 as stated in the Conservation Commission and Harbor Management Commission's recommendation. After a brief discussion,

Motion by Councilor McKay, seconded by Councilor Maloney and was

VOTED: That no substantive objection be filed to Coastal Resources Management Council Application Number 2017-03-066, RI Department of Environmental Management Water Quality Certification Number 17-059, and Dredge Permit Number 17-156 to allow Quonset Development Corporation to modify the dredging method to include blasting of rock found in a portion of the approved dredge channel at General Dynamics/Electric Boat, Plat 185, Lot 029; Plat 185, Lot 032; Plat 186, Lot 011; and Plat 186, Lot 012; and it was

FURTHER VOTED: To forward the following concerns from the Town Council, the Harbor Management Commission, and the Conservation Commission:


1. The requirements of the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA) should be adhered to by the applicant regarding the harassment of marine mammals inhabiting the area. Mitigation measures should be taken to ensure there are no violations of the MMPA.
2. Related to the requirements of the MMPA, these local waters are home to seals off North Kingstown's shore particularly at this time of year. Seals are in the process of migrating during the coming months and will be vulnerable to the effects of blasting.
3. Alternatives to the proposed blasting should be considered. Based upon the nautical chart, there appears to be a more direct route closer to and parallel with the land that may have sufficient depth to accommodate the new Electric Boat transport barge. This would eliminate the need to blast and likely reduce costs.
4. As it relates to alternatives to the proposed blasting, the applicant indicated that the regulatory agencies preferred that the activity continue in the originally approved channel given that a portion of the channel has already been dredged. An alternative location would introduce additional disturbance to an undisturbed habitat. They prefer to continue the dredging and blasting work in the already disturbed area. The Commissions requested that the applicant provide a report from the regulatory agencies stating why an alternative area could not be utilized.
5. There are local fishermen who place lobster and snail pots in the vicinity of the proposed blasting. These fishermen should be notified well in advance of the blasting so they do not put their pots in this area and/or can remove any pots already in place. The RI Marine Fisheries organization should be notified of the blasting and be asked to distribute notice to the local fisherman. Notices could also be placed at the Town Wharf and Allen Harbor Marina.

Councilor Brimer and Councilor Welch voted in the negative.









21. Presentation/Award of Contract – Wilson (Zeke Harris) Park Playground

Chelsey Dumas-Gibbs, Recreation Director gave the following presentation:



WILSON PARK  
NORTH KINGSTOWN, RHODE ISLAND

Wilson Park  
Playground  
and Splashpad



WILSON PARK

Although we are unsure of exactly how long Wilson equipment has been in use at the playground, we do know that this is one of the most used parks in North Kingstown. I was able to determine the piece in the photo at top right was purchased from Obrien & Sons in 1993

The rest of equipment has been placed and pieced together throughout the years and is beginning to rot, break and rust becoming a safety hazard.

Please note that a few thousand children utilize this facility in a season not to mention our Recreation camp hosting a few hundred children daily during the summer for 8 weeks



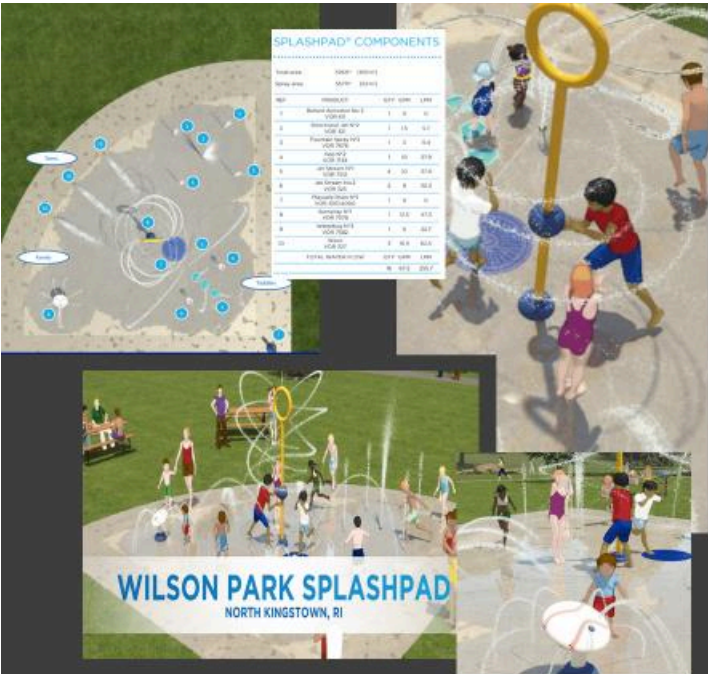






*Wilson Park  
Upgrades  
Let's finish what  
we started!*

- The design shown would cost about \$500,000 (equipment, poured flooring and installation)
- This would be a major improvement to one of the Towns most used Play Areas
- The images to left are the lead by a sports inspiration as Wilson Park is a place that softball, baseball, Lacrosse, Pickleball, Soccer and so many other sports are played








We are looking to award this work at Wilson Park to Obrien and Sons for completion of the construction & renovations.  
In your packet you will see they are an approved vendor on the MHEC  
Funding Source:


Other North Kingstown Work Completed:  
Forest Park (2018-2019)  
Davisville Academy (2018)  
Quidnessett Elementary (2012)  
Fishing Cove Preschool (2010) &  
Poured in Place Rubber only for the other playground at Fishing Cove (the one you see when you pull in)  
There are no local vendors that provide this product


When can we play again?

 Assuming the order placed by 10/2 (pending council approval)

 October remove current equipment and prepare/level grounds

 First week of November into December playground equipment delivery and install ready for use by January

 Concrete, rubberized flooring and splash pad flush out must take place in the spring cannot occur in low temperatures

 Weather dependent; Open for use and complete in April

After a brief discussion, the Council thanked Ms. Dumas-Gibbs for her presentation and efforts in executing this project.

Motion by Councilor Maloney, seconded by Councilor Brimer and unanimously

VOTED: To award the contract for Wilson (Zeke Harris) Park Playground and Splash Pad to O'Brien and Sons, 17 Trotter Drive, Medway, MA 02053, for the purchase and installation of playground equipment and splash pad in the amount of \$468,109.42 (Playground \$371,739.72, Splash Pad \$96,369.70) through the MHEC Group Purchasing Consortium (MC15-B-14).

Funding for this project will be through a combination of the Public Space Fund and the Capital Improvement Fund.

22. Presentation by WaterSmart and Approval of Contract/Purchase

Thomas Butler of WaterSmart gave the following presentation:






# Delivering insights & customer self-service 24x7

Prepared for the Town of North Kingstown, RI September 28<sup>th</sup> 2020

TJ Butler  
thomas.butler@vertexone.net  
781.733.2155

## Agenda

- Introduction
- North Kingstown Goals
- About 
- Customer Benefits
- Utility Benefits
- Demo
- Questions



**North Kingstown**  
*Rhode Island*

### About

- 9,500 Accounts
- Itron Metering System  
(19 WaterSmart Integrations)
- MUNIS Billing System  
(13 WaterSmart Integrations)

### Your Goals



Improve Online Presence



Increase Customer Satisfaction




Leverage Data Reports

# Customers expect more from their utilities



instant information



self-service functions



personalized communication



actionable insights




intelligent automation

## About WaterSmart


Founded in 2009, the WaterSmart platform surfaces actionable data insights for water utility staff and provides self-service solutions for end-use customers effectively reducing costs, improving operational efficiencies, and increasing customer satisfaction

Our award winning software is designed, developed, and delivered in the United States


### UTILITIES



Town of SHARON Massachusetts



KWD




CITY OF FITCHBURG

150+ Utilities | 35 states  
4M+ Accounts  
12.5M End-use customers


WATERSMART SOFTWARE

### PARTNERS




HomeServe

Home Service Partners



InvoiceCloud Paymentus

Electronic payments




Itron NEPTUNE


Metering

### TEAM


WaterSmart dedicates itself to execution, delivering on 100% of our implementations




## Customer experience




Customer Portal provides additional water use information and tips




Customer Letters, & Print Leak Alerts drive customers to the Portal



Alerts can be sent by all channels (print, email, voice, text)



Leak Resolution & Bill Explorer help customers to resolve common issues online



WATERSMART SOFTWARE

5

6

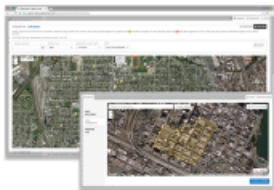
# Utility experience



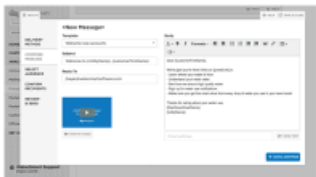
Consumption data by meter class and reading period



Metrics monitoring program effectiveness



Reports and maps identify customers with leaks, unusual reads, rebates, and more



Group Messenger to send targeted, timely customer communications

WATERSMART SOFTWARE

7

## Platform demo

The Council thanked Mr. Butler for the presentation.

Following a brief discussion, a motion by Councilor McKay, seconded by Councilor Brimer and unanimously

VOTED: To approve the contract/purchase of the WaterSmart Software Platform (a sole source vendor) for monitoring/analysis of the Town's water usage to WaterSmart, 1321 Upland Drive, Suite 8389, Houston, TX 77043, in the amount of \$45,100.00.

Funding for this project will be from Water Department Fund Balance.

23. Presentation by the Finance Director and Authorization to Purchase Software

James Lathrop, Finance Director gave the following presentation:






### THE FACTS

- Annual Tax Bills
  - Real Estate 11,000
  - Motor Vehicle 13,000
  - Personal Property 1,000
- Reminders
  - 4,000
- Annual Water & Sewer Bills
  - 10,000
- Annual Payments Processed
  - 140,000
- Other Billings:
  - Police Detail
  - Transfer Station
  - Sewer Assessment

### PAYMENT METHODS



<b>IN OFFICE</b> Counter and Mail Proceed 36,000 annually	<b>CREDIT CARD</b> Pre Covid 900/quarter Post Covid 1,400/quarter Cost 2.25% of transaction Charged back to taxpayer	<b>E CHECK</b> Pre Covid 300/quarter Post Covid 900/quarter Cost: Pre Covid \$1.50 Post Covid \$0.00 (\$0.75 paid by town)
<b>Mail/Lock Box</b> 24,000 payments processed annually		



# THE PARTNERSHIP

RI DEPARTMENT OF REVENUE  
MUNI FINANCE DIVISION

TOWN OF NORTH KINGSTOWN

TYLER TECHNOLOGY







In advisement with RI League of Cities and Towns




# THE SOLUTION: TYLER NOTIFY

Tyler Notify is a unique platform that allows sending of messages and cite action with citizens, vendors and employees using delivery channels that we use every day.

- Telephone
- Text
- Email

- Does not replace mail at this time
- Ability to send reminders
- Link to on-line payment options
- Creates activity log
- Requires Opt In by Taxpayer
  - Taxpayer controls how notified
  - Allows cc address



## Welcome to Citizen Self Service

Home

Citizen Self Service

- Animal License
- Business License
- Email Announcements
- General Billing
- Motor Vehicle
- Non-Emergency Requests
- Other Services
- Parking Tickets
- Permits and Inspections
- Personal Property
- Real Estate
- Utility Billing

### Announcements

**Pay and/or View Bills Online.** The Town of Tyler is excited to offer residents an easy and convenient method to view and pay their real estate, motor vehicle excise, personal property tax, and water/sewer use bills online.

**Fast and Easy.** "Express Pay", the fastest way to pay online. Quick, simple, and easier than writing and mailing checks, plus you'll get an email confirming that your payment has been accepted.

**Safe and Secure.** Rest assured that your information is kept confidential and is 100% secure, backed by the highest standards in security today.

**Eco-Friendly.** Paying online reduces paper use and is an easy way to help the environment. You'll save natural resources like trees, and gas, and reduce your carbon footprint.

HAVE A QUESTION? You may reach us at (335) 860-7210. You may email your questions to [tlk@townoftyler.com](mailto:tlk@townoftyler.com)

### Profile Information

Profile information not found.

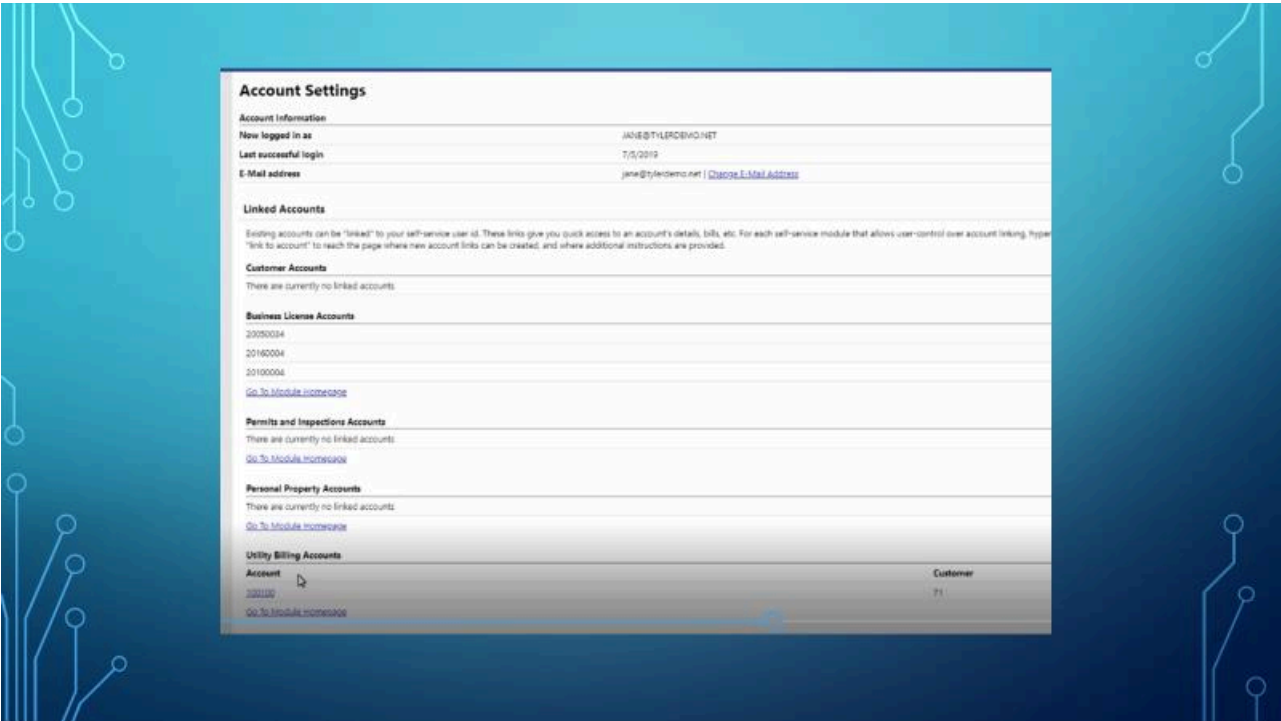
### Business License Accounts

11	PLUMBING IN WORK (20050004)
11	STAIRLIFTS (20160004)
11	KOVADS (20100004)

### Utility Billing Accounts

11	100100 (71)
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CITIZEN MUST REGISTER AND THIS SETTING CAN BE ENABLED – MUST LOGIN AND SIGNUP FOR NOTIFICATIONS AND LINK ACCOUNTS



## TIME TABLE AND NEXT STEPS

- October Purchase & Set Up
- October Develop Test (beta group)
  - 50-200 taxpayers
- December Start Test
- March
  - Review and adjust based on feedback
- April
  - Report results to Town Council
- May – June
  - Roll out to all taxpayers
- July
  - Full implementation
- July – August
  - Roll out for Utilities and other billings

## You're Invited

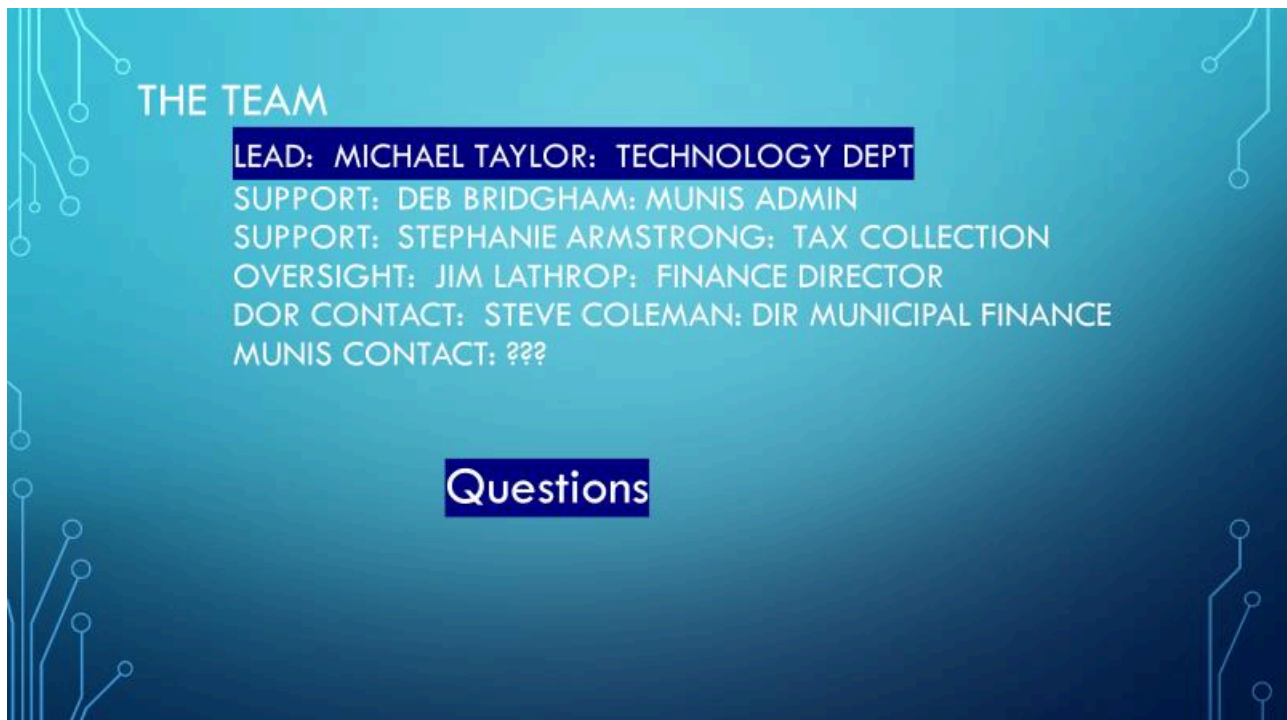


## PROJECT COST AND ROI

- Annual Software cost \$6,100
- Current Cost
  - Bill Processing \$10,000
  - Postage (tax bills) \$10,000
  - Reminders (postage) \$2,000

**Does not include in house labor/material**

- ROI
  - Goal of 50% opt in
  - Year one Reminder Savings only
  - Year Two
    - Billing Cost & Postage Savings
    - Utility Billing and Postage Savings



The Council thanked Mr. Lathrop for his presentation. After a brief discussion, a motion by Councilor McKay, seconded by Councilor Brimer and unanimously

VOTED: To authorize the purchase of Tyler Notify Module/Software from Tyler Technologies (a sole source vendor) in the amount of \$6,100.00.

Funding Source: FY2021 Budget - Munis Software.

#### 24. Discussion of Post Road Corridor Zoning (requested by Councilor Welch)

Councilor Welch stated that at the last meeting, he brought this up about going back to the former zoning on Post Road as the Post Road Corridor Plan has been a disaster for the Town. It hasn't helped development on Post Road. He has spoken with the Chair of the Planning Commission who is in favor of this but feels we should keep certain aspects of the plan. He agrees that the current plan has resulted in the Town missing out on opportunities. He further understands that the Planning Director also agrees. His recollection of the zoning before the Post Road Corridor was put in place is that the 200' is zoned general business. When you look at things like one project has a ten-foot access on Post Road and falls into the Corridor Plan, in regards to density it doesn't make sense. Or, when you look at Reynolds Farm where up in back you can't hear or see Post Road from that site and it is still included in the Corridor Plan because the Corridor Plan affects that property all the way to the back of the property. It needs to change for the benefit of the community. For example, Dragon Palace sits right on Post Road which to him is the most ridiculous thing he has seen. When they did the Shell Station on the corner of Newcomb Road and Post Road, they wanted to make them put a second floor on a gas station which is ridiculous; however, they made them build the roof line to look like a second floor. It has proven itself for the period it has been in effect that it has hurt the Town and Post Road and a lot people would like to see things happen with Post Road.

Councilor McKay asked what Councilor Welch's proposal is. Councilor Welch stated that he would propose that the Planning Department make recommendations to the Planning Commission of what should be eliminated and what should be kept. Let's move forward and get out of the Corridor Plan. Councilor Welch stated that six years ago the former town manager said it would be part of the rewrite of the Comprehensive Plan and that never happened. Realistically, let's help the situation by not making the Post Road Corridor the problem.

Mr. Mollis stated that this is worthy of a discussion for a number of reasons. All that he would ask is that it will be a comprehensive discussion requiring a lot of work by our Planning Director and will have some unintended consequences such as sewer assessments but there is no doubt that we need to look at these things. He would recommend setting up a meeting with the Chair of the Planning Commission, the Planning Department, and a Council Member to formulate something for 2021.

President Mancini stated that he thinks the Manager is correct and he appreciates Councilor Welch pushing this issue, but he thinks that it will entail a lot of work and would strain the resources of the Planning Department.

Director of Planning and Development Nicole LaFontaine stated she wants to remind everyone that there are two pieces that keep getting intertwined. There is the Corridor Plan and Post Road Zoning. The zoning that was put in place was proposed based on the Corridor Plan. As a Council you need to make a decision if you are talking about the zoning or the plan which talks about the basic things. We also have the list from the Post Road Workshop that she can provide the Council to refresh their memory. She doesn't think that we should throw the entire Post Road Zoning out but make more changes as the Planning Commission has been working on this for a while. She further stated that there is always room for improvement, and this is one of those places she feels needs to be addressed. She thinks that a "Step 2" workshop would be in order.

Councilor Brimer stated that at the Post Road Workshop, there were a number of recommendations that came out of those discussions and asked how many of those suggested changes have become before the Council. Mr. Mollis stated that he has reviewed the minutes of that workshop and there were 13 recommendations of which most of those items have been covered.

Councilor Maloney stated that he agrees that the ordinance needs to be addressed but he's not certain he would revert to the old zoning. Also, we should consider if they want to keep two story requirements to keep them in the gateway area. Ms. LaFontaine stated that requirement was removed several years ago. Councilor Maloney stated that we need to grow this slowly for a half a mile or so instead of making 4 miles look identical. We should at least start and direct planning to begin putting some recommendations together.

President Mancini suggested that the Council have a second workshop on Post Road in 2021.

Mr. Mollis stated that we can prepare something over the next quarter to present to the next Council.

Councilor McKay stated that this will go nowhere without developers and suggested that we sit down with developers and get their input. Councilor Brimer suggested maybe we should also speak with the Commercial Realtors or have EDAB interview them. President Mancini stated that he believes they did that. Councilor Brimer stated that she is the liaison and doesn't believe they did. Councilor McKay stated that at the end of the day someone needs to put the money up and put a shovel in the ground and developers are the one that are going to do that.

Councilor Brimer stated that it almost seems like the property owners are sitting on some of these properties to write off the depreciation on their taxes. She suggested that maybe a tax workshop to explore incentives or penalties for these undeveloped properties would be useful. Councilor McKay asked what if we were to go to those successful business owners on Post Road. Councilor Brimer stated the other issue is no sewers on Post Road.

The Council agreed that a workshop be held in 2021.

## 25. Discussion of Post Road Redevelopment Tax Incentive (proposed by Councilor Maloney)

Councilor Maloney stated this came about last weekend as there was discussion on the social media sites regarding businesses getting a tax incentive. He assumed it was the Economic Development Incentives and he discovered that it had sunset. The ordinance began in 1997 and in 2018 it was never carried forward. At the same time there has always been a discussion and not enough attention on Post Road, and we need to incentivize Post Road to make it more attractive. He believes there was another social media complaint regarding Post Road and in looking at the ordinance, he wanted to keep most of what was in there. However, make it more specific to Post Road by narrowing it down to the State Police Barracks to School Street. The idea is to try and minimize and keep growth in a certain area and not all over Town. He further stated that basically, when you look at the Comp Plan, the first thing to do is to revitalize existing properties before building in undeveloped areas and the other one is to preserve and protect the environment and open space. This change would be one more tool in the toolbox. He is proposing a five-year window and thinks there should be some way to attract development on Post Road.



Mr. Mollis stated he is not a fan of social media debate as we have accomplished a lot on Post Road, yet we still have more to do, but it will be gradual. As far as a tax incentive ordinance, we did speak about this in 2018 during budget discussions and again in April of 2019. He wasn't here when this ordinance was in place and is sure the intentions were outstanding; however, in this case when we spoke with businesses locating in North Kingstown, we made them aware of the incentive. The fact that we had the incentive was not the reason they came to North Kingstown and we lost revenue when we gave them the incentives. We lost \$31 million in value as a result of this ordinance. If the Council wants to reconsider this at some point, he is concerned that this could be a terrible time as we are going through a revaluation in 2021 and we all know that because of COVID, commercial value is going to tank. So when that value tanks, even without a tax increase, residential taxes will rise. Every City/Town Manager and Mayor are very concerned about those commercial values tanking and the residential taxes will need to increase without touching the tax rate. He is very concerned about providing a tax incentive to commercial when is very concerned about the impact on our residential properties in 2021.

Councilor Maloney stated that he looks at several businesses that were situated on Post Road that moved into the Gateway because of incentives offered. We are talking about losing commercial business altogether and he is asking for a way to hold on to what we have or what we can bring to Post Road which is in his mind a small investment. The other thing is residential and land is excluded but only includes new building or a 50% increase in the value of the building, which are small potatoes in the big scheme of things. If we gain one business over the next five years, he thinks it would be great.

President Mancini stated that he thinks this is also an issue that could be combined with the Post Road Workshop in 2021.

After a brief discussion, it was the consensus of the Council to have the next Council have the opportunity to discuss this.

The Council took Item Number 9 next.

9. Amendments to the 2020 Town Council Meeting Calendar

Motion by Councilor McKay, seconded by Councilor Brimer and unanimously

VOTED: To amend the 2020 Town Council Meeting Calendar as follows:

- \* Cancel the October 5, 2020 Regular Meeting
- \* Change the November 9, 2020 Regular Meeting to November 16, 2020
- \* Cancel the November 23, 2020 Regular Meeting

The Council took Item Number 26 next.

26. Correspondence

There was no Correspondence.

**VI. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 10:42 p.m.

Jeannette Alyward  
Town Clerk