

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

JANUARY 19, 2021

1. COVID-19 UPDATES

Extension of CARES Act Coronavirus Relief Fund Covered Period

The Town was notified by the Administration and Finance office for Federal Funds, that on December 27, 2020, an extension of the CARES Act Coronavirus Relief Fund “covered period” was signed into law. This change extends the deadline for use of the Coronavirus Relief Fund from **December 30, 2020 to December 31, 2021**. This memorandum provides an updated definition of eligible uses.

Background

CARES Act Coronavirus Relief Fund

On March 27, 2020, the federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (the “CARES Act”) was signed into law. This \$2.2 trillion package created the Coronavirus Relief Fund (CvRF), a \$150 billion effort to provide state and local governments with resources to address unexpected costs incurred due to COVID-19. The Commonwealth of Massachusetts received approximately \$2.7 billion from this fund, including \$2.4 billion paid to the Commonwealth.

Update From Dennis Health Department –

The Health Director Kristen Keller provided the following update today, January 19, 2021 -

At this time, Dennis remains a high-risk red community following 70 active cases. Barnstable County currently reports a 7-day average of 134 new cases per day, with 375 new cases over the weekend. Hospitalizations remain elevated. As of yesterday, CCHC reported 62 COVID patients with 16 in intensive care. As you know, on January 7th, Governor Baker extended executive order 59 which applies further capacity restrictions to statewide safety rules until at least January 24th . COVID testing locations remain open in Falmouth, Hyannis, Wellfleet, Harwich port and Provincetown. Individuals must call ahead for an appointment. Information regarding registration at these sites is available on the TOD website. Phase one vaccination is underway with our first responders receiving their first dose of the vaccine last week. Also in Phase 1, staff and residents in shelters and other state funded congregate living settings and correctional facilities began receiving the vaccine yesterday. This group of individuals will be followed by Home based Health care workers and Health care workers doing non COVID facing care. Yesterday, a mass vaccination site opened at Gillette stadium in Foxborough for only those eligible individuals identified as we move through the vaccine distribution plan. Planning is underway for regional mass vaccination sites on cape cod, which will begin operation in phase 2. The vaccine comes in allotments from that state. As it is dispersed to the different priority groups in each phase, each sector must wait until a clinic is opened for their vaccinations. MDPH has added persons over the age of 75 as well as residents and staff of public and private low income and affordable senior housing to the first group in Phase 2. Available on the DPH website is a vaccine distribution timeline which depicts an estimated timeline as to where we are in the rollout and when the next step will begin for Phase 1. Beginning today the Barnstable County Department of Health and Environment launched a regionwide helpline to respond to COVID related questions. Callers will be able to speak with a medical reserve corp nurse Mon-Fri 8:30-4:30 to get answers on test sites, vaccine rollout and more general information. The number is 774-330-3001. Aside from the location at Gillette, there is no detailed information from the State or Barnstable County about clinic locations, or registration for the future steps of each phase at this time but information will be constantly updated and forthcoming.

Dennis Begins Vaccinating First Responders

Dennis is taking part in the clinics provided by the County; Dennis police officers, firefighters and other first responders began receiving their vaccinations last week, as part of the state's Phase 1 vaccinations. The County will continue to offer the vaccine to first responders in the coming weeks, including offering second doses to those who have already received their first dose.

Important Vaccination Information

The Dennis Health Department has been inundated with questions from residents about when they can receive the vaccine and will try to respond to all questions. In the meantime, please continue to check <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/covid-19-vaccine-distribution-timeline-phase-overview> for when you can receive the vaccine. The Dennis Health Department is following the state of Massachusetts' 3-Phased Vaccine Distribution Plan. The Town does not have the ability to vaccinate individuals or groups outside of the state-approved list of recipients. Massachusetts is currently in Phase 1 of the vaccination effort. Eligible individuals in this group include: healthcare workers doing direct COVID-facing care; long-term care residents and staff and first responders (police, fire and EMT). Beginning January 18, 2021, those living or working in congregate care facilities (shelter, group homes, correctional facilities) will be eligible to receive the vaccine. Home-based health care workers and healthcare workers doing non-Covid-facing care are also in Phase 1. However, those groups are not yet eligible under the state rules.

Individuals 75-years-old and older are currently not eligible to receive the vaccine until Phase 2 (unless they fall into one of the Phase 1 groups). While some states are offering the vaccine to those 65-years-old or older, **Massachusetts has not authorized that group as part of Phase 1 or Phase 2.**

It is anticipated that Phase 2 will begin in February and Phase 3, which includes the general population, will begin in April.

Currently, the town is ONLY able to offer the vaccine to first responders or to members of the Medical Reserve Corps, who are assisting with the vaccinations. Updated information will be posted on the Dennis Covid website, Facebook, and media release.

2. BUSH PROPERTY

I am pleased to report the Bush property Conservation Restriction was recorded at the Barnstable County Registry of Deeds on December 31, 2020; formally preserving this property in perpetuity for future generations to come. Fantastic collaboration and work on the acquisition and CR by so many staff including; Wendy, Karen as well as the Conservation Commission, CPC, Select Board, DCLT was a team effort by all.

We will have further updates on the CR requirements and items for the Select Boards review at an upcoming meeting.

3. HOUSING PRODUCTION PLAN COMMENT PERIOD -

On January 5, 2021 the Town of Dennis Select Board, Dennis Municipal Affordable Housing Trust and Planning Board held a joint tri-board meeting to receive the Draft Housing Production Plan Update. This live meeting was open to the public via Zoom.

The Town is required to periodically, at no greater than five-year intervals, update its plan for meeting local affordable housing needs. The Draft Housing Production Plan Update can be accessed from this [link](#)

The goals of the Housing Production Plan Update are:

- Help the Town of Dennis meet its significant affordable housing needs and have more local input in the Comprehensive Permit process.
- Points out that special consideration be given to the needs of older residents, residents with disabilities, and those living in poverty, all of which Dennis has in relatively large numbers.
- Highlights the income disparity between Dennis and the rest of Cape Cod including:
 - In 2018 Dennis Median Household Income was the second lowest on Cape Cod.
 - Sixty-four percent (64%) of the households in Dennis pay more than 30% of their income on their housing costs.
- Emphasizes that the growth of the seasonal second-home market continues to outpace that of the year-round market. This market data as well as community feedback indicate that it is increasingly difficult to afford a home in Dennis.
- Recommends that the Town work to meet its annual goal of thirty-eight new affordable units through a focus on redevelopment and infill projects, through strategies such as encouraging development of Accessory Dwelling Units or adopting a Chapter 40R Smart Growth Overlay, among others.

The Select Board welcomes your feedback on the Housing Production Plan updates please provide any written comments to Laurie Barr at lbarr@town.dennis.ma.us by February 5, 2021.

4. SWAN POND WATERSHED WASTEWATER PEER REVIEW UPDATE -

As you know, at your November 17th meeting, the Select Board endorsed the request for an independent study with regards to the conceptually planned Wastewater treatment facility and any impacts to the Swan Pond Watershed.

I am pleased to report I have met with the subgroup as requested consisting of Paul McCormick and John Terrio and Finance Committee members Bob and Peter and we defined the scope for services for the requested wastewater peer review.

We have determined we are able to utilize the towns existing on-call engineering services bid with GHD, which helped tremendously with procurement as well as expediting this peer review.

The cost for services is \$9,000 and we anticipate this peer review to be completed in approximately 30-60 days. Additionally, I have confirmed with the Finance Committee Chair that they will support a reserve fund transfer request for this contract as stated at their meeting requesting this service.

We are hoping to schedule a project kickoff meeting next week.

5. MUNICIPAL VULNERABILITY PROGRAM (MVP) GRANT WORKSHOP -

The Town received an invitation to attend an MVP Action Grant Information Session for the Cape and Islands and hosted by the Cape Cod Commission. As Dennis was recently designated an MVP Community, several Department Heads will be attending this information session.

Greetings,

I would like to invite you to an MVP action grant information session for the Cape and Islands hosted by the Cape Cod Commission. The goal of this action grant info session is to provide MVP applicants with insight into MVP's goals, ways to improve applications, tips for community involvement and engagement, and give examples of successful MVP projects.

Please respond to the attached calendar invite if you are available to join us on February 23rd from 1-3 pm. I have included an agenda below, but if you have any topics that you would like me to cover, please respond and I will try my best to incorporate them into the agenda.

Cape and Islands Action Grant Info Session Agenda

- *Review of MVP & Core Values*
- *Cape & Island MVP Applications*
- *Successful Examples of Education and Outreach*
- *EJ and Vulnerable Populations and the Cape*
- *Common Action Items Across Cape & Island Planning Grants*
- *Expression of Interest Form*
- *Open Discussion & Questions*

Please reach out if you have any questions, and I hope to see you online soon!

Thank you,

Courtney Rocha, Southeast Regional Coordinator
Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Program
MA Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs

6. FIRE STATION 2 –

Following timeline:

- 12-22-20 - A tentative award was issued for the purposes of contract negotiations.
- 12-29-20 – First round of contract and contract attachment(s) submitted by Galante for Town review. Some items were missing, requested additional information.
- 1-4-21 – Required attachment A & B submitted and forwarded to OPM for initial review.
- 1-14-21 – Received feedback from OPM, referred back to Galante for final draft.
- Anticipate final draft from Galante this week and will forward to legal counsel.

There has been some delays due to the way the negotiations fell between many holidays, but there has been steady progress throughout.

Thank you everyone, have a great rest of the week - please stay vigilant, wear a mask and be well!!

Respectfully,

Elizabeth C. Sullivan
Town Administrator