

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT NOVEMBER 17, 2020

1. COVID-19 UPDATES FROM DENNIS HEALTH DEPARTMENT –

The Town of Dennis has had 173 confirmed and probable cases since January 1, 2020 with a total of 20 deaths.

As of this morning, November 17, 2020, Dennis had 10 newly confirmed cases and 7 probable cases. Probable cases are those that have tested Antigen Positive, but require a PCR Test to confirm. The VNA continues contact tracing, we may see these numbers rise as they continue their efforts.

County-wide, newly confirmed and probable cases continued to trend upwards over the past four weeks suggesting re-emergence of community spread is likely, particularly in the mid-Cape region. As of Thursday, November 12, the seven-day average number of cases in Barnstable County exceeded 8/100K. By Monday, November 16, that number had climbed to 9.9/100K.

Cape hospitals continue to test all incoming patients regardless of diagnosis and on occasion find positive, asymptomatic cases. Cape Cod Healthcare reported 9 cases in hospital on Sunday afternoon, 7 at Cape Cod Hospital, 1 of which is in the ICU and 2 cases at Falmouth Hospital. Two additional fatalities on Cape Cod were reported by DPH over the weekend; bringing the total in Barnstable County to 188. Schools remain vigilant and are reacting well to new case reports.

The data confirms regional case levels are continuing to increase as well, with numbers rising throughout Southeastern MA including Barnstable County as well as in Rhode Island and Connecticut.

As a reminder, there is a mandatory face covering order in MA for everyone over the age of 5. Face coverings are required in all public places, indoors or outdoors, regardless of social distancing. In addition, the Governor and MDPH continue to urge residents to limit travel to only those states identified as lower risk, which as of yesterday, included Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts and Hawaii. All visitors entering MA from a state other than those few identified as lower risk who do not otherwise meet an exemption, such as for work or healthcare reasons, must complete the MA Travel Form and either self-quarantine for 14 days; or produce a negative COVID-19 test administered within the 72 period prior to arrival in MA. All visitors and residents should also be aware of the 10-person limit for indoor, private functions or 25-person limit for outdoor functions and the State's Stay at Home advisory, recommending limitations on activities away from home after 10:00 pm and before 5:00 am.

2. VETERANS HOME -

Trim was put into place last week. This week is interior painting. Furniture has begun to arrive and is being stored in the basement. Targeted move in date is Mid-December. Landscaping will be completed in the spring. Cape Cod Times ran a good story on Veterans Day about a local veteran, wrapped in the article is the Veterans Home, you can find it here <https://www.capecodtimes.com/story/news/local/2020/11/10/their-service-cape-organizations-work-support-regions-struggling-veterans/6238464002/>. The article places the need for the home (and others in the region) into appropriate perspective. Much appreciation for all the great work by CIVOC, Town Planner Dan Fortier, liaison Wayne Bergeron, Joe Taylor, Jayne Pelosi, Cristina Hadzi, Bill Burke, Bill

Blaisdell, Gina, Paul Covell and Gary Barber – all who have gone above and beyond to get this project to where it is today – thank you!!

3. HOUSING PRODUCTION PLAN –

The Housing Production Plan is on target for the draft to be ready for review by committees in December. Original plan was for a Planning Board Meeting, with them making a recommendation to the Select Board to endorse at a subsequent meeting. Efficiency of process, and allowing the Select Board a chance to be involved in the review of the draft, would be for a joint meeting of the Planning Board, Housing Trust and Select Board. Due to Budget Meetings and holidays, this could take place in early January. Housing Production Plan 2nd Citizens Input Meeting taking place tonight at 5PM.

4. RETIREMENT –

Fire Chief Mark Dellner - Sharing some bittersweet news with the Community. Chief Mark Dellner of the Dennis Fire Department, has announced his formal intent to retire effective March 31, 2021. The Board was previously made aware, and as you know the Chiefs contract includes language to extend to his 65th birthday, which is the legal age requirement by law for retirement, which is March 30th.

Chief Dellner has provided leadership for the fire department and the Town of Dennis that has gone above and beyond. His fire career spans over 46 years, and our municipality has benefited greatly by Chief Deller's 16 years of public service and dedication to the Town of Dennis. Mark has always worked together with the union and management to ensure labor negotiations were as efficient as possible. The Chief has been an instrumental part of the senior leadership team serving Dennis and his presence will be missed. The Fire Department and the Community will be very well served to have Mark continue serving in his capacity as Chief for the next months to assist with succession planning.

I look forward to discussing next steps the Board would like to take for a recruitment process, in the very near future with the Select Board.

Assessor, David Wood – David came to the town of Dennis in 2015 and has worked as an integral part of our Financial Team for the past 5 years. Prior to Dennis David worked for the town of Avon Assessing Department and also 17.5 years with the Department of Revenue. David has announced his retirement date of December 26th. Thank you to David Wood for all his years of service in is public servant career!

5. SIGNIFICANT CHANGE IN TOLLING DEADLINE FOR LAND USE PERMITTING ACTIVITIES -

Another critical development is the passage of the supplemental state budget for FY20. In that supplemental budget, H.5102, the state Legislature made a major change to Chapter 53 of the Acts of 2020 (“Chapter 53”), significantly shortening the tolling period for board/committee action on pending applications. We expect the Governor will sign H. 5102 in the coming days. In anticipation of the enactment of H. 5102, please circulate this information to your permitting boards and committees, as it may be critical in their planning of public hearings over the next few weeks. This information has been shared with all Dennis regulatory Boards and Committees.

6. BUDGET BUILDING AND SCHEDULE FOR FY22 –

The FY2022 Budget Planning process has commenced. The Finance Director and I met with the Chairs of both the Select Board and Finance Committee. Guidance was given, that with all the uncertainties due to the ongoing health crisis and continued impacts to the economy, a level funded, level service budget will be prepared, with the exception of contractual wage increases for the Boards review. It is

my hope to present the Board a balanced budget without impacting services. As you know the Board was provided a fiscal update at the end of September, while we ended the year in good shape, as presented by the Finance Director; we are cautioning that FY22 and FY23 may be very challenging years, there may be fiscal impacts from the pandemic. We will continue to update on financials monthly while we build the preliminary FY22 budget.

During this meeting a tentative overall budget schedule was discussed; the Select Board will be holding all budget meetings during the month of December. This will commence with my TA Budget message delivered to the Board at the December 1st Board meeting. All Departmental budgets will be scheduled during the rest of the month. Additionally, it is anticipated the Finance Committee will meet during the month of January. Review with the Finance Director and TA of all Department budgets commences the first week of November.

In addition, I have met with the School Superintendent, together with MaryAnne Gibbs, at this time with Chapter 70 funding still unknown the school is working with estimates. The School budget will be presented to the Board in December as well.

7. THANKSGIVING 2020 -

Thanksgiving is a holiday for families and friends to gather, enjoy a meal, watch football, and gather together but due to COVID-19 many are struggling with the decision whether to hold traditional celebrations this year.

According to the Center for Disease Control (CDC) the safest way to celebrate this year is with people in your immediate household. If you do plan to spend Thanksgiving with people outside of your household, please ensure that everyone wears a face covering when not eating, limit the number of guests attending per the State guidelines, maintain social distancing, eat outside if the weather allows, and limit the number of people preparing and serving food. If possible, have guests bring their own food and utensils.

If you plan to travel or have guests traveling to Dennis, please comply with the Governor's Travel Orders requiring anyone arriving in Massachusetts from a high-risk state to quarantine for 14 days or produce a negative COVID-19 test that has been administered up to 72 hours prior to arrival in the Commonwealth.

I want to take a moment to express my deepest gratitude to our dedicated and hard-working public servants that support the Town of Dennis; it takes a great amount of team work and I am proud of the work that is getting done amidst the ongoing health crisis we are all facing.

I am also thankful for the continued vigilance of the Community, it has not been an easy year for anyone but together we have all done the hard work in keeping the Town healthy. Thank you to all of you for all that you do and continue to do on behalf of the greater good for the community.

Wishing you and your families a Happy Thanksgiving!!

Thank you everyone, have a great rest of the week, please stay well!!

Respectfully, Elizabeth C. Sullivan, Town Administrator

