

News from the Desk of the Town Administrator

By Stephen Halleran

Roads less traveled: The highway department has continued this summer with its Selectboard established priority of working on the town's various gravel roads. This work includes right of way trimming, ditching work, and culvert replacements. Currently, the crew is on Center of Town Road and is next headed for Freeman Road. Our experience has been that by the time the crew spends the summer rebuilding a paved roadway, the maintenance of our gravel roads often has to be limited to just grading. The goal of this project is to open up these less heavily traveled roadways and improve existing drainage courses with a goal of reducing the severity of mud season.

Given the emphasis on gravel roads we have had a lot of discussion about how to best utilize the 2009 state highway block grant money for paved roads, **\$105,000**. This is what the Selectboard settled on:

- 1) Freeman Road: In an attempt to deal with some very worn out pavement that has rightly led to concerns about safety as motorists dodge the rough spots with little regard for which side of the road the vehicle must travel on the Selectboard has approved removing the pavement on the south end of Freeman Road. This will cost about **\$5,000**. A small area will be left near the intersection of Route 12A, but otherwise all the existing pavement on that end will be reclaimed. The highway crew will then gravel, shape and grade the road. We are confident that in the short term we can provide a safer driving surface with gravel. As time allows going into the fall and next spring the highway department will work on additional drainage and road bed improvements with the expectation that we will return pavement to the hill area in 2010.
- 2) School Street: Working with Facility Manager Bill Knight we did a resurfacing project with the school. The town budget paid for the School Street part, school funds paid for the loop and the access drive to the new parking lot. The hope is that by resurfacing and sealing the road up now, we can avoid the pavement breaking up and the need for a costly rebuild. Project cost **\$15,000** for the town portion, \$15,000 for the school portion.
- 3) Willow Brook Road: As we continue to thread the needles for obtaining a second hazard mitigation grant, this one for closer to \$500,000 we felt it was important to protect the investment already made on the roadway, so later this summer Pike Industries will pave a 1" wearing course on the rebuilt section of Willow Brook Road. The overlay has an estimated cost of **\$28,000**.

These three projects will consume about \$48,000 leaving \$57,000 to be held over for the 2010 construction season presumably to replace the pavement on Freeman Road. While we could repave Freeman this year, while contractors are especially hungry, the reality is that we just won't have time with town forces to tackle all the various

drainage issues on the roadway and keep going with the aforementioned gravel road project. Keeping Freeman gravel for a season will also allow for a “test” of drainage improvements to make sure our fixes work as intended. Anyone that drives Freeman knows water flows out right in the middle of the roadway. Before we repave we won't to be absolutely sure that our fix works on that particular spot.

Junk Cars and General Debris: We have been pleased to see a few junk cars and loads of scrap leaving town over the last two months. Helping this effort is the fact that metal prices have come back up. Need some extra cash? Call some local junk dealers and have them scrap out the back forty. As promised, the Selectboard is now moving into phase two of the program, letters to be issued with summons to court to follow.

Tax Sale: The Town of Plainfield now, as a result of nonpayment of taxes by the previous owner, owns the small abandoned blue house at #766 Willow Brook Road. The town has been working with our counsel to set up a tax sale of the property for early November. The new statutes that govern this process give the previous owners and mortgage holders enhanced rights to reclaim the property. Therefore, to have a good sale requires some care with the details. Our plans are to advertise the sale in early October and to open sealed bids for the property at the Selectboard 's November 4th meeting. If you are interested in participating in bid process for the purchase of this property contact the town office during the month of October. Buyer beware, the town makes no claims or warranties about the property, which includes about one acre of land.

Town Energy Committee: Residents Nancy Mogielnicki and Allan Ferguson continue to help form and guide our fledgling energy committee. Nancy is our Chair and is working hard to pull off a Plainfield/Cornish collaboration on a local energy fair where residents can learn simple easy things we can all do to save and reduce energy consumption. Allan provides great cross over to the very successful effort that has been going on with the Plainfield School. His involvement with that project has helped the town committee access various state and federal programs. Keep your eyes open for more information about the energy fair planned for later this fall.

Town News E-mail List: Who were the first residents to learn that starting in September, Town Clerk hours have been expanded to include Friday mornings from 7:00am to noon? Answer: Those that have signed up for the town news e-mail. If you want to be in the know for all things town business related take a few minutes and sign up. We have received lots of positive comments from those that have done so. As we have indicated your e-mail is not shared with anyone else and you will not receive anymore “junk mail” as a result of having signed up.

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