

Town Administrator Report  
June 09, 2020

The following is a summary of the major activities of the Office of the Town Administrator for the previous week.

- 1. Town Offices Reopening Protocols-** Our team has completed the protocols and procedures for reopening Town offices. This week we have already reached our phase 1 25% occupancy guideline, and we are prepared to expand as we progress into phase 2 this week, with increased public access to follow. The Town has developed its own comprehensive employee guidance document which is in full compliance with all of the mandatory safety requirements issued by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Our Town buildings have received engineering modifications including the installation of plexiglass screening and the moving of workstations to accommodate social distancing. We have also adopted detailed written cleaning and disinfecting procedures for each building. The employee guidance documents cover all areas of operation and include issues such as maintaining social distancing, wearing face covering, general hygiene, daily wellness questionnaire, telecommuting policies, and additional resources. We are working hard to include our workforce as partners in providing public service while slowing the spread of COVID-19. This includes working with our unions, sharing information, and conducting interactive training sessions. I want to thank our hard-working Back-to-Work Team for all of their efforts, and especially our project leader, Assistant Town Administrator, Wendy Brough, for her tremendous work to make this happen.
- 2. Oak Bluffs Reopening Website Tools-** With the leadership of the Chairman of the Board of Selectmen, we have developed a comprehensive set of website tools called, "Reopening Oak Bluffs" which are prominently posted on the Town's website. As we all struggle to emerge from the COVID-19 shut-down which brought great success in slowing the spread of the virus, the State has issued detailed and complex guidance to businesses who seek to reopen. We have followed these developments very closely and have developed materials to help local businesses navigate the complicated state guidelines in a simple and convenient way to serve as a resource for local businesses seeking to reopen. This material also includes our streamlined application process for restaurants to seek outdoor service and other forms of guidance to help local small businesses get back to work in a safe and responsible way. Local government contacts are included in the material for any questions or discussion of ideas related to the reopening process, and I will personally help to coordinate people with the right resources to review any issues they may have. Special thanks to our Administrative Assistant, Carrie Blair, for her great work on this project.
- 3. Town Meeting Preparations-**With the approval of the Board of Selectmen to conduct our Town Meeting on Tuesday, June 16 at the Tabernacle, we have been working together to finalize our preparations for a smooth and successful Town Meeting. Our first key steps were to work to shorten the warrant by removing all articles that could be delayed until fall, and also working to reduce the budget to a level supported by my revised revenue projections. Last Monday we conducted a site visit/meeting at the Tabernacle with representatives of the MVCMA and Town Officials to review details and I am convinced that we can conduct our

Town Meeting in a safe way. We have a plan for social distancing in place, and we are asking local residents to wear face coverings to the meeting for added protection. I am working with Chief Blake to develop a sound traffic and circulation plan, and we have met with the MVC for assistance in developing a map we hope to see printed in the local papers. Very simply, all parking for the Town Meeting will be at Sunset Lake, except for handicap parking off of School Street. Entry to the site will be from Sunset Lake to Siloam Ave to Jordan Crossing, right by the Campground Museum directly into Trinity Park and the front of the Tabernacle. All other entry points will be closed, and we beg for maximum cooperation to make the flow work smoothly; and please stay six feet apart.

- 4. Seaport Advisory Council Grant Application-**This past week I applied for a \$1.2 million maritime economic development infrastructure grant from the Seaport Advisory Council for the implementation of the Streetscape Plan recommendations for the reconfiguration of the North Bluff area. The project will improve the circulation and welcoming of visitors as well as creating more robust and inviting pedestrian paths and wayfinding to the downtown and local businesses. Even accommodating additional circulation, the plan provides for beautification and a park area at the point of the bluff that will accentuate one of our Island's great vistas. I am hopeful that this project will be successfully received by the funding agency. My special thanks to the Martha's Vineyard Commission and Planner Christine Flynn for her excellent technical assistance work.
- 5. COVID-19 Deficit Spending and CARES Act Funding -**Working together with Town Accountant, Deborah Potter, we have established a program to track all of our COVID-19 spending by Town Departments, including public safety staffing, the purchase of supplies and equipment, including personal protective equipment, modifications to Town buildings, extra cleaning and disinfecting and all of the other costs, totaling almost \$100,000 to date that the Town has spent on our emergency COVID-19 response. We have applied for and received State permission to create a deficit spending account for all of these costs which will not be held against the Town's free cash. We are additionally making application under the federal CARES Act for reimbursement for these costs from the Act's emergency funding provisions. We are in hopes that we will receive 75-100% reimbursement through the Act.
- 6. Downtown Sidewalk Presentation-** Working with our designers from the Waterfield Design Group we have developed a presentation in support of the downtown sidewalk project. The presentation breaks down the project into the component areas of North Circuit, South Circuit, Kennebec, Healey Square and Lake Ave Parking. Slides have been developed to graphically show before and after imaging for a more dramatic example of the improvements. The value of this project is highly magnified by our recent pandemic experience .Firstly, the investment in pedestrian infrastructure addresses many of the problems we have in the downtown related to narrow and overcrowded sidewalks, lack of waiting areas and congestion. The project will also be a significant stimulus to local business by investing in the public infrastructure that supports business and creating a more inviting and positive visitor flow and experience that will help stimulate economic activity. The end result will be to help create the tools to make the Town emerge from the pandemic stronger than before.