

Hundred Day Wrap-Up

When I took office on December 3, 2007, several people from several different camps gave me some sage advice. "Don't try and do everything in the first 100 days." This has proven to be very sound and valuable advice to me. However, reaching the 100th day milestone, which was March 11th, affords me a good opportunity to reflect on what we've accomplished and where we are headed.

First of all, I underestimated how much I would enjoy this position. It is incredibly fulfilling to help our residents understand and receive the benefit of local government and it is exciting to get involved in areas of concern previously outside of my purview. I relish the chance to learn about and research best practices and new opportunities.

The Board of Selectmen has worked very well together. Fellow board members, John Szewczyk and Jim McLaughlin have been cooperative, helpful and respectful. Our discussions have been lively, productive and even comical at times. When we haven't unanimously agreed, the vote has been 2-1; but not always the same 2! That indicates to me that we are all considering policy above partisanship.

To some degree, every new Board of Selectmen has to complete projects started by the previous board. This year was no exception. I am pleased to report that we are just about finished tying up the "loose ends". To date we have passed the Ethics Commission Ordinance and will soon appoint the Ethics Commission; we have passed the Senior Tax Relief Ordinances and are taking new applications daily; completed application for an updated feasibility study for extension of public water for Main Street; accepted Elihu Drive as an approved town road; completed applications for STEAP grants; addressed Knox Box ordinance and will soon be bringing the Unlawful Deposit of Snow, Ice, Leaves or other Debris on Public Roadways and Sidewalks Ordinance to Town Meeting.

We've also had the opportunity to launch some new initiatives. We appointed a Clean Energy Task Force that is already in motion to help the Town and our residents become more energy efficient; we became an authorized fuel bank for Operation Fuel; worked with Representative Kalinowski and Senator Meyer to propose legislation that would waive the requirement to obtain a Water Diversion Permit for the Durham Water Company (estimated savings - \$100,000-200,000). In addition, we submitted a budget for consideration by the Board of Finance that we view as responsible both from a service and fiscal standpoint.

The most exciting venture to date is our attempt at a comprehensive capital plan. We have dedicated the entire month of March to gather public opinion and have scheduled many different meeting times and venues in order to reach as many people as we can. So many of you have responded and a report will be issued at the first Board of Selectmen meeting in April. We know that no plan will get implemented without widespread public support.

There will be challenges and tough choices to make but I am confident that our dedicated town employees and volunteers will help guide our future decisions.