



The Town of Barnstable

Office of Town Manager

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November 2, 2023

To: Barnstable Town Councilors

From: Mark S. Ells, Town Manager

RE: Town Manager update for October 18 through October 31, 2023

1. We are proceeding with the budget action calendar for FY 2025. The Town Manager Calendar Year Fee Hearing is scheduled for November 14, 2023 at 11:00 AM via Zoom. Please check the Town Website calendar and the Town Manager webpage for notice and details. For information on our fiscal year budgets please view the Town's Open Budget website at <http://budget.townofbarnstable.us>.
2. We are anticipating making a presentation to the Town Council at the November 16th meeting regarding tax levy shifting options for the Fiscal Year 2024 tax levy. This includes an option to split the tax rate between the residential class of property and the commercial, industrial, and personal property classes (CIP). This option allows for shifting a larger portion of the tax levy to the CIP class from the residential class. The presentation will also include an illustration of the tax levy and tax bill impacts from the adoption of a residential exemption. This option shifts the tax burden within the residential class from owners of moderately valued residential properties to the owners of vacation homes, higher valued homes and residential properties not occupied by the owner, including apartments and vacant lands. After presenting the tax levy shifting options at the November 16th meeting, we anticipate scheduling the votes on both these items at the December 7th Town Council meeting. These votes are necessary to set the Fiscal Year 2024 tax rates and to issue the 3rd and 4th quarter tax bills by December 31, 2023.
3. The Town received a citizens petition pursuant to Section 8-9 of the Town Charter requesting a meeting of the voters. Working collaboratively with the proponents of the petition, the Town Council President, Vice President and Town Manager a meeting was held on Monday, October 23, 2023, from 6:00-9:00 pm at Barnstable High School. There was a large turnout of our citizens at the meeting and many others viewing remotely. The October 23, 2023 Special Town Council Meeting / Open Meeting of the Voters is now available on the Town's Video on Demand: <https://streaming85.townofbarnstable.us/CablecastPublicSite/show/10795?channel=1> and on a YouTube link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dC21eMo7vNs>.

After listening to the many questions of those in attendance and attempting to answer those questions I was able to address the appropriateness of cable landings in Barnstable is of concerns and what the Town can do to assure safe projects that minimize impacts to our community in the event that the projects are permitted. As I explained at the meeting the Town of Barnstable is not the proponent of these offshore wind projects but rather the community in which the proposed projects would make landfall, traverse our beaches and roadway, and then ultimately connect into the electrical grid.

- a. The Park City Wind project is proposed to land at the west end of Craigville Beach and is in the later stages of permitting with the state Energy Facilities Siting Board (EFSB). The Town has been informed that Park City Wind was terminating its Power Purchase Agreement with the Connecticut utilities with the intent of rebidding on the purchase of power generated for the project. As previously stated, the Town has taken the change in the status of the Power Purchase Agreement along with other substantial changes under advisement for legal review and appropriate action. The Town Council has directed me not to grant any easements to Park City Wind before the EFSB issues its final decision on the project. Once that decision is issued, the Town will review it, along with whatever the current circumstances are at that time, and the Legal Department will advise on appropriate steps.
- b. The Commonwealth Wind project is proposed to land at Dowses Beach and is in the mid stages of permitting with the state. This landing site was chosen by Commonwealth Wind without any consultation with, or input from, the Town. Commonwealth Wind has terminated its Power Purchase Agreement with the Massachusetts utilities, resulting in the Town ceasing any Host Community Agreement negotiations. Further, the Town Council has formally revoked my authorization to commence negotiations with Commonwealth Wind for a Host Community Agreement. Commonwealth Wind did notify me that they intend to continue permitting for the Project, which they have the right to do. The Town submitted extensive comments on the proponent's Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) which was submitted to the state pursuant to the Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act (MEPA). Our comments clearly state that the Town does not support the Commonwealth Wind project.

We will keep the community advised of next steps relative to both projects. Legal has under review the Town comments on each project to the appropriate agency which project submittals are pending.

4. Eversource Energy is proposing to modify electric infrastructure located in Bourne, Sandwich, and Barnstable, Massachusetts. The following project changes would enable the operation of a previously approved transmission line between Bourne and Barnstable known as the Mid Cape Reliability Project. The proposed Project includes (a) operating and interconnecting the line between Bourne and Barnstable; (b) expanding the West Barnstable Substation for operation; and (c) constructing a new switching station in Bourne. The Siting Board will conduct a public comment hearing (a meeting where the public may

provide input on the Projects) in hybrid format, allowing participation in person or remotely on: Tuesday, November 14, 2023, beginning at 6:30 PM. The in-person hearing location is the Tilden Arts Center, Cape Cod Community College, 2240 Iyannough Road, West Barnstable, MA 02668. The link to the state web site for this hearing is <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/mid-cape-reliability-project-change>.

5. On October 23, 2023, The Cape Cod & Island Legislative Delegation met with the Cape Cod and Islands Wastewater Trust Fund (CC&IWTF) Board to discuss funding support from the state in an effort to maintain a 25% principal subsidy level for eligible wastewater projects. Significant increases in the number of projects and estimated project costs have resulted in a decrease in the amount available funding from the CC&IWTF. The Town Council sent a letter to the Governor regarding this matter several months ago and this meeting was a discussion requested by our legislative delegation with the CC&IWTF Board on which I serve as vice chair to strategize on how to proceed relative to this funding request. We will keep you advised as this discussion progresses.
6. The Town of Barnstable recreational oyster harvest season opens on Wednesday, November 1st. Please check the Marine and Environmental Affairs - Shellfishing webpage and review current open areas, harvest size, and limits.
7. The Town of Barnstable has been awarded the Greening the Gateway Cities grant which involves the planting of up to 2,400 trees in eligible sections of our community with a goal of covering 5% of the Town's Planting Zone in new tree canopy over the next three years, through summer 2026. Hyannis is the primary area for eligibility under this grant program. Residents who live within the Planting Zone are eligible to sign up to have a free tree planted at their property. To see if your property is within the Planting Zone and to learn more about this opportunity please visit [GreeningHyannis.com](https://www.greeninghyannis.com).
8. Elizabeth Jenkins, Director of Planning and Development, will provide an update on our Local Comprehensive Plan. The next meeting of the Local Comprehensive Planning Committee will be held on Thursday, November 30, 2023 at 5:30 pm in person at Town Hall. The Committee will engage in an interactive mapping exercise to discuss land use changes since the 2010 Local Comprehensive Plan and current land use patterns to begin to establish future goals and strategies. The Town is looking to diversify representation on the Local Comprehensive Planning Committee to ensure that the Committee's makeup is reflective of our community's population. The application period closed Monday October 16th and the Town received fourteen applications. At this time, the Town Manager along with members of the Town Council Appointments Committee Chair working together to make recommendations for the Committee. The Town Manager will appoint members; and the Town Council will ratify the appointments. To learn more about this important process and to stay up to date on meetings and community events please visit the project website: [BarnstableLCP.com](https://www.barnstablelcp.com).