

Events Calendar

Nashaway Chapter of the Audubon Society of New Hampshire Goes on Search for Owls

The Nashaway Chapter of the Audubon Society of New Hampshire will search for wintering owls on its monthly field trip. Join us as we head out to Salisbury Beach and Parker River National Wildlife Refuge in Northern Massachusetts on Sunday, February 15 from 8am – 3pm. To carpool, meet at the Exit 7 Park and Ride on the hill behind the Granite Inn. Contact Richard Bielawski 429-2537 or rbielawski@mac.com to register or for more information. There is a \$5.00 fee per care to get into the refuge.

Saturday Night Comedy Club

Great Comedy on Saturday Nights at the Club Comedy in Amherst from the co-founder of the Comedy Connection. Doors open at 7PM and show starts at 8PM. Amherst Country Club, 72 Ponemah Rd, Amherst. For more information call 673-9908 or got to www.amherstcountryclub.com.

Amherst MOMS Club

The Amherst MOMS Club meets the first Tuesday of every month at the First Baptist Church on Middle Street in Amherst at 9:00. We are a non-profit organization that supports stay at-home moms and their children who live in Amherst. We plan get togethers, play groups, special outings and service and community projects throughout the year. All activities are during the day except our monthly mom's night out and children are welcomed at all our activities. Please contact Carrie Patel, president at amherstmomsclub@yahoo.com or by mail, PO BOX 508 Amherst, NH 03031 for more information.

MOMS Club of Milford / Mont Vernon

The MOMS Club of Milford / Mont Vernon meets every second Friday of each month at the Mont Vernon Congregational Church in Mont Vernonat 9:30am. This is a non-profit organization that supports at-home moms and their children that reside in the towns of Milford, Mont Vernon and Wilton. We will be planning get togethers, playgroups, special activities and service and community projects. All activities are during the daytime except for a monthly mom's night out. Please contact Michelle Paquette, president @ momsclubofmilfordarea@yahoo.com for more information.

Medical Ride Service in Souhegan Valley

Rides to medical appointments will be available to people living in the Souhegan Valley towns of Amherst, Brookline, Hollis and Milford. The door-to-door service will be provided by the Nashua Transit System and will be offered on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays from 8:30 am to 4:00 pm. For information call 880-0100.

Town Warrant

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of maintaining and preserving good roads to extend the service life of the roads. According to the information presented the road maintenance has been under funded for the last 10 years and now requires the reconstruction of 4 to 5 miles of roads a year. With increased local, commuter and truck traffic, along with a growing population, older roads with poor sub base, drainage issues and some with dirt, gravel and logs as a road base, need to be rebuilt. Newer roads need regular maintenance as they reach the end of their service expectancy.

There was an amendment to the article to reduce the bond to \$0. It was presented by Mark Vincent representing the Amherst Citizens Association (ACA) who commented that although some major road repair is needed, this is not the year to increase taxes to support this bond. Mr. Vincent said the amendment would give taxpayers a break. "We would prefer to see a plan for oversight of \$6 to \$15 million to insure we get value for our money." The amendment was defeated.

The bond being proposed is \$6 million for 15 years and needs a 60% majority to pass. The tax rate increase will be \$0.15.

The operating budget of \$9,823,300, which represents a 2.99% increase, was presented by the Board of Selectmen. The budget has \$279,313 spending increases. Tedd Landon, ACA, offered an amendment to reduce the budget by \$183,910, which would bring the increase in the budget down to 2%. Mr. Landon complimented the Souhegan and Amherst School Districts for developing budgets with only a 2% increase and said the town should do likewise. Selectmen George Infanti said that the select-

men's operating budget was both "prudent and frugal." He continued, "There's no fat in this budget and I strongly disagree."

The vote on the amendment to reduce the budget was close but it failed.

The next amendment came from Jeanne Ludt. She offered an amendment to increase the budget by \$40,000 for health and human services. It was passed and raised the budget to \$9,863,300, an increase of \$0.17 on the tax rate.

Another failed amendment was offered by Sally Wilkins to reduce the Police Department's budget by ½ an officer (\$31,808). The amendment would be to pull a resource officer out of the schools and put a patrol officer on the road. Ms. Wilkins said that with more commercial development in town we needed more patrol officers. The amendment was defeated.

Article 24 submitted by petition is the open space land purchase of the Martin property off Fellows Farm Road bordering Bedford. As a result of the latest negotiations on this property, the price in the article has been reduced to \$1,290,000 from \$1,890,000. This has been accomplished by extracting 12 acres and the house from the sales agreement. The portion of the land (35 acres), which is in Bedford, will be offered for sale to the town of Bedford. The selectmen have received assurances that Bedford is interested in purchasing the land and have the funds to do so. Dependent upon that sale, the cost to Amherst could be as low as \$780,000.

The amendment from the selectmen to reduce the price passed. Estimated increase on the tax rate is \$0.07.

Article 25: EMS Cardiac Defibrillation Equipment Replacement (\$74,550) This article has an estimated tax impact of \$.04.

Article 26: EMS Cardiac Resuscitation Equipment (\$13,237) This article has an estimated tax impact of \$.01.

Article 27: DPW Replacement Trucks (\$59,080) This article has an estimated tax impact \$.03.

Article 28: Baboosic Lake Phase IV Community Septic Design (\$14,500) This article has an estimated tax impact of \$.01.

Article 29: Fire Department Engine 1 Refurbishment (\$20,600) This article has an estimated tax impact of \$.01.

Article 30: Recreational Facilities Capital Reserve Fund (\$250,000.00) from surplus. This article has no tax impact.

Article 31: Fire Apparatus Capital Reserve Fund (\$150,000) This article has an estimated tax impact of \$.08.

Article 32: Ambulance Capital Reserve Fund (\$22,000) This article has an estimated tax impact of \$.01.

Article 33: -Assessing Revaluation Capital Reserve Fund (\$25,000) This article has an estimated tax impact of \$.01.

Article 34: Communications Center Capital Reserve Fund (\$5,000) This article has an estimated tax impact of less than \$.01.

Article 35: Town 250th Anniversary Celebration Capital Reserve Fund (\$5,000) This article has an estimated tax impact of less than \$.01.

Article 36: Forestview Cemetery Capital Reserve Fund (\$15,000) This article has an estimated tax impact of \$.01.

Article 37: Highway Equipment Capital Reserve Fund (\$20,000) This article has an estimated tax impact of \$.01.

Article 38: Health and Human Service Agencies (\$1.00)

Article 39: Souhegan Valley Transportation Collaborative Subsidy (Submitted by Petition) (\$5,500) This article has an estimated tax impact of less than \$.01.

Article 40: Merrimack Valley Regional Water District Legal Fees (Submitted by Petition) (\$10,000) This article has an estimated tax impact of less than \$.01.

Town News

Amherst Area Newcomers' Group



Frankie Straccia & Kathy Freitas were among those in attendance.

Food & Fellowship

The Amherst Area Newcomers' Club recently held their 2nd annual Champagne Brunch at the home of Frankie Straccia. This event has become a seasonal favorite ~ a time to forget the snow, ice & frigid temperatures. The brunch is just one of the activities enjoyed by members of the group. For further information on any of our other activities or special interest groups, please call Susan Wheatley at 673-1439 or visit our website www.nhnewcomers.com

Master Planning Notes

Reviewing Our Vision and Goals, Part II

RICHARD HART, PLANNING BOARD MEMBER

AMHERST – Review of the draft Amherst Master Plan draft and goals continues. At the January 21st Master Plan meeting, we covered the Historical and Cultural Resources, Natural Resources, and Housing elements. Many details were discussed, and a few changes identified, including:

- The possibility of a town wide demolition delay ordinance, already in the History and Culture section, was discussed, and preserved.
- Another action was added to the Conservation element to "Encourage legislation to protect water supplies for public use & protection of the environment."
- Citizens at the meeting voiced their concern over the possibility of commercial or multi-family housing in Amherst Village.. "Amherst Village" was removed as a specific reference for these sorts of developments, in the Housing section.. The more general "appropriate areas of town" remains.
- If smaller lot sizes are to be encouraged in the Housing section, the issues of septic and water for

housing needed more examination. • Actions in the Housing section that ask the town to establish funds to support affordable housing were changed to "Encourage establishment of a housing land trust."

At the next meeting the 4 remaining elements, shown below, will be examined. When all elements have been reviewed, the results will be provided to the consultants to integrate into the next version of the Master Plan.

Economic Development

The Economic Development goals are: (1) to encourage higher valued commercial development, (2) to improve the design of commercial areas, (3) to encourage mixed-use areas, and (4) to diversify the tax base. Among the possible actions suggested to achieve these goals are the adoption of design standards and guidelines for buildings, signs, and landscaping; to provide infrastructure support such as roads and sewers; to attract businesses such as professional, scientific, and health services; and to modify zoning to

allow some commercial and residential mixed use development.

Transportation

Transportation goals are (1) to preserve the town character, (2) to minimize traffic congestion, and (3) to encourage alternatives to driving. Among actions identified are improvement of roadways to increase safety and capacity, designation of additional scenic roads, use of signs and pavement markings to distinguish between regional and local roads, and development of a bicycle and pedestrian trail system.

Public Facilities and Services

The Public Services and Facilities goals are (1) to optimize the use of town resources, (2) to provide quality education and other needed services, (3) to manage future growth, and (4) to encourage sustainable development. Among the suggested actions to meet these goals are to explore the possibility of sharing town owned spaces for multiple uses, to encourage additional uses of the Village

Liz Overholt said the amendment to reduce spending should include suggestions of where to cut.

Mr. Landon said that the selectmen and department heads should make cuts where they decide.

The amendment failed. ACA also opposes the road reconstruction bond, the purchase of the Martin property, DPW replacement trucks, AFD engine 1 refurbishment, recreational facilities capital reserve fund, fire apparatus capital reserve fund, cemetery capital reserve fund, highway equipment capital reserve fund, Souhegan Valley transportation collaborative and the Merrimack Valley Water District legal fees.

They support the EMS cardiac defibrillation equipment, EMS resuscitation equipment, Baboosic Lake phase IV community septic design, assessing capital reserve fund, ambulance capital reserve fund, and the Town 250th anniversary celebration capital reserve fund.

Ways and Means Committee supports all of the articles supported by the selectmen. W&M positions will be reviewed in the next issue of The Amherst Citizen.

For more information on positions taken by ACA visit: amherstcitizensassociation.org

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