

Town Manager Report to the Board of Selectmen – Mon., February 1, 2021

Vaccinations – We are excited to announce the first Hamilton COVID-19 vaccination clinic, thanks to the efforts of the Hamilton Health Department, Hamilton Fire Department, Hamilton Council on Aging, Hamilton Medical Reserve Corps volunteers and our partners in Topsfield and Wenham. This first clinic is scheduled to take place Saturday, February 6, from 1 to 4 p.m. and is open to Hamilton residents age 75 and older, per Massachusetts Phase 2 guidelines.

The Clinic will be held at the Hamilton-Wenham Recreation Center, 14 Union St., behind the Hamilton-Wenham Library.

Registration for this clinic will be on a first come, first served basis and will be available by phone. The phone number and opening of registrations will be announced on the town website and via Code Red emergency communication messages to residents who have signed up for this service.

The Town has been given a limited number of doses for the clinic, so residents who register and are not able to get a vaccination at this first clinic will be placed on a waiting list in the order they called/registered and will be at the front of the line for the next local clinic. We are hoping to be able to offer a weekly clinic at the Recreation Center, but must wait until we receive confirmation from the state about the availability of doses each week.

Winter Shared Streets and Spaces Grant – The Town was informed that we have received a grant for \$64,800 from the Massachusetts Department of Transportation through their Winter Shared Streets and Spaces program. The grant funds will be used to make improvements along Railroad Avenue and Willow Streets, to improve the pedestrian and bike access between the downtown shopping district and Patton Park.

I want to take the time to thank our staff members, Pat Shannon, Tim Olson and Sean Timmons, along with local resident Ted Acworth and Planning Board and Hamilton Development Corporation board member Brian Stein for their assistance with the grant.

The grant program is designed to make public spaces multi-functional, allowing residents to get out and enjoy the outdoors in a safer way and making the public spaces more useable by the public at-large. We will be providing electrical upgrades along Railroad Avenue that would allow for more complimentary uses, much like the Springtime Street Fair held two years ago, or for Holiday street events.

Along Willow, the town will have the resources to improve bike and pedestrian access by building out a better, more visible bike/walking lane along the side of the road and improving the ability to safely travel to Patton Park and Weaver Pond. These improvements will also have the added benefit of improving the walking and biking access to the Hamilton Senior Center and the Winthrop School.

COVID Testing at Miles River Middle School – The town’s COVID testing clinic at the Miles River Middle School will on a once per week basis, beginning on Sat., Feb. 13. Hamilton and Wenham, along with Beauport Ambulance, have been partnering to offer this service for residents who are showing COVID symptoms or who have been advised that they are a close contact of a positive case. Unfortunately, the federal funds we have been using to provide these tests are starting to run low for both towns and at the same time we have had ample evidence that residents have been using the free testing, to travel and take part in other risky behaviors, reducing the availability of tests for others, despite the availability of an affordable “pay” option.

When the testing clinics resume on Feb. 13, **we ask for all residents who want to test for personal reasons to take advantage of the self-pay option, at a cost of just \$85 per person, so that tests for those who are symptomatic or have been notified they are a close contact will be available for those who need them.**

Continued use of the town testing site by those who are not symptomatic, MAY result in the closure of this testing site, due to a lack of funding.

Information about Compost program – Due to the inclement weather this week, and because some residents have not yet received their green bins, the DPW department has delayed the start of the Organics Ban in the Hamilton trash program.

Residents who need a green bin to be compliant or those who feel they would qualify for an exemption from the Organics Ban, are encouraged to visit the DPW page on the town’s website to apply for a new green bin or to complete an application for an Exemption Sticker.

Beginning next week, black bins that are not accompanied by a green bin at the curb will be tagged with warning stickers to alert residents that the new program has begun and that residents must place their green bin curbside in order for the their black trash bin to be collected.