

Board of Selectmen Sidelines October 14, 2020

Your Board of Selectmen has made a commitment to improved communication and transparency of Town issues. We have decided to produce a twice monthly email that summarize our thoughts.

The parameters of this email will be to keep all communication kind, clear and direct with no foul language or demeaning or nasty comments regarding any person or group. We will strive for relevant commentary without political endorsements, messages, or innuendo. This does not mean that we will avoid controversy (Can anyone say Sidewalks?).

The opinions expressed in these emails are the individual thoughts of each Board of Selectmen member. Your Board will not be in agreement on every issue. We are committed to express our disagreements with a civil and conscientious tone. Yes, really, this Board is committed to work together for the betterment of all Union citizens. Not every Board of Selectmen member will contribute to every email. There will be times when one Board of Selectmen Member will publish an email on a topic that is particularly important to them.

Let us know how you think we are doing! We want to hear from you. Our email addresses are on the Town web site.

Tell your friends and neighbors that if they are interested in receiving future email messages that they can sign up on the Town's web

site: <https://www.union.maine.gov/index.asp?SEC={BD6AF50A-150C-4AC2-A827-C620AD872B86}&Type=DYNAFORM>

Highlights of the Board of Selectmen Meeting, October 6, 2020 (not official minutes)

Solar Moratorium & Ordinance – Jerry Brooks, chair of the Planning Board, spoke about the need to have a clear ordinance regarding ground mounted solar energy systems. He felt that it would be best to have parameters in place to ensure that Union's best interests would be addressed. The Board voted to proceed with a moratorium and have the Planning Board develop an ordinance. You will hear more about this in the future as the town will need to vote on these measures.

Food Ordinance Committee – This committee was established to develop local rules for local food. Members of the committee are Lizzie Dickerson, Elaine Frost, Jim Justice and Board of Selectmen Members, Josh White, and Bill Lombardi. The committee wishes to hear from all community members who have an interest and to balance local food traditions with rules and regulations. You will also hear more about this in the future as the committee will meet via Zoom plus the town will need to vote if a new ordinance is proposed.

NE Municipal Advisor Contract – In an effort to reduce the interest rate on the recently voted upon Road Bond this contract was approved. This organization has been successful negotiating lower interest rates for other towns.

Center for Tech and Civic Life – The Board voted to accept a \$5,000 grant. Proceeds will be used for tents to protect voters from the elements, a computer to facilitate voting and personal protection equipment. Good job by the town administration to investigate & apply for this grant.

Broadband Committee - The Board feels that if we can improve internet access and speed it would be attractive to current citizens and make the Town more attractive to businesses. If you are interested in being on this committee or any other committee you can express your interest by submitting the following: [https://www.union.maine.gov/vertical/sites/%7B45C83186-1E71-4F7C-A6A6-4C9EBBC99C05%7D/uploads/Statement_of_Interest_Form\(1\).PDF](https://www.union.maine.gov/vertical/sites/%7B45C83186-1E71-4F7C-A6A6-4C9EBBC99C05%7D/uploads/Statement_of_Interest_Form(1).PDF)

Sidewalks

The Board of Selectmen has heard from many people about their desire for the sidewalks as well as we have heard over the course of discussion about this project from people on both sides of it. We thank you for your input. It is always great to hear from our fellow citizens. The Town will decide on this project on November 3rd or by absentee ballot, please vote. We, as Board of Selectmen members, get a vote like everyone else as residents, and we have an obligation to get as much info out as possible to the public so that they can make an informed vote.

A previous board applied for this grant and committed us to our share of this project years ago. Attacking that action has been part of the conversation, along with a lot of personal attacks and many horrible things said. It is fine to review how the grant application came about and how it was applied for, but we have to remember we are seeing it with the clarity of hindsight. Some on the current Board are not sure that was gone about in the best way and we think even with tight application deadlines we need to do better as a town to get public input before public funds of that scale are committed. In this case, these funds were committed years ago. The question now is do you, as a voter, find the sidewalk itself is a good investment? Attacks on neighbors or town officials is not acceptable. There is no need for the unfriendly behavior that has been thrown around.

If you have not already, please review the following message regarding sidewalks from the Town website: https://unionmaine-my.sharepoint.com/personal/blombardi_union_maine_gov/_layouts/15/doc.aspx?sourcedoc={03f49f31-bba9-49a5-a961-d5014ee751b6}&action=edit

Submitted by Bill Lombardi at the direction of the Board of Selectmen.