

Town of Lincoln | Weekly News

TO: Lincoln Town Council
FROM: Lisa J. Goodwin, Town Manager
DATE: February 3, 2012

The Recreational Center
Fundraising Committee will meet
Tuesday, February 6th, at 6:00 PM
at Health Access Network.

ITEM 1. This weekend Main Street activity will be a little different than what we are accustomed to. Beginning early Sunday morning a film crew from Vacationland Films LLC will arrive to shoot scenes for a film production which is targeted for worldwide premiere at the 2013 Sundance Film Festival. I can't divulge the story line but I can tell you that Lincoln native, Brandon Libby, has a star role in the production. The majority of the filming for this production is being done in the Millinocket/East Millinocket area.

Filming will take place at Marden's during the day on Sunday and then filming will move to Wing Wah on Monday. Crews will be arriving around 5:30 am Sunday morning and anticipate filming to be wrapped up by 7:00 PM Sunday night. Traffic delays can be expected between the hours of 10:00 am and 6:00 pm, as traffic is stopped during the filming of certain scenes. Traffic control will be done by Project Flagger, the same company used by the Maine Department of Transportation for its construction projects. Residents are encouraged to use Fleming Street as an alternate route. Monday's filming will also start early in the morning but there will be no interruption of traffic flow. Parking spots in front of both businesses will be blocked off during the filming. The production company also has a crew to deal with crowd control should there be a lot of curious people who show up to watch!

ITEM 2. Transfer Station Director, David Lloyd, reports that the solid waste compactor is still experiencing some problems. One week the truck and trailer are weighing in at around 100,000 lbs and the next the crew has trouble getting 90,000 lb in the trailer.

Mr. Lloyd met with Todd Hager from Atlantic Recycling Equipment to discuss the cost of a new compactor and the timeframe for his company to install the compactor if awarded the bid. Mr. Hager estimates that it would take 12-14 weeks to fabricate and four days to install. During the budget process for FY12, it was decided to fund half of the cost of the compactor in FY12 and the other half in FY13. However, we knew at that time that the compactor may or may not last until July.

In light of the time it will take to bid the project and have it fabricated and installed, I will recommend to the Town Council at its February meeting that Mr. Lloyd be given authority to bid the project and purchase the compactor during this fiscal year. We currently have \$50,000 in the FY12 budget along with \$35,000 in the Transfer Station reserve account. Depending on the final bid amount, I anticipate that the Town Council would need to appropriate an additional \$12,000 from Unassigned Fund Balance to fund the project in this fiscal year. Waiting until July to start this project could end up costing the town a lot more money in alternative waste disposal than we had originally anticipated given the time frame for fabrication.

Mr. Lloyd said the unit he is looking at is slightly smaller than our current compactor but has a faster cycle time and will be more energy efficient than our current compactor. The Town

of Millinocket has a similar compactor and Mr. Lloyd plans on visiting that facility to view the operation of that compactor.

ITEM 3. Wellness Coordinator, Shelly Crosby, reports that the 2012 Employee Wellness Program is off to a great start! This week, town employees gathered for an employees' wellness luncheon. Subway sandwiches and homemade soups were brought in for all departments and the luncheon was held in the Council Chambers. To-go lunches were provided to those employees who were unable to leave their buildings. This luncheon was funded by the 2011 Maine Municipal Wellness Grant Program. Each of the departments within the town have hired new employees over the last year and often the employees do not get a chance to meet each other. Mrs. Crosby commented that, *"This was a great opportunity for employees to mingle among departments and get to know each other on a personal level. Yes, we discussed our individual wellness goals for the 2012 year but also shared stories which brought much laughter. This was definitely a hit with all that attended and we look forward to the next one!"*

Mrs. Crosby also received notification this week that the Town of Lincoln has been approved for a \$1,320 grant for the 2012 Wellness Program and has scheduled classes for the upcoming year. The Employee Wellness Committee is charged with developing and coordinating the classes. The current committee members are: Melissa Quintela, Dan Whittier, Cory Stratton and Shelly Crosby. Goals for this year are to raise employee participation, revamp the Public Safety workout room and hold the second *"Biggest Loser Contest"* for employees.

ITEM 4. Public Works Director, David Lloyd, reports that the frequent ice storms have consumed a large portion of his salt reserves. This year his crew has applied over 500 tons of salt to the roadway. Mr. Lloyd said, *"It seems like the salt trucks have to deliver salt a couple of times a week right now. Our current salt shed can only hold about 80-90 tons of salt. The snow storms that change over to ice or freezing rain require so much more material to keep traffic flowing that we are really going through some material right now."*

The crew has moved the sand screen back down to the sand pit in preparation of screening additional sand. Mr. Lloyd reports that if this weather pattern continues, a few of his budget line items will be in jeopardy of being over spent. Trying to keep the roads clear of snow and ice is expensive. Just one load of salt delivered averages \$2,224 for 32 tons. Applying salt/sand during a freezing rain storm is just a temporary solution as most of the time the rain will freeze over the sand and the road will continue to be slippery 20-30 minutes after the truck goes by. Mr. Lloyd said there has been so much sand applied already this year that it going to be very dusty and dirty after the snow melts.

Without a sweeping program, a lot of this sand will not be cleaned up as in the past and Mr. Lloyd anticipates receiving many complaints from residents whose breathing is affected by the dust in the air. This is a problem that will be experienced throughout the spring and summer, because even if the voters authorized the purchase of a new sweeper, it would most likely be fall before it was delivered. A discussion will be placed on the February Town Council agenda to see if the Council wants to put the sweeper referendum on the June Primary ballot.

ITEM 5. Police Chief, William Lawrence, reminds residents that a parking ban is in effect. The parking ban prohibits parking on any street or municipal parking area that is maintained by the Town of Lincoln from November 1st through April 1st from 12:00 midnight to 6:00 AM. Residents that live on Main Street in the downtown area who do not have a sufficient parking area can purchase a parking permit that will allow overnight parking in the Veterans Memorial Square. These permits can be purchased at the Town Office during normal business hours. Any vehicle parked on any town maintained street or parking areas will be towed at the owner's expense. The purpose of this parking ban is to allow sufficient room for the Public Works Department to remove snow from the streets and parking areas throughout the winter months.

For more information on obtaining a parking permit, please call the Town Office at 794-3372.

ITEM 6. As Lincoln Paper & Tissue works to complete a liquid natural gas (LNG) facility, the Fire Department has been involved in meetings that outline the general scope of the project to obtain a general familiarization of the facility and its equipment, training for firefighters and safety issues. The LNG facility is being constructed to accept LNG by tractor trailers and will be stored in two tanks at the facility. The LNG will be converted from a liquid to a gas state and piped to LP&T's tissues machines. The LNG is to be used as an alternative fuel source versus the more expensive #2 fuel oil.

The Fire Chief indicated that this is a learning process for him and his employees and wanted to share some of the information he has learned to help citizens understand LNG.

Some residents have been using gas for cooking or heating in the form of LP gas or liquid propane. LNG is used throughout the country for the same purposes with the biggest difference being in how it is delivered. Chief Dawson has listed some of the characteristics of both gases to illustrate similarities and differences:

- LP is delivered and stored in a storage tank.
- LNG is delivered by an underground service line and metered outside the home or can be trucked in as is the case for LP&T.
- Both gases are largely made up of methane gas with other types of gases in different concentrations making up the chemical composition that distinguish one from the other.
- Methane gas can be found in sewers and landfills as a by-product of decomposition as well as other sources.
- Both gases are odorless, colorless and non-corrosive. The odor that you do smell is a chemical additive to note the presence of LP or LNG.
- Both gases are virtually non-toxic however both displace oxygen which makes them an asphyxiation hazard.
- Both gases are flammable however burn at significantly different intensities.
- The term "flame propagation speed" is a measurement used to determine how fast flame spreads through a gas. The flame propagation speed of propane is in excess of 900 mph while natural gas is between 12 and 20 mph.

- LNG is a gas that is lighter than air which means as the liquid gas begins to warm up from a liquid state of -259 degrees F. it turns into a gas and rises into the atmosphere and generally dissipates rapidly. If there should be an ignition source there would be a rapid burn off.
- LP is a gas that is heavier than air which means that when released, it usually collects into low lying areas or depressions that takes much longer to dissipate. When this collection of gas makes contact with an ignition source, the result is an explosive burn off.

Chief Dawson indicated that he is not concerned with the use of LNG as long as his department is educated on its properties and has a plan to act in the event there is an incident. LP&T is working closely with the Fire Department to ensure that it receives the education and training necessary to deal with and mitigate incidents that may arise.

ITEM 7. As many of you will recall, the Town of Lincoln has been working to update and obtain State approval for its Comprehensive Plan. A Comprehensive Plan is an overview and inventory of facilities, services, population, housing and natural resources in a community. It also includes the history of the Town. The State recommends all towns to have a Comprehensive plan in order to be competitive in federal and state grant applications. It is also used as a guide for future growth in a community. Comprehensive Plans, once approved, are good for 10 years.

In 1995 the Penobscot Valley Council of Government received a grant for \$30,000 to revise Lincoln's existing Comprehensive Plan. The State Planning Office found the plan drafted by PVCOC to be inconsistent. The town was informed that to bring the plan into compliance it would cost an additional \$30,000. Lacking the funds to do this, Town staff made several attempts over the years to bring the plan into compliance. These efforts proved to be unsuccessful. With the adoption of Smart Growth requirements by the State Planning Office, it was clear revising the 1995 draft was no longer an option. Over the years several inquiries were made into obtaining grant funds to resolve this issue, none were found.

With the approval of the LP&T TIF, revenue from this TIF could be utilized to update the Comprehensive Plan. In September of 2008 the Town Council awarded the bid for the Comprehensive Plan update to consultant, Gwen Hilton. Assessor, Ruth Birtz, was the liaison for the project. For several months Mrs. Hilton, Mrs. Birtz and the Comprehensive Plan Committee worked to draft a new updated Comprehensive Plan. This plan was presented to the Town Council for review in May of 2010. The Council directed Mrs. Hilton to forward the Plan to the State Planning Office "as is" with no revisions.

Maps of all facilities including roads, sewer, storm drain, and water are a requirement of a comprehensive plan. Mapping of the sewer lines proved to be problematic. The mapping of these lines was finally completed in late November 2011. With this final step completed, the plan was submitted to the State Planning Office for review. Mrs. Birtz indicates that the review process should be completed by the end of March. Once the Plan is deemed consistent by the State Planning Office it will be forwarded to the Town Council for approval. The draft Comprehensive Plan is available for review at the Town Office and on the Town's website www.lincolmaine.org. For more information, please call Mrs. Birtz at 794-3372.

ITEM 8. Another project that has been ongoing since June of 2009 is the adoption of the changes for Shoreland Zoning Ordinance mandated by the Department of Environmental Protection. The changes were approved by the Town Council in June of 2009. Once approved the new ordinance was forwarded to the DEP for review and approval. For months, Mrs. Birtz and former Code Enforcement Officer, Jerry Davis, worked to make revisions requested by the DEP. Our current Code Enforcement Officer, Dan Whittier, has picked up the project to see if he could be successful in gaining a resolution to the issues. The lack of progress was the result of the Planning Board being unwilling of to amend what the representative from the DEP deemed as inconsistencies in Lincoln's shoreland zoning. To give you an example of an inconsistency, the DEP felt the 75' setback in developed areas should be amended to agree with the State's minimum zoning. Lincoln is currently the only town in the State with a 75' setback in SD3. In 1988 the Planning Board worked with the DEP to get this reduced setback approved because they felt Lincoln was unique because of the density of development on the lakes and the volume of lakes in Lincoln.

Mr. Whittier has been successful in getting approval for the mandatory changes the Town made in 2009 and will continue to work with the DEP to clear up other inconsistencies sometime in the future. The DEP has now approved the final draft of the Shoreland Zoning changes. These revisions will come back to the Town Council for approval in March. These revisions are grammatical in nature but still need Council approval. Nice job, Dan!

ITEM 9. Each year, Tax Assessor, Ruth Birtz, reminds residents to apply for their Veterans Exemption and Homestead Exemption. Applications for these exemptions should be filed with the Tax Assessor by April 1st. If you are already receiving the Homestead Exemption or Veterans Exemption, you do not need to reapply.

To qualify for the Homestead Exemption, you need to own your residence for 12 consecutive months prior to April 1, 2012. To qualify for the Veterans Exemption, you need to be 62 years of age prior to April 1, 2012. The applications are available through the Assessing Department. For Fiscal Year 2012, the savings for the Homestead Exemption was \$198.60 and the Veterans Exemption was \$119.16. If you feel you may qualify for either of these exemptions or have further questions, please call Ruth Birtz at 794-3372.

ITEM 10. The Lincoln 2012 Republican Caucus was held last Saturday, January 28th. Deputy Clerk, Diana Hill, attended for one hour prior to the commencement of the caucus to register or enroll voters as required by law. Ms. Hill reports that 20 residents attended this year's event.

Town Clerk, Shelly Crosby, provided a list of individuals for the Republican Party to consider for appointment as Election Clerks. This list is comprised of individuals who have worked at elections in the past or expressed an interest in working. She will submit a similar list to the Democratic Party for their caucus. A list of both party candidates will be submitted to the Town Council for appointment at the March Town Council meeting. If you are interested in working at the elections, please contact Mrs. Crosby at 794-3372.

ITEM 11. Assessing Clerk, Amanda Woodard, mailed 706 forms to businesses this week. A 706 form is an annual request from the Tax Assessor for businesses to list all equipment used in their business for taxation purposes. These forms are also used by the Assessor to determine which equipment may qualify for the Business Equipment Reimbursement program and which equipment qualifies for the Business Equipment Tax Exemption program. Currently, the business equipment assessment in Lincoln is \$76,669,867. This valuation generates \$1,522,663.56 in tax revenue and represents 21% of total taxes collected. The Town has \$15,200,400 in exempt business equipment for which the state reimburses the Town 70% of the taxes lost or \$211,316. This is the first year Mrs. Woodard completed this mailing and is part of her ongoing training in assessing. A total of 271 forms were sent out.

ITEM 12. The 2012 dog licensing grace period ended on Tuesday, January 31st. Any dogs licensed after that date will be subject to a \$25.00 late fee. Town Clerk, Shelly Crosby, said that this week at least six residents have asked if the Town Office staff could waive the late fee because they couldn't get an appointment at the veterinarian. Unfortunately, the Town is not able to waive the penalty as it is part of state law. Despite hosting two rabies clinics, putting notices in the Lincoln News and Weekly News, as well as making over 450 reminder phone calls over the last two months, there remain 150 dogs still not licensed!

The Clerk's office will send one final notice to the owners of the unlicensed dogs before delivering the list to the Animal Control Officer for enforcement. If you have any questions regarding dog licensing, please contact the Town Office at 794-3372.

ITEM 13. Attention Senior Citizens! Recreation Director, Ronald Weatherbee, is interested in starting an exercise program for our senior citizens. This program will be free of charge and held at the Ballard Hill Community Center. Mr. Weatherbee is looking for ideas on the days and times that work best for you. This will be a low impact class designed for you! If you are interested or have any suggestions please call the Recreation Department at 794-6548.

With a new month upon us, there are a variety of programs offered by the Recreation Department that should be of interest to many. Mr. Weatherbee wants everyone to know that it is not too late to join most of our programs. Basketball clinics with Stephanie Dubay, Ryan Libby and Bill McCarthy will take place on February 5th and with Bub Hanscom on the 11th. Adult programs that are ongoing are women's basketball, co-ed volleyball, men's basketball and Boot Camp. Also, registrations for the trip to Hermon Mountain must be made by February 6th at noon.

For more information on programs please contact the Recreation Department at 794-6548.

ITEM 14. Two employees are celebrating their employment anniversary this month. February 13th marks six years of service for Tax Collector, Tracie York, and February 25th marks two years of service for Sgt. Glenn Graef. Congratulations, Tracie and Glenn!

ITEM 15. The Town received its snowmobile registration refund from the State of Maine early this week. By law, all municipalities in Maine receive a percentage of the snowmobile registration fees back from the State. The reason for this refund is because the municipal governments are responsible for grooming and maintaining the snowmobile trails throughout the State. This snowmobile registration refund is supposed to be used for this purpose.

SNOWMOBILE REGISTRATION REIMBURSEMENT		
YEAR	AMOUNT	# OF REGISTRATIONS
2011	4,005.10	605
2010	3,687.34	557
2009	4,296.38	649
2008	3,952.14	597
2007	2,892.94	437
2006	3,498.16	599
2005	3,025.12	518

The town receives \$6.62 for each snowmobile registration that is done for a Lincoln resident. As you can see from the chart to the right, the winter season for 2011 (October 2010 through April 2011) saw an 8% increase in the number of snowmobile registrations paid by our residents. It does not appear that the slow economy affected that recreational activity in our area.

ITEM 16. Treasurer, Gilberte Mayo, administers the unemployment compensation program for the Town. Since 2000, the Town has been registered with the state as a direct reimbursement employer. *What does being a direct reimbursement employer mean?* The Town does not have insurance to cover its costs of unemployment benefits. Instead, the Town is required to pay the unemployment benefit amount each time a former employee is eligible to receive benefits. That amount varies each year depending on the number of former employees (or current employees) who apply and are granted unemployment benefits. To the right is a history of the claims paid by calendar year for unemployment compensation insurance benefits. For calendar year 2011, the unemployment benefits paid decreased from the previous two years, which is indicative of a recovering economy with less people collecting unemployment benefits and/or fewer former employees eligible for benefits.

Calendar Year	Claims Paid
2011	6,382.94
2010	10,083.47
2009	18,622.24
2008	799.57
2007	3,067.12
2006	3,557.92
2005	13,996.47
2004	6,648.27
2003	508.65
2002	3,892.57
2001	1,255.34
2000	3,225.25

ITEM 17. Have a nice weekend!