



TOWN OF PRINCETON

Office of the Selectboard

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Letter from the Selectboard regarding Goals for the Next Year

Dear Princeton Residents,

A new year has begun for the Selectboard (SB) and we want to take this opportunity to tell you about our goals for the year and provide some background on how the SB functions.

One of the SB's goals is to communicate more with townspeople. This letter is the first step in that process. We have created and adopted a communication plan that can be found on the Town website that explains, in detail, the means of communication we will use, including Town News and Nextdoor. Because of the Open Meeting Law (described in the last section of this letter), the SB is not allowed to enter into a discussion on Nextdoor.

The SB's goals for the year, in no particular order, are:

Town-wide Broadband Initiative

The Selectboard and Town Administrator will continue to work with Charter Communications to bring internet and broadband services to all residents.

East Princeton Village Improvement Project

This project involves the reconstruction of about 1.2 miles of Route 140 centered around the Historic Village of East Princeton. The purpose of the project is to improve safety for the residents and the traveling public as well as to restore the Historic character of the Village. The Selectboard and Town Administrator will work with the Road Advisory Committee to ensure that all legal requirements are met to obtain rights of way and bids on the project. The Town will provide updates regarding construction and other related issues.

Building Stabilization Projects

At the 2018 annual town meeting, voters approved funds for needed repairs for Bagg Hall, the Town Annex and the existing Public Safety Building. The Selectboard and Town Administrator, working with employees and perhaps some townspeople, will start this work.

Develop and Begin Implementation of a Communications Plan

The Selectboard would like to do a better job of communicating with townspeople. It will create a formal communications plan covering means and desired frequency of communications. The Selectboard will begin more regular communications with the townspeople.

New Public Safety Building

Establish a new committee to make recommendations on how to move forward with the public safety complex need. The Selectboard & Town Administrator, along with the support of the Facilities Steering Committee Phase II, would then bring these recommendations to a special town meeting.

Medical Response

The Selectboard & Town Administrator, in collaboration with the Fire Chief and Police Chief, will meet and prepare a plan including budget and timeline (as needed) for the purpose of establishing a more rapid response for medical calls within the town.

Sale of Mechanics Hall

Establish a new committee to research and recommend any restrictions to be placed on the sale of the property. The committee is also asked to develop a description of the property and research methods by which the town can lawfully sell the property. Once complete, the Selectboard will vote the final terms and conditions of the sale, and the Town Administrator will begin the process to advertise the property.

Sell Unused Property

The Selectboard and Town Administrator, working with a team of employees and, perhaps, representatives of one or more committees, will develop guidelines and materials for the sale process and will begin a methodical process of disposal of unused town property.

Increase Selectboard focus on long-term strategic thinking

The Selectboard & Town Administrator will evaluate best practices in the separation of duties between the Selectboard and Town Administrator, with the goal being to effect greater long-term strategic planning.

Teamwork – Selectboard, Town Administrator and Advisory Committee

The Advisory Committee Review Committee recommended that the Selectboard, Town Administrator and Advisory Committee look for ways to improve their working relationship in order to more effectively serve the town. The Selectboard and Town Administrator will engage the Advisory Committee in discussions about effective roles for the Advisory Committee.

Begin Clarifying Roles & Responsibilities: Better Definition for Council on Aging and Council on Aging Director

The Selectboard and Town Administrator, working with the Council on Aging and the Council on Aging Director, will develop a formal Council on Aging committee charge that defines the roles and responsibilities of the Council. In addition, the Selectboard and Town Administrator will review and modify the job description of the Council on Aging Director as necessary to conform to the overall view of the relationship between the Council on Aging and the Council on Aging Director. The Selectboard and Town Administrator see this as a model to be applied to other town committees.

Long-Term Financial Planning

The Selectboard and Town Administrator will continue the work initiated by the Ad-Hoc Financial Group, relating to long-term financial planning, to maintain an updated 5-year plan.

Add a Student to Selectboard as a Deliberating, but Non-Voting, Member

The Selectboard will announce the opportunity, review and select a student, and work to incorporate the student as fully as possible into the Selectboard. The Board would value a younger perspective on issues of import to the town with a secondary goal that the real-life town government experience would be of value to the student.

Town Use of Sonoma Space at Post Office Place

The Selectboard and Town Administrator will continue to work to reach an agreement on the Sonoma space with the Post Office Place management team. Upon signing of a lease, the Town Administrator and Council on Aging Director will oversee the build-out of the space. While the space is under construction, the Selectboard and Town Administrator, working with the Council on Aging Director, will develop a policy on the non- Council on Aging use of the space.

Bagg Hall Renovation/Addition

The Selectboard recognizes that this is still an important need that should be addressed as soon as the board feels comfortable bringing it to the forefront. The Selectboard believes that a new Public Safety building must currently take priority. The Selectboard supports the Friends of Bagg Hall in their fund-raising efforts. These efforts will help the community understand what kind of financial support is available to assist the town in meeting future building needs.

The SB is a three-person elected board of townspeople who volunteer their time and receive a nominal stipend to help defray expenses. The Town Administrator (TA) is an employee of the Town and is hired by the SB. The SB serves as a town's chief executive body. Its members, working with the TA, have overall responsibility for the general operations of Town government. It is the major non-school appointing authority for the Town. Its members are authorized to enter into contracts on behalf of the Town. The details of their duties and responsibilities are outlined in a publication by the Massachusetts Municipal Association called the Handbook for Massachusetts Selectmen.

Massachusetts, like most states, has a "sunshine" law called the Open Meeting Law (OML). OMLs seek to ensure (1) the right of citizens to receive timely and adequate notice of when and where a public body will meet and what will be discussed/decided at that meeting, and (2) that public bodies will deliberate and decide the matters before them with the public present unless that business falls within a small number of specified exceptions. Since we have a three-person SB, none of the SB members can talk to each other about matters that might come before the board outside of a public meeting. What this means is that our meetings are where most of our work gets done. Therefore, we need to ensure that we have focused and productive meetings. Per our Public Participation Policy, public comment is limited and is at the beginning of most meetings. It is not an opportunity for debate and the SB will likely not respond at that time. We encourage you to email the TA or SB ahead of time to explain your position or question. You can also request that a topic be placed on the agenda for an upcoming SB meeting.

Thank you,

The Princeton Selectboard



Richard C. Bisk, Chair



Edith M. Morgan, Clerk



Karen G. Cruise, Member