



Town of
PRINCETON
MASSACHUSETTS

Municipal Update

FEBRUARY 2022

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR SHERRY PATCH'S UPDATE

As February draws to a close, there are sure signs of spring in the air! The Princeton Housing Production Plan Committee is asking residents to fill out a survey that builds upon the results of last year's housing needs survey. It will help the Town complete a State-approved Housing Production Plan. In addition, a community workshop on housing needs will be held in the spring. Paper copies are also available for pick-up and drop-off at the Princeton Town Hall, Senior Center, and Public Library. My office has been working with this committee bi-weekly, and we look forward to the forthcoming progress.

The Selectboard is seeking nominations for its Citizen of the Year award, awarded at the Annual Town Meeting. Nominees must be residents of Princeton. As part of the nomination, please explain why you believe the nominee should receive the award and how the nominee has benefited the Town. Nominations will be accepted between 2/15/22 and 4/15/22 and should be emailed to townadministrator@town.princeton.ma.us.

The Selectboard has issued a letter regarding recent criminal justice reform legislation, signed into law on December 31, 2020, that imposes new and costly changes to rural policing. As a result, Princeton is considering adding two full-time police officers to its roster this coming fiscal year and relying on fewer part-time officers. Further requirements on the department are predicted as the law is implemented. Please visit the town webpage for more information.

The Selectboard and Financial Management Team will be holding a series of budget presentations between now and the Advisory Committee Hearing on the Annual Town Meeting Warrant. The first meetings were held in early February and reviewed the process, team and roles, budget guidance provided to departments, and budget drivers. We will have the next set of panels on 3/7 at 7 pm and 3/8 at 1 pm for an overview of the budget, first look at school numbers, how ARPA decisions are factored in and on 3/28 at 7 pm and 3/29 at 1 pm where a semi-final budget will be presented.

There is lots of progress to look forward to in the busy spring and summer months ahead. As always, please feel free to contact my office anytime with concerns, ideas, or questions at 978-464-2102 or by email.

TOWN CLERK'S OFFICE



Town of Princeton residents can obtain nomination papers for the May 9th, 2022 Annual Town Election at the Town Clerk's Office now through March 21, 2022. Papers must be returned to the Board of Registrars (Town Clerk's office) by 5:00 pm on March 21st, 2022. A minimum of 20 signatures of qualified registered voters of the Town of Princeton are required. To view the Town Meeting / Election calendar in its entirety please visit the [2022 Election and Town Meeting Schedule](#) webpage.

The Citizens' Caucus to nominate candidates for the May 9th, 2022, Annual Town Election will be held on Wednesday, March 9th, 2022, at 7pm at the Thomas Prince School Gymnasium. All registered voters in Princeton are invited to attend. A quorum of 25 registered voters is required to conduct the Caucus.

If you would like to be nominated, please have another Princeton voter attend and nominate you for the office you will be running for. Those nominated at the Caucus will automatically have their names placed on the May 9, 2022, Annual Town Election ballot. Two names for each office may be nominated. For more information please visit the [Town Election Information Page](#).

The 2022 Annual Town Census was mailed to each household in late January. Please complete and return the census form to the Town Clerk's Office, located in Town Hall, 6 Town Hall Drive. Residents may return the form by mail or drop off the form at the Town Hall. You can read about the law regarding annual street list forms here. If you misplace your census form or do not receive a census form, don't hesitate to get in touch with the Town Clerk's Office by calling 978-464-2103 or emailing townclerk@town.princeton.ma.us

Open Space Committee



Maren Paquette poses by the TPS Trails kiosk which she helped design.

The Open Space Committee has completed a project to add kiosks and/or signage to all of the Princeton and Princeton Land Trust hiking areas in town. These include Four Corners, Calamint Hill, Cobb Brook, PLT Bullock/MeElroy, PLT Gregory/Alexander, and PLT Russell Corner. The new signs will make it easier for hikers to find their way through the trails. We also added, with the help of the Thomas Prince School Community, a new kiosk at TPS for the nature trails.

Our big winter project is to re-do the Open Space Committee Website, which documents all of the trail areas in the Princeton area and also many of the hikes which the Princeton Hikes group has done. A common format has been applied to the hikes, to include information about the trailhead, distance and elevation, a turn-by-turn description of the hikes, and photos of the trails and people enjoying the trails.

A second winter project has been preparing for a town-wide Trail Summit meeting. We were planning this for early February but have pushed it out to the spring due to concerns with group meetings during the COVID surge. At this summit we will talk through the short and long term plans for improving the Princeton trail network, and we will also talk about land conservation stories and options and the Princeton Hikes program.

In addition, we do have a couple of trail development projects planned for the spring.

Collector Treasurer Office

Motor Vehicle Excise bills have been mailed and are due in March. Please note the remittance address has changed as the town is now using a lockbox service for payment processing

Princeton, MA
Department 2680
PO Box 986500
Boston, MA 02298-6500

You may still pay bills online or at Town Hall but please mail any payments to the PO box above. Reminder Real Estate and Property tax bills are due April 1, 2022.

Do You Know Where Your Home Energy Dollars Go?

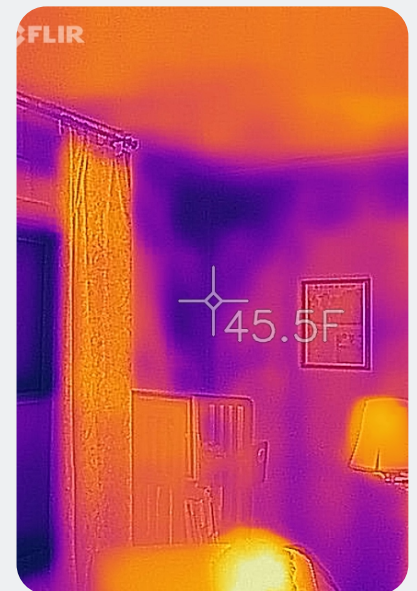
The Environmental Action Committee is pleased to announce a pilot program with the Princeton Municipal Light Department to help Princeton residents save money and use energy more efficiently.

The program has two components:

1. PMLD has purchased several Kill-A-Watt meters which measure the amount of electricity used by specific appliances. You can borrow a Kill-A-Watt meter, plug it in between your wall socket and an appliance, and see how much electricity the appliance requires. Then you can compare your appliance's energy use to your neighbor's, or to other appliances on the market.

2. Light Commissioner Richard Chase is allowing his infrared camera to be used by Charlie Cary to take pictures of Princeton homes upon request. These pictures are remarkable at identifying where buildings are losing the most heat.

Call (978-697-8223) or email (crcary@verizon.net) Charlie Cary if you are interested in participating in either of these energy awareness opportunities



THANK YOU FOR A GREAT WINTER CARNIVAL!

We want to extend a heartfelt thank you to everyone who joined us for the 2022 Winter Carnival this past weekend! This year's event was humble compared to the Winter Carnival of years past, but we are excited to see winter outdoor events of this nature taking hold in this community again. We had an estimated 200 people join us on Saturday - a remarkable showing despite the frigid temperatures and biting winds! Although the conditions caused us to scale back some of the activities, we still had several creative entries in our cardboard box race. Our new skating rink, purchased with the Shared Winter Streets grant this past year, was the centerpiece of a festive day of sledding, skating, and mingling around the bonfire.

Events like the winter carnival are only possible with the help of many people, groups, committees, and departments. We owe a huge thank you to many Town of Princeton employees, volunteers, and residents! We hope this year's Winter Carnival will be the first of many to come through the years.

As a committee, we have big ambitions. One thing we hoped to accomplish but were unable to fund with the shared winter streets grant was to winterize the Everett-Needham Field House and make the restrooms available year-round. The need for this improvement was more than driven home on Saturday - access to the restroom and a warming station in an all-season field house would have improved the experiences at our celebration. This is still possible for the future! We can raise funds to make these improvements, but we need your help.

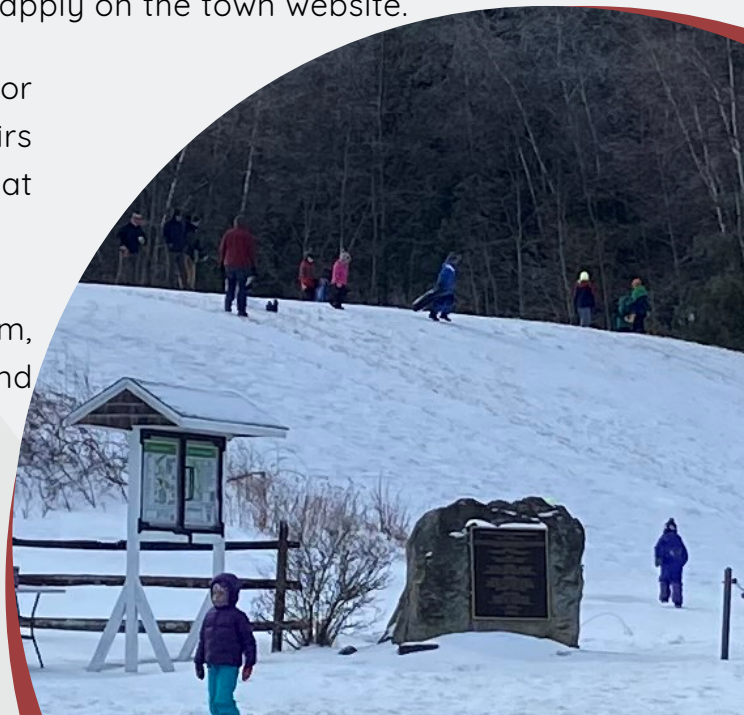
We need to raise funds to commit to improvement projects, like winterizing the field house. If you'd like to make a donation to this end, payments can be made to Parks and Recreation and deposited into an account specifically for this project. Our committee also recognizes needs for additional improvements at Sawyer Playground and other facilities in town. In time, all of this is possible if we come together as a community.

Our committee is only a total of seven (five full members and two alternates), but we are a town of many. Please click [THIS LINK](#) and sign up if we can count on you to help in the future. We also have two alternate spots available on our committee - if you're interested in filling one of those two vacancies, you can indicate that in this form or apply on the town website.

If you have further questions about donations or volunteer work, please feel free to contact co-chairs Kari Sledzik and Melissa Hawthorne at recreation@town.princeton.ma.us.

Thank you for making our community a warm, inviting place -even in the face of single-digit wind chills. We hope to see you all again soon!

PARKS AND REC





PRINCETON PUBLIC LIBRARY

It's been a busy start to the winter at the library. In addition to being open for browsing and offering curbside pickup and book delivery, we are hosting a variety of virtual programs for patrons of all ages.

Our upcoming events include:

- Storytime with Miss Jessie on Fridays at 10:00 (email jthrowbridge@cwmars.org for the zoom link)
- Cookbook club with Ginger on Thursday, February 24, at 6:00pm (email princetoncookbookclub@gmail.com for the Zoom link and an ingredients list). Cooking along is recommended, but not required.

We are always looking for ideas for new programs! If you have a recommendation or would like to present a program, please email eredihan@cwmars.org. Our best programs come from our very talented local residents!

Coming in March

We will host an Iditarod Sled Dog program for all ages on Friday, March 11, at 6:30pm in the Town Hall Annex in conjunction with the Sterling Conant Library. Karen Land, who has raced the Iditarod and has been involved with sled dog racing for many years, will visit with her dogs Noggin and Chloe, to talk about the race, demonstrate the gear involved, and discuss sled dog life. Use this link to register. Thank you to the Friends of Princeton Public Library for funding this program!

Stuck inside? The library will have a subscription to Kanopy starting March 1! Kanopy is an on-demand streaming platform with movies, documentaries, and series for kids and adults. The link will be available on our website (www.princetonpubliclibrary.org) starting Tuesday, March 1. You will need a Princeton library card to access our holdings. Stop by the library or use this link to register for a FREE card!





LOOKING AHEAD TO SPRING

We will host a series of diverse author book talks this spring with funds provided by a Community Enrichment grant from the Community Foundation of North Central Massachusetts. We will host one children's, one young adult, and one adult author in hybrid format. Dates and authors TBA!

The clock tower renovation project approved at the May 2021 Town Meeting will take place this spring. The start date is tentatively set for April, though this is weather-dependent. During this process, the stones in the tower will be reset and the interior and exterior of the clock will be repointed and recalked. The clock face will be painted and the weathervane will be gilded in gold. A Connecticut-based firm, Kronenberger and Sons Restoration, will be completing this project, which is expected to last about 13 weeks. Please note that the clock will not chime during the renovation, as the clock mechanism will be covered to protect it from potential damage while the work occurs.

Thanks to an American Library Association Libraries Transforming Communities grant, we will be hosting the first Princeton Community Read book discussions this spring. Our inaugural title will be *American Dirt* by Jeanine Cummins. Keep an eye out for discussion dates in the near future! If you'd like to get a head start on reading the book, visit the library or check out the e-book version on Overdrive today!

Looking for more library information? We're everywhere! Follow us on social media: Facebook, Instagram (@princetonmapubliclibrary), call (978-464-2155), visit the library's website (www.princetonpubliclibrary.org), or stop by to learn more about our programs and materials! Need help selecting your next book or movie? Check out our New Acquisitions, updated monthly on the library's website.



COUNCIL ON AGING



The Council on Aging had a bit of a slow start to 2022 as it restricted a few onsite activities for a couple of weeks during the post-holiday Omicron surge, but we are fully open now subject to masking and social distancing. Our monthly newsletter is now posted on the town website so you can access the schedule or other information using your computer, phone, or tablet. You can also see our monthly calendar of events and classes on the COA page of the town website as well.

The COA has been running a Recipe Exchange for the last couple of months with each month having a theme. January was Soups and Crock Pot Recipes, and February will be devoted to Casseroles and Comfort Food. If you aren't on the email list to receive these OR you would like to pick up a paper copy at the COA, please call us, 978-464-5977, to get on one of the lists. Please do not be shy in submitting one of your favorite recipes either, that's how we get the really good stuff to share!

For all the gamers, we now have two Mah Jongg sessions each week; Mondays from 2-4 PM and Thursdays from 1-3 PM. All are welcome to attend either session and Susan Hall will be offering informal instruction in the Monday sessions. Bridge continues to play both online and onsite depending on Covid and the group's wishes. A quick reminder that the Puzzle Table is up and always has either a 500 or 1,000-piece puzzle in the works. If you have puzzles you would like to either donate or swap, stop by the COA - we're happy to share/trade our puzzle inventory - but please don't bring puzzles with missing pieces. In the health and fitness department, we have a new Tai Chi class onsite on Wednesday mornings at 10:30 AM taught by Sifu Gary (vaccinated and boosted) who has classes at several local senior centers and gets rave reviews.

In March we will be offering the first 4-session class of the UCLA Memory Training Program on consecutive Mondays between 11AM - 1PM. The program will consist of lectures, in-class exercises as well as some assignments to do at home and is limited to 15 participants. Please call the COA if you'd like to register. As always, if you have an idea for programming or would like to volunteer, please reach out to us at 978464 5977.

PLANNING BOARD UPDATE

Written by **CHAIR JOHN MIRICK**

Much of the Planning Board's time for the last three months was taken up by proposals for by-law amendments triggered by a proposed large scale commercial marijuana outdoor grow operation on Beaman Road. The Selectboard referred to the Planning Board resident-proposed zoning by-law amendments intended to prohibit commercial marijuana operations in Agricultural-Residential districts. During a series of five meetings in November and December, the Planning Board reviewed the potential negative impacts from commercial marijuana operations, concluded that the Planning Board would support the intent of the residents to prohibit commercial marijuana operations in Residential-Agricultural districts, but also determined that the prohibition intended by the resident-proposed zoning by-law amendments could be more successfully achieved through a clear and simple paragraph. The Planning Board drafted such an alternative proposed zoning by-law amendment. The Planning Board also drafted similar proposed zoning by-law amendments that would extend the prohibition of commercial marijuana operations to Business and Business-Industrial districts.

The Planning Board held a public hearing on both sets of proposed zoning by-law amendments on January 5, 2022. While many residents voiced support for the prohibition of commercial marijuana operations, some residents expressed a preference to regulate rather than to prohibit completely. In addition, Town Counsel informally advised the Planning Board that if the zoning by-law amendments applied to marijuana cultivated, processed, or manufactured for medical purposes (which is governed by a different statute and different regulations), the Attorney General may not approve the amendments. As a result, the Planning Board is going to work on a further proposed zoning by-law amendment to allow limited cultivation/processing/manufacturing of marijuana for medical purposes, but only in Business-Industrial districts.

Instead of the zoning by-law amendments proposed by the residents, the Planning Board recommends that the zoning by-law amendments proposed by the Planning Board be placed on the warrant for the next Town Meeting. The Planning Board believes that with a separate amendment proposed for each zoning district, residents can more easily understand the issues and more effectively express their views at Town Meeting.

Once the marijuana zoning by-law amendments are finished, the Planning Board will be able to turn its attention to an update of the Town's Master Plan, as well as resuming discussion about supporting solar power generation, considering a noise by-law, and encouraging senior housing in Princeton. Residents are urged to follow the Planning Board's posted agendas and to participate, in person or via Go To Meeting, on those important issues.

COVID-19 BY THE NUMBERS

February 15, 2022

On January 4, 2022, the Town of Princeton Selectboard voted to require that all individuals over the age of 5 years old, regardless of vaccination status, wear a mask or face covering in indoor public spaces effective immediately.

The Board of Health voted at their scheduled meeting of February 3, 2022 to not endorse this requirement, therefore the mask mandate made previously has been rescinded.

The Princeton Board of Health supports the effectiveness of being vaccinated and adhering to other CDC guidelines. Thank you for your continued support in keeping our community safe.

Masks continue to be required in town owned buildings. Individual businesses have the option to require masking on their premises.

3

Confirmed Covid-19 since 2/3/2022

411

Total Cases to date

2

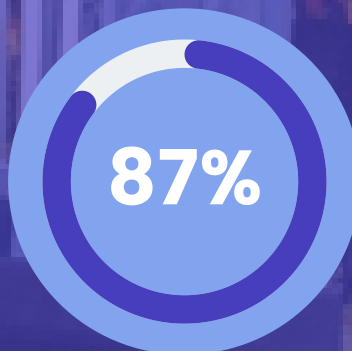
Fatalities to date



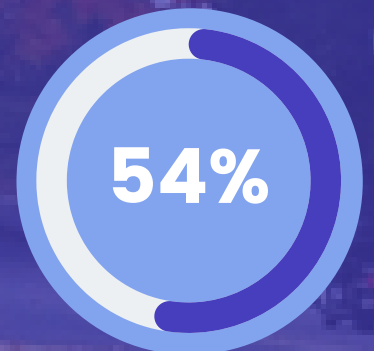
MA COVID-19 DASHBOARD

MASSACHUSETTS

INITIAL 2 DOSES PER CAPITA



BOOSTER DOSES PER CAPITA



Wachusett Regional School District

COVID-19

DATA

Princeton's Veterans' Services Department is working in collaboration with the City of Gardner, Town of Westminster and Town of Ashburnham to develop the Central North Veterans' Services district. This district will allow our area veterans to have greater access to their benefits as there will be office coverage during normal business hours. The district will operate out of the Gardner's City Hall, but for veterans and their families that are unable to travel, the Veterans Agent, Lynette Gabriela will come to the Princeton Senior Center to meet with prospective and current clients.

CULTURAL COUNCIL UPDATE

The Princeton Cultural Council is a Local Cultural Council (LCC) of the Massachusetts Cultural Council (MCC). We support cultural programs in our town and award grant funding to all forms of art. Princeton requires that a performer or artist have a local sponsor. To learn more, please visit the Princeton Cultural Council MCC page. We're very excited to announce the grant recipients and cultural programming planned for 2022.*

Dates and times pending. Keep an eye out for advertising.

Outdoor Spaces

This year, students at the Thomas Prince School will have the unique opportunity to create outdoor art installations. These installations will be available for everyone in the community to enjoy. Look out throughout the year to see student art in the school's courtyard and trail system.

Environmental Speaker Series

This year, the Environmental Action Committee will continue to host its Environmental Speaker Series. They will present this series virtually. Community members can gain practical information to take informed actions aimed at maintaining and improving environmental sustainability and public health.

The Jellyfish: How to Pastel Paint

May 25th from 6:00-8:00 PM, Gregory Maichack, award-winning artist, presents an exciting remote Zoom event through the Princeton Public Library. Sheer beginners to advanced painters keep their 12 X 18 pastel painting of their own personalized vivid painting of a jellyfish. Have fun and learn how to paint a jellyfish with pastels.



Have an idea for the next edition of the Municipal Update? A community event to promote? A volunteer or employee you would like to see highlighted for their good work in the Town of Princeton? Send suggestions:

Town Clerk Nathan Boudreau
6 Town Hall Drive
townclerk@town.princeton.ma.us
978-464-2103

Thank you to all of the boards, committees, and departments for their assistance with our Municipal Update!



TOWN HALL HOURS

Monday - Thursday
8:00AM - 4:00PM

[Department Directory](#)

[Click Below For Town News, Updates, and Emergency Alerts](#)

