



Town of
PRINCETON
MASSACHUSETTS

Municipal Update
APRIL 2022

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR SHERRY PATCH'S UPDATE

With only weeks until the Annual Town Meeting, Town Hall is busier than ever! I have worked with the Selectboard, Financial Team, and Advisory Committee to fine-tune the operating budget and ATM Warrant ahead of our Saturday, May 14th meeting. I want to give a special thank you to all the employees, officials, and volunteers that have spent countless hours preparing and presenting these [documents for Town Meeting](#).

In an abundance of caution and at the urging of the town's insurance carrier, the Selectboard voted to close off access to the Center School field and trails on Boylston Avenue at their meeting on April 5th. The property has been posted, and barriers blocking access to the driveway have been installed. This is to protect residents and visitors from injury due to the existing conditions at the Center School. Most recently, we have had reports of asphalt and slate shingles being blown off the roof of the building. We urge residents to use the many beautiful trails around town for walking and hiking. Thank you for being so cooperative.

You may have noticed that the Library Clocktower Project is now underway. This project will replace the stones in the tower, and the interior and exterior will be repainted and repaired. Kronenberger and Sons Restoration of Connecticut will be completing this work, which is expected to last about 13 weeks.

My office has been working with Central Mass Regional Planning Commission to assist the Master Plan Steering Committee and the Housing Production Planning Committee in developing Phase 1 of the Master Plan and the Housing Production Plan. So far, both committees are on track and working towards their goals of plans that will aid Princeton in obtaining housing, planning, and economic development funding for years to come. Please keep your eyes out for upcoming residential input initiatives for these critical projects.

On behalf of the Selectboard and myself, I would like to thank the Environmental Action Committee, Open Space Committee, and the many resident volunteers for the work they have done cleaning up during Princeton Earth Month. Each year more residents get involved in making a difference in our community, with almost all roads and parks getting claimed and cleaned during this springtime town-wide initiative. In addition, we urge local businesses to provide trash receptacles outside of their establishments so patrons can properly dispose of their trash.

Hoping to see you at the Annual Town Meeting on Saturday, May 14th at 10 AM at the Thomas Prince School! Please feel free to contact my office anytime with concerns, ideas, or questions at 978- 464-2102 or by email at townadministrator@town.princeton.ma.us

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

TOWN HALL HOURS

 Get it now...

SUBSCRIBE



 Nextdoor

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

[Department Directory](#)

TOWN CLERK'S OFFICE



Annual Town Election - MAY 9, 2022

The Town of Princeton Annual Town Election will be held on May 9, 2022 from 12:00PM - 8:00PM at Thomas Prince School. For more information please visit the [Town Election Information Page](#). Please note that this will be the first year of the Election Workers using electronic poll books to check in voters for elections and town meetings. These will expedite the election process but there may be a learning curve during first use. If you have any questions please reach out to the Town Clerk.

To view a sample ballot please click [here](#)

Annual Town Election Absentee Ballots - Now Available

Absentee voting is available for Princeton residents and applications must be submitted to the Town Clerk's office by 5PM, Thursday, May 5, 2022. Please visit the town website for more information, the applications can be submitted by mail to Town Hall, 6 Town Hall Drive, Princeton, MA 01720, by email to townclerk@town.princeton.ma.us.

The Office of the Town Clerk will do its best to place your ballot in the mail the day the application is received. Absentee ballots must be dropped off or postmarked on or before May 9, 2022.

Please visit <https://www.sec.state.ma.us/ovr/> to check your Voter Registration status

If you have any questions, please call the Town Clerk's Office at 978-464-2103 or email us at townclerk@town.princeton.ma.us

The deadline to register your dog for 2022 without penalty was April 28, 2022.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts requires that all dogs over six (6) months of age be licensed annually. Licenses are valid for one calendar year. Dogs less than 6 months of age may be licensed as well if the owner so chooses.

License Fees (per dog)

Male / Female (intact) - \$15.00

Spayed / Neutered - \$10.00

A late fee of \$25.00 per dog will be assessed in addition to the license fee after the April 28th deadline. Failure to license your dog within 30 days of the deadline will result in a \$50.00 non-criminal citation from the Animal Control Officer.



The Princeton Selectboard is pleased to present a list of all seats on the various Boards/Committees that are appointed by the Selectboard and have expiring terms this year. Appointments to these Boards run July 1 through June 30 and typically last from one to three years.

This list represents all seats with terms expiring, including ones that are currently occupied and whose occupant may be seeking re-appointment. Re-appointment is not guaranteed and the Selectboard views all applications prior to making appointments.

If you are interested in serving on one of these Boards, please fill out the Board/Committee/Commission Online Volunteer Application by Wednesday May 18, 2022 at 5:00PM



Treasurer Collector's Office

Please note the new tax bill payment mailing address 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.

Open Space Committee

Your Open Space Committee has been busy!

We have completed installation of the first set of small junction maps at Calamint Hill Conservation Area (CHCA), Cobb Brook trails, and Bullock McElroy trails. We intend to add these to other areas. Please try out our town trails if you haven't; the signage has greatly improved.

We are keen on reviving Goodnow Park, a small town parcel directly behind the Town Hall Annex which was formerly used as a disc golf course. There is interest from Parks & Recreation and we will be involving the Selectboard and the Historical Commission in the planning.

At the end of March we held a successful trail "trail summit" attended by about thirty residents. The feedback was overwhelmingly positive. Topics included the current status of our many trails, how to use some hike and land mapping software, some history on how Princeton came to have so much open space for public use, an introduction to the Princeton Hikes! program, and where to find all this on the town website (<https://www.town.princeton.ma.us/open-space-committee>). And the Open Space website is better than ever thanks to a recent overhaul of the content!

Lastly, the third annual Princeton Earth Month Clean Up is well underway! This is in conjunction with the Environmental Action Committee and citizens-at-large Rick Rys and Laurie Kraemer.

Historical Commission

TOWN POUND - With animal husbandry being such a big part of our New England heritage, managing and keeping of livestock was an important aspect of daily life during the earliest parts of Princeton's history. Almost every homestead owned some form of farm animal that instinctively knew that the grass (and grazing) was always better on the other side of the fence.

Considering the amount of investment (in both labor and money) that went into farming, an escaped goat, pig, or any other farm animal could do considerable damage if left to wander about his neighbors' plantings. As a result, many villages constructed "Pounds" or fenced in areas on public land where loose animals could be corralled in a way that would minimize the amount of damage they inflicted until their owner could be located to bring the animal back to its pen.

During a Town Meeting held in March of 1761 the construction of the town pound was included in the same conversation as other important infrastructure, such as the construction of the meetinghouse. The first Town Pound was originally established on a farm owned by Caleb Mirick, who would serve as the pound-keeper from 1761 to 1762 but was moved to a location set back off modern-day Mountain Road in 1767. The specifications for the new pound were clear: "Ye pound be built with stone and that it shall be built thirty feet square within ye walls, also be six feet high from ye ground with a stick of timber round ye whole upon ye top. Each stick to be ten inches thick." Such construction would ensure it to be "horse high, bull strong, and pig tight".

Despite falling into private ownership, Princeton's Town Pound has remained in-tact for over 250 years. In 2007, JoEllen Quigley, who owned the property at the time, generously donated the pound back to the Town of Princeton, who now maintains it. In 2021, the Princeton Historical Commission in partnership with the Princeton Conservation Commission worked to erect a sign to help recognize it as an important landmark that represents Princeton's past.

If you happen to be on Mountain Rd. just up from the town center and want to take in a little bit of history, you can visit the old pound along with Meetinghouse Cemetery nestled in the wood lot just before the intersection with Allen Hill Rd.



POLICE DEPARTMENT



Officer Fawne Russell and Officer Holly Doyle conducted a bike safety program at the Thomas Prince School over a two week period at the end of March. Grades Kindergarten through 8th grade went over bike safety and were given bike safety lights to affix to their bicycles. Other items were distributed based on age of the students. This training was provided through the Municipal Road Safety Grant.

The next phase of the Municipal Road Safety Grant is ongoing from April 1st through April 30th. The officers working the grant will be focused on Distracted Driving.

The Princeton Police Department will be holding a self-defense safety class for women on Tuesday May 24, 2022. Please contact Sergeant Thebeau at rthebeau@princetonpolice.org for registration and information regarding this class.

PARKS AND RECREATION

The Parks and Recreation Commission held a Easter Egg Hunt at Krashes Field with a special visit from the Easter Bunny! Fun was had by all involved! A special thank you to the Parks and Recreation Commission members, Princeton Public Library Teen Advisory Board, and the many Volunteers for working so diligently on local events.

Holding large scale recreational events takes a whole team, If you want to get involved please contact co-chairs Kari Sledzik and Melissa Hawthorne at recreation@town.princeton.ma.us.



ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION COMMITTEE

In April, we celebrate Earth Day! Since 1970, Earth Day—April 22—has marked the anniversary of the modern environmental movement. This day, celebrated in global commonality across cultures, countries, and continents, re-inspires our environmental consciousness.

In Princeton, April is Earth Month! Spearheaded by the Environmental Action Committee (EAC) and the Open Space Committee, an annual Earth Month townwide cleanup effort is underway. Volunteers register to cleanup roadsides, parks and trails any time during the month. With nearly all roads claimed and many already cleaned up, this year's event is already proving to be another success. Thomas Prince School students are making posters to inspire and celebrate the cleanup efforts! More information on Earth Month Cleanup can be found on the Open Space Committee webpage.



R. Howard (TPS Grade 8, April 2021)

While Earth Day is an annual celebration globally, and the Earth Month Cleanup is a month-long collective effort in our community, the EAC works daily to empower individuals and the community at large with information and tools to make a positive impact on the environment:

The EAC kicked off the spring season with the first event in its 2022 Environmental Speaker Series: Journey to Zero Waste, Part 1: Recycling and Composting. A record number of Speaker Series participants learned what happens to recycling after it leaves the curbside and got answers to many questions about acceptable recyclables. Participants also learned about the importance, benefits, and easy steps of composting. A video of the presentation and all past presentations can be found on the EAC webpage. Stay tuned for Part 2 of the Journey to Zero Waste: Reduce, Reuse, and Donate. The EAC's Environmental Speaker Series is supported in part by a grant from the Princeton Cultural Council, a local agency, which is supported by the Mass Cultural Council, a state agency.

In the meantime, check out the latest issue of the EAC's [The Green News](#), which is loaded with information on the Wachusett Watershed Recycling Center (WWRC)—a regional reuse and recycling facility open to seven member towns, including Princeton residents, and presided over by Princeton resident Helen Townsend. Located in West Boylston, the WWRC accepts curbside recycling items, textiles and many hard to recycle items (some with a fee); they also have tons of free items for reuse, and they hold document shredding, latex paint and household hazardous waste collection events a few times per year.



Photo courtesy of Wachusettearthday.org

Working toward helping the town achieve a sustainable ecological and climate resilient future, among its very many ongoing initiatives, the EAC looks forward to continuing to implement the Town's Environmental Action Plan; assisting the Town's Public Safety Building Committee with design and implementation of certain building elements for a proposed new Public Safety Building; assisting the Town's newly formed Master Plan Steering Committee as that committee guides the updates to the Town Master Plan; and helping the Town implement its Municipal Vulnerabilities Preparedness Plan.

CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Spring is here!! The Conservation Commission would like to remind residents that this is the perfect time to get out in the yard and manage problematic plants. As the leaves emerge, take a walk around your property. Many INVASIVE plants like MULTIFLORA ROSE, JAPANESE KNOTWEED, BARBERRY, and EUROPEAN BITTERSWEET start to leaf out before the native plants.

Barberry will be found dotted throughout the land as an understory plant. This time of year, it will be the one with the thorny upright branches. Now that it has begun to leaf out, you will see the light yellow haze in the woodlands where they have taken hold.

The Multiflora rose will have thorns, as do most roses we are familiar with. Their habit starts upright and then bends over like an umbrella. Cutting both of these plants right at the base each spring will keep them in check. If you have the energy, it is best practice to pull the roots.

Bittersweet uses other bushes, trees or fences for support. You may remember the bright orange berries surrounded by a yellow casing from the fall. They can completely cover smaller trees and shrubs and climb quite high using a tree trunk. Using a loper, a ground-level cut will keep the entire vine from leafing out. Pulling the vines down will help the shrubs and trees they are using for support to recover.

Polygonatum: Japanese Knotweed is another one that can quickly get out of hand. It dies to the ground each winter, then regrows to 6-7' tall with white fragrant blooms by the end of the summer. This time of year, put down a weed barrier (cardboard, landscape fabric) and spread enough mulch over it to keep it in place and ensure that no light gets to the soil to keep it from regrowing. It is tenacious, so you will likely find pieces poking up along the edges of the weed barrier. Removing and cutting those pieces throughout the season will keep it in check.

If we all get out there and take care of these plants now, they won't have the opportunity to produce more seeds and spread. Managing a property with care will result in higher quality food and forage for our native wildlife. The pictures with this article were taken on April 10th and 17th to give you an idea of what these plants look like now. They do leaf out quickly, so you will notice quite a change in the days since these photos were taken! So don't delay - get out there this weekend with your lopers to help out the woodlands. (Please note that any cutting in a wetland would need approval from the PCC.)



Princeton Cultural Council

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.

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.

Reading is Magic with Ed the Wizard - June 30th, people of all ages can attend an interactive hands-on magic performance at the Princeton Public Library. The performance emphasizes the value and importance of building and maintaining reading skills. Ed Cope (Ed the Wizard) has been performing for libraries and other institutions for well over 15 years.

Animal Adventures - August 2nd, 8-10 animals including a snake, alligator, and a hedgehog will visit the Princeton Public Library. Children can come learn interesting stories and information about each animal. They can get up close and pet some new friends in a controlled environment.

Hip Swayers Concerts - This summer and autumn, the Hip Swayers will perform two shows. One show will take place at the Princeton Council on Aging. Another show will take place at the Mass Audubon's Wachusett Meadows Wildlife Sanctuary. The Hip Swayers combine hot picking, syncopated rhythms and soulful harmonies in an eclectic mix of catchy originals, twangy country/western swing and reverb-soaked surf that gets "toes tapping and hips swaying".

Worcester Chamber Music Society - December 8th, the Worcester Chamber Music Society (WCMS) will perform its popular winter Baroque concert, both in-person and virtually, featuring seasonal selections by a variety of composers. Residents can attend the performance at the First Congregational Church. The nine core musicians who comprise the WCMS ensemble are outstanding musicians and recording artists who perform worldwide as soloists, ensemble members, conductors, and composers. Among them, they have performed with the London Symphony Orchestra, Prague Symphony, Odyssey Opera, National Repertory Orchestra, Handel+Hadyn Society, and the Boston Symphony Orchestra, among others.

The Princeton Cultural Council is thrilled to help bring cultural programming to our community and hope you find enjoyment in all of these excellent programs.





PRINCETON PUBLIC LIBRARY

Clock Tower project: The long-awaited clock tower project that voters approved at the May 2021 Town Meeting is now underway. The scaffolding went up on Monday, April 11, but the library will remain open throughout the project. 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 work, 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.

Come read with us: Princeton Public Library is holding its first Community Read program on Wednesday, May 4, at 6:30 pm. The adult title we will be discussing is *American Dirt* by Jeanine Cummins. There will be an accompanying children's program with a story and craft at 4pm and a YA discussion of *Refugee* by Alan Gratz at 5:30pm. This program will take place as a hybrid model, both in person and on Zoom. The library has tablets and wifi hotspots available to check out to anyone who wishes to participate remotely. We are happy to teach you how to use Zoom as well! If you would like more information or to reserve a copy of the book, please visit the library, call 978-464-2115, or email eredihan@cwmars.org. This program is made possible by a Libraries Transforming Communities grant from the American Library Association.

The library celebrated National Library Week (April 3-9) with a weeklong open house that included an author talk with local author and Fitchburg State professor DeMisty Bellinger, technology demos, the debut of a new virtual history tour of the library, and raffles. Congratulations to our raffle winners and thanks to everyone who stopped by!

Storytime takes place Wednesdays at 10am via Zoom (email jtrowbridge@cwmars.org for the link) and in person on Fridays at 10am.

Kids Cooking will meet via Zoom on Monday, May 2, at 5pm to make Cinco de Mayo recipes. For more information or to sign up, email gtoll@cwmars.org.

TAB will hold its next meeting on Thursday, May 12, at 5:30pm.

Wingmasters, a birds of prey program for kids ages 5 and up, will take place on Wednesday, May 18, at 2pm, in the Town Hall Annex. No registration is required.

Greg Maichack will present a **jellyfish-themed pastel drawing program** via Zoom on Wednesday, May 25, at 5pm. Participants will receive all necessary supplies prior to the session. Email eredihan@cwmars.org to sign up.

Looking for more library information?

We're everywhere! Follow us on social media: Facebook, Instagram (@princetonmapubliclibrary), call (978-464-2115), 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



After a soft close during the worst of Omicron, the COA is open and getting busier every day!

Grab & Go Lunches: The Corned Beef & Cabbage Lunch in March hit a record number of participants and was a real hit. The recipe is available from the COA if you're interested. Likewise, the Holiday Dinner Kit for April has had an enormous number of households signed up. We will have 2 Grab & Go's in May: a special Mother's Day Goody Bag on May 5th and a Picnic Basket on May 26th. An ice cream social just in time for Father's Day is planned for June.

Bridge, Mahjong, and Other Games: Bridge has started to be played on site again, and it's great to have the crew back together in person! Mahjong is also played onsite two afternoons each week and has been a welcome and popular addition to our calendar. Bridge is scheduled on Tuesday, and Mahjong is on Monday and Thursday afternoon. We have had requests from Cribbage and Backgammon players, too – if you're interested, please let us know.

Tai Chi: We've started holding a Tai Chi class on Wednesday mornings, and our new instructor is getting five stars from class participants. We're inviting you to try this new class. No prior experience is required—Wednesdays at 10:30 AM.

Yoga with Kate and the Barre/Pilates classes: Kate's Powerhouse Studio has a dedicated and growing following – they even want classes on holidays! They are ongoing, and you can join any session – all skill levels are welcome, and modifications are always provided. Please see our calendar for details.

Senior Hikes arranged by Rick Gardner are a great way to get outdoors for a good hike and some socializing! Look at the happy group in the photo above (last month when it was even colder). Check our calendar for details about signing up for the monthly hike.

There's plenty more happening so please check out our page on the town website and sign up for our newsletter! Something's happening every day, Monday-Friday, and something's sure to strike your fancy! As always, if you have an idea for programming or would like to volunteer, please reach out to us at 978-464-5977.

MASTER PLAN STEERING COMMITTEE

In November 2021, Princeton received a \$50,000 grant to work with the Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission (CMRPC) to start the update of Princeton's Master Plan (last updated in 2007).

A Master Plan is a community's vision of what they want to look like in the future. Based on extensive community input (yes, there WILL be MORE surveys! 😊) Master Plans guide communities in their decisions on land use and preservation. [Read the 2007 Plan.](#)

Princeton's Master Plan Steering Committee had their kickoff meeting March 29, 2022, and expect to complete Phase 1 of the update by Winter 2023.

Princeton Housing Production Plan Committee (PHPPC)

PHPPC formed in December 2021 to help Princeton understand our housing needs, development constraints, opportunities, and formulate a vision for the future.

Assisted by CMRPC, the committee's first task was a comprehensive housing survey. 396 residents responded!

The next task is a community workshop to review the results of the housing survey and to brainstorm about future development. The workshop is tentatively scheduled for late May at Thomas Prince School. Come help the committee brainstorm how to respond to the new state rules about multi-family housing.

HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT

The Princeton Highway Department is readying to become the Princeton Department of Public Works in Fiscal Year 2023. This new department will combine four departments into one (Highway, Facilities Maintenance, Cemetery, and Parks and Recreation), improve services to the Town, and help each department with all their overall needs. Additionally, The DPW will hire one new employee to assist with our new shared workload.

The Highway Department has started some spring cleanups, cleaning catch basins, street sweeping, and cleaning up the highway garage. Additionally, we have had the wood chipper out, chipping all branches and trees that had fallen over the winter months. Crew members have started some box widening on a short section of Coal Kiln Road, including removing the topsoil on the shoulder and bringing in some processed gravel to bring it up to grade ahead of scheduled road reconstruction this summer. Summer is upon us, and we look forward to our small projects around Town, Culvert replacements, maintaining gravel roads, drainage repairs, and maintenance of all athletic fields, including the common, center school, and station 2. Please feel free to reach out with any concerns by calling 978-464-2120 or emailing highwaydept@town.princeton.ma.us



Veterans' Services

Massachusetts has provided benefits to its veterans since colonial days. From the French and Indian Wars to the Global War on Terrorism, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts provides financial assistance to veterans in need.

Massachusetts General Law Chapter 115 (MGL Ch. 115) requires every city and town to maintain a Department of Veterans Services and establish a Veterans Services Officer (VSO) to assist in dispensing these benefits. This is the only state in the nation that, by law, requires every municipality to have a Veterans Agent (or VSO) employed to assist Veterans, their families and/or their survivors.

Veterans with incomes at or below 200% of the Federal Poverty Level can receive financial assistance under MGL Ch. 115 as long as they meet the cash asset limits:

Number in Family	Maximum Monthly Income	Maximum Asset Limits
1	\$ 2,147.00	\$ 8,400.00
2	\$ 2,904.00	\$ 16,600.00

MGL Ch. 115 has authorized the towns to assist its Veterans with 75% of that amount reimbursed back to the town for its support of Veterans Services.

The Central North Veterans' Services District is located in Room 14 at the Gardner City Hall: 95 Pleasant Street, Gardner, MA 01440. This region services veterans and their families in Ashburnham, Gardner, Princeton and Westminster. Office hours are **Monday – Thursday from 8:00 am – 4:30 pm and Fridays from 8:00 am – 1:00 pm.** The office can be reached at: (978)630-4017.

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!