**Town Manager Update**

*August 19, 2024*

The Central Berkshire Habitat for Humanity has finished construction on a newly-built 3-bedroom, 2-bath, single-family home located at 16 Gulf Road in Dalton.  They will be having a fair housing lottery. Anyone who is interested can contact Erin O’Brien at the Central Berkshire Habitat for Humanity for details.

We received our final Cherry Sheet from the state, based on the FY2025 state budget. We are scheduled to receive $1,815,235 and to be charged $45,569. This is a $50,620 increase from the Governor’s original budget, most of which will come in the form of unrestricted general government aid. In addition, I look forward to hearing the amount we’ll be getting in “Fair Share” funds, which have also been voted as a whole but not yet allocated; last year we received about an extra $120,000 in Chapter 90 funds.

I’m pleased to say that we are close to having a new website. The functionality and look of the website have all been worked on extensively by our main and very experienced Town volunteer and myself, and we anticipate final work over the next few weeks.

I am working with the Town Planner and Town Counsel on an update to our cannabis by-law. As I reported to you earlier, the Cannabis Control Commission issued updated regulations that they believe implement the Legislature’s goal of preferring social equity businesses. We had tentatively agreed that amending the by-law to one of the Commission’s options—simply require three years of only social equity applicants—would be the best way to proceed, getting that requirement behind us. Town Counsel is advising that such a rule would be discriminatory as a zoning by-law, so I am preparing to propose a new general by-law.

The state has passed a law regarding ADUs that supersedes some of the requirements that Dalton had imposed, such as the need for a special permit under most circumstances. The Planning Board is reviewing the law and our by-laws and will presumably be making recommendations for a by-law amendment. Section 8 of the Act allows ADUs as of right in single-family residential zoning districts subject only to reasonable regulations including, but not limited to, site plan review, dimensional setbacks, restrictions on the bulk and height of structures, and restrictions on and prohibition of short-term rental ADUs. Section 8 prohibits zoning bylaws and ordinances from imposing owner occupancy requirements for either the ADU or the principal dwelling, a requirement Dalton currently has.

The Green Committee has proposed applying for a Community Compact grant to fund a consultant to implement the recommendations of the Climate Action Plan. I have gotten for a description of the scope of work and am working with him on that. I will at least be filing for a consultant to revise our employee handbook, which I believe is quite out of date.