

# Town of Littleton Newsletter



Issue 9

February 2025



## Message From Your Select Board



### Town Directory

Town Offices Main—[978-540-2400](tel:978-540-2400)  
Town Clerk—[978-540-2401](tel:978-540-2401)  
Accounting—[978-540-2440](tel:978-540-2440)  
Assessor—[978-540-2410](tel:978-540-2410)  
Building—[978-540-2420](tel:978-540-2420)  
Cemetery—[978-540-2480](tel:978-540-2480)  
Conservation—[978-540-2428](tel:978-540-2428)  
Elder & Humans Servs—[978-540-2470](tel:978-540-2470)  
Fire Station—[978-540-2302](tel:978-540-2302)  
Highway—[978-540-2670](tel:978-540-2670)  
Human Resources—[978-540-2455](tel:978-540-2455)  
LCTV—[978-540-2488](tel:978-540-2488)  
Library—[978-540-2600](tel:978-540-2600)  
Parks & Rec—[978-540-2490](tel:978-540-2490)  
Planning—[978-540-2425](tel:978-540-2425)  
Police—[978-540-2300](tel:978-540-2300)  
Tax Collector—[978-540-2405](tel:978-540-2405)  
Town Administrator—[978-540-2460](tel:978-540-2460)  
Transfer Station—[978-540-2674](tel:978-540-2674)  
Treasurer—[978-540-2450](tel:978-540-2450)  
Veteran Services—[978-540-2485](tel:978-540-2485)



January was a busy month for the Select Board. In addition to our regularly scheduled meetings, we held meetings with the various town departments to hammer out the budget for FY2026. Thanks to the hard work of our finance team, we were presented with a balanced budget! More work will be done in the months leading up to the May Town Meeting.

The Shaker Lane Building Committee continues to shepherd the Shaker Lane Building project through the state funding process. The Finance Committee and Finance Director have been running multiple scenarios trying to limit the impact of this project on the tax bill.

The Select Board is entering the final stages of negotiations on a lease for the Orchard. There will be a meeting in February where the townspeople can ask the potential tenant questions prior to the lease being finalized. We are hoping to schedule public information sessions about the orchard via MAPC in February as well. These sessions will help provide input for what to do with the portions of the property not covered by the lease.

In January, the Select Board welcomed the Sustainability Committee, Affordable Housing Trust, Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC), Cultural Council, Conservation Commission, Finance Committee, and School Committee to one of their meetings. Based on recommendations from BPAC, the Select Board has petitioned MassDOT to reduce the speed limit on Great Road and King Street to make the streets safer for cyclists and pedestrians.

Members of the Select Board attended the Massachusetts Municipal Association (MMA) annual conference. This conference is an opportunity to share knowledge with representatives from other towns, learn the latest happenings around the state, and to see the latest innovations from vendors around the state.

The Select Board invited applications for the Charter Commission. This group will bring back recommendations to the Select Board and the Town for how town government should be structured going forward. Appointments to this committee will be made at the February 4 Select Board meeting.

Half your life is  
spent trying to  
get out of a  
small town and  
the other half is  
trying to get  
back to one.

# From the Desk of the Town Administrator



I'm thrilled to share some news with you all! The Littleton Select Board tasked me to identify a way we can invest in supporting our community's well-being. When I posed the question to the Littleton Team, our Elderly and Human Services Director, Liz Tretiak, recommended we partner with Care Solace, a social purpose organization that connects people to mental health care, substance use treatment, and social services matched to their needs.



We watch the media and every day there's a reminder that untreated mental health issues can affect all aspects of life, and it's something we're committed to addressing in Littleton. That's why this partnership is so important—it provides easier access not only to mental health care but also to social services like food, housing, and affordable medical and dental care.

Care Solace will act as a bridge between our first responders, justice systems, local agencies, and the many mental health providers in our area. Their team of Care Companions will be available at all times of day and night to help guide our residents to the right care, regardless of their insurance coverage.

The best part? This service is **COMPLETELY FREE** to our community members. We want everyone to have access to the support they need, and this partnership is one more way we're working to make that happen. I hope that you will go see what they have to offer: [caresolace.com/ma-littleton](https://caresolace.com/ma-littleton) or call 888-515-7881.

## Assessor's Office

Please be advised that the Town of Littleton has contracted out for personal property services. The company we use is Real Estate Research Consultants, Inc, better known as RRC. There will be 3 Representatives over the next several weeks stopping by various businesses in Town to obtain personal property information necessary for fair and equitable taxation. The State of Massachusetts mandates that all real estate properties be reviewed by the Assessor's office at least once every 10 years and personal properties once every 5 years. The 3 representatives are as follows:

Timoth Ludy (Red 2021 Toyota Venza, MA plates)

Kevin Casey (Black 2022 Audi Q5, MA plates)

Harold Miles (Orange 2019 Cross trek, MA plates)

If you have any questions or concerns regarding these inspections, please contact our office at 978-540-2410.

Sincerely,

Kathy Miller, Chief Assessor Town of Littleton

# Nagog Hill Orchard FAQ's



There have been a lot of questions about the status of the Nagog Hill Orchard. The Select Board has had the authority to lease the Orchard for several years, pursuant to a Town Meeting vote. At the May 2024 Town Meeting, the Select Board and the Nagog Hill Orchard Working Group recommended passage of an Article to grant authority to the Select Board to sell the Orchard. The Article failed to receive the needed 2/3 majority. Following that vote, the SB authorized an RFP to lease the Orchard. We are currently in negotiations with Bransfield Tree Company to lease the Orchard. Below is a list of the questions and comments we see the most, and our answers. We also invite you to review past issues of the newsletter where we have provided updates, and to review the Nagog Hill Orchard page on the town website.

**Q:** Why didn't the SB just immediately try to get permission to sell again after May Town Meeting voted no?

**A:** Town Meetings are both public input and where we make our decisions. The vote in May said "No" to selling. The Select Board consensus was that we had an obligation to respect that vote and to try in good faith to lease the property before asking again to sell.

**Q:** Why didn't you do a lease-to-own RFP? Or accept the lease-to-own proposal by the Nashobah Praying Indians?

**A:** Legally, the town cannot do lease-to-own. It's not an option.

**Q:** Would you be giving the lessee a right of first refusal to buy the orchard?

**A:** No. That is prohibited by Mass law.

**Q:** Are you leasing the house?

**A:** No. The house is uninhabitable and therefore cannot be leased. It was not a part of the RFP to lease, and it is not part of lease negotiations.

**Q:** After you reviewed the proposals, why did you allow Bransfield to change their proposal and not the Nashobah Praying Indians?

**A:** We didn't. The Orchard Working Group recommended Bransfield as the best proposal. The SB then moved forward with the party that submitted the best proposal to negotiate a lease. This is standard procedure for public procurements, and it is not the same as only allowing one party to revise their proposal but not others, which would \*not\* be standard procedure for public procurements.

**Q:** But all the proposals had issues, and you only allowed Bransfield the opportunity to change theirs!

**A:** Again, we didn't allow anyone to change their proposal. Just because no one was perfect doesn't mean everyone was equally imperfect. The OWG reviewed each proposal against the published criteria and determined there was one proposal that was best. We moved forward with that party.

# Nagog Hill Orchard FAQ's



**Q:** If the proposals are reviewed against the RFP criteria, why didn't the published criteria include [things that favor my preferred outcome]?

**A:** The OWG and the SB have been trying to learn lessons from past mistakes. Since the last tenant vacated, multiple attempts to lease failed. Stormalong Cider was the only bidder for one round of attempts, but they abandoned negotiations. Other RFPs to lease got no responses. All of these prior RFPs to lease had a long list of requirements and restrictions. We tried to learn from that mistake and kept the RFP criteria as minimal as we could. And it worked! For the first time, we received multiple bids to lease!

**Q:** We've had to bring other votes forward multiple times. What's wrong with that?

**A:** Nothing! But in all the recent cases where that happened, the options were "Vote Yes or Do Nothing." This is different because even though the vote failed, we still have an obligation to farm the land under our contract with the state (the Agricultural Preservation Restriction) \*and\* we had another avenue available to us to do that (i.e., lease).

**Q:** I do not support this lease. You should stop these negotiations and sell.

**A:** We do not have the authority to sell.

**Q:** You should stop these negotiations and go back to Town Meeting in May and ask to sell then.

**A:** This is one potential outcome depending on how lease negotiations progress, but a note of caution: The Town has been put on notice by the state that the Orchard is "derelict," meaning we are not fulfilling the terms of the APR. When the requirements of an APR are not being met, the state has the right to sell the property itself, without any say by the Town. The longer we delay getting the orchard back into compliance with the APR the higher the risk that Littleton loses all say in the orchard.

**Q:** But I heard that the state wouldn't do that!

**A:** That's been said by some people in the past, but that was before the OWG published an RFI and had multiple credible parties respond that they were interested in buying the Orchard. We know that MDAR is aware of the interest in the Orchard, and for some SB Members, this changes the calculation of whether it is safe to continue to delay getting into compliance.

**Q:** The Article to Sell would have passed if you had told us who you would sell to, or if you would have promised the public could vote on who buys it.

**A:** Neither of these is an option under Mass law. The SB can't seek buyers until we have permission to sell from 2/3 vote at Town Meeting. Once that permission is obtained, we have to follow procedures dictated by Mass law for selling taxpayer-owned land, and that requires an open procurement with fair and open competition. We do not have the option of only offering to sell to one party, and Town Meeting cannot veto the results of a fair and open competition.

# Nagog Hill Orchard FAQ's



**Q:** Other towns have restored land to Indigenous tribes. So can Littleton!

**A:** There are many historically significant properties owned by private entities, trusts, and individuals in Littleton. The Conservation Commission, for example, has requested that the Select Board transfer care, custody and control of ~7 acres of the Orchard that is not part of the APR to them. In our research, we haven't found any restored lands in Massachusetts that were publicly owned and subject to an APR. Please let us know if you find out otherwise! If not, then as a community we need to recognize that the Orchard is subject to all the complications, nuances, and restraints discussed here.

**Q:** You said in May that you'd give the public an opportunity to weigh in on who you lease to.

**A:** We didn't say that, but we are trying to do what we can. What we said in May was that we would hold additional public input meetings moderated by MAPC if we got permission to sell, and that we would use that public input to inform how we wrote the RFP to sell. We still plan to hold public meetings but we aren't selling and the lease process is different (as explained above), and so the when and why of public input sessions is also necessarily different.

**Q:** Without MAPC meetings like you discussed for selling, there's no meaningful public input on the lease!

**A:** We are still working on MAPC meetings, but they won't be the same format as what they would have been if we were preparing to sell. In the meantime, we have had Orchard updates on every agenda for the Select Board's 2x/monthly meetings, we have provided updates in the town newsletter in nearly every issue, several of us hold office hours, public input is available at every SB meeting, and our email addresses are published. The public input that is being exercised now has been available before, during and after the May vote and throughout the lease process, and will continue to be available.

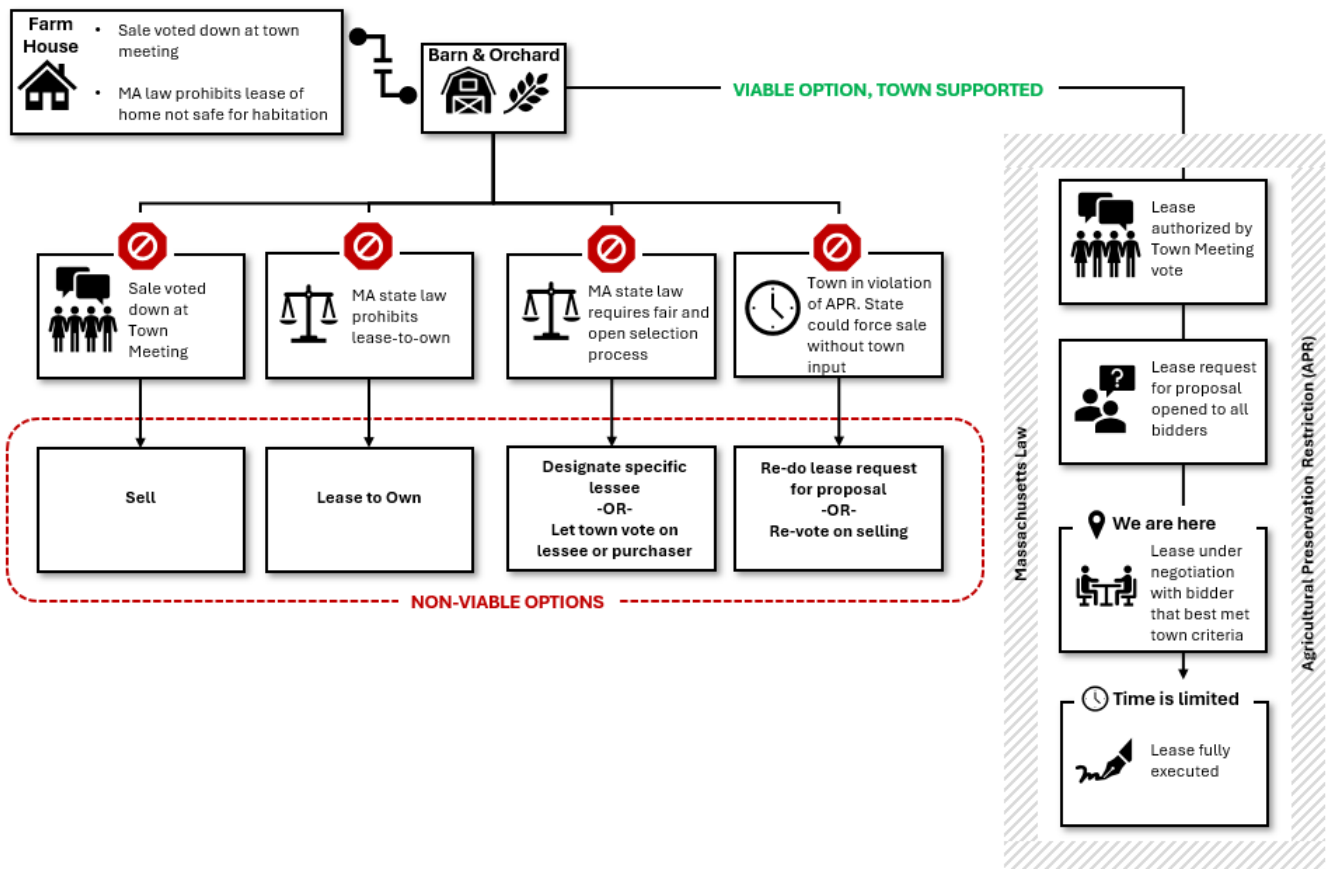
**Q:** The public doesn't want this. If you move forward you are ignoring public input.

**A:** It is literally impossible to follow all public input on such a controversial topic. Town Meeting is the most public input we get from residents on any given topic, and as a town in the Commonwealth it is where we have decided to make certain decisions. Town Meeting granted the SB the authority to lease and Town Meeting explicitly denied the SB the authority to sell. Our attempt to lease is in direct response to public input.

**Q:** You should just sell to the Nashobah Praying Indians.

**A:** We cannot do that. First we do not have authorization to sell. Second, even if we did, we must follow MA law and issue an RFP that any entity can respond to. Those responses must be weighed and there may be a proposal that is rated higher.

# Nagog Hill Orchard FAQ's





# DPW



## Town Clerk



The Town Clerk's Office is happy to announce a new and improved way to license your dog(s).

Please go to the following link:  
<https://littletonma.portal.opengov.com/> and click on the picture of the dogs to start your license application.

There is also a link from the Town Clerk's webpage  
<https://www.littletonma.org/424/Dog-Licenses>

You may pay by debit/credit/ACH or come into the office and we will assist you at the counter. Instructions will also be on the census for you to follow. Any questions, please contact the office at 978-540-2401.

As well, we would like to let you know if you have hit a certain milestone of 70 or older, we want to celebrate you and offer a dog license for free.

## Employment Opportunities - as of published date

Please visit the [Human Resources Page](#) for updates



[Assistant Conservation Agent](#)

[EHS Van Driver](#)

[Office Coordinator](#)

[Regional Energy Manager](#)

[\\*Download an  
Application Here\\*](#)

## Health Department

### *February is American Heart Month: Prioritize Your Heart Health!*

February is American Heart Month—a perfect time to focus on heart health and take steps toward preventing cardiovascular disease. Here are some tips to keep your heart strong:

- **Move More:** Aim for at least 150 minutes of moderate physical activity per week.
  - **Eat Heart-Healthy Foods:** Incorporate fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and lean proteins into your diet while limiting processed foods and added sugars.
  - **Know Your Numbers:** Keep track of your blood pressure, cholesterol, and blood sugar levels. Schedule a check-up with your healthcare provider if you haven't had one recently.
- Quit Smoking:** It's never too late to quit. Free resources are available at [Massachusetts Smokers' Helpline](#).

### *Beat the Winter Blues: Prioritize Mental Health This Season*

The winter months can be tough on mental health, with shorter days and colder temperatures. Here are some ways to boost your mood and support your mental well-being:

- **Stay Active:** Physical activity can improve your mood and reduce stress. Consider winter activities like walking, yoga, or even dancing indoors.
- **Seek Sunlight:** Try to get outside during daylight hours or sit near windows to increase your exposure to natural light.
- **Stay Connected:** Reach out to friends and family for support or participate in community events to stay engaged.

**Know When to Seek Help:** If you're feeling persistently sad or overwhelmed, don't hesitate to reach out for help. The Massachusetts helpline (988) provides free, confidential support 24/7.



## Project Updates



### The Center on Shattuck Street — December 2024 Update



During the month of December, Commodore made further progress on the roof, installing the shingles and beginning to install racking for the PV System by the end of the month. The roofing subcontractor completed all of their remaining work except for snow guards and downspouts, which have not yet been delivered to the project site. Once delivered, these will be reviewed with an in-place mockup for approval by the design team. With Drywall installation completed and priming / painting progressing as new areas became available, Commodore was able to begin installing

finishes throughout the building. This included acoustical ceiling grids and tiles, tiling, and carpet. Casework was delivered to the site at the conclusion of this reporting period and is expected to be installed next month. Interior MEP work consisted primarily of finishing ductwork connections (Kitchen Exhaust Hood) and low-voltage electrical / data work by the electrician. At the building exterior, remaining siding was completed at the Kitchen Area and the concrete pad was poured beneath the location of the PV System disconnect at the Shattuck St. side of the building. It remains Commodore's plan to complete the remaining site concrete work in the spring alongside remaining asphalt paving and landscape plantings to ensure suitable conditions for placement.

By the end of the month, the Elevator was fully completed and will be ready for inspection when the building is being reviewed for a Certificate of Occupancy. Electrical progress during the past month included continued lighting installation in addition to the low voltage work, as well as detailed coordination with the roofer, Commodore, and the manufacturer's representatives regarding warranties and other issues related to the PV System Racking.



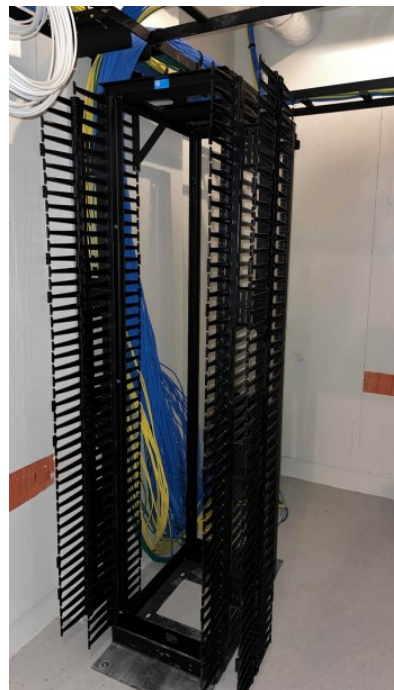
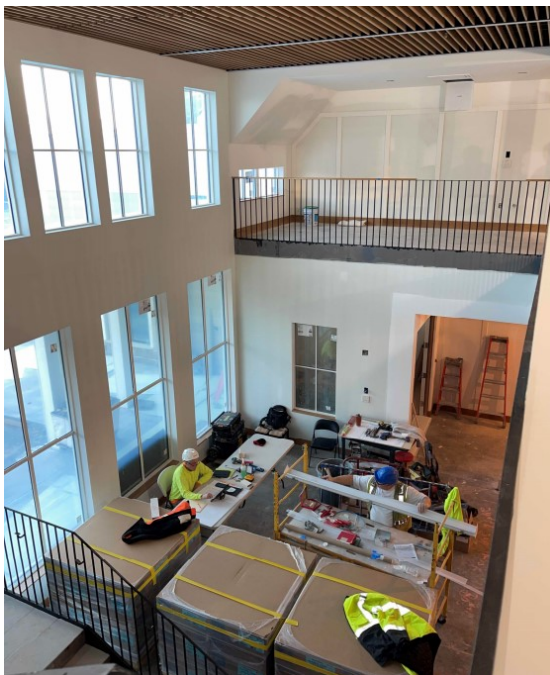
# Project Updates

## The Center on Shattuck Street — December 2024 Update

Continuing progress with the water service last month (the building is now live), Plumbing startup was successfully completed for the Water Heater as part of the Commissioning process. Other Plumbing-related systems will be Commissioned as they are fully-completed.

On the administrative side, Commodore confirmed that a separate (residential) Building Permit will be required from the AHJ for the modifications requested at the 31 Shattuck St. construction house, including provision of a new Sewer Main tie-in, a new driveway, and retaining wall. As a part of this process, LLB and their consultant engineers worked this month to prepare an ANR plan documenting the lot-line adjustments required to bring the property line into conformance with Town Zoning Ordinances. This process is expected to continue through the March 2025 Planning Board meeting where the plans will be presented for formal approval.

Both FF&E and AV / Technology continued to move forward – the FF&E order was placed, and at the conclusion of the reporting period the team was working to coordinate where to schedule actual delivery of the furnishings. Technology purchases were also completed during the month of December, and the AV system needs were being fully coordinated with all parties, including LCTV and their preferred vendor, KeyCode Media. It is anticipated that these items will both be fully completed next month.





## Project Updates

### 36 King Street—December 2024 Update



During the month of December, Classic Construction began the month performing additional exterior work on the building, including completing the installation of drywells to assist in stormwater management and finish grading directing surface water away from the building. Classic also added handrails to the newly-constructed exterior decks and stairs at the West building elevation.

With significant structural coordination having been completed, Classic began closing up floor openings in areas where the structural engineer had no comments or requests for modifications. Classic's carpenters continued framing new built-in shelving and soffits at the lower level, and also completed framing reinforcements ("sistering") of studs in load-bearing walls to support planned filing cabinet locations at the offices above (per the direction of the structural engineer). The HVAC contractors were back on site to reconnect ductwork at the Magic-Pak units replaced last month and replace ductwork in the Game Room at the lower level. They also were able to install and connect the ERV unit located above the first-floor ceiling at the restrooms and worked with their Controls subcontractor to connect the HVAC equipment. Following reconnection to ductwork, the Magic-Pak units were plumbed for gas by the Plumber. Finally, new linesets were run in the lower level and connected to the new AHU.

With a significant amount of Electrical work being authorized following the PMBC meeting on 12/11, all in-wall work identified in CPR-014R1 was able to begin. The electricians were on site to wire the new mechanical units for power, install light fixtures, and coordinate their work with other trades.

Classic's administrative efforts are ongoing through the Submittal, RFI, and PCO processes to document their intended material purchases/installation as well as questions for the design team based on in-field conditions. Classic and their subcontractors are current with Certified Payroll documentation as of the conclusion of this reporting period.





# Project Updates

## 36 King Street—December 2024 Update

LLB continues to work with both Vertex and Classic to process changes based on what is/has been uncovered or requested by the Town, reviewing Submittals and RFI's.

As of the close of this December reporting period, the project continues to show schedule slippage in line with what was reported last month. Several Change Order items authorized during the past month are on the Critical Path and enable a significant amount of work to move forward. These are being incorporated into a forthcoming Construction Schedule update being prepared by Classic. With the additional time required to complete both remaining Base Contract and Change Order work, the project is tracking approximately 2 months behind the original Substantial Completion date. Vertex will continue to monitor schedule status as updates become available.





# Project Updates

## Shaker Lane School Building Committee Monthly Report for October—December 2024



Executive summary PM Monthly report Shaker Lane Elementary School

The Shaker Lane Elementary School project in Littleton, MA submitted a Statement of Interest (SOI) and was accepted into the Eligibility Period (Module 1) of the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) state program in May of 2021.

The Shaker Lane School Building Committee (SLSBC) was established, as part of Forming the Project Team (Module 2). The SLSBC's first order of business was to procure an Owner's Project Manager (OPM). Turner Townsend &

Heery was selected and contracted in December 2023. The SLSBC and the OPM worked together to advertise, interview, and secure a Designer for the project. Studio G was selected in May 2024. With the establishment of the Project Team, the project proceeded into Feasibility Study (Module 3).

In June 2024, the SLSBC formed a Design/Site Sub-Committee to review and recommend potential sites and configurations of a possible renovated, addition/renovation, or a new Shaker Lane Elementary School. Studio G began in earnest and scheduled school tours, started assessments of the existing Shaker Lane building, scheduled visioning sessions with the School District and Staff and began forming the education program. Community outreach consisted of an online survey, a project website, and an introductory informational video of the MSBA process.

The Team compiled this information and started drafting the Preliminary Design Program (PDP), a pre-scribed MSBA process which establishes the educational program, the initial space summaries, evaluation of existing conditions, site development requirements, and preliminary evaluation of alternatives. On August 28, 2024, the SLSBC approved the PDP and directed the OPM to submit the PDP to the MSBA. On August 30, 2024, the OPM delivered the PDP to the MSBA.

The MSBA will review and comment on the PDP. Once the Project Team responds to any comments by the MSBA and those answers are accepted by the MSBA, the project will enter the second part of the Feasibility Study (Module 3), the Preferred Schematic Report (PSR). The PSR will evaluate the 3 recommended options further developing the designs and cost estimates with the goal of identifying one option to proceed into Schematic Design (Module 4).

In October 2024, the team held SLSBC Meetings, and a special Town Meeting with a very short presentation to the Town to update the residents on the status of the project. Also, cost estimates were procured from the Designer and OPM, reconciled, and became the basis of the project cost as a starting point. The PSR submission materials were developed for later submission to the MSBA.

In November 2024, the team held SLSBC Meetings, and a special meeting was held with tours of the Shaker Lane school for the public. Work continued on refining the PSR submission, and a meeting was held with the SLSBC to review the PSR submission for acceptance. I

In December 2024, the team held SLSBC Meetings, submitted the PSR to the MSBA (for FAS meeting) and the review of the submission was underway by the MSBA.



## Parks, Recreation & Community Education



Alicia Day and the PRCE Team  
[LittletonRec@littletonma.org](mailto:LittletonRec@littletonma.org)  
 978-540-2490

*Click on Brochure for  
 Registration Details  
 and Information!*



Join us for a special evening of fun!

**TIES & Tiaras**

Littleton Middle School Cafeteria

DOORS & DINNER 5:30PM  
 DANCE 6:00PM-8:00PM

Tickets \$30 per child +1  
 \$10 each additional guest

Saturday, February 8th, 2025

Ties & Tiaras is Valentine themed dance for K-5th grade students and a special adult figure in their life. Please join us for this very special semi-formal night out for you and your child(ren). You can dine, dance, take pictures, and make memories!

Admission to the dance includes a buffet dinner, two hours of dancing, games, a raffle, and a professional photographer. [Registration](#) is required, and spots are limited. Register by 12 pm on 2/7.

**When:** February 8th, 2025  
 Dinner: 5:30pm  
 Dancing: 6:00pm-8:00pm

**Where:**  
 Middle School Cafeteria

**Program Participant Fee:**  
 \$30.00 per child plus 1  
 \$10.00 each additional child

**Contact:**  
 For more information, contact the Littleton Parks, Recreation, and Community Education at 978.540.2490 or email [Littletonrec@littletonma.org](mailto:Littletonrec@littletonma.org)

## Elder & Human Services



### **Valentine's Day Sundae Bar**

**Friday February 14th, 2-3pm in the MPR**

Join us for some Valentine's Ice Cream Sundaes while we watch some classic Valentine's Day clips from TV and movies.

### **L.O.V.E. presented by Lisa Yves**

**Thursday Feb 13th at 2:00 in the MPR**

Lisa Yves comes to Littleton with her tribute to LOVE songs just in time for Valentine's Day. Join us on February 13th at 2pm for a sweet time! Refreshments provided. Call to register 978-540-2470. Lisa Yves has been a highly accomplished professional musician and vocalist for over 35 years. She graduated from New York University as a vocal jazz performance major. She is a recording artist, composer, performer, vocal coach, and well-known musician in Boston. Lisa has released over 10 albums of original music across various genres. Her work has been featured in numerous TV shows, including Blue Bloods, The Young and the Restless, Hallmark, and Dolly Parton's Heartstrings on Netflix. Additionally, Lisa was a finalist in the 2004 Boston Pops search, where she performed with Keith Lockhart at Symphony Hall.

### **Back to Basics with iPhone and iPad - Presented by KevTech Services**

**Tuesday, Feb 11th at 9:30am, Room 103**

This introductory class introduces new users to the basics of using the iPhone and iPad. We cover the hardware of the iPhone and iPad, important areas of the devices, and accessing common tools like the flashlight, alarm, and camera. Part presentation, part hands-on class, bring your devices! Call to register 978-540-2470.

### **Lunch & Learn: Spot the Scam & Fraud Workshop**

**Tues. Feb. 4th, 12:15pm in Room 103**

Workshop presented by Celia Otero from Jeanne D'Arc Credit Union to educate the community on frauds and scams that target seniors. Join us to learn about the different scams out there and get useful information to help protect yourself from any type of fraud. Lunch sponsored by Life Care Center. Call to register in January so we have an accurate headcount for lunch: 978-540-2470

## Elder & Human Services



### AARP Tax Aide Program

It's tax season again! We have our AARP Tax Aide program running this year to assist you with your simple tax returns. Beginning Monday Feb 3rd you may call to sign up for a Wednesday afternoon time slot to have your taxes done. AARP Tax-Aide volunteers Bob Martinec and Bill Cranshaw as well as other certified volunteers will be available this year to complete your 2024 federal and state income tax returns. This is a free service sponsored by EHS. Please call us at 978-540-

2470 to add your name to the list for having your tax return prepared. We will be scheduling one hour appointments on Wednesdays at 1pm, 2PM, and 3pm beginning February 12th— April 9th. Please call us with any questions: 978-540-2470

### Elder and Human Services Tour of Shaker Lane School February 5th at 2:30pm @ Shaker Lane

Come tour the Shaker Lane School on Wednesday, February 5th at 2:30pm. During the tour you will see how the building is currently used as well as the limitations and challenges within Shaker Lane School. After the tour we will gather in the school's library for questions and answers. This tour is open to all, no advanced sign ups are required. For questions about touring Shaker Lane School, please reach out to Dorothy Mulone at [dmulone@littletonps.org](mailto:dmulone@littletonps.org) or Joyce Hekkala at [jhekkala@littletonps.org](mailto:jhekkala@littletonps.org), or by phone 978-540-2500.

### Friends of the Council on Aging

Our original vendor for our Donor Tree suffered damage from the two hurricanes that impacted the Sarasota region of Florida. We have since decided to go with Metro Signs located locally, they are currently working on designing a Donor Tree for us. The tree will be 8 feet wide with brown acrylic branches and metal leaves of gold and silver mounted on a backing of plexiglass, Leaves can be purchased at \$500 for a gold leaf and \$250 for a silver leaf. Checks can be mailed to the Friends of the LCOA, Treasurer, Box 134, Littleton, MA 01460 - Charlie Vice Chair, FLCOA

Donation information packets are available upon request, or online here:

[LittletonCenterOnShattuck.com/donation-opportunities](http://LittletonCenterOnShattuck.com/donation-opportunities)

Liz Tretiak, MS, CDP  
Director  
Elder and Human Services Dept  
Town of Littleton  
#978-540-2470  
[Ltretiak@littletonma.org](mailto:Ltretiak@littletonma.org)



# Library



**Take Your Child to the Library Day - All Day!**

**Saturday, February 8<sup>th</sup>**

**Friends of the Library Cookie Sale - Morning**

**2pm - Magician Mike Ben will be in the Sturtz Room!**

## **Children's Room**

### **Toddler Storytime**

-Tuesdays and Fridays at 10:30am in the Sturtz Meeting Room

### **Littles and Letters Alphabet Story Time...**

-Wednesdays at 11am in the Sturtz Meeting Room

### **Busy Bees Play Time**

-Monday, February 10<sup>th</sup> at 10am in the Sturtz Meeting Room

### **PJ Story Time with SLS Teacher Abby Warnock**

-Wednesday, Feb. 12<sup>th</sup> at 6:30pm in the Children's Room

### **Painting with Julie Harrold**

-Wednesday, Feb. 19<sup>th</sup> at 2pm in the Sturtz Room



# Library



**New Databases are now available at the library! Visit [www.littletonlibrary.org](http://www.littletonlibrary.org) to learn more or to access for free with your library card.**

**Educate Station:** Monthly learning plans and worksheets for pre-K through 5<sup>th</sup> Grade. Provides easy-to-use, comprehensive learning plans with a robust range of extension activities across a wide range of subject areas and grade levels. Great for parents who homeschool their children!

**Fold3:** features premiere collections of original military records. These records include the stories, photos, and personal documents of the men and women who served in the military.

**Newspapers.com:** Search 954 million + pages with newspapers.com for obituaries, birth, and marriage records. Easily discover, save and share the stories that connect you with the past.



**The Library Trustees are now accepting applications for the Ray Grande Scholarship**

- Available to up to two High School students with anticipated graduation dates of 2025 or 2026
- Must be residents of the Town of Littleton

**For more information**

**<https://form.jotform.com/250013814767152>**

**Deadline: March 9, 2025**



## Police Dept



### December 2024

Calls	1668
911	229
Arrests	4
Incidents	75
Citations	63
Crashes	18



Congratulations to Patrol Officer Brian Jones for being selected to be the School Resource Officer (SRO) for the Littleton Middle School and Russel St. Elementary School. Brian has been with LPD since 2013, starting off as a Reserve Officer and then promoted to full-time in 2014. Brian will be working alongside Det/SRO Megan Wodzinski as she maintains a presence in the Littleton High School. Together they will also cover Shaker Lane Elementary. LPD would like to thank the Littleton School Administration for their support and partnership in creating this second SRO position to better serve the School District.



### Meet Littleton's Next Police Officer

Deputy Patterson proudly introduced Communication Officer Noah Graham to the Littleton Select Board committee. Noah, a longtime resident of Littleton, has demonstrated exceptional dedication to our community and is now taking a significant step forward in his career.

Noah will soon begin his journey at the Police Academy, and we couldn't be more excited to see him grow into this new role. Please join us in congratulating Noah and wishing him the best of luck as he embarks on this exciting chapter! [#LittletonMAPD](https://twitter.com/LittletonMAPD)

## Reminder



Section 5 – Article 4  
Traffic Regulations ~ Town of Littleton  
Permit No. 1801 – September 16, 1941



**November 15 to April 15**

# **NO ALL-NIGHT PARKING**

"It shall be unlawful for the driver of any vehicle, other than one acting in an emergency, to park said vehicle on any street for a period of time longer than one (1) hour between the hours of 1:00 am and 6:00 am of any day."



## Fire Dept



Even as Littleton endures the chill of winter, the fire department is sounding the alarm about the ongoing drought conditions affecting the region. While the frozen ground and occasional snow may create the illusion of relief, much of the state remains under drought or abnormally dry conditions. These circumstances, masked by winter weather, pose serious risks as spring approaches.

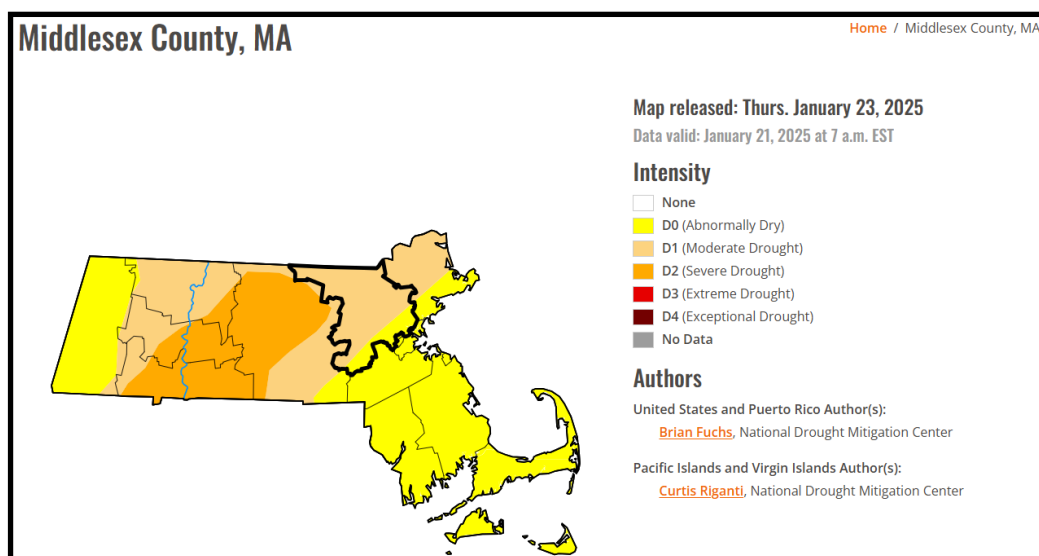
Over the past year, Massachusetts has faced drought, with some areas experiencing significant deficits in precipitation. Although winter typically replenishes water supplies, many parts of the state have received less-than-average snowfall and rainfall. Compounding the problem, the dry soil conditions from previous seasons have left groundwater and reservoir levels lower than normal. This creates a ticking time bomb for fire risk, agriculture, and water supply once temperatures rise.

The Littleton Fire Department is particularly concerned about the elevated wildfire risk that could emerge in the spring. Dry vegetation, which hasn't recovered from the past year's drought, becomes a dangerous fuel source as warmer weather and spring winds arrive. Brush fires, which can ignite quickly and spread rapidly, are especially problematic during this transitional period from late March through April.

Homeowners can help mitigate the risks by creating defensible space around their properties, clearing dead vegetation, and ensuring outdoor equipment doesn't spark a fire. Clearing dead vegetation such as leaves from around buildings and from underneath decks can be the difference between a brush fire and a fire involving a building. Often these leaves or even dry grass work as the mechanism for a fire to transition from a ground fire to valuable properties.

As spring approaches, and specifically outdoor burn season, the Littleton Fire Department urges residents to conduct their burning as early as possible, preferably while snow is left on the ground. Each year, the burning season runs from January 15 to May 1. This season is dictated by the Department of Environmental Protection. With the on-going drought conditions, severe restrictions on burning or an outright ban may occur shortening the burn season.

The Littleton Fire Department reminds residents that everyone plays a role in reducing the risk of wildfires. By taking proactive steps now, residents can better prepare for the challenges the warmer months may bring.



## October 2024 Calendar of Meetings &amp; Events

Check website for updates, additions &amp; cancellations

[www.littletonma.org/calendar](http://www.littletonma.org/calendar) or scan barcode for live calendar

## February 2025

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						<p><u>1</u> <u>Community Shred Day</u></p> <p><u>Finance Committee - Joint Meeting w/ Select Board - February 1st, 2025 @ 9:00 AM - Sturtz Room (Reuben Hoar Library)</u></p> <p><u>Select Board - Joint Meeting w/ Finance Committee - February 1st, 2025 @ 9:00 AM - Sturtz Room (Reuben Hoar Library)</u></p> <p><u>Cemetery Commission - Joint Meeting</u></p>
<p><u>2</u></p> 	<p><u>3</u> <u>Ray Grande Scholarship Committee Meeting - February 3rd, 2025 @ 4:00 PM - Virtual via Zoom</u></p> <p><u>Select Board Meeting - February 3rd, 2025 @ 6:30 PM - Sturtz Meeting Room (Reuben Hoar Library)</u></p>	<p><u>4</u> <u>EHS - Lunch and Learn "Spot the Scam and Fraud Workshop"</u></p> <p><u>Conservation Commission Meeting - February 4th, 2025 @ 7:30 PM - Virtual via Zoom</u></p>	<p><u>5</u> <u>Chocolate Tasting Social</u></p> <p><u>Elder &amp; Human Services Tour of Shaker Lane</u></p>	<p><u>6</u> <u>Recovering from a Hospital Stay</u></p> <p><u>Board of Assessors Meeting - February 6th, 2025 @ 7:30 AM - Virtual via Avaya</u></p> <p><u>Planning Board Meeting - February 6th, 2025 @ 6:30 PM - Room 103 (Town Hall)</u></p> <p><u>Planning Board - Public Hearing: Zoning Bylaw</u></p>	<p><u>7</u></p>	<p><u>8</u></p>
<p><u>9</u></p>	<p><u>10</u> <u>Council on Aging Board Meeting</u></p> <p><u>Park and Recreation Commission Meeting</u></p>	<p><u>11</u> <u>Back to Basics with iPhone and iPad</u></p> <p><u>Nashoba Valley Mineralogical Society (NVMS)</u></p> <p><u>Park and Recreation Commission Meeting</u></p>	<p><u>12</u> <u>Board of Health Meeting</u></p> <p><u>Historical Commission Meeting - February 12th, 2025 @ 7:00 PM - Room 301 (Town Hall)</u></p> <p><u>Orchard Meeting</u></p>	<p><u>13</u> <u>Library Trustees Meeting</u></p>	<p><u>14</u> </p> <p><u>Valentine's Day Sundae Bar</u></p> <p><u>Drop In Meeting with a Select Board Member - Matthew Nordhaus</u></p>	<p><u>15</u></p>
<p><u>16</u></p>	<p><u>17</u> <u>Town Offices Closed</u></p>	<p><u>18</u></p>	<p><u>19</u> <u>Foot Care Clinic</u></p> <p><u>Lunch and Learn! Decluttering &amp; Downsizing</u></p>	<p><u>20</u> <u>Boost your Brain Health</u></p>	<p><u>21</u></p>	<p><u>22</u></p>
<p><u>23</u></p>	<p><u>24</u> <u>Parker's Maple Barn Sugar House Tour and Breakfast trip</u></p>	<p><u>25</u> <u>Lunch &amp; Learn Estate &amp; Long Term Care Planning</u></p>	<p><u>26</u> <u>Board of Health Meeting</u></p> <p><u>A&amp;W Ukulele players</u></p>	<p><u>27</u> <u>Mass. Behavioral Health Partnership</u></p> <p><u>Littleton School Committee Meeting - LCTV Room</u></p>	<p><u>28</u> <u>The History of Classic Country Music with Matt York</u></p> <p><u>Drop In Meeting with a Select Board</u></p>	

# Current Board Vacancies (Appointed by the Select Board)

Click [HERE](#) for a list of all Boards/Committees



Applications are invited from residents of the Town of Littleton for the following Town board positions appointed by the Select Board. Application forms are available online at <https://littletonmaboards.vt-s.net/newcaf.php> or at the Office of the Select Board/ Town Administrator - Town of Littleton, 37 Shattuck Street, Littleton, MA 01460. Application submissions will be accepted and interviews/appointments will be made by the Select Board on a rolling basis until the positions are filled.

\* **AGRICULTURAL COMMISSION**

One (1) member (engaged in farming, employed in agricultural field and/or with knowledge/experience in agricultural practices / business) - term expiring June 30, 2027

One (1) citizen-at-large - term expiring June 30, 2027

\* **CONSERVATION COMMISSION**

Two (2) associates - term expiring June 30, 2026

\* **CULTURAL COUNCIL**

One (1) member - term expiring June 30, 2025

\* **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE**

Two (2) members – No expiration date

\* **HISTORICAL COMMISSION**

One (1) member - term expiring June 30, 2027

\* **MASTER PLAN IMPLEMENTATION COMMITTEE**

Two (2) members - term expiring June 30, 2027

One (1) member - term expiring June 30, 2025

\* **PERMANENT MUNICIPAL BUILDING COMMITTEE**

One (1) member— term expiring June 30, 2029

\* **TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COUNCIL**

Three (3) alternate citizen-at-large members - terms expiring June 30, 2027

\* **ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS**

One (1) member - term expiring June 30, 2025

One (1) alternate—term expiring June 30, 2026

Two (2) alternate - term expiring June 30, 2027

**APPOINTED BY SCHOOL COMMITTEE**

\* **FINANCE COMMITTEE**

One (1) member—term expiring June 30, 2027



# Planning Board



## Planning Board Community Survey - Short-Term Rentals



Short-Term Rental is the rental of a room or dwelling unit for less than 31 consecutive days, as long as it's not a hotel, motel, bed and breakfast, or lodging house. Examples include Airbnb and VRBO.

Short Term rentals are not currently addressed in the Town's Bylaws.

Survey is Open: NOW – February 16, 2025

### We want to hear from you: please take our *brief* survey!

1. *Should the Town of Littleton allow short-term rentals?*
2. *If the Town allowed short-term rentals, should the host/owner be required to be onsite during the short-term rental stay?*
3. *If the Town allowed short-term rentals, should they be required to obtain a local short-term rental license which would include an annual fee?*
4. *Additional Input ...*

### Please Visit:

<https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=Gj94KITybUiZhKWzSMLCX9-RRe1pXj9Oo7RV0k0CrdxURjVMN1lJRkE0UFBXN1NaVjZRVldUSDYyVS4u>

### Or scan this QR Code:



## Boards & Committees—Click [HERE](#) for a list of all Boards/Committees

### Affordable Housing Trust



#### Homeowner Mini-Grant Program



The Affordable Housing Trust is excited to announce the Homeowner Mini-Grant Program. The program is designed to provide financial support for critical home repairs/aging in place adaptation projects to allow Littleton homeowners with limited means to remain in the community as long and as safely as possible.



#### Message from Liz Tretiak, Elder & Human Services:

“We’re thrilled for the new Homeowner Mini-Grant program to roll out. This initiative provides funding for the essential small home repairs and modifications residents need to ensure safer, more age-friendly living spaces. Aging in place is incredibly important, as it allows seniors to maintain their independence, stay connected to their communities, and enjoy the comfort and familiarity of their own homes. Littleton Elder and Human Services fielded nearly 500 housing and home repair related inquiries last year, so adding this grant program to our resource tool kit will be a huge benefit. We can’t wait to see the positive impact this grant program will have.”

#### Message from Amy DeMichele, Elder & Human Services:

“Home improvements, modifications, and repairs are crucial for older adults and individuals with disabilities to maintain their independence and enhance safety within their homes. When considering these changes, one of the most common challenges is cost. We’re excited to offer a program that helps ease this burden, providing the support you need to make your home safer and more comfortable.”

## **Boards & Committees**—Click [HERE](#) for a list of all Boards/Committees

### **Affordable Housing Trust**



This Small Grant Program was made possible when Littleton received a \$120,000 Housing Choice Grant from the Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities. The Affordable Housing Trust will offer up to \$7,500 for critical home repairs for qualified Littleton Applicants. Applicants may be deemed eligible if (1) The property is your primary residence and in need of critical repair; (2) Household income is below 80% of Littleton's Median Income; and (3) You plan to own your home for at least the next 12 months.

Critical Home Repair Projects can include, but not limited to: Chimneys, Doors, Downspouts, Dry-Wall, Electrical, Energy Sealing, Flooring, Gutters, Heating, Insulation, Locks, Plaster, Plumbing, Roofing, Siding, Smoke/CO2 Detectors, Stairs, Steps & Porch, Tiling, Weather Stripping, and Windows

Aging In Place Adaptations can include, but not limited to: Access Ramps, Grab Bars, Railings, Tripping Hazards, Stair Lift, and Wheelchair Access

Applications will be evaluated and prioritized based on health and safety considerations, and the financial need of the applicant. Grants are awarded by the Affordability Housing Trust on a first come first served basis.

This program is made possible by the hard work of Littleton's Elder and Human Services, Building, and Planning Departments with policy guidance from the Affordable Housing Trust.

**For additional information, please reach out to Liz Tretiak or Amy DeMichele at 978-540-2472, or visit the Elder & Human Services page of the Town website at <https://littletonma.org/226/Elder-Human-Services>.**

## Boards & Committees—Click [HERE](#) for a list of all Boards/Committees

### Planning Board Update



*The Planning Board is discussing several possible Zoning Bylaw Amendments for May 2025 Town Meeting: Accessory Dwelling Units, Floodplain Bylaw and Map Updates, and Marijuana Cultivation Facilities. Your input at upcoming meetings – scheduled for Feb. 6, March 13, and April 3 is appreciated.*

#### **Accessory Dwelling Unit Bylaw Update**

New State Law requires every Massachusetts community to allow Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) of 900 square feet by right starting Feb. 5, 2025. The State Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities (EOHLC) has issued draft guidelines and will publish final guidelines and a model ADU Bylaw soon. Littleton has an “Accessory Apartments” bylaw that could be updated to meet these new State requirements; sections of this bylaw that do not meet the new State requirements will not be enforceable after Feb. 5. Please visit the “ADU” page on the Town website (link below) that has links to the State and MAPC resources. Responses to the short-term rental survey will help inform the discussion on Accessory Dwelling Units.

**For more information on Accessory Dwelling Units, please visit: <https://littletonma.org/1275/Accessory-Dwelling-Unit-Bylaw-Update-202>**

#### **Floodplain Bylaw and Map Update**

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has issued new Flood Insurance Rate Map panels for Littleton. Littleton’s Floodplain Bylaw is outdated and should be updated (1) to reference the new maps and (2) to assure that FEMA does not drop Littleton from the national flood insurance program. FEMA issued the maps as “Final” in January 2025, so Littleton has until July 2025 to update our Floodplain Bylaw. We have an initial draft submitted to the State Department of Conservation and Recreation – Flood Hazard Management Program for a required review prior to scheduling a Planning Board Public Hearing.

Littleton IT Department, working with a GIS consultant, has posted the Preliminary FEMA maps to the website GIS. Funding for the mapping work is from Article 8 part (3) of the October 29, 2024, Town Meeting.

**For more information on the FEMA Floodplain Bylaw and Maps, please visit: <https://littletonma.org/1273/Floodplain-Bylaw-and-Maps>**

#### **Marijuana Cultivation Facilities Bylaw Update – Feb. 6, 2025, Public Hearing**

The Planning Board is moving forward with a zoning bylaw amendment to further reduce the number of possible cultivation facilities to the minimum allowed under State Law – one. Town Meeting vote (2/3 majority) and Ballot Vote (simple majority) will both be needed. Votes can occur as early as the May 6 Town Meeting and May 10 Town Election. Town Counsel has provided (1) cover letter, (2) draft Zoning Bylaw amendment(s), (3) draft TM Warrant Article(s). These are all posted to the Marijuana Bylaw Amendments page linked below.

**For more information on the Marijuana Cultivation Facilities Bylaw, please visit:**

**<https://ma-littleton.civicplus.com/1226/202425-Marijuana-Bylaw-Amendments>**

## Trust Fund Commission



2025 Kimball-Morrison Scholarship Application Available Starting January 15, 2025

2025 Kimball-Morrison Scholarship Application Available Starting January 15, 2025.  
For more details, please click the link below:

<https://www.littletonma.org/924/Scholarship-Funds-and-Application>

## Conservation Commission



### Barbara Chapin (Newtown Hill) Community Garden

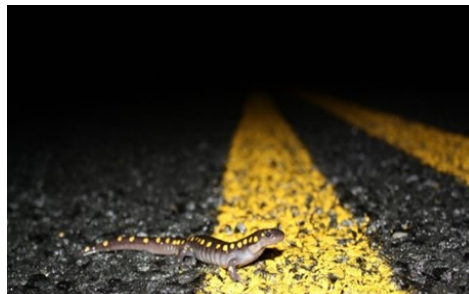
We have one plot available at the community garden. If you are dreaming of gardening this spring, please contact us! The plot has a yearly fee of \$15

### Amphibian Brigade Crossing

In the next couple months, amphibians will begin to emerge and migrate to vernal pools. Some of these amphibians are rarely observed outside of this migration period. The amphibian crossing brigade is a team of individuals that go out over the course of several evenings when migration is occurring and assist the amphibians in crossing roads that have historically high amphibian mortality rates. We will notify you the night when migration is occurring so you may come out to assist. Kids are welcome (with an adult). If you want to volunteer and for more information on this, please go to <https://ma-littleton.civicplus.com/1029/Vernal-Pools>.



For more information on any of the above, please contact Tim Pearson at 978-540-2427 or [tpearson@littletonma.org](mailto:tpearson@littletonma.org)





## School Committee



Greetings from the Littleton School Committee! This month we are pleased to share some initiatives involving our valued community partners, emphasizing the role we all play as a community to support a high quality education in Littleton.



At the January 9 School Committee meeting we heard from the LHS Environmental Club. These students are partnering with Erin Jade from the Littleton Conservation Trust and the Highway Department to update the landscaping at the high school. Their plans involve removing invasive species and replacing them with native plants to beautify the campus. The students have researched which plants would be most successful based on available light and soil conditions. Many of the plants will attract local pollinators, and students have reached out to the district's science coordinator regarding the possibility of integrating science lessons. We are grateful for the collaboration of so many in the community on this worthy project!

Another example of community partnership involves the Littleton Electric Light and Water Department. LELWD recently awarded a grant to the Russell Street School to purchase updated Augmented Reality (AR) and Virtual Reality (VR) kits. This new tool will provide our students with immersive and interactive experiences with engaging age-appropriate educational content. The goal is to use this technology to create deeper experiential learning opportunities that include virtual field trips, science explorations, creative exploration, and the potential for student-created content. For example, our third graders virtually traveled to the moon where they were able to explore the craters, watch a lunar lander and hear Neil Armstrong's famous words when his boots touched the surface of the moon.



LELWD further supported our curriculum with a demonstration for fourth graders about water pollution and watersheds. Volunteers from LELWD and the Department of Environmental Protection set up hands-on interactive models of how pollution impacts our water supply. Many thanks to LELWD for their tireless commitment to our students!



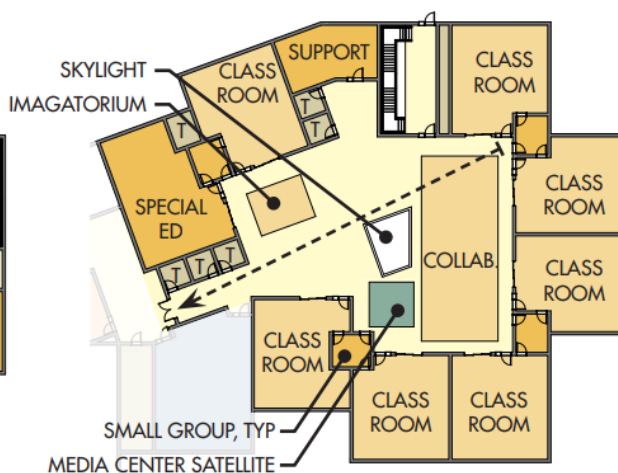
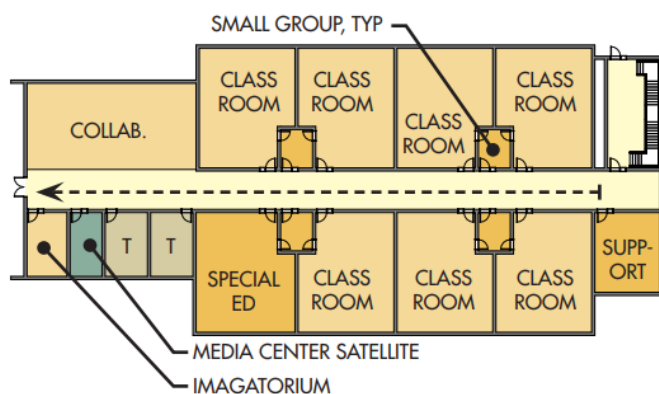
## School Committee



It's important to also keep the community updated with our plans for a new Shaker Lane School, as this is the biggest community partnership of all. We can share a small preview of what is being considered as a layout for classrooms at the new school. The new layout, called an Extended Learning Den, provides a better physical space for collaborative learning and community building. The chart below the diagram explains the benefits of this type of layout. Are you interested in seeing for yourself? A tour of the current building, including ideas for the future, will be held on [February 5](#) from 2:30 - 3:30. Please [contact](#) the office at Shaker Lane School if you are interested in attending. We are committed to involving the full community as we make our way through the process in partnership with the Massachusetts School Building Authority.

### How does an Extended Learning Den (modern school layout) compare to a traditional layout?

These two layouts contain the same spaces, and follow both MSBA guidelines and the Shaker Lane educational program.



	Traditional Layout	Extended Learning Den	
<b>Classroom Size</b>	1,000sf each (MSBA max)	900sf each (MSBA min)	Classrooms can be smaller but more functional if resources are shared in the Den
<b>Total Size</b>	16,360sf	16,600sf	Total size is approximately equal
<b>Travel Distance</b> →	182'	116'	Lengthy travel reduces educational time
<b>Multi-Functional Circulation</b>	No	Yes	Multi-functional spaces are flexible and cost-effective
<b>Equal access to collaboration space</b>	No	Yes	Students receive better, faster support
<b>Natural light in circulation areas</b>	No	Yes	Natural light improves educational outcomes
<b>Distributed toilet rooms</b>	No	Yes	Improves supervision and reduces travel time
<b>Compact footprint</b>	No	Yes	Maximizes value of every square foot

# TOWN OF LITTLETON

37 Shattuck Street  
Littleton, MA 01450  
978-540-2400  
Email: [WebQuestions@littletonma.org](mailto:WebQuestions@littletonma.org)

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## Additional Town Resources



[Littleton Public School District](#)



[Littleton Electric Light & Water Department \(LELWD\)](#)



- \* [What is the Current Population in Littleton per Census?](#)
- \* [How to apply for an Abatement?](#)
- \* [How to Register to Vote?](#)
- \* [How do I find Minutes & Agendas?](#)
- \* [What are the current Electric Rates?](#)
- \* [What are the current Water Rates?](#)
- \* [What are the current Tax Rates?](#)
- \* [How to apply for a Building Permit?](#)
- \* [How to contact Parks, Recreation & Comm Ed?](#)



We can all agree that the groundhog is the world's most famous rodent meteorologist, but who appointed them the official spring forecaster? The Pennsylvania Dutch introduced this superstition into our popular culture. The lore claims that if the groundhog emerges from its burrow on February 2nd and sees its shadow, it will retreat back underground and there will be six more weeks of winter. If the groundhog doesn't see its shadow, then spring will arrive early.

Groundhogs (a.k.a. woodchucks or whistlepigs) are stout cat-sized rodents belonging to the group of large ground squirrels in the family Sciuridae. They have the nickname "whistlepig" because when alarmed, they use a high-pitched whistle to warn the colony.

Groundhogs have short ears and a short tail. The jaws are strong, and their teeth grow throughout their lives.

The average groundhog weighs as much as 11lbs. Despite their stocky build, they are surprisingly quick. Groundhogs are also good swimmers and tree climbers.

They have two layers of fur: a dense grey undercoat and a longer coat of banded guard hairs that gives the groundhog a "frosted" appearance. When groundhogs are frightened, the hairs of the tail stand straight up.

Groundhogs live near rocky outcrops from valley bottoms to alpine tundra, but they avoid dense forest. They are active mostly at dawn and dusk.

Groundhogs are exceptional diggers and will use their claws to create an intricate system of underground burrows, which even include a separate "bathroom" chamber!

Their burrow systems can have between two and ten entrances, but the average is around five.

They use their burrows all year round for resting, safety and raising young.

A groundhog's diet consists of lots of green plants, fruits, and vegetables, but very little water. Most of their moisture come from dewy leaves. They're mostly herbivores, except for when they're not. They will occasionally be spotted snacking on insects, bird eggs and other tiny critters.

