

## Higganum

**HES Building** – It is my belief that if the town had not acquired this property the building would have been locked up with minimal maintenance on the exterior. The town has kept the building open and maintained. The Farmers Market, HK Rec, Blue Fire Stage Company, Pratt and Whitney Machinist Union, and various other non- profits use the building which keeps the air circulating. They are quick to report any problems that may otherwise go unnoticed. The town retained a landscape company for the exterior with an on-call quote if an issue is to arise.

**In 2020**, a lot of progress was made on leasing the entire building to Adelbrook School. The lease terms would have covered all town expenses and allowed for some public use, like the farmers market. When the pandemic struck all negotiations came to a halt.

**In 2021** we need to address the play-scape and plan to make the necessary repairs to re-open. We will continue to have conversations with Adelbrook and hopefully strike a deal in 2021.

**Connections between Higganum Center and the natural environment** – This subject was of great interest at the October 2019 workshops.

We worked with the Land Trust, the Conservation Commission and others to identify trails and a plan to preserve the area. We had discussions with the Town Engineer and sub-contracted a consultant with trail experience. A meeting was set up with Chamber of Commerce and the Middletown Mayor on the Green/Blue Way to Middletown and update of Conway Study.

The meetings were canceled due to Covid. During 2020, I posted my thoughts on Facebook. I posted a Higganum Cove photo tour on Facebook. Clearly there was interest in developing the Cove as a first step.

We secured \$8,000 from State of CT and used \$6,000 in the capital budget to retain a landscaper and clear 5 years of overgrowth and downed trees.

**In 2021**, we will clear the area below the parking lot which is full of historic foundations from the Coves industrial past. Research will begin on the removal of the graffiti as well as installing security cameras to hopefully deter vandalism.

Most significantly we need to increase the number of good, responsible people using the Cove. This will force out the people with negative intentions. Just before her passing, former First Selectwoman Melissa Schlag shared with me her vision for the Cove which revolved around creating a “Friends of Higganum Cove” organization. There are many successful models of similar plans and this will be a top priority in 2021.

**Scovil Hoe Property** – Using a state grant we completed work to address liability issues concerning the town’s acquisition and created a final Remedial Action Plan. The State DOT has made it clear that if the town doesn’t acquire the property, it will remain as is with no improvements.

The goal is to create an environmentally stable, liability free and occupiable shell that the town can feel comfortable acquiring.

**In 2021** there is \$17 million available in State Brownfield Remediation funding as well as a winter 2021 grant round. We will use the final Remedial Action Plan to apply for a \$1 million clean-up grant.

We are also working on the reconstruction of Candlewood Hill Road adjacent to Scovil Hoe. This will include a retaining wall, improvements to the green (including a water source for the Garden Club), cleaning up and defining the streetscape at the upper lot at Scovil.

**Community Septic** – Many feel the lack of a centralized sewer system has prevented any meaningful revitalization of Higganum Center. Over the years, the Town has spent close to \$200,000 studying the issue. Again, if we did not acquire the HES building we would not be talking about the creation of a community septic system.

What started as an idea to help drive the acquisition of HES, turned into a conceptual plan, the concept was then endorsed by State DEEP and State Health. The conceptual plan then received funding in the Capital Budget and then received \$128,000 from the State Small Town Economic Assistance Program (STEAP) from the State Office of Policy and Management.

**In 2021** we will start a formal design and create a Water Pollution Control Committee (WPCA).

**Rossi Site** – This property is the lynchpin to meaningful and comprehensive revitalization of Higganum Center. Rossi Lumber left in 1994, since then the property has been more of a negative than a positive influence on the center. I believe it is time for town to control the property and its future destiny. With that argument the BOS, BOF and Town Meeting authorized the First Selectman to sign a purchase and sale agreement which allocated funding for a Phase 1 environmental study.

The new Cromwell town garage cost \$240/sq.ft. The First Selectman has determined it is in the best interest of town to acquire and control the Rossi property. But he is not proposing any funding to create new Public Works facility on the Rossi property. He is open to alternate sites.

**In 2021** we will present the results of the Phase 1 study and a plan to move forward.

**Steady Habit Brewing** – unfortunately, this project has fallen apart due to continued landlord – tenant disputes. I remain in contact with Steady Habits as they would love to remain in Haddam and have put them in contact with a Farmington developer with extensive experience with historic buildings and significance resources. As we are hoping to look at the jail and Scovil Hoe as options - what a great first tenant that would be for Scovil Hoe!

## **Tylerville**

**Day Care in Tylerville** – This project is fully approved with an experienced day care provider. The day care provider remains committed to this project; however, the bank needs him to get his other facilities up to capacity before moving to this new project. This will represent new jobs, significant new tax revenue and fill an identified need in that section of the town. Project cost – approximately \$2 million.

**Sidewalks on Bridge Road/ Roundabouts** – The public meeting went very well. The final design plans have been submitted to DOT and DEEP. Certainly, the biggest and best news came late in 2020 when CTDOT announced they will be constructing a pedestrian crossing cantilevered off the swing bridge to connect Tylerville and East Haddam.

**In 2021**, we will complete the appraisals and I will be contacting the owners to negotiate the acquisition of the required easements. Hopefully, we can have shovel in ground fall 2021.

**Also, in 2021**, the DOT will be conducting public meetings regarding a round-about at the intersection of Bridge and Saybrook Road. They are very committed to the idea of a round-about and asked us to design our sidewalks as if there were a round-about present.

**Multi-family** – In 2020 the Planning and Zoning Commission amended the Tylerville Village Regulations to permit multi-family development. As a result of this change two developers were interested in high end multi-family projects. One developer has prepared an engineered design which is under review. All design issues are subject to review by the Architectural Review Committee. If built a project such as this will be a very significant addition to the grand list and add residents to the area which is critical.

## **Haddam Center**

**Sidewalks** – Haddam Center is the oldest section of Town and is in the National Historic Register. We need to highlight that fact and promote it. My experience with the Farmington Village Historic District really showed me how historic assets can add so much value to a town.

This sidewalk reconstruction project is 100% funded by the State of CT and includes signage, landscape, benches etc. The final plans have been submitted to the CTDOT for final approval. A grant from Eversource allowed us to hire the historical society to research key historical elements, which will be incorporated into the project.

**In 2021** we will bid the project and hopefully have shovel in ground in the fall.

**Haddam Jail** – This is a huge challenge. I have shown it to several developers, unfortunately the renovation costs are too high. A very successful restaurant group with nine locations was very interested until COVID19.

**In 2021** I hope to address the disconnected septic issue and establish a reliable water source. I will continue discussions with the interested restaurant group. I spoke to them in November, they have a new concept which could start the renovations and work very well with the “new normal” for dining.

**7 Island Dock – Hope Garden Wellness Center** - This is the long vacant Marin Environmental Office building. We have worked with these developers throughout 2020 and I am happy to report the project will go forward in 2021. The project was bid and awarded to Quest Builders Group; we will be meeting with them the first week of 2021. We have just received the full set of plans for the building permit. It is a \$3.5 million project and should end up being the 3<sup>rd</sup> largest taxpayer in town. The building permit fee should be approximately \$60,000. The project will also create several new jobs, utilize local services and restaurants.