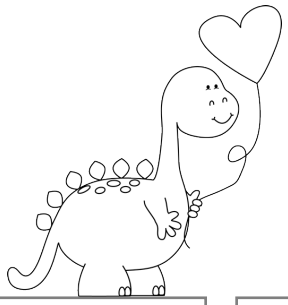
Washington On Track

February 2022



Open Burning for 2022

Open burning is now open and will run through May 1, 2022. Washington residents and property owners must obtain a permit for open burning from the Fire Chief for each day they want to burn. There are two options for obtaining a permit:

1. Call the Fire Chief's residence (413) 623-2185 and speak directly to the Chief or leave a message (listen to the entire message to be sure burning is being permitted for the day). When leaving a message include name, address where you will be burning, and a contact phone number.
2. Log onto www.beburnpermits.com and follow the directions that are listed.

Weather conditions, current and predicted, are part of the determining factors for permitting. The MassDEP also makes a determination based on air quality. Call the MassDEP Air Quality Hotline at (800) 882-1497 or visit MassAir Online to find out if the daily air quality is acceptable for burning.

Open burning must be done:

- Between 10:00 AM and 4:00 PM
- At least 75 feet from all buildings
- As close as possible to the source of the materials being burned
- When air quality is acceptable for burning
- Attended by an adult until completely extinguished
- Extinguishment materials / tools must by onsite and available
- No hazardous materials
- Use common sense and be safe
- Call 911 immediately if the fire gets out of control

Paul Mikaniewicz
Fire Chief
Becket / Washington

2022 Dog Licenses are Available

The 2021 licenses and tags do not expire until March 31, 2022, but you are welcome to get the 2022 license/tag anytime you would like. You can see the Town Clerk on Monday evenings with the following:

- Current rabies certificate
- Proof of spay or neuter, if applicable
- Fee: $4.00 if spayed/neutered or $10 if not

You can also mail the above (checks payable to Town of Washington) to the Town Clerk, 8 Summit Hill Rd, Washington, MA 01223 and a license and tag will be mailed back to you.

Please note that if you received a 2021 late fee invoice, you will have to pay that first before receiving your 2022 license/tag.

COA News

Classes are continuing with masks being required for all

Yoga Tuesdays at 9:00 AM
Osteoporosis Thursdays at 9:00 AM
Ti-Chi/QiGong Fridays at 10:00 AM

Pot Luck Dinner Friday, February 18 at 5:30 PM Steve is cooking roast pork and potatoes As always all seniors are welcome with or without a dish to share - we look forward to seeing you!
(Masks required for socializing before and after eating)

Questions, comments, or need assistance? Call 413-394-0003 or email washingtoncoa@gmail.com

Dear Washington Friends & Neighbors: February 2022

With the Omicron variant raging through Berkshire County, the Select Board had hoped to obtain Covid-19 at-home test kits for our community. But regional efforts stalled when other towns pulled back after the Federal government announced plans to distribute free kits and make insurance companies cover costs of at-home tests.

All residents are strongly encouraged to sign up for the 4 free test kits being offered from the U.S. government by going online to CovidTests.gov or calling 1-800-232-0233.

We are still looking into opportunities to procure N95 masks for residents, depending also on State and Federal efforts and their effectiveness.

Until recently, we have seen more ice storms than snow again this winter. Dealing with icy roads is more costly than snow removal, unfortunately. Supplier problems have made it a challenge to keep up with salt needs. Ongoing mechanical problems with one of our plow trucks haven't helped. We also face serious repair needs with the Voc. Ed. school bus. The Select Board and Finance Committee will be confronting these issues further in the upcoming budget process.

We plan to go out to bid in the coming month for the repaving of Lovers Lane Rd and lower Frost Rd this spring, to be paid from our Ch. 90 funds. Also later this year, we plan to finish raising Upper Valley Rd and then repave it from Summit Hill Rd to Route 8, also with Ch. 90 funding.

At the last hearing on Bucksteep, the Receiver brought a motion to enforce their lien. The judge ordered the Owner to arrange a payment plan by Feb 28, or else he will hear the Receiver's motion to authorize them to sell the property. The Owner still claims to be intent on auctioning the property soon. The judge clarified that notice of the auction and any bid award will be subject to court approval. The case drags on. The next hearing is scheduled for March 14.

After several years of talking about it, we are pleased to finally launch a new Town website this month. Our site is now on the same CivicPlus platform used by many other towns in the region. Elsewhere in this Tracks, you'll find an orientation to some of the features. Note that with this renovation, our official town web address will now be washington-ma.gov instead of .com.

This makeover has been funded through a Community Compact Best Practices grant in the arena of citizen engagement and represents a major effort to improve information, transparency, and access to our Town government. We also hope this will provide a useful tool for fostering a greater sense of community through frequent news & announcements and communication. The site should be live by Feb. 1, or shortly thereafter.

Kent Lew
Select Board chair

Tricia Drugmand
Select Board clerk

David Ellis
Select Board

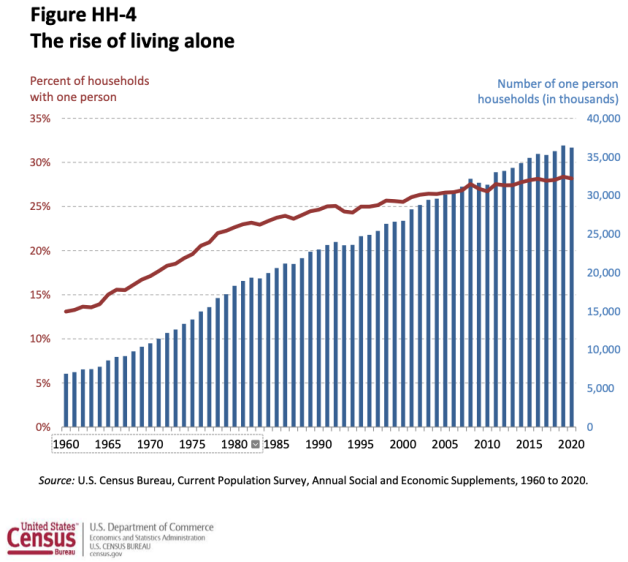
Pursuant to the Town of Washington's disposition policy the Select Board is offering residents the opportunity to purchase vintage two-seater wooden chairs that were used in the Washington School auditorium. The offer duration is for 30 days, beginning February 1, 2022 ending March 2, 2022. Residents can purchase chairs for $10.00 per two-seater on a first come first serve basis. Payment will be made by check payable to the Town of Washington - General Fund. Interested parties can place an order by email to the washingtonaas@gmail.com or leave a message at 413-623-8878 extension 1. Please include quantity and a phone number where you can be reached. Thank you. Other items available include: HP 3600n Color LaserJet printer, HP 9800 Deskjet printer, Brother DCP 7020 Laser copier printer scanner, two Dell keyboards, two Dell monitors, adding machine. Also on a first come first serve basis.

A Home to Share
Building rental income while sharing lives

By Susan Colgan Matson

Senior Housing– and affordable housing– are top priorities for the Town of Washington's long-term plan. And while all of us consider how that housing might be built and how we can pay for it, there's an affordable option that could be implemented right away. I learned of it through my niece Annamarie Pluhar, who began a nonprofit 4 years ago called Sharing Housing, Inc. Based in East Dummerston, Vermont, Annamarie provided some insights that could be helpful here in Washington.

In our country, and here in our community, the cost of housing and the availability of affordable housing is a pervasive problem. According to the 2020 US Census more than 30 percent of the households in the country are single occupancy, for a total of 36 million Americans living alone. And the trend is growing. The median age of our population in Washington has increased from 41 years old, as recorded in the 2000 Census, to 56.5 today. About 40% of our population is 65 and older and about 14% of them live alone.



"That's a lot of empty rooms," says Annamarie who is also the author of Sharing Housing: A Guidebook for Finding, and Keeping Good Housemates. (Bauhan Publishing, $16.50)

Many folks love living alone. But what are your options, she asks, if you find yourself living in a house that is too big for your needs, too expensive to maintain—and you don't want to move? Or maybe you are just starting a career, you have a job, but your salary isn't big enough to afford an apartment in the community you know and love? One solution is to find a housemate—or mates—helping to conserve resources and supporting a familiar way of life.

"Like many people of my generation, I started living in shared housing after college," Annamarie explains. "I lived in rental apartments and houses with many different people. Later, I bought a house that was big enough for me to have two housemates. I liked to have someone to say hello to and I liked sharing the bills. I lived in that house for ten years and had many housemates, some for years, some for a few months. All of them started out as strangers. I made good friends and I made some mistakes, but I learned how to make it work."

Annamarie came to realize that she had acquired some very useful knowledge, and that crystalized when a good friend was having a financial crisis and did not feel she could afford living in her home. Annamarie remembers saying, "You have an asset here. You could rent a room in your house."

(continued)

When her friend complained that she'd tried having a roommate and it hadn't worked, Annamarie offered to coach her on a better selection process.

"I realized over the twenty years of having housemates I had honed a model for selecting good housemates and after research I also learned that the process was nowhere documented." Then, after Annamarie began to coach people, she realized that a guidebook for selecting a housemate would help folks unsure how to proceed.

In her book, Sharing Housing, Annamarie defines a homemate as an independent person whom you like and respect and whose ways of living at home are compatible enough with yours that everyone is comfortable.

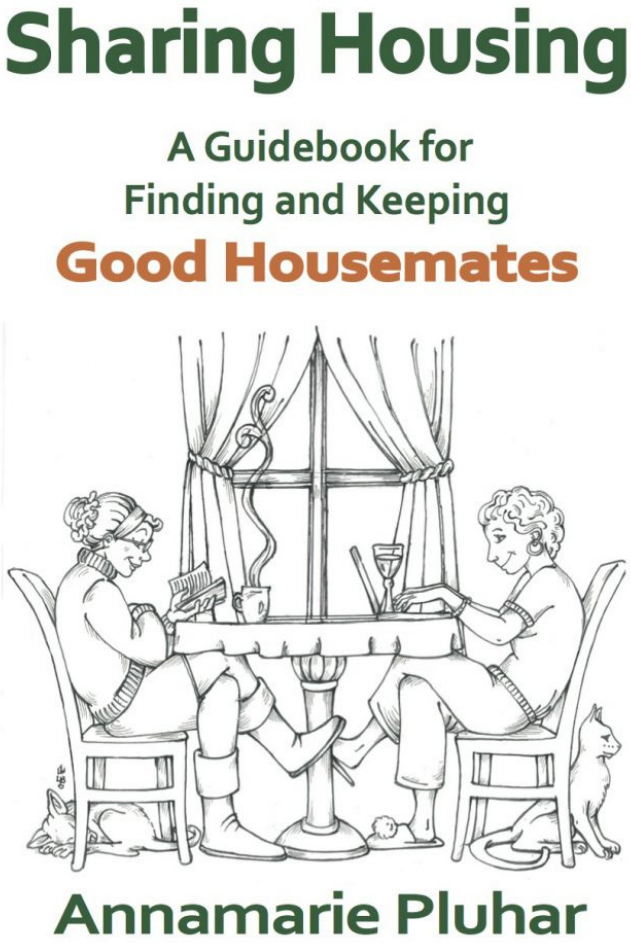
In the past, the main reason for sharing housing was the financial help it offered, but since the pandemic, when so many folks have been forced to be alone for much of the time, companionship and help with tasks are also big motivators.

"People start for the income and stay for the companionship," says Annamarie, adding "Five hundred dollars a month can make a big difference; so can the company."

When considered carefully, shared housing offers a range of benefits: additional income, social connection, extra hands, and living light on the earth. If you are interested but uncertain about how to get started, Annamarie has designed a website where you can explore articles, sign up for a newsletter, read about matching programs, find books on shared housing and even sign up for on-line workshops that make what can seem a daunting project easier.

In some communities, renting a room in your house might require a special permit, but in the Town of Washington, renting a room (or up to three rooms) in your house requires only the approval from the Board of Health.

With the need for affordable housing so ubiquitous, cutting down the number of one-person households by sharing housing is a solution that could be widely applied and, at the same time, might help diminish social isolation in our communities.



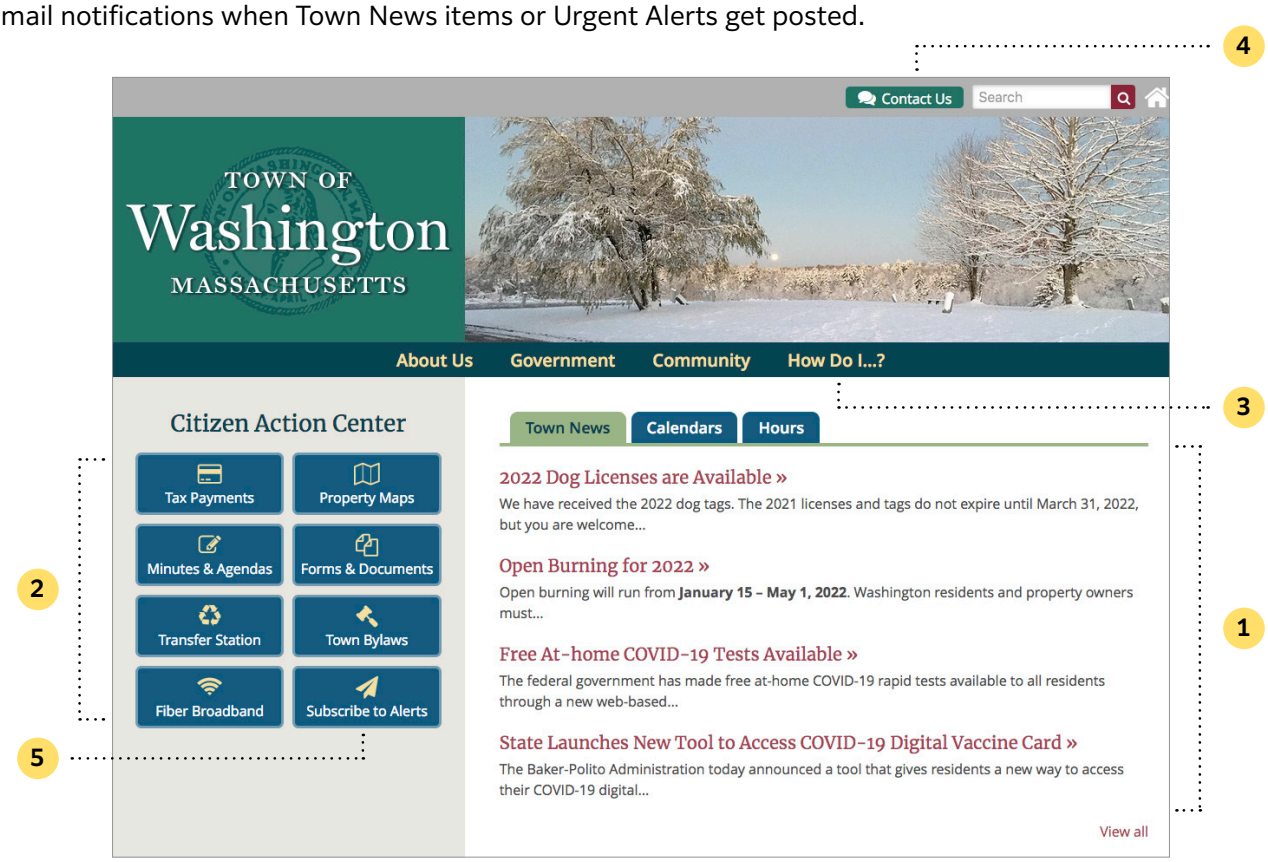
For additional information, check out the Sharing Housing website at www.sharinghousing.org.

Introducing the new official Washington, MA website : *washington-ma.gov*

We have long wanted to give our Town website a makeover. And now it's time for the big reveal. In order to make this available sooner rather than later, some content that has not yet been added. More resources, links, and even whole sections will be added in the coming weeks and months.

This flyer is an introduction to highlight some of the features of the new site.

Above all, I really want to encourage everyone to use the *Subscribe to Alerts* feature to sign up to get email notifications when Town News items or Urgent Alerts get posted.



1 **Town News & Calendars** — You can now find timely News front & center on the home page.

The Calendars divvy up Public Meetings from Community Events, so you can more easily focus on the kinds of events you're interested in. Dates with an underline have something scheduled which you can view by hovering.

2 **Action Center** — Buttons take you right to common tasks and information. Let us know what else you want to see here.

3 **How Do I …?** — This menu also guides you to where to find things when it might not be obvious which board or department handles what you're looking for. Your feedback on this is also welcome.

4 **Contact Us** — Send a general message or direct it to a specific department or board.

5 **Subscribe to Alerts** — You can sign up to receive email notices when items are posted. You can choose among News, Urgent Alerts (*not shown*), and specific Board/Committee Agendas & Minutes.

(continued)

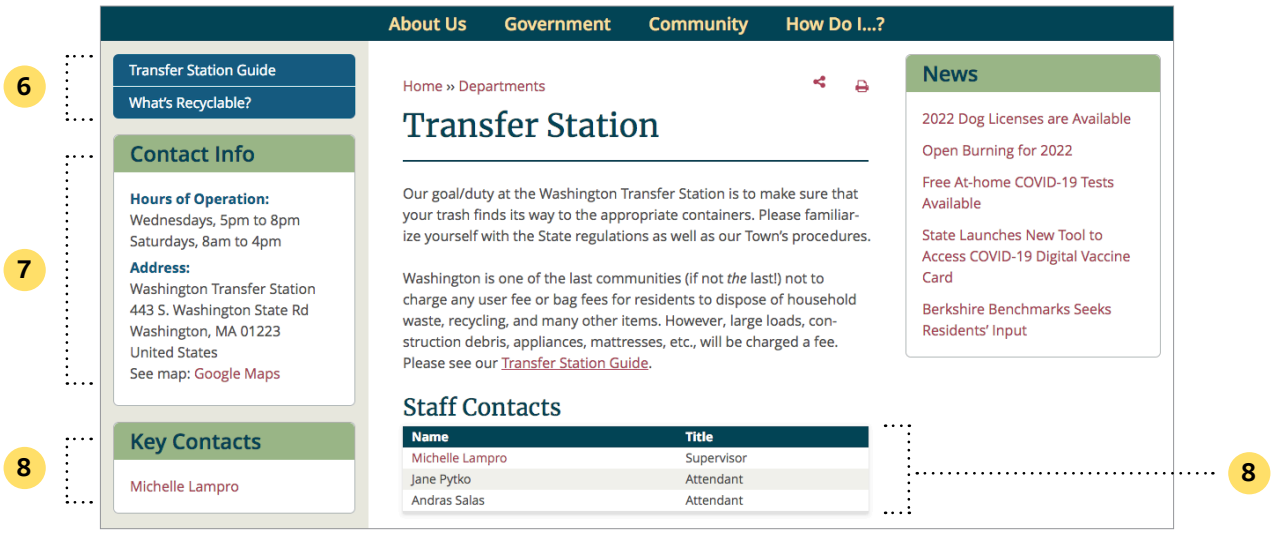
6 **Useful Links** — In the left sidebar, you'll find links to relevant forms, downloads, resources, information, etc.

7 **Contact Info, Hours, Meetings** — The kinds of information will vary by department or board.

8 **Key Contacts, Staff & Members** — In most cases, clicking on a Staff Contact or Board/Committee Member name will open a Contact form to send a message. With only a few exceptions, we aren't publishing email addresses directly on the website, especially when personal addresses are involved, in order to prevent getting on spammers' lists.

9 **Board Calendars, Agendas & Minutes** — Boards & Committees will now be required to post their agendas and minutes online (and be able to do so themselves).

Example Department page



Example Board page

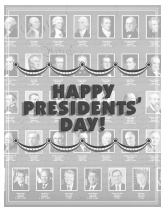
TOWN OF WASHINGTON FEBRUARY 2022 CALENDAR

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	The Steering Committee Meeting date can be found on the new Town website: washington-ma.gov	TOWN HALL 1 Yoga with Rima 9AM	TOWN HALL 2 Historical Commission 10AM Building Inspector 1PM-2PM Transfer Station 5PM-8PM Girl Scout Troop 40367 6PM-8 PM	TOWN HALL 3 OSTEOPOROSIS CLASS 9AM	TOWN HALL 4 TAI-CHI/QI-GONG CLASS 10AM	5 Transfer Station 8AM-4PM
6	TOWN HALL 7 Administrative Assistants 10AM-2PM Parks Commission 6:00 -6:45PM Select Board Meeting 7:00 - 9:00PM Finance Committee 7:00 - 9:00PM Assessors Office 6:00 - 8:00PM Tax Collector 6:00 - 8:00PM Town Clerk 7:00 - 9:00PM Police Deparment 7:00 - 9:00PM	8 Yoga with Rima 9AM Planning Board Meeting 7PM	TOWN HALL 9 Administrative Assistant 10AM-12PM (Closing Early) Building Inspector 1PM-2PM Transfer Station 5PM-8PM Girl Scout Troop 40367 6PM-8 PM	TOWN HALL 10 OSTEOPOROSIS CLASS 9AM	TOWN HALL 11 TAI-CHI/QI-GONG CLASS 10AM	12 Transfer Station 8AM-4PM
13	TOWN HALL 14 Administrative Assistants 10AM-2PM Select Board Meeting 7:00 - 9:00PM Assessors Office 6:00 - 8:00PM Tax Collector 6:00 - 8:00PM Town Clerk 7:00 - 9:00PM Police Deparment 7:00 - 9:00PM	15 Yoga with Rima 9AM	TOWN HALL 16 Administrative Assistant 10AM-2PM Building Inspector 1PM-2PM Transfer Station 5PM-8PM Girl Scout Troop 40367 6PM-8 PM	TOWN HALL 17 OSTEOPOROSIS CLASS 9AM	TOWN HALL 18 TAI-CHI/QI-GONG CLASS 10AM * Council On Aging Potluck Dinner 5:30PM-7PM	TOWN HALL 19 Transfer Station 8AM-4PM
20	TOWN HALL 21 Presidents' Day Observed	22 Yoga with Rima 9AM	TOWN HALL 23 Administrative Assistant 10AM-2PM Building Inspector 1PM-2PM Transfer Station 5PM-8PM Girl Scout Troop 40367 6PM-8 PM	24 OSTEOPOROSIS CLASS 9AM	TOWN HALL 25 TAI-CHI/QI-GONG CLASS 10AM	26 Transfer Station 8AM-4PM
27	TOWN HALL 28 Administrative Assistants 10AM-2PM Select Board Meeting 7:00 - 9:00PM Assessors Office 6:00 - 8:00PM Tax Collector 6:00 - 8:00PM Town Clerk 7:00 - 9:00PM Police Deparment 7:00 - 9:00PM	The story of Presidents' Day date begins in 1800. Following the death of George Washington in 1799, his February 22 birthday became a perennial day of remembrance. At the time, Washington was venerated as the most important figure in American history, and events like the 1832 centennial of his birth and the start of construction of the Washington Monument in 1848 were cause for national celebration. While Washington's Birthday was an unofficial observance for most of the 1800s, it was not until the late 1870s that it became a federal holiday. Senator Stephen Wallace Dorsey of Arkansas was the first to propose the measure, and in 1879 President Rutherford B. Hayes signed it into law.				

Entity	Contact	Number
Assessors	Karen Avalle	717-7216
Board of Health	Jim Huebner	655-8668
Building Inspector	Paul Greene	446-0964
Chapel Commission	Rose Borgnis	394-0003
Clerk	Allison Mikaniewicz	623-2185
Conservation	Michelle Lampro	464-2388
Council on Aging	Rose Borgnis	394-0003

Entity	Contact	Number
Finance Committee	Sean Connors	212-1182
Parks Commission	Dominic Sinopoli	623-2086
Planning Board	Don Gagnon	822-8385
Police Chief	Nicole Miller	446-4294
Selectmen	Kent Lew	623-0202
Tax Collector	Gina Campbell	623-0146
Transfer Station	Michelle Lampro	464-2388
Veterans Agent	John Herrera	499-9433

Please **CALL AHEAD**



Washington Tracks
Town Hall
8 Summit Hill Rd.
Washington, MA 01223

www.washington-ma.gov
New website address in February

Support Our Local Businesses

Horace Mann Insurance Agency
PO Box 772 Becket Ma. 01223
Phone 413.623.2112
Fax 413.623.5551
Provide all Personal Lines of Insurance
Provide Financial and retirement products too

Hilltowns Veterinary Clinic
Dr. Sharon Lynch, MVB
133 South Washington State Rd
Washington, MA 01223
413.623.5329
www.hilltownsvetclinic.com

John Fish Piano Service
413-281-6130
johnfishpiano.com
Piano tuning, repair & restoration; 20 years experience

Justice of the Peace
Dorothy Filanowska
413.446.6921 justicedora@gmail.com
http://www.justicedora.com

Mark F. Roos, Broker Associate ABR
The Kinderhook Group
413.822.6143
markfr909@gmail.com
Helping buyers and sellers achieve their dreams

Pinnacle Painting Company
578 South Washington State Rd
Washington, MA 01223
413.623.8737
Over 35 years experience Painting, wall covering & light carpentry

Realtor & Notary
Lisa Peltier
500 S. Washington State Rd.
413.822.1257
Keller Williams Realty
LisaPeltier413@gmail.com

Summit Hill Campground
34 Old Middlefield Rd.
Washington, Ma. 01223
413.623.5761
Great Family Camping
Tents,R.V.s Motor Homes
Full Hook Ups
Pet Friendly
Seasonals Welcomed
Events scheduled May through Sept

Email your TRACKS info by the 25th of the month to get in to next month's issue to
Lisa at: mrsabeski@mac.com
Please put TRACKS in the subject line.