



May 2012

Movie for May 18, 2012

Dinner at 5:30PM -- Movie to start at 6:30PM



Johnny Depp lends his voice to the title character, an adventurous family pet who leaves home to learn more about himself in this comic animated tale also featuring the vocal talents of Abigail Breslin, Harry Dean Stanton and Ned Beatty.

Spring Park Clean-up & Repair Schedule

May 5, 2012 9:00 AM to Noon or when available

Girl Scouts:

- Apply bark mulch. Contact Allison Mikaniewicz 623-2185
- Pull weeds, look for flowers
- Remove sod from benches and apply bark mulch
- Remove sod from playground equipment and apply bark mulch

Ball Field:

- Re-stain the dugouts and soccer kick board
- Repaint logo
- Ben Phillips is re-doing the pitcher's mound and home plate

Bike Path:

- Re-work bike path around playground equipment, clean out sod and re-apply crushed stone. Contact Paul Willis 822-6107

Benches:

- Repair fixed benches - 2 10' 4X4 rotted

Animals:

- Four to be set in concrete with 3X3 posts. Contact Ben Phillips
- Remove animals. Four volunteers needed to repair them.

Volunteers Needed. Contact Ed Bond, Chairperson at 623-5782

To our fellow Washington residents:

May 2012

Our people make Washington work. Anyone interested in volunteering for the Town's various jobs, committees, or boards please email washingtonboardofselectmen@gmail.com and let us know. We want to have as many different people involved as possible. There is plenty to do!

The Board of Health plans to hire the new Berkshire Public Health Alliance (BPH) as our Health Agent to provide inspections for camps, Title V, food service, lodging, wells, pools, etc.

- Sandra Martin of Egremont has graciously volunteered to assist Karl Franz as our interim Health Agent until BPH is up and running this summer.
- Temporary food events require an inspection and a permit only if they are open to the public; Sandra has provided us a guide that appears elsewhere in *Tracks* today. The Board of Health considers the CoA Pot Lucks to be "private" but reminds everyone that food safety is a critical health concern.
 - Make sure food has been cooked to a proper temperature.
 - Keep cooked food out of the bacterial growth danger zone (41° to 140°).
 - Avoid cross contamination and keep food preparation areas clean.
- BPH also received a \$40,000 MA Community Innovation Challenge grant to foster Public Health Nursing in the Berkshires, one of only 30 grants statewide. We hope to bring a public health nurse to Town for immunizations, health screenings and education for our residents next year. We expect our senior population to benefit from this.

We received only a single bid for the exterior insulation on the Town Hall. The amount exceeded the remaining Grant funds so the Board turned it down. We will petition the Department of Energy to allow us to use the remaining funds to cover architectural and grant writing costs before we formally close it out. The Grant paid for insulated garage doors for the Town Garage and high-efficiency heating for the Town Hall.

The Town Hall spruce-up and reorganization is proceeding. Now that we are no longer considering the exterior insulation, the work will be extended to refinishing the building's trim and doorways.

On the energy conservation front:

- CTC Technologies has decided that the Town does not buy enough electricity to sell us their output credits but is still considering the property behind the Town Park as a potential site for solar generation.
- Berkshire Regional Planning has recommended that the Town aggregate its demand for electricity. The Select Board is pursuing this because Lanesborough residents are reported to be saving \$150,000 per year after adopting aggregation.
- There are two questions on the Annual Town Meeting Warrant (**Saturday May 12 at 7 pm**) pertinent to the Town becoming a "Green Community". One is for the adoption of a solar by-law and the other is for the adoption of a "stretch" building code. To help our voters decide we have placed "Pro-Con" discussion points elsewhere in this issue.

We hope to see as many of you as possible at our Annual Town Meeting and even more importantly we hope each and every one of our voters exercises his or her most important civic duty during **Town Elections on Saturday May 19**. See you there. And don't forget the annual Town Park clean-up on Saturday June 3!

Jim Huebner
Select Board Chair

Shaun Lennon
Select Board Clerk

Mike Case
Select Board

THE WASHINGTON CULTURAL COUNCIL

Will be holding an Informational meeting on May 10th at 6:30 pm at Town Hall.

This meeting is opened to the Public.

Stretch Code - Green Communities Pro:

For the Homeowner: Energy Efficient Mortgages make it easier for borrowers to qualify for loans to purchase homes that are already energy efficient or to cover the expenses for making cost-effective energy improvements when purchasing or refinancing older existing homes.

Economic Benefits – reduced energy consumption and energy costs. The increased cost is usually recouped in lower energy costs after three to four years

Environmental benefits – reduce greenhouse gas emissions

For the Town: We would receive grant funding; last year each Green Community received \$125K plus a per capita income formula; Middlefield got \$138,025 521 and Becket \$140,000.

Projects being funded:

- Energy conservation measures
- Energy savings performance contracts
- Solar PV projects
- Incremental costs for hybrid vehicles
- Residential efficiency grant programs,

The Select Board plans to use the grant funding to:

1. Replace the old drafty doors and windows at the Town Hall.
2. Refund the cost of the HERS inspection to builders.
3. Provide seed money to residents wishing to improve the energy efficiency of their homes.

If we adopt the stretch code we can also repeal the stretch code and opt out of the Green Communities Program if we think it's bad for the community.

Stretch Code - Green Communities Con:

For the Homeowner/Builder: Increased construction/remodel cost

After rebates, the stretch code adds about \$2,000 to the cost of building a new 3,000 square foot house.

Inspection for energy efficiency would be required for any construction from a HERS Rater (Home Energy Rating System) adding approximately \$1000.00 for the inspection.

Some people believe a home that is build “too tight” in an effort to meet the regulations will be unhealthy to live.

Increased construction time from additional inspections.

There are too few HERS Raters in the area which has put some projects behind with **a wait time of approximate three weeks.**

The HERS process:

1. Review Building Plans via Computer Modeling
2. In-process inspections
 - First inspection
 - Thermal Bypass Checklist
 - Duct tightness test (if applicable)
 - Second Inspection
 - Insulation
 - Final Inspection
 - Blower door test
3. Finalize energy model based on verified performance and equipment

For the Town: The requirements in the Stretch Code are coming eventually. For towns that don't adopt the Stretch Code now, most of its new, tougher provisions will go into force when Massachusetts moves to the 2012 IECC, sometime in 2013 — and when that happens, complying with the code will not make towns eligible for any state grants

TOWN OF WASHINGTON

Highlights of the Fiscal Year 2013 (FY13) Annual Town Warrant

Article 3: Most Elected officials have seen no salary increase in four years. Therefore, it was decided that a 5% increase was warranted this year.

Article 5: Most General Government budgets are set at the FY12 level or have slight increases. The total budget for this category reflects only a 0.7% increase.

Articles 7 & 8: The capital budget for the Central Berkshire Regional School District is up 16.6% (\$8215). That is due entirely to a much larger population of Washington students at the Becket-Washington School. The operating budget is only up 0.26%.

Articles 9 & 10: We expect three vocational education students again FY13, all at Taconic High School. Because they are all at Taconic, it was possible to decrease the budget by \$11,000 (20%).

After two years without certified free cash the town finally has a substantial free cash account certified by the state Department of Revenue. That has made the following two articles possible.

Article 21: Transfer \$100,000 from free cash to the Stabilization account. This will replenish the \$35,000 that was transferred from Stabilization last year to reduce the tax rate and begin to rebuild this account. The balance will be slightly over \$125,000 with this transfer.

Article 22: Transfer \$50,000 from free cash to reduce the tax rate. That should ensure that there will be no increase in the tax rate from FY12 to FY13.

Article 23: Transfer \$8,800 from free cash for a hydraulic study of Eden Glen. This is a necessary step in order to request grant money that will enable flood prevention work in the Eden Glen/ Frost Road area.

Article 26: The Town is asked to adopt the Stretch Code version of the Massachusetts State Building Code. This is one of the five criteria necessary to become a Green Community and the only one that might have a financial impact on individual tax payers. (See the accompanying article listing pros and cons of this action.)

Article 27: The Planning Board has submitted a Solar Bylaw for approval by the voters. The bylaw allows small solar photovoltaic installations occupying less than 1/8 acre after approval of the plan by the Building Inspector. Large installations of 1/8 to 1 acre would require approval of the plan by the Planning Board. Installations greater than 1 acre would require a special permit to be granted by the Planning Board.

Overall the town's budget shows an increase of 9.5% from FY12; but almost all of that is comprised of the \$100,000 to fund the Stabilization account.

To the residents of the Town of Washington,

My name is Larry Wells and I've been a resident of the town my whole life. I am 53 years of age and have seen a lot of changes in our town, some good and some bad. The latest that's being invoked on us for a vote at the annual town meeting I feel really hurts us as citizens of this community and also hurts us in the ability to take care of our families.

You are going to be asked to vote on becoming a GREEN community at the annual town meeting.....I encourage you all to vote but also encourage you all to consider the dynamics of the situation if you vote yes. It will be a wonderful thing that our town hall gets a few needed up-grades in the form of grants....a building now being used pretty much one night a week.

If we vote yes it means new construction in this town will cost over triple in value. If you need to add a room on your home for an elderly parent you may now need to hire engineers to blow air through your windows and doors vents and add insulation on your duct work as well as maybe replacing a whole new heating system for a single bedroom.....for what.....a small grant that won't pay for all the construction on a building used once a week and your tax dollars need to finish the job? I feel we need to make our own personal decisions on how our homes are kept and not be bullied into these kind of requirements. We are a small town and need to be environmentally friendly not environmentally restrictive if we plan on any growth or help with our tax base.

On the flip side I am all for solar the 40 acres behind the town park to be used for solar energy because as a community we will all be benefitted and not just a choice few.

I urge all registered voters in the town to vote NO on the green vote in May at the annual town meeting. Like most of us I usually don't attend this meeting but I am pleading to all towns people and especially those that were here when the town hall was a school and our town was a true community to attend and voice your opinion and cast your vote.

Sincerely,

Larry Wells

Guide to identifying events that serve or offer food or drink that are regulated by the Mass Food Code

Safe food is everyone's goal. Because our population is aging and has many more individuals with compromised immune systems, safe food at all events is more important than ever.

This is only a guide. Each event has to be assessed to determine if it is an activity regulated by the Food Code and therefore must be permitted by the Board of Health

	Probably Public – Subject to Inspection/Permitting	Probably Private
Advertising	<ul style="list-style-type: none">–Posters in public places such as Town Hall, Transfer Station, Stores, Post Office–Notices in generally distributed newsletters or newspapers–Notices on the Town Website–Signboards on the highway	<ul style="list-style-type: none">–Notice in church or club newsletter–By written invitation only
Food	<ul style="list-style-type: none">–A few individuals provide most of the food for the event	<ul style="list-style-type: none">–Everyone generally brings something to share
Location	<ul style="list-style-type: none">–Generally held in a public place like a public park that is easily visible and accessible to a passer-by	<ul style="list-style-type: none">–Generally held in a more private location like a church or clubhouse
Size	<ul style="list-style-type: none">–Generally a larger group with many newcomers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">–Generally the same group and generally of smaller size
Frequency	<ul style="list-style-type: none">–Generally only a few times per year	<ul style="list-style-type: none">–Generally on a regular basis
Money	<ul style="list-style-type: none">–Event is intended to be a fundraiser–Donations are requested or suggested–Admission is charged–Charges for food or drink	<ul style="list-style-type: none">–Event is <u>never</u> a fund raiser–No charge or suggested donations of any kind
Intention	<ul style="list-style-type: none">–Event is intended to be a public event	<ul style="list-style-type: none">–Event is intended to be private

Don't Forget to Vote!

The Annual Town Election will be held on Saturday, May 19, 2012 from 12:00 PM to 4:00 PM at the Washington Town Hall. On the ballot this year are the following offices and candidates:

Auditor (1 year unexpired term)

Finance Committee (3 year term): Michael Burke, Incumbent

Planning Board (5 year term): Mary Jarvie, Incumbent

Select Board: (3 year term): James A. Huebner, Incumbent AND Rose A. Borgnis

Town Clerk: (3 year term): Allison M. Mikaniewicz, Incumbent

Tree Warden (3 year term): Craig Willis, Incumbent

Washington Tracks

Town Hall

8 Summit Hill Rd.

Washington, MA 01223

www.washington-ma.com



Support Our Local Businesses

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Po Box 772 Becket Ma. 01223. Phone
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dora@justicedora.com
<http://www.justicedora.com>

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Hilltowns Veterinary Clinic

Dr. Sharon Lynch, MVB
133 South Washington State Rd
Washington, MA 01223
Phone: (413)623-5329
www.hilltownsvetclinic.com

Please send your Tracks info by 28th of the month to:

mrsabeski@mac.com or if you do not have email, call Lisa at 623.5088