



Town of Bennington

Communications Coordinator Report — October 24, 2022

Fall Is Here!

This year has been particularly beautiful! After a number of years of lack-luster foliage, it's good to have such a glorious display.

Willow Park Playgrounds:

Work on the new playgrounds was interrupted in late September when a number of issues were identified by the playground engineer and playground certification team. The most visible issue was problems with the curbing, but they also included placement of Geotextile material installation, and a punch list of items regarding the new equipment.

Most of the issues are minor, but the curbing is a big project. A complete review of the curbing issue include sub base preparation, grades, reveals, and transition details between the playground and the donor bricks in the lower playground and a new entrance location for the upper playground.

The town has received confirmation that work on the new curbing will begin between October 17 and October 24. Once the work begins it will take 2-3 weeks to complete the curbing and possibly another week to finish the other punch list items. These final steps must be completed before the rubber surfacing for the playgrounds can be poured and the playgrounds completed.

The "poured in place" rubber surface requires sustained temperatures above 40° F to effectively install and cure, so we are in a race against time to see if it can be completed before low temperatures push this final step to springtime.

The \$500,000 cost of the new playgrounds have been entirely funded through ARPA monies. The Town is committed to ensuring that the project is completed as quickly as possible but in accordance to all specifications and requirements. We greatly appreciate the patience of the community as we work towards finishing this important community resource!

Citizen Outreach:

I met with citizens thirteen times over the last month on a variety of issues, ideas, and concerns. There were three public record requests to my office.

Community Outreach

This past month I met with BCCH, GBCS, and participated in discussions with the Continuum of Care around community planning. I also worked with CAT TV and the Bennington Fire Department to produce a video about the 25th anniversary of the of the new Fire House on River Street as well as sharing information about the new ladder truck. I also worked with CAT TV on new audio clips available at the Bennington Battlefield that are accessible using QR codes located on interpretive signage located throughout the battlefield area. I've also worked with our Town Clerk to do a couple of social media outreaches about elections and election participation. These will continue at least weekly up to election day.

250th Anniversary Planning:

The steering committee for the newly formed Bennington 250th Anniversary Committee met in September and a number of task forces have been suggested to move forward in the areas of event planning, fund raising, education, and more. Those recommendations will be discussed at the full Bennington 250th committee meeting this coming Thursday. An official press release introducing the committee to the public at large will be put out the last week in October. A website is planned to help keep people informed and engaged. On the regional level, I organized a meeting with 29 people from the states of NY, CT, MA, VT, and RI to discuss regional collaboration between the states for the anniversaries. A media outreach team emerged from that effort to help share and amplify work done by the states around the 250th effort. People interested in being involved with the 250th Anniversary committee can contact me.

BennHi Redevelopment

A primary focus of my time over the last month has been working with Town staff on sharing information for the proposed ARPA funded BennHi redevelopment. We have created an informational page on the town website: <https://benningtonvt.org/benn-hi-redevelopment/> This web page has a detailed narrative of the proposal as well as all documents and reports related to the project that are currently available. It's a big complicated project and we expect the community to have many questions! A public meeting will have been held on October 19 by the time my report comes out.

Website Development

The new town website is in its "beta" version. Town staff have attended three training sessions on how to use and update the new website. Work now continues on adding in all the new photography and approximately 750-1000 documents that were not migrated by the vendor to the new site. Additional work includes insuring ADA compliance on all the pages and adding in new images. We hope to have this completed in the next few weeks and then we will have a focus group review the site for user-friendliness, and implementing any navigational changes as a result as a final step before going live.

Facebook POST OF THE MONTH:

Sometimes the biggest news is not the best news.

Our post with the biggest reach this past month was not surprisingly about the delay in the completion of the playgrounds at Willow Park.

The playgrounds have consistently been an item of great interest to the community ever since January when planning for the renewal began in earnest.

I discuss the delay in detail in my report, but I want to note that while the delay is regrettable... it is an example of the town doing its "due diligence" and holding vendors accountable for all work.

We take how we spend money very seriously and while a delay was the last thing we wanted, it is our responsibility to ensure that we get the full value for our investments into the community.

Facebook Post:

Update on Willow Park Playgrounds: Work on the new playgrounds was inter..
 October 14, 2022 at 12:28 PM
 ID: 2479156415568394

Interactions:
 72 reactions, 80 comments, 21 shares

Performance:

Metric	Total	Worst	Best
Reach	6,079		
Reactions, comments and shares	173		

Reach Summary: This post reached more people than 100% of your 50 most recent Facebook posts and stories.

Reactions, comments and shares Summary: This post received more reactions, comments and shares than 96% of your 50 most recent Facebook posts and stories.

Results: Link clicks: --