

Municipal Corner – October

**Municipal Bond Votes:** The Selectboard has warned and unanimously supported municipal bond votes for November 6<sup>th</sup> to see if the voters will approve the Town Class 1 Highways Sidewalk Reconstruction Project (\$3.4 million dollars) and the Main Street Overhead Utility Removal project (\$3.2 million dollars). The Main Street overhead utility project is proposed to be funded entirely with local option tax revenues, revenues that come from an existing tax on rooms, meals and alcohol.

Article 1 asks the voters to approve funding for the reconstruction of the sidewalks along Stowe's Class 1 highways. This includes Main Street, South Main Street from the Public Safety Building to Main Street, Maple Street from Main Street to Cemetery Road, and Mountain Road from Main Street to Weeks Hill Road. The project will bring the sidewalks into compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act. This project involves a full reconstruction of the sidewalks, with improved sub-base, granite curbing and surface materials. Along Main Street, remaining deteriorated concrete sidewalk pavers will be removed and new concrete sidewalk with brick accents strips will be installed. With the recently added parking along Park Street, the net increase in Village parking after construction will be +5 spaces, but there will be a reduction of 5 spaces on Main Street. The loss of spaces on Main Street is due to feedback from the community to improve motorist and pedestrian visibility. In order to accomplish this, parking was moved away from the intersections and bulb-outs were added at the crosswalks. This improves motorist visibility when they are trying to pull in and out traffic. It also improves motorist's ability to see pedestrians waiting to cross the street and the pedestrian's ability to see them. The intent is to create a sidewalk and crosswalk system that will improve the safety and functionality of our downtown walkways as well as to reduce the need for ongoing repair of our sidewalks.

Article 2 asks the voters to approve funding for the Main Street Overhead Utility Removal Project. This project will involve the construction of a new underground utility network to allow for the removal of all overhead utilities on Main Street from its intersection with the Mountain Road to Sunset Street. It will also involve some undergrounding and relocation on School Street and Park Street. If the existing overhead utilities are removed, acorn style lights and trees would occur on both sides of Main Street. The intent of the project is to improve the aesthetics on Main Street, including the view of the Stowe Community Church from School Street. The vitality of Main Street is important to the economy of Stowe. While the entire community is important, *there is only one Main Street.*

The timing of the bond votes and projects is important. The State plans on paving the Town's Class 1 Highways in 2020. If approved by the voters, the Town intends to do their work in 2019 and early 2020 before the State's paving project. Doing this work in advance will help to avoid future cuts into the asphalt and ensure everything ties together. The overhead utility work is dependent on the sidewalk work, so the sidewalks bond must pass in order for the utility work to occur.

In-person voting will be on Tuesday, November 6<sup>th</sup>, from 7am to 7pm in the Akeley Building Memorial Room (a.k.a. Stowe Town Hall). Early voting is already open in the State of Vermont and absentee ballots can be picked up at the Town Clerk's Office. You can also obtain one by calling 253-6133 or emailing [lwalker@stowevt.gov](mailto:lwalker@stowevt.gov). The sidewalk plans and a view of Main Street with the overhead wires photoshopped out can be viewed on the Town of Stowe website ([www.townofstowevt.org](http://www.townofstowevt.org)) or at the Akeley Building Main Floor. There will also be an informational meeting at 5:30pm on November 1<sup>st</sup> in the Akeley Building Memorial Room. In the interim, technical questions relating to the project may be

directed to Harry Shepard, Public Works Director, at 253-8770 or [hsheward@stowevt.gov](mailto:hsheward@stowevt.gov). Funding and general questions can be directed to me at 253-7350 or [csafford@stowevt.gov](mailto:csafford@stowevt.gov).

**Stormwater Regulations:** The State has adopted stormwater regulations that will require municipalities to implement drainage system improvements on most Town's Highway network. These improvements must be implemented by 2024 on roads steeper than 10% and by 2036 for all other roads. This will involve proper ditching to prevent gravel roads from serving as the de facto drainage ditch. If there are inadequate roadside ditches, there is often erosion of the gravel road during heavy rain events, which can transport sediment and phosphorus into the water if the road is hydrologically connected. There are some exemptions to the ditches having to meet standards, such as impacting historic features (e.g. stone walls or buildings). Public Works will be developing plans and the Selectboard will hold hearings on designated scenic roads. While local input is important, there are other levels of government regulations that will also have to be taken into consideration.

**Orange:** Please remember that hunting season runs from the beginning of September through the middle of December. If you and/or your dog are in the woods, it is a good idea to have some hunter orange in order for hunters to easily identify you. Many of our public and conserved lands are shared use, including permitting hunting. If you would like a list of specific hunting seasons, you can go to the Vermont Fish & Wildlife website at [vtfishandwildlife.com](http://vtfishandwildlife.com).

**Neighbors Supporting Neighbors:** The Alchemist recently featured Stowe Parks & Recreation at their Thursday Nights *on the lawn* on September 27<sup>th</sup>. The tip money received that night was donated to Stowe Rec's Financial Assistance Program (FAP). We would like to thank them for doing so. If you would like to help people participate in public recreational programming, including summer day camp or the afterschool program, you can donate to the FAP by mailing payment, by visiting the Rec Office or by making a donation online ([www.stowerec.org](http://www.stowerec.org)). For more info visit [www.stowerec.org](http://www.stowerec.org), call 802-253-6138 or go to the Stowe Parks & Recreation website at [www.stowerec.org](http://www.stowerec.org).