

Country Journal

Devoted to the Needs of the Hilltowns

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BLANDFORD

Reichert delivers Bicentennial Park update at meeting

By Mary Kronholm
Correspondent

Chair Jackie Coury, at the Tuesday, Oct. 20 Select Board meeting acknowledged Administrative Assistant Joann Martin’s hard work and diligence in getting the meeting minutes up to date.



George Reichert

George Reichert provided an update on the progress work, and ongoing work at Bicentennial Park on Main Street. He complimented all the volunteers who stepped up to plant, weed and water and maintain all the handiwork that had been done.

He cited the financial assistance and employee assistance from Home Depot, Hull Forestry and Whip City Fiber. He especially mentioned the contribution of Select Board member Corinne Shartrand/who stepped up and volunteered bringing other gardeners to help.

There are existing issues with the retaining walls, both the stone and the timbered areas need bolster-

ing. But, “we need to begin now, not in July,” he said, to do restoration work. Getting cost estimates and determining how much funding is available has to start now, according to Reichert.

He would like to see plans going forward to see how the town can make use of the park from here on; a picnic table for lunch, benches for relaxing or reading and wants to get some November dates to decorate the park for the holidays.

Coury thanked Reichert and then said that there should be some way to acknowledge and show appreciation to volunteers and the work they do. “I know people don’t do it for the recognition,” she said, but (an acknowledgement) would demonstrate appreciation. She would like to keep track of who does what as there may be opportunities to volunteer in other areas using similar skills.

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BLANDFORD

Bert Pease receives Boston Post cane

By Mary Kronholm
Correspondent



Turley Publications photo by Mary Kronholm
Bert Pease, Blandford’s oldest resident, received the Boston Post Cane recently.

There were two birthdays celebrated at the Council on Aging’s Friday, Oct. 23 luncheon.

At the lunch, Council on Aging director Margit Misuski presented Bert Pease with the Boston Post cane as the town’s most senior female citizen. as COA. She turned 94 years on Thursday, Oct. 1.

The Boston Post gave to select boards in 700 towns throughout New England a gold-headed ebony cane with the request that it be presented with the newspaper’s compliments to the oldest male citizen of the town, to be used by him as long as he lived or moved from town and at his death handed down to the next oldest citizen of the town.

The cane would belong to the town and not the man, who received it. The select boards were to be the trustees of the cane and keep it always in the hands of the oldest citizen.

Apparently only Massachusetts, Maine and New Hampshire received canes. In 1930, after considerable controversy, eligibility for the cane was opened to

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HUNTINGTON

Library hosts workshop

By Wendy Long
Correspondent

The Huntington Public Library will again offer their popular beginners block printing workshop on Thursday, Nov. 12 from 4-6 p.m.

Led by artist/library director Amanda Loiselle, this free workshop will be limited to eight people. Pre-registration is required by visiting the huntingtonpubliclibrary.org website, under events.

November is also full of the library’s regular programs, starting with the monthly book club’s discussion of “The Frozen River” by Ariel Lawhorn on Thursday, Nov. 5 at 4 p.m.

This work of fiction is based upon the actual midwife Martha Ballard who lived in Hallowell, Maine in the late 1700s. Her 27-year personal journal was published in 1990 as “A Midwife’s Tale: The Life of Martha Ballard, Based on Her Diary,” which won the Pulitzer Prize for history.

While “The Frozen River” is a work of fiction, Martha Ballard is the principal character, who pieces together the mystery around

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BLANDFORD

Residents and officials attend listening session

By Mary Kronholm
Correspondent

The third of four public listening sessions on energy facilities set by the Healey-Driscoll administration was held Monday, Oct. 19 at the Town Hall.

Town residents as well as others from Becket and Middlefield spoke on issues regarding Battery Energy Storage Systems and solar energy in general.

Key takeaways mentioned included volunteer fire departments with inadequate equipment, training and availability, clear cutting forest vegetation, how quickly the clean energy projects are being processed without regard for safety of residents, land mass or adequate local funding.

Chair Jackie Coury read a letter, to be on record, from Richard Meczywor who criticized the state’s ability now, under new streamlined energy facility siting framework, “to override local municipal zoning to fast-track clean energy infrastructure” without regard for Blandford’s “clay soil, wetland leaching, toxic runoff and watershed contamination.”



Turley Publications photos by Mary Kronholm

The head table for the Healey-Driscoll Listening Session on Monday, Oct. 19 are from left, Select Board members, Ted Cousineau and Corinne Shartrand and Chairman Jackie Coury; Kristen Elechko, Western Mass Governor’s Office; Melissa Hoffer, Climate Chief; Michael Judge, Undersecretary of Energy; Aladine Joroff, Deputy Climate Chief; Doug Finn, Division of Energy Resources and Director of Rural Affairs, Anne Gobi.



Resident and Finance Committee member Sarah Malanson speaks at the listening session.

He also expressed concern over “Springfield Water and Sewer Commission’s uncharacteristic salience and



Resident Paul Dirschka is a clean energy proponent but has concerns for safety.

how it aligns with the administration’s top-down energy mandates and because their critical infrastructure is direct-

ly dependent on your administration/s financial approval, the community demands a direct answer: Is there a relationship...between the administration and the leadership of SWSC” that ensures compliance and silence.

One of the state representatives said the reason for making the rounds of listening sessions is “because of the backlash” from the rural areas, particularly concerning the BESS.

The sessions have been in Worthington and Pittsfield with the next one in Shutesbury.

Steve Hart spoke about the impassable roads during the winter and having a BESS installation on a dirt road.

Select Board member Corinne Shartrand read a prepared statement and closed her comments with, “Our community is ready to speak up—and we expect to be heard.” A round of applause followed.

The same with Ted Cousineau’s comments, who was looking for the benefits to the small towns.

Coury asked, “Who is going to pay for this?” referring to the town’s lack of resources. “You are asking us to manage the process.”

Cathy Smelcer cited her concern for water contamination from firefighting foam, once the permanent contaminants are in the water, “it’s permanent.”

Sarah Malanson, Dave Converse and Paul Dirschka also commented on safety issues and costs.

On a brighter note, Doug Finn of the Division of Energy Resources said applications must be complete and if not, must be rejected and that a rejected application cannot be appealed.

Director of Rural Affairs Anne Gobi who attended the session, did not speak. In a prepared statement regarding the session, she said, “I am not an expert on BESS and other specific energy questions that were brought up by the community. I learned a lot from Chief Hoffer and

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Daylight Saving Time Ends

Sunday, Nov. 1, 2026

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