

TOWN OF SOUTH THOMASTON

MARCH 2016 NEWSLETTER

Selectboard

Jan Gaudio, Chairman

Dorothy Meriwether

Cheryl Waterman

E-mail: sthomstn@midcoast.com Website: town.south-thomaston.me.us

Town of South Thomaston

125 Spruce Head Road

P.O. Box 147

South Thomaston, ME 04858

SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT – BEYOND THE TRANSFER STATION

At this coming Town Meeting we need to make a decision that will have impact for the Town budget and will determine how the town will dispose of our Municipal Solid Waste (MSW) for at least the next 15 years. Maine law requires each municipality to “provide solid waste disposal service for domestic and commercial solid waste generated within the municipality.” For more than 25 years, South Thomaston and 186 other Maine cities and towns have been part of a non-profit organization called the Municipal Review Committee (MRC). The MRC is chartered to ensure affordable, long term, environmentally sound disposal of MSW for its member towns. Those towns, including South Thomaston, currently have a Waste Disposal Agreement with the Penobscot Energy Recovery Company (PERC). The MRC has worked since 1994 on behalf of its municipal members and as a shareholder to improve PERC’s facility operations and economic performance. After 2018, PERC’s contracts with Emera to sell electricity will expire and PERC’s cost will increase significantly. After several years of study and planning, the MRC has decided to work with a leading edge technology company called “FIBERIGHT.”

FIBERIGHT advantages:

- affordable - scales to fit the MRC membership and does not rely on out-of-state MSW
- increased the capture of recyclable materials from MSW
- higher rate of conversion of organic materials to high-value and readily marketable products such as bio-gas and bio-mass
- will privately finance to build, own and operate the solid waste facility – the MRC and member communities will own the land.

Each town will make its own decision regarding how they will dispose of their MSW after 2018, but as part of the tri-town Owls Head, South Thomaston, Thomaston (OHSTT) Solid Waste Corporation, that manages our Transfer Station, we are linked with two neighboring communities. Working in partnership with a large number of MRC municipalities lowers both the costs and risks to South Thomaston.

Jan C Gaudio
OHSTT Solid Waste Board

BRIDGE REPLACEMENT AND SIDEWALK PROJECT

On February 9, the Select Board voted to proceed with Maine Department of Transportation’s plan for replacement of the Weskeag bridge, scheduled to occur during the latter part of September and October, 2017. The MDOT’s recommended, expedited plan calls for a full-bridge closure of four to six weeks, with MDOT offering incentives to the contractor to complete in the shorter time. The Board acknowledges this will cause inconvenience to residents and local business owners but is convinced that this schedule is preferable to nine months of construction in the center of town. Additionally, this plan will be a significant savings to Maine taxpayers.

At the MDOT’s public hearing on February 3, there were strong opinions regarding the sidewalks to be constructed from Gilford Butler School, down Route 73, across the bridge to the public landing, across the road and up Elm Street in front of the library.

For years residents and town officials have been concerned about the safety of the Route 73/Dublin Road intersection for a number of reasons, including poor visibility for both pedestrians and motorists. In the Comprehensive Plan of March, 2010, it was noted that this intersection was a hazard for the following reasons, “Poor configuration, intersection not perpendicular, no shoulder and needs a stop sign heading south on Rt. 73.” Another identified hazard at that location is speeding. We’re all familiar, as well, with the culvert and its precipitous drop located at the Library corner, which poses a hazard to traffic turning right from Dublin Road onto Elm Street. (continued on page 3)

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Assessors' Agent Appointments

The Assessor's Agent, Kevin McCormick, meets with residents by appointment during his office hours. If you would like to schedule an appointment, call the Town Office at 596-6584. In the non-summer months he is typically at the Town Office only twice a month. Also Kevin only sees emails and messages when he arrives at the Town Office, so depending on when you email him or leave him a message he may not have a chance to respond for 2 to 3 weeks.

We Now Accept Credit/Debit Cards

Customers who choose to use credit & debit cards will be charged a 2.5% processing fee ***in addition to*** the amount charged with a minimum fee of \$1. These fees are not retained by the Town of South Thomaston.

VOLUNTARY TAX CLUB

Voluntary Tax Club Booklets are available at the Town Office. Anyone interested in participating should contact the Town Office at 596-6584 for assistance. You can budget your property taxes on a monthly basis.

Thank you to Lowes for loaning appliance dollies and wagons to the Fire Department and Ambulance Service in preparation for the renovations of the municipal building.

TOWN E-MAIL LIST

The Town has an email list to electronically mail newsletters, meeting agendas and other information. If you would like to be added to the electronic distribution list please send an email to:
sthomstn@midcoast.com.

Neighbor Check

In the event of an emergency, the Town wants to know that everyone is safe. We need to hear from you, though. We need you to tell us what we can do for you. If there is a storm that knocks out power, for instance, maybe a neighbor could knock on your door or make a quick phone call just to check you are okay. Are you interested in being that person who is willing to check on your neighbor?

We are looking for residents willing to participate with Neighbor Check, a way to quickly spread the word or check on neighbors and friends. If you are interested in helping your community or being involved in emergency preparedness, please let me know by contacting me at 594-7873 or send an email to:
emadir.so.thomaston@gmail.com.

Betty Thomas, Emergency Management Director

TOWN OFFICE 2016 HOLIDAY SCHEDULE

2016 Holidays	Date Observed
New Year's Day	January 1
Martin Luther King, Jr. Day	January 18
President's Day	February 15
Patriots Day	April 18
Memorial Day	May 30
Independence Day	July 4
Labor Day	September 5
Columbus Day	October 10
Veterans Day	November 11
Thanksgiving Day	November 24
Christmas Day	December 26

OPERATIONAL HOURS

Town Office

Mon, Wed, Thurs 8:30 AM - 5:00 PM
Tuesday 8:30 AM - 6:00 PM
Friday Closed

Demolition Debris Facility

Wed & Sat 9:00 AM - 4:00 PM
A sticker is required for residents. Vouchers are available at the Town Office.

Library

Monday 11:00 AM - 4:00 PM
Wednesday 2:00 PM - 7:00 PM
Saturday 10:00 AM - 2:00 PM
Story Hour, Monday 10:00 AM
Phone 596-0022

Transfer Station (Buttermilk Lane)
Tues - Thurs & Sat
8:00 AM - 4:00 PM
Phone 594-0748



ANNUAL TOWN MEETING MARCH 29, 2016 @ 7:00 PM, GILFORD BUTLER SCHOOL

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NEW FLOOD MAPS ARE COMING

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has completed a re-evaluation of the flood hazards in South Thomaston, and has issued a new Community Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM). This new flood map, which revised many base flood elevations upward, will take effect on July 6th, 2016.

In order for South Thomaston to continue participating in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP), the town needs to adopt a new floodplain management ordinance (replacing our current one) that reflects the new map and the standards put forth in federal floodplain management regulations. These standards basically mandate that any new construction or substantial improvement in a flood zone must be elevated to a standard that will lower overall flood risk. In return for adopting these standards, all residents of South Thomaston, regardless of whether they are in a flood hazard zone, are eligible to purchase federally backed NFIP flood insurance.

At our annual Town Meeting on March 29th, the town will be asked to approve acceptance of the new floodplain ordinance. If that proposal is voted down, South Thomaston will be removed from participation in the NFIP, and federally backed flood insurance policies currently in effect will expire without renewal, and no new policies will be available. Although it is possible to acquire flood insurance outside the NFIP, it is only available through what are known as "surplus and excess" insurance carriers. These policies don't come at the same price and do not have to operate under the rules of the NFIP. Homeowners policies do not include flood insurance.

For anyone who is not in a flood zone on the current map but may be moved into a flood zone on the revised map, it is recommended that you purchase a Preferred Risk policy prior to the map change on July 6, 2016 to secure continuous-coverage grandfathering in a lower rated zone. If you do not take advantage of this grandfathering rule by purchasing a policy before the maps change, you can still benefit from a lower premium by buying a Newly Mapped policy within the first 12 months of the new map's effective date. The Newly Mapped rule allows the user a lower Preferred Risk rate at the first renewal. After that the premiums will increase by a capped amount annually until they reach full premium based on the new flood zone.

In general, it is recommended that your insurance agent be the first point of contact for your flood insurance questions. If they are unable to answer your questions sufficiently, either your agent or you can contact Tom Young, NFIP iService team, at 603-625-5125 or at TYoung@nfip-iservice.com

A great source of information for anyone unsure of their status in this area will be a public outreach meeting on Tuesday, May 24th at Rockland City Hall, from 4-7 PM. It is specifically for Knox County residents. This will not be a presentation format. It will be a series of one-on-one meetings with homeowners wherein they will check the maps, determine your status, and advise you on how best to proceed.

John Snow, Code Enforcement Officer

BRIDGE from page 1)

The Town has appealed for years to the MDOT to address these concerns, and we are grateful that MDOT has responded. This is a once in a lifetime opportunity.

A decade ago a sidewalk committee investigated the desirability of a sidewalk in the center of Town. The public response, at the time, was overwhelmingly in favor. The Comprehensive Plan noted the following in its section on Transportation, "There are no paved pedestrian sidewalks in South Thomaston. Most pedestrians use road shoulders as walkways and unpaved paths. Historically, there have been board-walks and gravel walkways in the Village areas. South Thomaston residents have frequently expressed an interest in providing safe access for pedestrians in our village and for our students traveling to and from the school. Providing healthy forms of recreation for our citizens, safe alternatives to motorized transportation and an enhanced neighborhood feeling in our town is important. To do so, creating new pedestrian paths and restoring others is needed."

The new sidewalks are to be 100% funded from a Federal Safe Routes to School Grant. We're all aware the Gilford Butler School may close, but the funding is available to a school still in operation with no scheduled closure date. Whatever happens to the school, there will always be something in that location which will now be drawn, by the sidewalks, to the Town center, increasing the property's value.

Fishermen are concerned that this project may impede loading and unloading of boats at the Public Landing. In fact the MDOT engineers anticipate the design at the public landing will improve accessibility and safety, serving to control the flow of traffic which is now random and unrestrained. MDOT knows of, and plans for, the large trailers which must back to the ramp .

As soon as town officials have formulated final plans for public safety and postal delivery, it will be announced to the Town, but in the meantime, the Board assures our citizens that there will be no disruption in fire and EMS service during the time of the bridge closure.

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Tips From The Fire Chief

Spring is coming

- If you want assistance burning your field or grass this spring please contact any of the Fire Wardens to set up a time to assist you before the fields or grass gets too dry.
- Check your smoke detectors and carbon monoxide detectors and change the batteries.
- If your smoke detector is older than 10 years, it is time to replace it.
- Make sure your house or business is properly numbered and visible for emergency responders.
- If you need assistance with numbering or your detectors please contact the Fire Department for assistance.

The fire department is still in need of members. If you are 16 and older please contact anyone on the Fire Department for more information. Applications can be found on the Fire Department section of the Town web page. Also check out our photos of current and past equipment training and incidents.

Chief Calderwood

TOWN OF SOUTH THOMASTON DIRECTORY

Selectboard

Jan Gaudio, Chair	Home: 594-0025
Dorothy Meriwether	Home :594-7873
Cheryl Waterman	Home: 594-7695

RSU # 13 Board of Directors Representative

Christine Curtis	Home: 596-0252
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RSU # 13 Superintendent

John MacDonald	596-6620
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Town Administrator, Town Clerk, Tax Collector, Treasurer, Registrar & General Assistance Admin.

Terri-Lynn Baines	596-6584
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Deputy Clerk, Treasurer, Tax Collector, and Registrar

Cynthia Ginn	596-6584
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Deputy Assistant

Michelle Ames	596-6584
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Animal Control Officer (ACO)

Robert Robinson	593-9132
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Call Knox Communications ACO issues

Fire Department: Emergency Dial 911

Bryan Calderwood, Fire Chief	596-6674
David Elwell, Deputy Chief	542-4797
Gerald Harjula, Assistant Chief	354-8026

All 3 are Fire Wardens and can issue burning permits

Ambulance Service: Emergency Dial 911

Pat Dougherty, Director	594-9305
Rich Norman, Asst. Director	594-5428

Emergency Management Director

Betty Thomas	Home: 594-7873
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Library Director

Pennie Alley	596-0022
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E-911 Coordinator

Arthur Grierson	Home: 594-8873
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Road Commissioner

Gerald Grierson	Home:594-5493
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Budget Committee

Moira Paddock, Chair, Gayle Gallant, Gary Skarka, Sonja Sleeper, Jeff Northgraves, Walter Reitz, Donna Withington

Planning Board

Roger Young, Chair, Eileen Skarka, Ruth Rinklin, Christine Curtis; Jeff Northgraves Alt: Gregory Peet.

Board of Appeals

Rich Norman, Chair, John Hansen, Barbara Noyes, Rolf Winters; Alt: Charles Hartman

Knox County Budget Committee

Dorothy Meriwether	Home: 594-7873
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Code Enforcement Officer

John Snow	Cell: 390-0054
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Plumbing Inspector

Lawrence Terrio	Home: 596-0545
Terry Brackett, Alternate LPI	

Assessor's Agent

RJD — Kevin McCormick	596-6584
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Solid Waste Committee

Jan Gaudio	
Gordon "Skip" Connell	Home: 594-1801

Georges River Shellfish Warden

Neil Pollis	Cell: 542-4281
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Knox County Sheriff (non-emergency)	593-9132
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Maine State Police (non-emergency)	1-800-452-4664
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