

**TOWN OF NORTHBRIDGE  
BOARD OF SELECTMEN'S MEETING  
NORTHBRIDGE TOWN HALL  
7 MAIN STREET - WHITINSVILLE, MA 01588  
November 21, 2016 AT 7:00 PM**

***JOINT MEETING WITH THE NORTHBRIDGE HOUSING AUTHORITY***

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

**I. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**II. PUBLIC HEARING:**

**A. 7:05 PM: FY'17 Tax Rate Classification Hearing** / Present: Robert Fitzgerald, Principal Assessor

**III. APPOINTMENTS/By the Board of Selectmen:**

**B. 1)** Safety Committee: Catherine Stickney, School Supt. [School Committee Designee]/Vote to appoint

**2)** Safety Committee: Melissa Walker, School Business Manager [Alternate School Committee Designee]/Vote to Appoint

**C. Joint Appointment by the Board of Selectmen and Northbridge Housing Authority:** [1 vacancy]

**Candidate 1.** Kathleen Charbonneau / **Candidate 2.** Christina Simonian

**RESIGNATIONS:**

**D.** Roland Hachey, Conservation Commission

**IV. CITIZENS' COMMENTS/INPUT**

**V. DECISIONS**

**E.** Operation Graduation/Request permission to hold a Boot Drive at Memorial Square on Saturday, April 8, 2017 from 9 AM to 1 PM to benefit the class of 2017. Present: Valerie Nowlan

**F.** Winter Parking Ban [December 1, 2016 to April 1, 2017] / Vote to approve

**VI. DISCUSSIONS**

**G.** Riverdale Street issues [water trucks]

**VII. TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT**

**H. 1)** Small Business Saturday

**2)** Silver Medal Award [Early Voting]

**3)** Massachusetts School Building Authority Meeting

**4)** Hazard Mitigation Plan

**5)** Solar Project/Ribbon Cutting Ceremony

**VIII. SELECTMEN'S CONCERNS**

**IX. ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDA**

**X. CORRESPONDENCE**

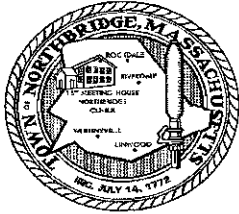
**XI. EXECUTIVE SESSION**

Town Clerk: 2 Hard copies	<input type="checkbox"/>
Town Clerk: E-mail hard copy	<input type="checkbox"/>
Web: Post time-stamped copy	<input type="checkbox"/>

A

***NORTHBRIDGE***  
***TAX CLASSIFICATION***  
***HEARING***  
***FY 2017***

Monday, November 21, 2016



# Town of Northbridge Board of Assessors

Town Hall, 7 Main Street  
Whitinsville, Massachusetts 01588-2210

(508) 234-2740

## MEMO

To: Northbridge Board of Selectmen; James R. Marzec, Chairman;  
Theodore D. Kozak, Town Manager  
From: Northbridge Board of Assessors  
Date: November 21, 2016  
Re: Classification Hearing

Chapter 40, Sec.56 of the Massachusetts General Laws requires that the Selectmen hold an annual public meeting to determine the percentages of the local tax levy to be borne by each class of property. This is referred to as the Tax Classification Hearing.

The information contained in these handouts are intended to provide the Board of Selectmen with the information necessary to determine the selection of a Residential Factor, as well as options pertaining to residential and small business exemptions available under Massachusetts General Laws. The decision of the Board must be submitted to the State's Department of Revenue on Form LA 5.

There are three options available for the distribution of taxes.

### (1) Selection of a Residential Factor (Split Tax Rate):

The Board of Selectmen has an option to select a residential factor of "1" or less. If a factor of "1" is adopted, there would be a single tax rate for all residential, commercial, industrial and personal property. If a factor of less than "1" is adopted, there will be a shift from the residential property class to the commercial, industrial and personal property classes.

### (2) Selection of a Residential Exemption:

The Board of Selectmen may adopt a residential exemption of up to 20% of the average assessed value of all properties other than commercial, industrial and personal property. The properties must be owner occupied. All properties falling below the town average would have a reduction in taxes. Properties assessed above the town average would have a higher tax rate as well as residential non-owner occupied properties and unimproved land.

### (3) Selection of a Small Commercial Exemption:

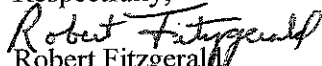
A small commercial exemption also may be adopted by the Board of Selectmen. Any business operating as of January 1, 2016, with less than ten employees and having a total assessed value of less than one million dollars would be eligible. The savings of the eligible taxpayers will be borne by the commercial and industrial properties that are ineligible as well as vacant commercial and industrial parcels.

The proposed tax rate, pending approval by the Department of Revenue, should be:

Tax Rate = Levy \$20,945,285 / Taxable Value \$1,547,544,490 = .01353 x 1,000 = \$13.53

The levy amount may change once all the forms are completed and approved, thereby changing the tax rate by a small amount. This is a decrease of \$ .22 per thousand from FY 2016.

Respectfully,

  
Robert Fitzgerald  
Principal Assessor

**TOWN OF NORTHBRIDGE**  
**PUBLIC NOTICE**

The Northbridge Board of Selectmen will hold a public hearing to determine the allocation of local tax as required by Chapter 40, S. 56 of the MGL on **Monday, November 21, 2016 at 7:05 PM** in the Selectmen's Meeting Room, Northbridge Town Hall, 7 Main Street, Whitinsville, MA 01588. Taxpayers and others are invited to present oral or written information on their views at that time. After the public hearing, the Board of Selectmen will determine the percentage of tax levy to be paid by each class of real property and personal property for FY 17. All persons interested in this most important subject are urged to attend the meeting.

NORTHBRIDGE BOARD OF SELECTMEN  
James R. Marzec, Chairman  
October 21, 2016

## FISCAL YEAR 2017 TAX RATE BREAKDOWN

FISCAL YEAR 2017			TOTAL TAXABLE VALUE FY 2017		
2016 Levy Limit	(Last Years Levy)	\$19,159,175	/	\$1,547,544,490	= \$ 12.38
+ Prop 2 1/2		478,879	/	\$1,547,544,490	= 0.31
+ New Growth		301,426	/	\$1,547,544,490	= 0.19
+ Debt Exclusion	(New High School)	0	/	\$1,547,544,490	= 0.00
	(School Land)	95,323	/	\$1,547,544,490	= 0.06
	(BVRHS Expansion)	80,224	/	\$1,547,544,490	= 0.05
	(School Roof)	164,415	/	\$1,547,544,490	= 0.11
	(Police Roof)	15,843	/	\$1,547,544,490	= 0.01
+ Capital Exclusion	(WWI Memorial)	100,000	/	\$1,547,544,490	= 0.06
+ Capital Exclusion	(Firetruck)	550,000	/	\$1,547,544,490	= 0.36
= Tax Rate		\$20,945,285	/	\$1,547,544,490	= <u>\$ 13.53</u>

All figures are approximated for an estimated tax rate.  
The Actual Tax Rate may change after DOR certification.

**FY 2017**

	<u><b>Average Single Family</b></u>	<u><b>Average Commercial</b></u>	<u><b>Average Industrial</b></u>
Value	\$284,400	\$705,300	\$803,900
<b>Single Rate</b>	13.53	13.53	13.53
Tax	\$3,848	\$9,543	\$10,877
Group Size	3464	167	36



<b>110% Shift Tax Rate</b>	13.33	14.89	14.89
110% Shift Tax	\$3,791.05	\$10,501.92	\$11,970.07
Difference	<b>(\$56.88)</b>	<b>\$959.21</b>	<b>\$1,093.30</b>

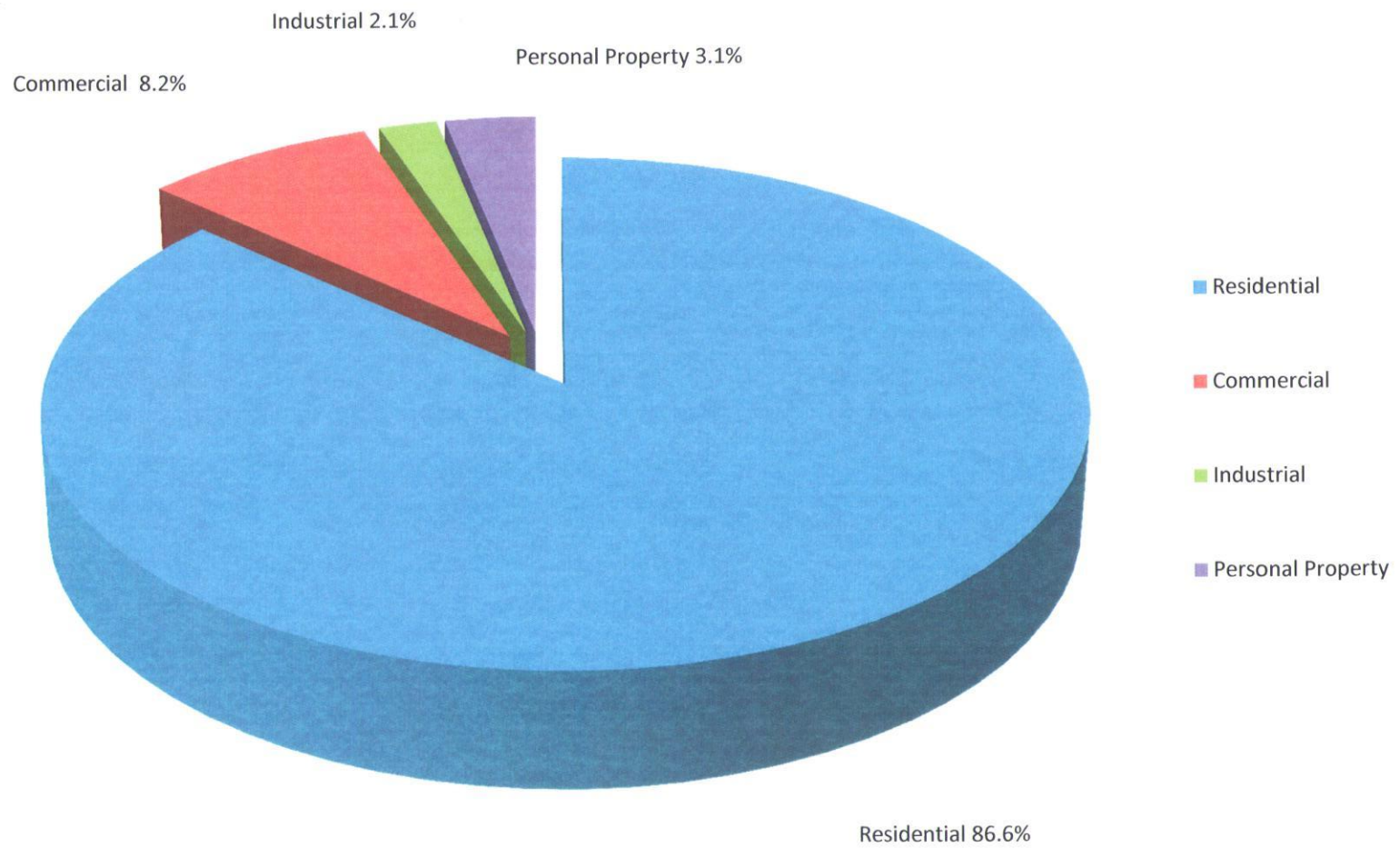


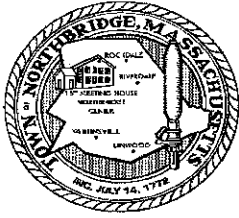
<b>125% Shift Tax Rate</b>	13.01	16.92	16.92
125% Shift Tax	\$3,700	\$11,934	\$13,602
Difference	<b>(\$91.01)</b>	<b>\$1,431.76</b>	<b>\$1,631.92</b>



<b>150% Shift Tax Rate</b>	12.49	20.30	20.30
150% Shift Tax	\$3,552	\$14,318	\$16,319
Difference	<b>(\$147.89)</b>	<b>\$2,383.91</b>	<b>\$2,717.18</b>

## FISCAL YEAR 2017 - VALUATION BY CLASS





# Town of Northbridge Board of Assessors

Town Hall, 7 Main Street  
Whitinsville, Massachusetts 01588-2210

(508) 234-2740

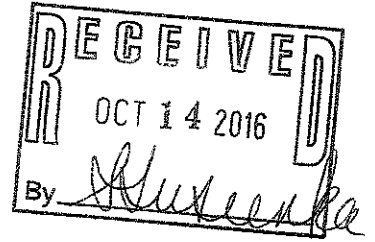
November 21, 2016

## **TAX RATE IN DECENDING ORDER**

	FY 2016 TAX RATES	AVERAGE SINGLE FAMILY VALUE	AVERAGE SINGLE FAMILY TAX
1. BLACKSTONE	\$ 19.34	\$ 246,600	\$ 4,770
2. UPTON	\$ 18.56	\$ 371,300	\$ 6,891
3. UXBRIDGE	\$ 17.57	\$ 279,300	\$ 4,907
4. MENDON	\$ 17.25	\$ 363,700	\$ 6,273
5. MILLVILLE	\$ 16.91	\$ 253,000	\$ 4,278
6. HOPEDALE	\$ 16.83	\$ 308,100	\$ 5,186
7. DOUGLAS	\$ 16.82	\$ 265,600	\$ 4,467
8. GRAFTON	\$ 16.75	\$ 342,200	\$ 5,732
9. SUTTON	\$ 16.68	\$ 325,200	\$ 5,424
10. MILLBURY	\$ 16.46	\$ 236,600	\$ 3,895
11. NORTHBRIDGE	\$ 13.75	\$ 268,600	\$ 3,693



C  
Candidate 1



October 13, 2016

Tina Myers  
Director of Housing  
11 Colonial Drive  
Whitinsville, MA 01588

Dear Ms. Myers,

My name is Kathleen Charbonneau and I am interested in the temporary position on the Housing Authority Board.

I am a lifetime Northbridge resident, graduating from Northbridge High School and then from Quinsigamond Community College where I received a degree in Occupational Therapy. I have worked at UMASS Hospital for 10 years in the Intensive Care Unit as a Nurse Extender, as an aide in several Nursing Homes in the area, and I also have my certification in Plebotomy. I currently volunteer at the Northbridge Senior Center.

I have always loved working with the Senior population and feel I can bring much experience from my lifetime of work and education in the community to the Housing Authority Board.

Thank you for your consideration,

*Kathleen Charbonneau*

Kathleen Charbonneau  
10A Colonial Drive  
Whitinsville, MA 01588  
(508) 266-0372

cc: Northbridge Board of Selectman

Christina H. Simonian

Candidate 2

7B Colonial Drive, Whitinsville, MA 01588 | 508-266-0210 | apollo9701@yahoo.com

August 29, 2016

Board of Commissioners for Northbridge Housing Authority  
12 Colonial Drive  
Whitinsville, MA 01588  
508-234-7736

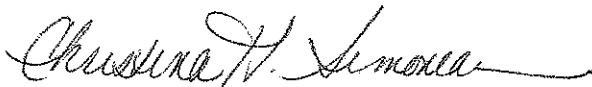
Dear Board of Commissioners:

Please accept this formal letter of interest for the open seat for the Board of Commissioners with the Northbridge Housing Authority.

I am a current resident and feel as though my residency within the Northbridge Housing Authority can be seen as a valuable asset and can offer perspective on behalf of tenants residing within Northbridge Housing Authority.

I have been a resident for 4 years, and have lived in the Town of Northbridge my entire life. I look forward in this opportunity in working collaboratively with you.

Respectfully Submitted,



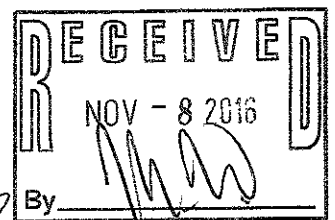
Christina H. Simonian

TO Northbridge D  
conservation commission  
R.E Resignation.

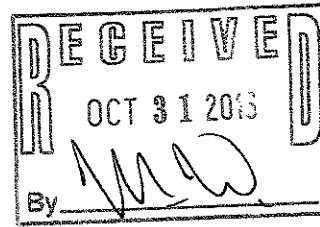
It is with deep regret  
that I will be tendering  
my resignation as a  
volunteer to the conservation  
commission as of

Nov. 15, 2016.

Respectfully  
Roland J Hatchey



October 31, 2016



E

Town of Northbridge  
Attn: Board of Selectman  
7 Main Street  
Whitinsville, MA 01588

OK'd by Chief Warchol  
BOS Agenda 11/21/16

Hello,

My name is Valerie Nowlan, and I am writing to you on behalf of the Northbridge High School Operation Graduation for the Class of 2017. Operation Graduation, is a chaperoned all-night event that gives the graduates a fun and safe night of celebration. We would like to have a Boot Drive on Saturday, **April 8, 2017** to help raise money for Operation Graduation. We just recently held a Boot Drive on October 15<sup>th</sup>, and it was a very successful! We would greatly appreciate the opportunity to have one more Boot Drive in the Spring.

I look forward to hearing from you with an upcoming date to come before the Board of Selectman. I can be reached by email [valerie968@verizon.net](mailto:valerie968@verizon.net) or by phone 774-276-0792

Regards,

From 9AM - 1PM

Valerie Nowlan

C. W. Warchol

**USE OF TOWN OF NORTHBRIDGE****PUBLIC WAYS FOR BOOT DRIVE****EVENT:** Operation Graduation, April 8, 2016**RELEASE OF CLAIMS, INDEMNITY AND HOLD HARMLESS AGREEMENT****\*\*\*Please read this document thoroughly before completing and signing\*\*\***

I, Valerie Nowlan, Northbridge High School, in consideration of my use of the Town of Northbridge's Public Ways for a non-town sponsored event on April 8, 2016, and for other good and valuable consideration hereby acknowledged, do hereby agree to forever RELEASE the Town of Northbridge, its employees, agents, officers, volunteers, or contractors (the "Town"), from any and all claims, actions, rights of action and causes of action, damages, costs, loss of services, expenses, compensation and attorneys' fees that may have arisen in the past, or may arise in the future, directly or indirectly, from known and unknown personal injuries which I or my guests, employees, agents, successors or assigns may have as the result of my use or the use of my guests, employees or agents of the Town of Northbridge's Public Ways for a non-town sponsored event on April 8, 2016, and all activities related thereto.

I further promise, to INDEMNIFY, REIMBURSE, DEFEND, and HOLD HARMLESS the Town against any and all legal claims and proceedings of any description that may have been asserted in the past, or may be asserted in the future, directly or indirectly, including damages, costs and attorneys' fees, arising from personal injuries to myself or others or property damage resulting from my use, or the use of my guests, employees or agents, of the Town of Northbridge's Public Ways for a non-town sponsored event on April 8, 2016, and all activities related thereto.

I hereby further covenant for myself, my successors and assigns not to sue the said Town on account of any such claim, demand or liability.

I am fully aware that by signing this document I am releasing the Town from liability that may arise as a result of the acts or omissions of the Town. Additionally, it is my intent to release the above mentioned parties from liability and defend and indemnify said parties for liability relating to any accident and resulting injuries and/or death that may occur as a result of my use, or the use of my guests, employees or agents, of the Town of Northbridge's Public Ways for a non-town sponsored event on April 8, 2016, and all activities related thereto.

To the extent I am signing this document on behalf of an organization, corporation, association or similar entity, I represent that I am fully authorized by said entity to execute this document.

Witness my hand and seal this 1st day of November, 2016.

Name (Printed): Valerie Nowlan

Valerie Nowlan  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Witness

**THIS FORM MAY NOT BE ALTERED**

## Melissa Wetherbee

---

**From:** Walter J. Warchol <wwarchol@northbridgemass.org>  
**Sent:** Monday, October 31, 2016 3:50 PM  
**To:** Melissa Wetherbee  
**Subject:** RE: Operation Graduation Boot Drive

No issues

**From:** Melissa Wetherbee [mailto:mwetherbee@northbridgemass.org]  
**Sent:** Monday, October 31, 2016 11:45 AM  
**To:** wwarchol@northbridgemass.org; tlabrie@northbridgemass.org  
**Subject:** Operation Graduation Boot Drive

Good morning gentlemen,

Attached is a Boot Drive request for the operation graduation to be held on April 8, 2016 and I am awaiting a rain date. This is an annual request. Please let me know if there are any issues with this request.

Thank you

*Melissa Wetherbee, Adm. Assistant  
Town Manager's Office  
Town of Northbridge  
7 Main Street Whitinsville, MA 01588  
Phone: 508-234-2095*

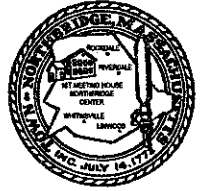


WALTER J. WARCHOL  
CHIEF OF POLICE

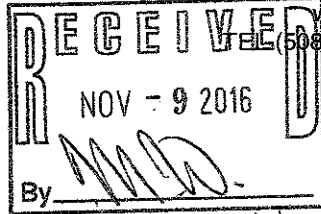
# TOWN OF NORTHBRIDGE DEPARTMENT OF POLICE

1 HOPE STREET, WHITINSVILLE, MA 01588

www.northbridgepolice.com  
(508) 234-6211 • FAX (508) 234-9021



TIMOTHY LABRIE  
LIEUTENANT



**F**

The all night parking ban for the Town of Northbridge will go into effect on December 1, 2016 and continue through April 1, 2017. The April 1<sup>st</sup> date may be extended if weather conditions make it necessary. The ban is effective from 1:00 am. to 6:00 a.m. The ban is applicable to all streets in the Town of Northbridge with the following exceptions:

ON THE EVEN NUMBERED SIDE:

D Street  
High Street  
Linden Street  
Main Street from Buma Square to Border Street  
Maple Court  
Overlook Street  
Upper High Street from #66 to #100  
Water Street from Main Street to gate at the Shop yard entrance  
Johnston Ave. from Brook Street to the end of Johnston Ave @ dead end  
Upper Border Street from D Street North

ON THE ODD NUMBERED SIDE:

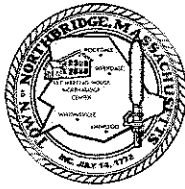
East Street from Johnston Ave to Christian Church parking lot  
Forest Street  
Johnston Avenue from Church Street to East Street  
Pine Street  
Prospect Street from Cottage Street to Church Street  
Water Street from gate behind Fire Station to bottom of hill, 20 feet  
North of fire hydrant  
Granite Street from #23 Granite to East Street

Violators of the ban will be tagged and if interfering with snow removal operations will be towed at the owner's expense.

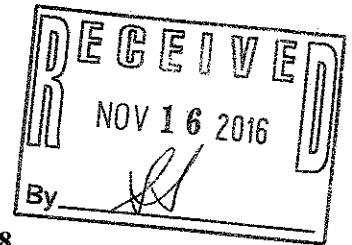
*Walter J. Warchol*

Walter J. Warchol  
Chief of Police

11/07/16



**TOWN OF NORTHBRIDGE**  
**EARTH REMOVAL BOARD**  
**MEMORIAL TOWN HALL**  
**7 MAIN STREET**  
**WHITINSVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS 01588-0088**



---

**AGENDA**  
**MONDAY, 28 NOVEMBER 2016, 6:00 P.M.**  
**NORTHBRIDGE MEMORIAL TOWN HALL**  
**BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING ROOM**

---

**G**

**I. Approval of minutes**

- 24 October 2016 Earth Removal Board

**II. Welcome/Vote on new member from Conservation Commission  
– Richard Chiras**

**III. Discussion**

- Follow-up and review of the request of applicant James Knott, Sr. (i.e. Andrews Survey & Engineering, Inc. letter dated 03 October 2016) for an extension of the Earth Removal Permit for 130 Riverdale Street – Assessor's Map 23, Lot 5 – for an additional 89,000 cubic yards of material. As of 01 October 2016, approximately 408,450 cubic yards of material have been removed from the site.

Follow-up materials will be provided by the Northbridge Conservation Agent and Northbridge Legal Counsel.

- Review and approval of the DRAFT permit extension for Douglas Road Industrial Realty Trust permit extension for the removal of earth materials incidental to the creation of a gravel storage area.

**IV. Other Business**

**V. Adjournment**



**TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT – November 21, 2016**

1. **Small Business Saturday** -The Blackstone Valley Chamber of Commerce is sponsoring “Small Business Saturday” again this year. Downtown businesses will be participating in the Shop Small event. We hope that residents in the Valley will participate and support local businesses. The event will take place on Saturday, November 26, 2016 from 10 AM to 4 PM.
2. **Silver Medal Award [Early Voting]** - The Massachusetts Election Modernization Coalition honored Northbridge with a Silver Medal Award for offering one weeknight of evening voting each week and four or more hours of weekend voting. Also, thank you to the voters for supporting Question 5 for a new Fire Department pumper truck and for the renovation of the World War I Memorial in Rockdale.
3. **Massachusetts School Building Authority Meeting** - Attended the School Building Authority Meeting in Boston with the Superintendent of Schools to review the administrative process for conducting an Owner’s Project Manager search for the Northbridge School Building Committee. The town was notified that we have been approved to go forward with this process.
4. **Hazard Mitigation Plan** - Attended a hazard mitigation workshop hosted by the Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission to update the Town’s 5 year plan for the preparation of natural disasters such as flooding and snow storms. We will be working with Department Heads who are involved in Public Safety to update the plan.
5. **Solar Project/Ribbon Cutting Ceremony** - Attended the Sutton Solar Farm ribbon cutting ceremony, which will commence the scheduled operation of the solar farm by January 1, 2017. The Town will receive funds for net metering credits to be allotted in the Building Maintenance Account.

TM Report  
11.21.16

H1

# Small Business Saturday in Whitinsville

Red balloons and window signage will welcome holiday shoppers to Whitinsville businesses celebrating Small Business Saturday, on November 26th from 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Community businesses will be offering free giveaways, special gifts, fun activities, discounts, coupons, and surprises for all ages during the day. Children ages 4-10 are invited to participate in a coloring contest for prizes. Santa is even expected to make an appearance!

Retail stores, restaurants, service providers, activity and entertainment venues are excited for this opportunity to thank patrons from the Blackstone Valley and beyond. "This is our chance to give back to loyal customers and to share with new visitors the many services available in our quaint and historic downtown," said Michelle Siefken of Art...Make It Real. "It's our hope to revitalize and reenergize a once vibrant downtown and to introduce the community to local small businesses," added Christine Guanipa from Little Man Handbags. Punch Cards identifying participating businesses, activities, and free giveaways will be located in the former home of the Blackstone Valley Chamber of Commerce Building at 110 Church St. on Nov.26th from 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Small Business Saturday is a national shopping day held annually in the United States on the Saturday after Thanksgiving. American Express conceived the concept in 2010 to ensure local, small business is included in the busy shopping time between Black Friday and Cyber Monday.

Participating merchants invite you to like their Small Business Saturday Facebook page Shop Small 01588. FMI, contact Michelle Siefken at 508-450-7120 or Christine Guanipa at Little Man Handbags 508-341-6211.

There will be Small Business Saturday specials in the towns surrounding Whitinsville. The event is celebrated throughout the country and most small business participate. This holiday season shop locally, it helps our communities thrive.

**NOTE TO VOTE: Uxbridge Special Election to fill a 5 month Board of Selectmen Seat will be held on December 6th. Polls will be open from 7:00 a.m.-8:00 p.m. Last day to register to vote for this election will be November 16th.**

ge  
ALI

quest  
in the  
next  
on to  
a ren-  
ieu of

dded,  
they  
ming  
new  
com-  
over  
the  
ed to

O:  
ge

traightEdge  
ers multiple  
ization pro-  
ect control,  
hing.

page 33

## ~ INDEX ~

Town News	Page 4
Calendar	Page 21
Senior Corner	Page 23
Society	Page 27
School News	Page 29
Business News	Page 33
Sports	Page 35
Real Estate	Page 37
Classifieds	Page 38



Chapter of the Daughters called their new officers. (L) Dudley; Linda Ballou, Vice gistrar, of Sutton; Carolyn and Marcelyn Karagosian, retary, of Douglas was not

## ance dedicated

arkers. To become a member of aughters of the American Revolu-a woman must trace her lineage to an individual who contributed e fight for American Indepen-. For more information contact Marie Safaee at 508-949-0926.

Fiscal Scorecard websit  
"We are, primarily based advocacy organ Craney said. "Our Fisc unique and valuable re ing out how state lawi vote on important issue  
The Fiscal Scorecard database of roll call vo fiscal responsibility an ment. "Obtaining actu- mation on legislators' government websites is ble. But knowing how Beacon Hill vote on i like taxes, spending, ar ment is critical to know check on November 8 advocacy will result i thinking, learning and  
Visit the Scorecard Massachusetts Fiscal A



**Authentic Mexico!**  
114 Main St. • Unit B • I  
**Take Out 508-92-**  
cassaburritotakeo  
**CATERING AVAIL**  
Find Us on FB: CasaBurr

**Appetizers • Nachos**  
**Frijoles Charros • Tostada**  
**Burritos • Taquitos**  
**esadillas • Fresh Guacamole**  
**Homemade Salsa**  
(mild, spicy, extra spicy)

HOURS: SUNDAY 4:30-8:30 PM  
WEDNESDAY & THURSDAY 10:30 AM-8:30 PM  
FRIDAY & SATURDAY 11:30 AM TO 8:30 PM



## 25th Annual

# Festival of Craf

**Saturday, November 19**

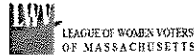
**9a.m. - 4p.m. • Rain or Shine**

Shepherd Hill Regional High Sch  
68 Dudley Oxford Road, Dudley, M



Over 250 top-quality New E Crafters and Artisans. On TW Fine hand-made holiday reasonable prices, draw fresh food, home baked de FREE package carry out s Free Parking and FREE s from Dudley Middle Sci  
Sponsored by the Shepherd Hill Music Parents' Ass

## Election Modernization Coalition Awards Early Voting Medals at State House



TM Refert  
H2

**BOSTON— October 19, 2016** – On the eve of Massachusetts' first experience with early voting, beginning October 24<sup>th</sup>, the Massachusetts Election Modernization Coalition today honored 201 of the state's 351 municipalities with Gold and Silver Medals for offering voters substantial early voting options.

"We are thrilled that so many communities have stepped up to go beyond the minimum required by law and are offering evening and weekend early voting hours," said Pam Wilmot, executive director of Common Cause Massachusetts during a Coalition press conference and 'medal ceremony' at the State House. "Early voting promises to shorten long lines at busy polling places, improve the voting experience, and give Massachusetts citizens more opportunities to participate in democracy," she said.

The Coalition campaigned for passage of the 2014 Election Modernization Law that established early voting and other reforms. Last fall, it launched the **Early Voting Challenge** to encourage municipalities to go beyond the floor set by the law (one location operating during business hours) and meet the Coalition's recommended standards, based on a Common Cause report on best practices from other states.

"The League of Women Voters of Massachusetts is proud to have worked with this coalition to bring robust early voting to Massachusetts," said Meryl Kessler, executive director. "And we are inspired by all of the cities and towns who went above and beyond the minimum requirements of the early voting law to ensure that voters throughout the state will have a convenient, flexible, and positive voting experience in 2016."

The Coalition awarded Gold Medals to 34 communities that offer one early voting site for every 35,000, at least two evenings of weeknight voting for each week in the early voting period, and six or more hours of weekend voting. 167 municipalities earned the Silver Medal for offering an adequate number of sites, at least one weeknight of evening voting each week in the two-week early voting period, and four or more hours of weekend voting. Towns under 10,000 people qualified with three hours on the weekend.

"Today we celebrate the cities and towns that have embraced early voting," said Rahsaan Hall, director of the Racial Justice Program at the ACLU of Massachusetts. "We believe that voting is the cornerstone of our democracy and the fundamental right upon which all our civil liberties rest. By increasing access to the polls through early voting we ensure that as many citizens as possible have a voice in the preservation and growth of our democracy. Communities with significant numbers of people of color, people living under the poverty threshold and English language learners, who have been historically underrepresented in electoral politics, will benefit the most from this very necessary modification of our voting practices."

Sophia Hall, staff attorney for the non-profit legal organization, the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights and Economic Justice echoed the sentiment. "The Lawyers' Committee's mission is to provide a safeguard for the civil, social and economic liberties of residents throughout the Commonwealth. On behalf of the communities of color and low-income communities that we serve

who disproportionately utilize early voting, we applaud each awardee for their efforts to expand access to the ballot box," she said.

Cheryl Crawford of MassVOTE added, "MassVOTE was founded to fight for political, racial and economic equality with a mission to increase voter turnout, modernize election laws and engage the next generation. We have been working to address these challenges by educating residents on early voting, and convincing others to become more civically engaged in this critical program."

Beth Huang from the Massachusetts Voter Table said that early voting will, "help make the voices heard of the Rising Massachusetts Electorate, especially in communities of color and among low-income people, young people, women, and new citizens."

MASSPIRG Education Fund executive director Janet Domenitz agreed. "For more than 40 years, MASSPIRG has been campaigning to make democracy more transparent and more accessible—particularly for our youth, in whose hands the future lies. Early voting is one tool that helps us realize that goal."

The Coalition plans to monitor the early voting process and will make recommendations on improving it for future elections.

###

*The Election Modernization Coalition is made up of the American Civil Liberties Union of Massachusetts, Common Cause Massachusetts, the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights and Economic Justice, the League of Women Voters of Massachusetts, the Massachusetts Public Interest Research Group, MassVOTE, and more.*





*Massachusetts Election Modernization Coalition presents the  
Silver Medal Award to the Town of*

# **Northbridge**

*for providing substantial Early Voting opportunities to its citizens.*

