

**A LOOK BACK
ED GIBSON'S SIX YEARS in SOUTHAMPTON
2018-2024**

Over the past years, a lot has been accomplished in this little town of Southampton. While it has been a team effort of various town departments, boards and committees, there is no doubt that Ed at the Town Administrator, has touched every one of these usually through procurement and reporting tasks as well as advice and counsel on the process to follow. These have all been achieved under Ed's leadership, juggling a multitude of town services and project priorities with countless hours of work to make them a reality.

TOWN IMPROVEMENTS

An emergency generator was purchased and installed at the Town Hall.

The Town website was re-designed and is now accessible and user-friendly.

Upgraded communications in place at Town Hall going from an antiquated POTS- Plain Old Telephone System to a modern Voice Over (VoIP) system.

New financial and payroll software acquired installed as well as Microsoft 365.

Southampton's Master Plan, the Municipal Vulnerability Plan and the Housing Production Plan were updated.

Acquired property on Rte.10 as the first designated site for affordable housing and established a Housing Trust.

The Town acquired the Right of Way from the Pioneer Valley Railroad to be able to move forward with the next steps for the Greenway Rail Trail Bicycle and Pedestrian Path.

A lighting and energy upgrade completed at Norris Elementary School completely paid for through Energy Saving Incentives provided by Eversource. Under the Green Communities program, four new energy saving projects at Town Hall, the Library and Norris School are currently in review stage at the State level.

Established a Host Community Agreement for the first cannabis dispensary.

2021 saw the transition from in person meetings to the use of remote virtual Zoom meetings due to the pandemic and that continued through 2022. New technologies and different ways of conducting business were utilized to help perform the everyday responsibilities of town government. The dates of the Annual Town Meeting and Annual Town Election were moved to accommodate the new reality as well as location moved to being outdoors to Labrie Field.

The Town received federal CARES Act funding to acquire various items and equipment to improve the safety of town employees and residents as the pandemic continued.

The Glendale Road Improvement project completed with the use of State funding.

Grants received 3 years in a row from Mass Trails for the engineering design of the Greenway to be done in order to receive MassDOT funds for its constructions.

The Town Water Department received a \$518,000 Hazard Mitigation Grant from the Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency to move the water main supply from the Manhan River bed up onto the Bridge on Rte. 10 where it passes over the Manhan River.

Town received a Shared Streets and Spaces Grant to install a new sidewalk on Route 10 between Pomeroy Meadow Road and High Street, completed in 2022.

Replacement of boilers at the school, library and police department.

The New Haven – Northampton Canal Project underway. This project involves the communities of Southwick, Russell, Westfield, Southampton, Easthampton, Northampton and the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission to map, record, and gain State/Federal recognition of the Massachusetts portion of the circa 1830 Canal Tow Paths.

PARC grant awarded for a spray deck and accessible walking path at Conant Park - work in progress.

Replacement of the Town's voting machines.

Updating of the Town's personnel classification and wage compensation plan underway.

Senior Center Building feasibility study/plan completed, property identified, perc tests completed and land appraisal in process.

Facelift of the old Town Hall – painting and woodwork repair completed to preserve the exterior of this historic building.

Broken Center Cemetery water main was replaced.

Upgrade to the Town's PEG TV broadcasting system (channel 191) by Easthampton Media.

Various roofing projects including library, Norris school and the Conant Park pavilion.

Replacement of the East Street (newly-named John V. Garstka) bridge completed in 2022.

Replacement of the heating system at the Highway department and garage.

Public Safety Complex design feasibility study underway with land appraisal and acquisition options under discussion.

Maddie's Magical Playground installed at Labrie Field, a resident-led initiative.

An Opioid Stabilization Fund established to receive legal settlement funds for local use.

The Town received \$1,844,554 in American Rescue Plan Act Covid-19 Recovery funds and made awards to eligible projects over a two-year period.

The Town's general and zoning bylaws were update and are awaiting their codification into ECode360.

Inter-municipal agreement concluded with Easthampton to manage our 911 Dispatch operations.

Over the years, acquired various equipment to replace the Town's aging fleet including: highway dump truck/plow and sander, wheel loader, fire rescue UTV/trailer and police cruiser.

In Ed's first year in Southampton, Ian Illingsworth assumed the role of Interim Police Chief and Judy Zedonis began as Administrative Assistant in the TA's office.

LAND CONSERVATION

In Ed's first year in Southampton, the Town received a \$400,000 LAND grant and with CPC funding, some 85 acres of open space was acquired for recreational purposes-Clearwater Woodlands is now an outdoor hiking destination in Southampton.

Drinking Water Supply Protection grant received to acquire land on lower Pomeroy Meadow Rd. a key recharge area for our aquifer.

Donation of land from the Hendrick family and conservation restrictions established for designated properties of the Riggs, Madsen, Gilmore families.

Manhan Sanctuary Trails re-routed and improved with funding from Mass Trails.

Water Commissioners secured a grant for aquifer and drinking water protection to acquire a sizeable tract of land on upper Pomeroy Meadow Road.

In Ed's last year in Southampton, collaboration among Kestrel Land Trust, the Open Space Committee, Conservation Commission and the Community Preservation Committee resulted in the Mountain Waters project, to be realized under a Landscape Partnership Grant. Some 730 acres of land will be available for conservation and recreation purposes preserving Southampton's iconic landscapes, as well as wildlife habitat, and drinking water supply areas.