

Municipal Update



Commemorating 250 Years

Next year marks the 250th anniversary of the “shot heard round the world”. Area militias, made up of local farmers, woodsmen, and merchants, marched to the North Bridge in Concord to defend against British regulars. The soldiers had headed west out of Boston to seize the colonists’ guns and ammunition. There was an exchange of gunfire in Lexington and another one at North Bridge. Fighting continued throughout the day as the colonists harassed the British back to Boston.

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Sudbury 250 Committee, cont...

Sudbury's Minutemen were involved in the events that day. Those skirmishes began the American War of Independence. A year later, on July 4, 1776, in Philadelphia, colonial leaders signed the Declaration of Independence, declaring the colonies' independence from the British Crown.

As we approach these anniversaries, the Sudbury Select Board is convening the Sudbury 250 Committee. The intent is for the Committee to plan for the commemoration of the 250th anniversary of the battle of North Bridge that commenced the American Revolution. The Board expects observances to occur in early spring through late winter of 2025. Events around the anniversary of the Declaration of Independence may also be considered and planned by the Committee. These will continue into the middle of 2026.

The Committee will consist of up to nine (9) members, including a Select Board member, Town Historian, Sudbury Public School or Lincoln-Sudbury educator, community members with expertise or interest in historical events in Sudbury, community members with event planning, logistics, and fundraising experience, and business, civic, and community groups. More information is available at <https://sudbury.ma.us/sudbury250/>.

Community members with experience or knowledge in these areas and with interest in helping celebrate Sudbury's role in these historic events are encouraged to apply for appointment.

Andy Sheehan
Town Manager

Town of Sudbury

TOWN MANAGER OFFICE HOURS

Andrew J. Sheehan



Join Town Manger Sheehan at a monthly Office Hours to ask questions, discuss town matters or just say hello.



NEXT OFFICE HOURS:

Tuesday

March 26, 2024

11:00 AM - 12:00 PM

Flynn Building

278 Old Sudbury Rd

Silva Room

sudbury.ma.us/townmanager/?p=2569



Sudbury Health Department Household Hazardous Waste Collection Day

SATURDAY, March 30, 2024

8:00 AM – 12:00 PM

Sudbury DPW – 275 Old Lancaster Rd.

BY APPOINTMENT ONLY

SIGN UP TODAY

Accepted Items

Styrofoam (collected by Sustainable Sudbury)

From the Workbench:

- Oil Based Paints (NO LATEX)
- Stains & Varnishes
- Wood Preservatives
- Paint Strippers/Thinners Solvent
- Adhesives Lighter Fluid /Fiberglass Resins

From the Garage:

- Fuels/Gasoline/Kerosene
- Motor Oil
- **Car Batteries**
- Antifreeze
- Engine Degreaser
- Brake Fluid/Carburetor Cleaner
- Transmission Fluid Car Wax, Polishes
- Driveway Sealer
- Roofing Tar
- Swimming Pool Chemicals

From the Yard:

- Poisons
- Insecticides
- Fungicides
- Chemical Fertilizers
- Weed Killers Moth Balls
- Flea Control Products

From the House:

- Rubber Cement, Airplane Glue
- Photo Chemicals
- Chemistry Sets, Hobby Supplies, Artist Supplies
- Furniture Polish
- Floor & Metal Polish
- Oven Cleaner
- Drain & Toilet Cleaner
- Spot Remover
- Rug & Upholstery Cleaner
- Fire Extinguishers
- Mercury Containing Devices
- Fluorescent bulbs

- Batteries Cad, Alk, Lith, Lead-Acid

Items NOT Accepted

NO Latex Paint

NO Empty Containers/Trash Commercial
Commercial or Industrial Waste

NO Radioactive Waste, Smoke Detectors

NO Infectious & Biological Wastes

NO Ammunition, Fireworks,
Explosives

NO Prescription Medicines/Syringes

NO Asbestos

NO Propane Tanks

NO Computers / TV's

Highlighted items collected prior to Clean Harbor Drop. Traffic will be diverted to this area and will re- enter traffic flow. **Separate out these items from hazardous waste.**

Safe Transport Tips

- o Leave materials in original containers.
- o Tighten caps and lids.
- o Sort and pack separately: oil paint, pesticides, and household cleaners.
- o Pack containers in sturdy upright boxes and pad with newspaper.
- o NEVER MIX CHEMICALS.
- o Pack your car and drive directly to the site.
- o NEVER SMOKE while handling hazardous material.



Free to
Sudbury Residents
ID IS REQUIRED.

Pre-Register Online

or call 978-440-5478

www.sudbury.ma.us/health

Protecting Nature in your Backyard: What is a Conservation Restriction?

BY JOE MILLER, LAND MANAGER

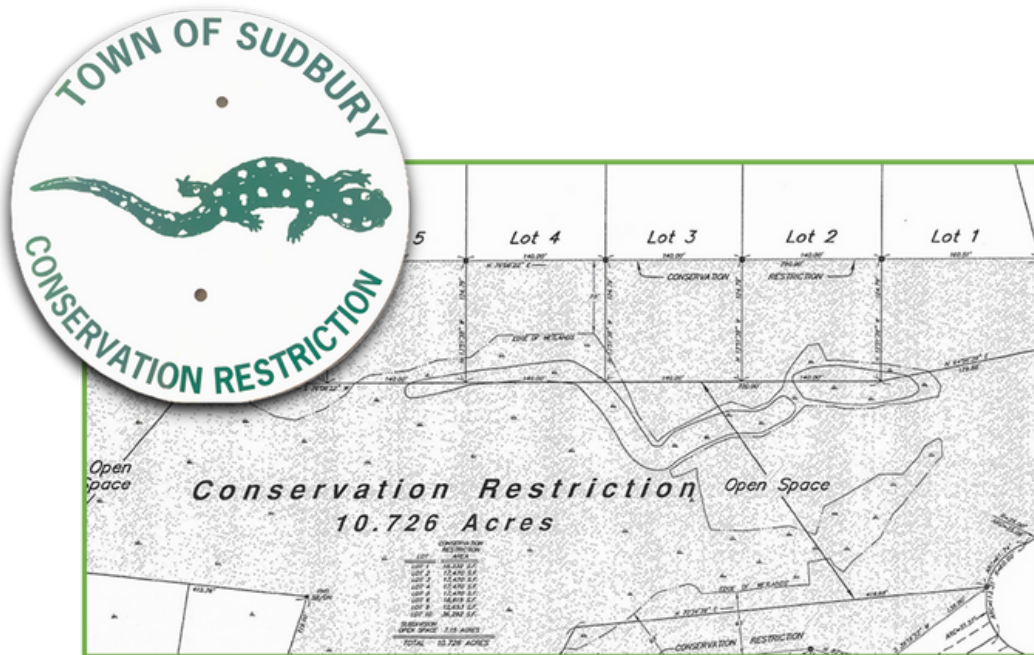
A key focus of the Conservation Office going into 2024 is the review and monitoring of conservation restrictions (CRs) across town. Many homeowners have already received letters discussing this monitoring, so for those who have them, and those who do not, what does a conservation restriction mean for a property?

CRs are one of many ways that open space is protected in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. A CR is defined as “a legally enforceable agreement whose purpose is to ensure permanent protection of specific conservation values while permitting limited land uses consistent with the protection of said conservation values.”

While the specifics of these agreements are individually negotiated when each CR is established and can therefore vary from property to property, they generally lay out a list of prohibited. These can include the prohibition of excavation, the building of structures, clearing of trees and plants, and other activities with the overarching goal to conserve the land in as natural a state as possible. They are granted by

landowners to qualified organizations, which in many cases is the town in which the land lies. Sudbury has around 600 acres of land protected in this way.

For those properties which the Town of Sudbury is the Grantee, it is the responsibility of the Conservation Commission to conduct annual monitoring to ensure that the land complies with the prohibitions of its CR. This entails staff walking the property and reporting on the current status of the land held within. Letters notifying CR holders of these monitoring visits began going out in November, and will continue through the new year. Joining Conservation Department staff on these walks is a great way for homeowners to learn the specifics of their CR, as well as best practices for stewarding their land.



Consider Conserving, cont.

There are two main avenues through which CRs are established on a property. The first are those which are required as a condition of development near protected resource areas, such as wetlands. This could occur either when the lot is first built, which is often the case with subdivisions, or as a mitigation measure when additional work is done to properties within the jurisdiction of the Conservation Commission. Forms and instructions for projects falling under the jurisdiction of the Commission can be found [here](#).

The other common way a CR can be established is as a gift. A homeowner with a large natural section on their property can voluntarily put that land into a CR as a way of ensuring that no development will ever happen on that portion of land, thereby preserving it as a natural landscape in perpetuity. Such gifts support rare and native wildlife, aid in carbon sequestration to help combat climate change, and support ecosystem services such as flood protection, erosion control and nutrient recycling. They can be a great way to leave a permanent mark maintaining the beauty of Sudbury's landscape. Additionally, there are significant federal income and estate tax benefits to the property owner, as well as local real estate tax benefits based on the value of the restricted land.

The other common way a CR can be established is as a gift. A homeowner with a large natural section on their property can voluntarily put that land into a CR as a way of ensuring that no development will ever happen on that portion of land, thereby preserving it as a natural landscape in perpetuity. Such gifts support rare and native wildlife, aid in carbon sequestration to help combat climate change, and support ecosystem services such as flood protection, erosion control and nutrient recycling. They can be a great way to leave a permanent mark maintaining the beauty of Sudbury's landscape. Additionally, there are significant federal income and estate tax benefits to the property owner, as well as local real estate tax benefits based on the value of the restricted land.



Mass Audubon reports that over 40 acres of open space (forests and field) are lost to development every day. By protecting our open space, property owners of Massachusetts are uniquely positioned in the fight against climate change. According to MassWoods, over 60% of Massachusetts is forested. Forests are incredibly important in providing the ecosystem services that benefit our climate and insulate it from the many growing threats facing the Earth. If you are a property owner, consider setting aside some of your land in a CR in support of a climate-resilient planet.

If you are interested in establishing a CR, the steps to do so can be found on the state website [here](#). For more information about the different types of conserved land in Sudbury, including CRs, check out <https://sudbury.ma.us/conservationcommission/conservation-lands-conservation-restrictions-wetlands/>

The Importance of Wetlands

BY DAVID HENKELS,
CONSERVATION COMMISSIONER

In any given year, the Sudbury Conservation Commission will hold upwards of twenty-five meetings, volunteering many hours to listening, questioning, and making decisions that bear directly on the conservation of the Town's natural resources. Sometimes the subject of concern is one of the numerous open natural spaces owned by the Town. Other times, the topics can range from conservation restrictions to budgets to agricultural leases. On rare occasions, we may even have the good fortune to approve the acquisition of an entirely new property.

However, the lion's share of our time is dedicated to the diligent execution of the authority granted to Commission by the [Wetland Protection Act](#) (M.G.L. c. 131, § 40), as well as the [Sudbury Wetlands Administration Bylaw](#) (Article XXII). Development projects in and near wetland resource areas are thoughtfully discussed, and permits are issued when the applicant demonstrates that adequate protections and mitigation will be implemented. At this point, you may be asking yourself: why should we care about wetlands?

For that matter, what are wetlands? Wetlands are areas where water covers the soil or is present either at or near the surface of the soil all year or for varying periods of time during the year, including during the growing season. The hydrological conditions of the soil, specifically, the degree to which it is saturated with water, determine how the soil develops. This in turn influences the types of plant and animal communities that live in and on that soil. Prolonged presence of water creates conditions that favor the growth of specially adapted plants called "hydrophytes", and promotes the development of hydric soil that often characterizes a wetland.

There are many different types of wetlands. These include swamps, bogs, marshes, and vernal pools, but also floodplains, and the lands underlying streams, rivers, ponds, and lakes. [Sudbury's wetlands](#) are extensive and well-connected.

Why all the fuss over some soggy dirt? In fact, wetlands are a critical resource, providing valuable services. Such services include protection of public & private water supplies, flood control, storm damage prevention, water and soil pollution prevention, erosion and sedimentation control, opportunities for passive recreation, and wildlife habitat. One study conducted in 1997 examined the total value of services provided by wetlands around the globe. They estimated it to be \$4.9 trillion per year. Yet wetlands do what they do without charging a dime.



The Importance of Wetlands, cont.

As the climate changes, flooding is expected to become more frequent and intense. According to a 2023 report by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, damage costs for weather and climate disasters in the United States reached a historic \$1.1 trillion over the last ten years. And that is just counting the 152 separate events with costs exceeding \$1 billion. Some of you may have personal experience with the damage and costs associated with floods and storms. Wetlands, particularly floodplains and in coastal areas, reduce flooding by storing excess water during storm events. This permits the water to safely infiltrate or evaporate, consequently reducing flooding.

The roots of wetland plants bind the soil, preventing water from washing it away. The plants also dissipate the energy of running water, slowing it down and allowing sediment to settle out. In addition to preventing erosion, the ability of wetlands to absorb and filter water provides natural pollution control. Filtration and collection of sediment from runoff water can prevent organic debris from stifling streams, lakes, and reservoirs

of their purpose to provide clean water.

Wetlands shelter and feed thousands of different plants and animals, including many that are threatened and endangered, as well as some who extensively depend on wetland biomes. A total of 432 native species are currently listed and protected under the Massachusetts Endangered Species Act (M.G.L. c. 131A). These includes species that rely heavily on wetlands, such as the Blanding's Turtle, the New England Blazing Star, and the Blue-spotted Salamander. When wetlands are damaged or destroyed, the impacts to wildlife can be incalculable.

As a community, we must remain vigilant. Development, stormwater runoff, pollution, hydrologic fragmentation, and loss of forest canopy exert steady pressure on our valuable wetlands. Once removed, they are difficult or impossible to replace. Visit the Conservation Commission's [website](#) to learn more about wetlands and other topics.





MUNICIPAL VULNERABILITY
PREPAREDNESS (MVP) 2.0

JOIN OUR
CORE TEAM!

CALL FOR COMMUNITY LIAISONS

MARCH -
NOVEMBER 2024

We are looking for Sudbury community members passionate about advocating for community needs and interested in helping us face the challenges brought about by climate change.

CORE TEAM MEMBERS WILL:

- Learn together about community climate resilience and climate equity
- Do outreach to their community to get input on climate priorities
- Translate input into action.



APPLY HERE BY MARCH 8TH

mapc.ma/SudburyMVPapply

STIPEND OF \$2,400

In three installments



SCAN TO APPLY

For more information, contact the Sudbury sustainability coordinator at MariniD@sudbury.ma.us or 978-440-5459.

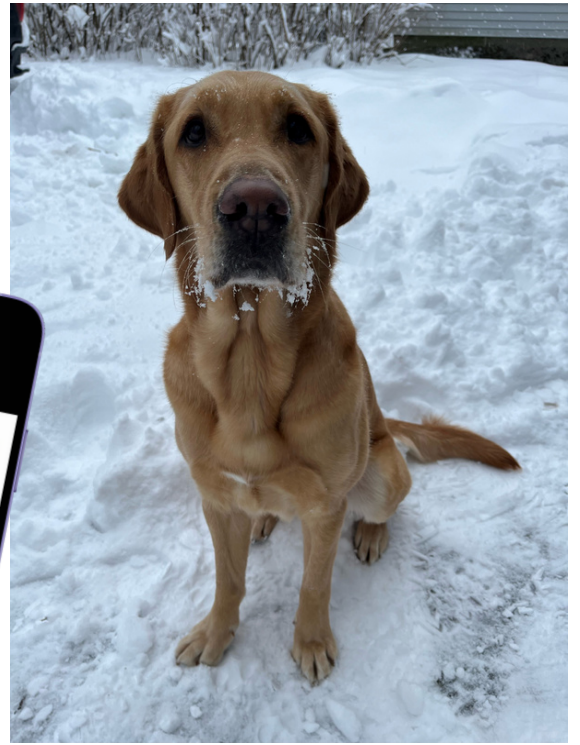
Dog Duty with Police Facility Dog Rico

**BY OFFICER JESS LATINI,
SUDBURY POLICE DEPARTMENT**

Rico has been a busy boy in Sudbury lately. Students and staff alike love getting to see Rico and give him pets on a daily basis. Rico has also been able to put his pressure therapy to good use with students, staff, and other members of the community who needed some extra help to relax. Besides the schools, Rico has also been busy visiting several places around town including Bridges, the Senior Center, the Coolidge buildings, and numerous daycares. Rico may have turned 3 in November, but this California boy finally experienced snow for the first time and loved it! As hard as Rico works each day, there is plenty of playtime after.



**FOLLOW RICO
ON INSTAGRAM!**



SUDBURY CLEANUP DAY

SATURDAY
APRIL 20, 2024

Join Sudbury
Residents, Businesses
and Civic Groups in
the Annual Roadside
Cleanup this Spring.



Help Keep Sudbury Beautiful



Sign up Today!

SUDBURY.MA.US/CLEANUP



Senior Center News

BY DEBRA GALLOWAY,
SENIOR CENTER DIRECTOR

New Community Center

We opened the new Senior Center spaces in the new Community Center to the public on Tuesday, January 2. Staff were thrilled to finally open to the public and visitors love the new spaces!

The Sudbury Senior Center staff have added new fitness, arts and other types of classes, and events to the schedule. We now offer Drums Alive, Line Dance, and Wellness Lab. New classes starting soon include: Dance Fusion, Seeing and Drawing, Making Pillowcases workshop and more.

WCVB Channel 5 Meteorologist Emeritus Harvey Leonard presented to a large crowd at the new Sudbury Senior Center on January 16. Harvey gave a clear, convincing and thought-provoking presentation on climate change, and then answered questions about his life and career.



Senior Center, cont.

What's Happening at the Sudbury Senior Center?

A wide range of offerings continue at the Sudbury Senior Center, including: Lifelong learning academic classes, support groups, art classes, social and discussion groups, fitness classes, informational talks, movies, cards and games... there's something for everyone at the Senior Center. We also host educational and informational talks, and special luncheons.

While the Sudbury Senior Center is known for the many activities we offer, we also provide supports and services for Sudbury residents and their families. There are support groups for caregivers, people living with low vision, and bereavement, as well as services such as Phone Buddies, help with shopping, hearing assessments, and SHINE Medicare counseling. In addition, the Sudbury Health Department nurse visits weekly for a Blood Pressure clinic.

Tech Savvy

The Sudbury Senior Center was awarded the "Enhancing Digital Literacy for Older Adults" grant through the Executive Office of Elder Affairs recently. Funds from the grant will support free technical workshops, technical one to one tutoring and hardware such as laptops, tablets, and their accessories. Check the Sudbury Senior Center newsletter for upcoming Tech workshops!



The new Senior Center lounge is comfy and has great windows!

Instructor Yachun Lin leads a group of drummers in Drums Alive class at the Sudbury Senior Center on January 18, 2024.



Newsletter

Our newsletter provides a wealth of information about our programs, if you don't already receive our newsletter, please contact us at 978-443-3055, or sign up for the emailed newsletter at the town website, www.sudbury.ma.us by clicking on the "Email Lists" tab.

Senior Center, cont. 2

Volunteer opportunities abound!

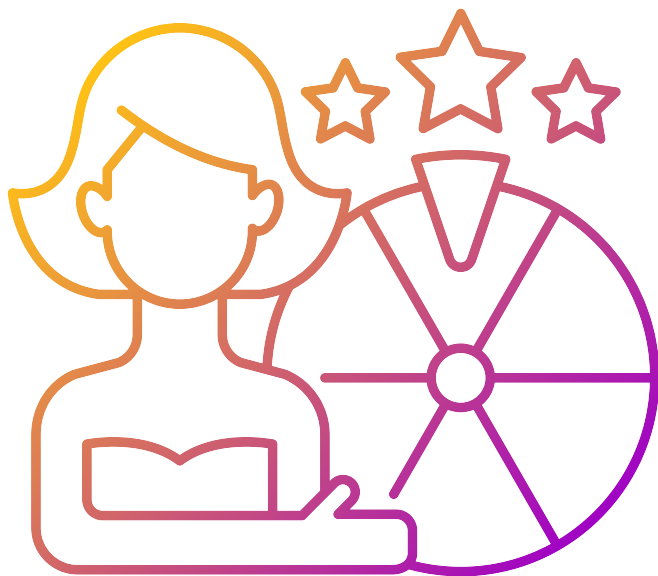
Our volunteers...

- Make small outdoor home repairs
- Provide technology support
- Make weekly calls or outdoor home visits to seniors
- Pick up groceries for clients
- Help out at special events
- Offer free legal, tax and health insurance advice
- Deliver books/materials to seniors unable to get to Goodnow Library
- Pick up donated baked goods from local supermarkets
- Greet people as they come into the Senior Center
- Assist with monthly newsletter mailings...and much more!

To learn more about our volunteer services, or to apply to become a volunteer, contact Janet Lipkin at LipkinJ@sudbury.ma.us.



Violinist Lynne Canavan plays at the Sudbury Senior Center Making Memories Café on January 16. Sponsored by Bridges by Epoch Memory Care and Dementia Friendly Sudbury.



Live game Show

Tuesday, March 5 at 12:30 PM

Join us for an afternoon of fun! Kevin Richman, from It's the Music Entertainment will produce a "LIVE" TV like game show (think Jeopardy, Family Feud, Wheel of Fortune). This program is filled with laughter and nostalgia as you get to be the stars of the show! Bring your quick thinking friends with you. Sign up by calling the Sudbury Senior Center at 978-443-3055.

Help develop the Sudbury Housing Production Plan!



**Join us for the second
Sudbury Housing Production Plan
Public Forum to discuss housing goals
and strategies**

Thursday, March 21st
6:30 PM - 8:30 PM
Held Virtually (Zoom)

Join URL: <http://tinyurl.com/SudburyHPPGS>

Dial-in: Dial-in number: 978-639-3366 or 470-250-9358

Meeting ID: 837 4308 3607

Join here!



*Sudbury HPP Public
Forum*

FROM THE SELECT BOARD

Winter 2024

Town of Sudbury

Elections 2024: Your Vote Matters

**BY DAN CARTY,
SELECT BOARD**

2024 will be a busy year at the polls and at our Town Clerk's office. As of the writing of this article there will be no fewer than five voting opportunities for all registered voters of Sudbury - see [2024 Election and Town Meeting Schedule](#). You may be asking "Why so many, and what are they all for?" Hopefully, this article answers those questions and others.

Let's start with the first two; The March 5 Presidential Primary and the March 25 Annual Town Election. Sudbury operates within the construct of its Bylaws and the very first entry there, Article I Section 1, stipulates that "The Annual Town Elections shall be held on the last Monday in March at such place and time as the Selectmen may determine." (see <https://sudbury.ma.us/clerk/2023-general-bylaws-articles-i-xxxix/>). Questions that may come to mind may be "Why this specific calendar event and why a Monday - aren't elections generally on Tuesday"? Research showed that our elections used to happen earlier in the month of March, but at the October 26, 1970, Special Town Meeting Article 2 was passed, setting the timing that is still followed today. Per that town meeting warrant "REPORT: The purpose of this article is to provide for the election of Regional District School Committee members to be held on the same day in both Lincoln and Sudbury. By so

doing, neither Town will be required to "impound" ballots and results." Also, from the 1971 Annual Town Report "Note: Members of the Lincoln-Sudbury Regional School District School Committee were elected for the first time in 1971 on an at large basis pursuant to the vote of the special Town Meeting of October 26, 1970 under Article 1 and subsequent passage by the General court of chapter 20 of the Acts of 1971." In short, our bylaws state that we have our town elections when we do in an attempt to sync up with our regional high school partner town Lincoln as filling the Lincoln Sudbury School Committee happens as an open election across both towns.

As for the Presidential Primary, dates in Massachusetts are set at the state level, so we have to hold those elections, essentially, when we are told to do so. Skipping to the last two planned events, the September 3 State Primary and November 5 State Election, those dates are also pre-determined and outside of the control of Sudbury. 2024 is a Presidential year, so we can expect state and national-level action at both the primary (September) and general (November) elections.

Right in the middle of that list is our Annual Town Meeting, which this year will begin on Monday May 6th at 7:30pm. Sudbury's primary legislative body is our town meeting. Sudbury uses what is called an "open town meeting" form of government, and they too are held when they are pursuant to our bylaws, specifically



2024 ELECTION CALENDAR

- MARCH 5** – PRESIDENTIAL PRIMARY
- MARCH 25** – TOWN ELECTION
- MAY 6** – TOWN MEETING
- SEPTEMBER 3** – STATE PRIMARY
- NOVEMBER 5** – STATE ELECTION

Elections 2024, Continued

Article I Section 2: "The Annual Business Meeting shall begin on the first Monday in May at such place as the Selectmen shall determine...All sessions of the meeting shall begin at 7:30 P.M". Town meeting is not an election per se, rather it is an opportunity for all town voters to speak and be heard, to propose legislation of their own, and ultimately to vote on all matters before the town. Generally, town meetings last multiple nights. Recently the town adopted the use of electronic counting devices, so where in the past all voters raised a card signifying their vote, now there is some level of anonymity as buttons on handheld devices are clicked instead. The clickers also have added a level of efficiency which helps move the meeting along quicker. However, to answer a question that I often hear, voters must show up in person for their vote to be counted as remote or advance voting for Town Meetings are not permissible under state law.

To learn more about the Open Town Meeting form of government visit the state website here [Massachusetts law about town meetings](#). [Mass.gov](#).

I started off by saying that this year there will be no fewer than five voting opportunities for all registered voters of Sudbury. We always have our annual town meeting in May, but there can also be "Special" town meetings called, which we tend to call "Fall Town Meeting," much like the October 1970 one I mentioned earlier. Most recently we held a special town meeting in October of 2023 to approve, among other items, additional funding for the new Fairbank Center and to fund the labor agreement with our firefighters. In 2020 one was held in January at the behest of citizens; citizens can call their own special town meeting at any time by collecting 200 signatures.

continued on page SB7.

FROM THE SELECT BOARD

Firearm Safety in Sudbury

BY CHARLIE RUSSO, SELECT BOARD

To increase public safety, the Select Board plans to present the Town’s first commonsense gun control zoning regulations at Annual Town Meeting in May 2024.

The new regulations would for the first time restrict where in Sudbury firearm shops are allowed to locate and install strict safety standards for any business to operate. Currently, Sudbury’s Zoning Bylaws do not address firearms businesses, so no geographic or safety restrictions are in place.

The Current State

Because firearms are not mentioned in the Zoning Bylaws, any application to operate a firearm business in town would be treated the same as any other business. This means a firearm retail shop permit application would be handled the same as a shoe shop or baby clothes shop application, with no difference in the level of scrutiny and requirements.

Firearms businesses applying to operate in Town might be classified as a retail store, light manufacturing, manufacturing, or some combination, depending on how the business operates. Today, those three uses are allowed “by right” in up to 7 of Sudbury’s 10 zoning districts – representing every non-residential area in town.

This means Sudbury could end up with a firearm business in any of these zones, or any of the approximately 536 commercially zoned parcels in Town.

Right now, these businesses would NOT be subject to any special review or safety standards, with the Town having little legal justification to deny their operation. As an example, present day checks might include whether there are enough parking spaces available for the shop and a review of the building’s exterior appearance.

The New Bylaw

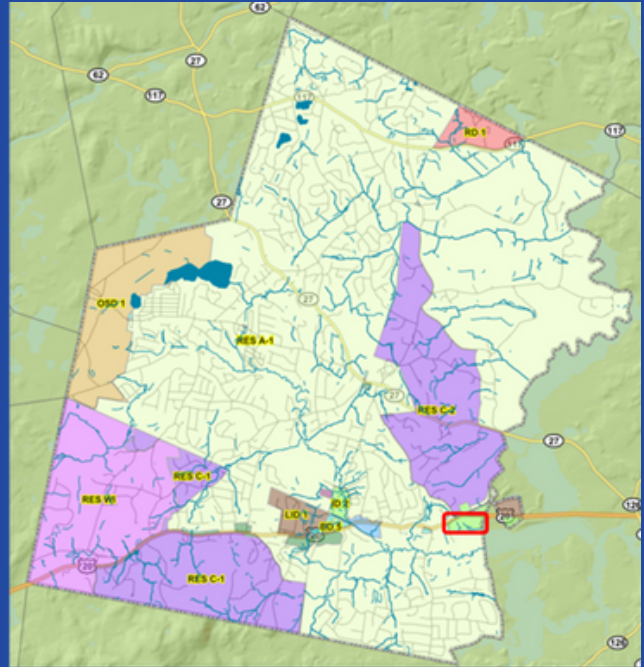
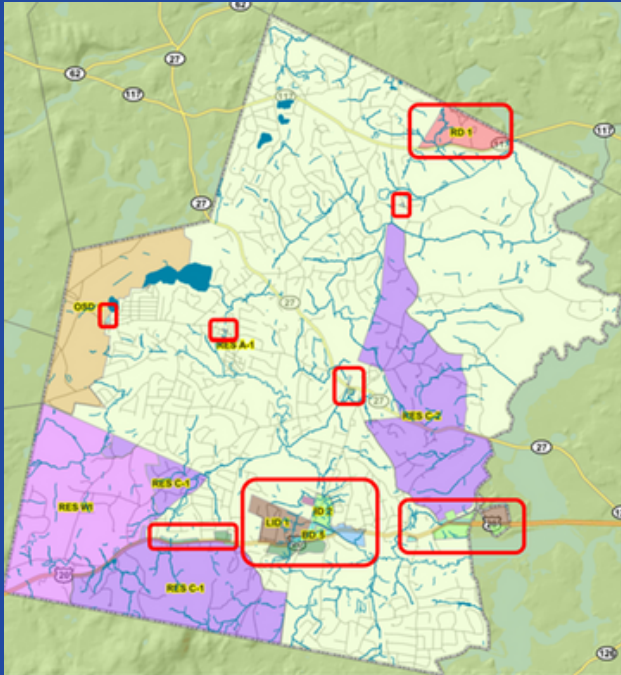
Adoption of the Firearm Safety Business Zoning Bylaw would restrict the operation of firearm businesses to only one zoning district, Industrial District, and only by special permit granted by a 4-1 or better vote of the Select Board. Special permits require businesses to meet far higher standards compared to “by right” permits. Special permits require a public hearing with abutter notification and empower the permitting authority with far greater ability to impose conditions, safeguards, and/or limitations on the time or use of a site, or even to deny an application for good cause.

	PRINCIPAL USE	A-RES	C-RES	WI	BD	LBD	VBD ¹	ID	LID	IP	RD
Before:	11. Retail stores and services not elsewhere set forth	N	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N
After:	11. Retail stores and services not elsewhere set forth	N	N	N	N	N	N	SB	N	N	N
Before:	1. Light manufacturing	N	N	N	Y*	Y*	Y*	Y	Y	Y	Y*
After:	1. Light manufacturing	N	N	N	N	N	N	SB	N	N	N
Before:	4. Manufacturing	N	N	N	N	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y*
After:	4. Manufacturing	N	N	N	N	N	N	SB	N	N	N

The picture above shows how allowable uses by zone would change for firearm businesses in the Table of Principal Use Regulations after the passage of this bylaw.

FROM THE SELECT BOARD

Firearm Safety, Continued



These maps of Sudbury show within the red boxes where firearm businesses could potentially locate now (left) and where they would be able to locate after the Firearm Business Use bylaw is approved (right). The number of commercial lots where a firearm business could locate would be reduced from 500+ to 5. The number of eligible zoning districts would drop from 7 to 1. The number of geographic locations would drop from 8 to 1.

This bylaw would limit two Firearm Businesses to locate in Sudbury at any given time. The bylaw aligns with similar bylaws approved in 8 nearby communities, follows a model law created by the [Gifford Law Center to Prevent Gun Violence](#), and includes regulations on best business practices and security to maintain safety for the general public. All other relevant state and federal regulations would still apply.

The bylaw would add a number of minimum requirements not currently in place, including:

- Reduces the locations available to firearms businesses to just 1 of 10 zoning districts instead of 7 of 10 available today
- Cuts the number of eligible parcels for firearm business locations from 500+ parcels across 7 zones down to 5 parcels in 1 zone

- Requires a minimum 250-foot offset from sensitive locations – schools, parks, churches, senior living centers, childcare centers, rail trails, liquor stores, and more
- Requires a security plan be submitted to and approved by the Sudbury Police Department
- Requires 24-hour video surveillance and video storage for 3 years
- Requires extensive after-hours lock up and secure storage requirements
- Allows additional site-specific conditions in consideration of abutters, public safety, or public good

FROM THE SELECT BOARD

Firearm Safety, Continued 2

The adoption of zoning restrictions to promote public safety has been endorsed by [Giffords Law Center to Prevent Gun Violence](#), [Massachusetts Coalition to Prevent Gun Violence](#), [Stop Handgun Violence MA](#), and [Newton Gun Violence Prevention Collaborative](#), among others.

Similar bylaws have been successfully implemented in Acton, Newton, Littleton, Wellesley, Plainville, Brookline, Dedham, and Westwood.

At Annual Town Meeting in May 2023, a citizens' petition requested a total ban of firearm shops. Town Meeting defeated this proposal, with 64% of residents voting against the ban (59-107) due to concerns about a lack of administrative detail, a clash with Constitutional rights, and the likelihood of a total ban triggering an expensive lawsuit. Submitting this bylaw keeps a promise made by the Select Board then to bring forward a similar, improved bylaw such as those implemented in nearby communities.

As noted by the petitioners last year, the so-called Littleton Gun Mill - a former mill building that recently hosted 80+ gun shops - is still being closed down, with the potential for those firearm businesses to relocate to nearby communities, such as Sudbury. Both Acton and Westford received inquiries from firearm businesses seeking to relocate to those communities and developed firearm business zoning bylaws as a result. The possibility of a Littleton firearm business seeking to relocate to Sudbury remains.

This new bylaw—discussed and revised extensively at eight different public Select Board meetings (from May 2023 through the end of January 2024) and edited by Town Counsel—addresses the concerns raised at the last Town Meeting, providing commonsense policies intended to promote public safety without infringing on individual or Constitutional rights. A dedicated public information forum is being organized and expected to take place in March. Sudbury will be an even safer place once this new bylaw is approved.

Gun Shops: A Community Conversation and Exercise in Democracy

BY LISA KOUCHAKDJIAN, SELECT BOARD

The Town of Sudbury's tradition of Town Meeting is the oldest and purest form of Democracy: one person, one vote. Town Meeting is our legislature. This is our community's Superbowl! This is our World Series!

At Town Meeting in May, we decide issues together, as a community, that impact our daily lives. For those who may have moved here from other states, the way we make decisions here may seem very different. At Town Meeting residents themselves vote to decide our town's path forward.



Gun Shops, Continued

One of the Select Board's roles is to decide what articles will go on the Town Warrant and be presented to the community for its consideration. The Select Board does not decide which articles should pass or not. Residents of Sudbury who attend Town Meeting will vote to approve or not approve articles on the Warrant.

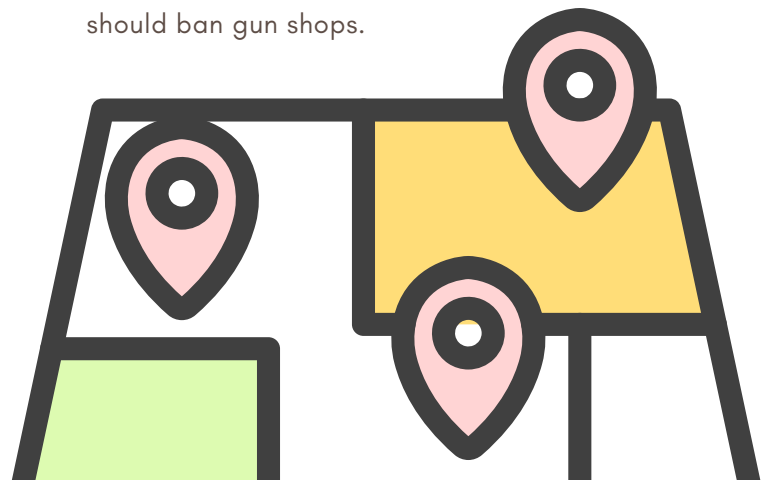
For several months, our Select Board has been discussing a potential zoning by-law that would permit gun shops to open in a designated section of our town. The Select Board has been considering this by-law since last Spring when a resident brought a citizens' petition for a gun shop ban to Town Meeting which did not pass by the required two-thirds vote.

At its meeting on January 31st, the Select Board voted 3-2 to place an article on the May 6th Town Meeting Warrant that would allow two gun shops to open in a specific part of town. Residents who attend Town Meeting in May will decide whether the Town of Sudbury will adopt this zoning by-law. The Select Board has agreed to conduct a town information session with the community. The date of this forum will be determined soon.

In Massachusetts, each town makes its own decisions regarding zoning. In other states around the country, such decisions are made on a county level, with some counties containing many, many towns. As a community, we have a lot of control and autonomy. With that right comes responsibility. Each of us, as residents and legislators at Town Meeting must be knowledgeable about the issues and cast our votes accordingly. At Town Meeting, we set our own path and our own destiny.

Community outreach is vitally important as we move forward and decide whether to adopt a zoning by-law that would allow two gun shops in Sudbury. Residents and community members, including our businesses, should attend community forums and ask questions. Since the Select Board is closely divided on the issue, community members should understand all perspectives to make an informed decision for our community. To pass, the by-law must receive a two-thirds vote at Town Meeting.

The issue of guns and gun violence is an emotionally charged matter that generates very strong feelings. For this reason, the Select Board rightly is providing an opportunity for people to share their positions and voice their opposition or concerns in an open and safe environment. Dialogue with the community is a must as this type of zoning by-law will have a lasting, direct impact upon the safety and livelihood of our residents and businesses. Once a zoning by-law passes, it is very difficult to overturn it. Some believe that this type of by-law will provide safety to the community because the town will limit where the gun shops go and will have oversight of them through the by-law. Others believe that allowing a gun shop does nothing but make it easier for a gun shop to open in Sudbury at a specific location in town, and that having no by-law would make it harder for a gun shop to open in Sudbury. Others believe our community should ban gun shops.



FROM THE SELECT BOARD

Gun Shops, Continued 2

We do not have data to indicate whether the community would support or oppose a zoning by-law that would allow gun shops in Sudbury. The law on gun shops is evolving. But what we do know is that we will make this decision together in May at Town Meeting. It is important to hold ourselves to a high standard for discourse and being fully informed on this matter. Respectful discussions of this issue will help ensure voters are equipped to make an educated, well-reasoned decision.

That decision has the potential of being one of the most consequential decisions our community has faced in several years. Fortunately, Sudbury has experience making these types of decisions like when it banned marijuana shops. Let's take advantage of this opportunity to come together respectfully to make a decision that is in the best interests of our community. As the purest form of Democracy, Town Meeting gives us this right!

Elections 2024, Continued 2

As of now, there is no fall Town Meeting planned for 2024, but that is always subject to change. As for Town Elections, again we always have our Annual in March, but depending on articles being voted, a follow-up election may be required for certain financial 'asks' like an override or capital exclusion. For example, in 2019 an election was held in June to approve the funding for the purchase of the Liberty Ledge/Camp Sewataro property that was approved at the May Town Meeting, and a similar election was held in 2018 for DPW Fuel Island, DPW vehicles, and repair of the Stearns Mill Pond dam, all having been approved at the May 2018 Annual Town Meeting. Last year, the override requested by Sudbury Public Schools was known in advance, and we were able to combine into our 'normal' March Annual Election. At the time of the writing of this article, none of the requests for our upcoming 2024 Annual Town Meeting should require a subsequent election. But, as is the structure of Town Meeting, any voter can suggest a change of funding source for any given article, which, if approved, could trigger a subsequent ballot vote via town election.

With multiple elections coming in 2024, voters may experience fatigue. To that I will simply say you have multiple opportunities for your voice to be heard and your vote to be counted, and your vote matters. Sudbury has about 13,500 registered voters and while Presidential elections draw well – the last 2 have had 89.73% and 84% voter turnout – our local election participation is much lower. Over the last 5 years we have averaged about 2865 voters for local elections, or 21.6% of those eligible, but looking just at our elections without an override on the ballot those numbers dip to 2271 and 17%. Town Meetings bring out significantly fewer still. For the same approximate 13,500 voters eligible, the last 5 Town Meetings I could find attendance data for had 251, 163, 706, 434, and 665 attendees. That's about 3 to 4% of our eligible voters making important decisions for the remaining 96 to 97%!

There are in-person and vote by mail options for our local, state, and federal elections (but not Town meeting!). For details, visit Sudbury's [2024 Election and Town Meeting Schedule](#).