**Town Administrator Update 01.28.19**

**Committees**

The Garage Committee is almost ready to propose an article for funding the design for the proposed Highway Facility. They are planning to use some funds left over from the last project to hire the FRCOG to manage a Request for Qualifications for an owner’s project manager to be able to give Town Meeting a hard figure for that cost. The design cost would still have to be estimated.

Due to a posting error, the Capital Improvement Planning Committee did not meet on Wednesday, January 23. The chair is aware that the Committee’s report is expected February 11. He also indicated that he did not feel the Committee as currently constituted was capable of taking on the task of capital planning; it seems we should consider recruiting others for the work.

**Departments**

I have in the past been able to present a proposed budget around the last week in February. I may or may not be able to do that this year. In the past, our utilities have regularly submitted their personal property values to the assessors well in advance of their deadline of March 1. However, not only is this not guaranteed, but I will be at a procurement class most of the last week of February. Normally, I would have submitted the budget before then, but if the utilities are later than usual in getting us their figures, I may not have the budget ready till early March.

I’m checking with Town Counsel about several matters related to taxing Airbnb operations. First, I believe this would cover existing (and permitted) bed-and-breakfast operations as well as Airbnb operations (the real object of the article) and have asked if he concurs. Second, I’ve asked whether setting the tax rate really needs Town Meeting approval, or whether it is just a Select Board action, now that Town Meeting has accepted the statute, and if so, can the Board set different rates for permitted B&Bs versus unpermitted Airbnb operations.

The Attorney General has approved the Town’s marijuana establishment by-law, with the following caveat (resulting from a motion to amend the Planning Board’s proposal on the floor of Town Meeting):

Section 11.5.F of the by-law states that: “Permitting priority will be granted to organic cultivation.” It is unclear what the Town intended by this text. Since organic cultivation is not a criterion for grant of a special permit, and since the Town does not establish a limit on the number of cultivators, it is unclear whether the Town intended to authorize the Planning Board, as the special permit granting authority, to deny a special permit if organic cultivation methods are not used. As drafted, the text quoted above may grant undue discretion to the special permit granting authority.

We have received a report from the Franklin County Regional Housing and Redevelopment Authority for our regional Community Development Block Grant. For the quarter ending at the end of December, 2018, 2 Conway housing units completed their rehab; 1 is under construction, and 2 are in the application process.