



LEEDS LETTER

DECEMBER 2015

UPCOMING EVENTS

DECEMBER 8

LCA Meeting

Tuesday, 7:00 - 8:00 pm
Leeds School teacher's lounge
All are welcome!

DECEMBER 12TH

DPW Toy Exchange

Please read the article on flip side for more details about time and location

"Beat the Winter Blues" PIZZA PARTY and RAFFLE

FEBRUARY 27

Saturday, 4:00 - 8:00 pm
Northampton Country Club

- cash bar
- raffle prizes
- appetizers
- pizza
- desserts
- music
- fun

Raffle prize donations for kids and adults can be dropped off at 8 Upland Road. Please contact Heidi at 585-9923 or heidi@heidistevens.com.



Leeds Civic Association

P.O. Box 114,
Leeds, MA 01053
leedscivassoc@gmail.com
www.leedscivic.org



Leeds Outreach Officer, Jared LaValle in front of Miss Flo's Diner

New guy in town to give some attention to Leeds residents! - David Rondina

Officer Jared LaValle has been with the Northampton Police department since late 2014. He previously worked at a correction center in Worcester. He was brought up with a grandfather in the military and studied Law Enforcement at Springfield Technical Community College after exploring other possible career ideas and studies. While he started off his employment here "walking the beat" downtown in the cold winter months, he aspired to connect more with the community at large. When Chief Kasper initiated three responsibility expansions of duty to include "Community Outreach Officers," he immediately applied for one of the roles. When spring rolled around and the bicycle patrols starting rolling again downtown, he was given the assignment of "Area 4" which includes downtown Florence and Leeds.

The Belchertown "towny" loves working for the city of Northampton. "It's exciting, interesting, and always different" says LaValle, whose favorite part of the job is connecting with people. "Being a police officer is certainly about helping people, but I really enjoy the interactions and meeting new people, making friends, and connecting deeper with the community." LaValle comments that it is not just about fighting crime, but showing that law enforcement is out to make people feel safe, cared for, and develop a "community feel" and not be viewed as "us versus them".

After I spent some time chatting with him, I can attest that it is a pleasure and gift that we have Officer LaValle to help look after our Village of Leeds. Following a meeting with the LCA, Chief Kasper and others concerning graffiti on Orange dam, LaValle's responsibilities expanded to include patrols by the river and along the bike path to help address the lack of respect that some individuals have for our Village's communal resources. Along with his patrol duties, he plans to attend as many Leeds Civic Association meetings and events as possible as he even enjoyed doing before the actual assignment. In the mean time, you can often see him working the day shift from 3-11. Keep an eye out for Officer LaValle and say hello and thanks when you see him around the 'hood!

Group brings Leeds' concerns to Mayor Narkewicz - Heidi Stevens
LCA board members Earl Meuniur, myself, Leeds-Mill River Greenway Chair Jason Johnson and Ward 7 City Councilor Alisa Klein met with Mayor Narkewicz on October 13th. Northampton Fire Chief Duane Nichols, Wayne Feiden of the Planning Department, and Ned Huntley of the DPW were also at the meeting. Below are the issues we have been hearing the most about from Leeds folks and were presented at the meeting:

WATER STREET EVACUATION

The first concern presented was an alternate evacuation route for Water Street residents if a situation arose where Water Street was cut off due to a storm event or other emergency. The City's current emergency route is through Roberts Hill Conservation area. Earl Munier and Red Greene have long thought that Old Newco Road (the first driveway on the west side of Water Street after the brook) to be a good alternative and this option was presented at the meeting. Since the meeting, Fire Chief Nichols has looked at and walked the proposed route and agrees it is a viable option if needed. Chief Nichols is having the DPW check and see if the city has any utility rights of way in this area. They are aware that a tree would need to be cleaned up for access. If the city has a right of way the DPW could cut up the tree to clear the path. If not they will need to work with the landowner to make it passable. Fire Chief Nichols also said in his email response to Councilor Klein "that the residents who we met with were great. I always appreciate when someone offers solutions and not just problems."

MILL RIVER CONSERVATION AREA

The second concern brought up was the abusive use, excessive garbage dumping and day camping that occurs along the Mill River on and upstream from Chartpak Dam. The Northampton Police have made extra efforts regarding this activity since early in the summer of 2015. Now, the Planning Department is onboard to try and help address the problem. Next week Wayne Feiden from the Planning Department will walk the site with LCA board members and Mill River Greenway chair, Jason Johnson to determine what can be done in advance of summer 2016 to help the situation. Our goal is to encourage respectful use of the river front and maintenance along the new bike path extension.

HOTEL BRIDGE

The third concern addressed at the Mayor's meeting was the status of the Hotel Bridge. In the short term the LCA requested help from the DPW to keep the entrances looking better, even if they are closed to pedestrians. The bridge is a stop on the Mill River Greenway's historical walking tour. Guard rails and invasives need attention. In the long term, the LCA offered our continued support to find a way to open the bridge to pedestrian traffic. The Mayor will be discussing options with DPW, and the planning department will be helping to locate grant funding for restoration. Restoration will be expensive and the process will take time.

Northampton ReUse - Holiday Toy Exchange - Dec 11, 12

Northampton ReUse is asking for donations of CLEAN gently used working toys and sports equipment. Donations can

be dropped off Friday, December 11th between 5:00-8:00pm and Saturday, December 12th between 8:00-9:00am at Smith Vocational High School, 80 Locust Street. Donor and guest shopping will be on Saturday December 12 from 9:00-10:00. General public shopping will begin at 10:00am. Grownups only, please! The toys distributed at this event are free gifts for local children. Resellers, please respect this goal. Remaining toys will be donated to local charities.

Leeds Civic Elections Tuesday Dec 8th

The LCA's mission is to advance the social, educational, civic and economic interest of the village and its residents. If you have been to LCA events, parties, community meetings, or are reading this newsletter, we thank you for participating. We also invite you to help keep the LCA a vibrant and effective organization. The LCA meets one evening a month to plan upcoming events and share ideas. Don't be shy! Please come and share your ideas or run for a seat on the board (all seats are open). Hope to see you on Tuesday, December 8th at 7:00pm in the Leeds School Teacher's Lounge!

Green Gift Tip - Amy Stamm

This year U.S. residents will each spend, on average, \$804 on holiday shopping. Holiday gifts are a way of bringing people together to celebrate each other, but they can also cause waste, pollution, and debt. Here are some ecological gift suggestions to avoid the downside of gift-giving:



And when wrapping gifts, you can use reusable fabric, old maps, comics, or hand-decorated recycled paper to avoid purchasing new wrapping paper!

**Wishing you all
a very happy holiday season!**

- from your friends at the Leeds Civic Association -