

**Mayor Daniel Knapik**  
**From the Mayors Desk**

In my last letter to you, I discussed a number of road construction projects. I would like to continue with that theme a bit in this letter. I recently met with our design/engineering firm to begin the process of designing improvements to the area around the turnpike interchange. The last work done there was in 1997 and we now need to revisit that area as it needs to have further work done to facilitate traffic management. Generally, design work takes 18 – 24 months to complete. During the design phase, public hearings are held at the 25% and 75% point in the project. This allows for the public to see what is planned and it allows for public comments to be incorporated into the final design.

This project is a three phase effort. We are now focusing on phase one. In this phase, we will reconstruct Arch Road and improve the drainage. This work is presently scheduled to occur in the summer of 2011. In the next phase, the interchange itself will also be reworked. We are planning to widen the turning radius moving left from the turnpike onto (going north) Southampton Road. The goal is to allow two complete travel lanes for 53 foot long tractor trailers. The good news is that the funding to fund construction is already in place for both projects. The city and state will jointly fund this construction work. Work on phase two will likely occur in the summer of 2012. Phase three may include an exit east bound onto the turnpike. It's a bit premature to talk about that at this time.

Additionally, I have fielded a number of questions about repaving Papermill Road as it appeared in the last article. The problem with that right now, is that it is not an accepted public way. Meaning that we cannot spend public money on this road until the City Council accepts it. This came to my attention, earlier this year, as we were doing some preliminary work on a sidewalk project in this area. I believe the needed work to have the City Council accept it should be completed in the next few months. I hope to wrap that effort up over the winter so we can pave it in the spring.

The other topic I wanted to cover in this article is the formation of four Building Committees we have created this year. The biggest committee is the special committee to study the feasibility of constructing a new elementary school. Creation of this committee is a state requirement. At present, the committee has had two meetings and there are approximately 31 members. The city has been invited to participate in a design review event in Boston on November 1. Because this office, our state delegation, the city council and the school administration have been working together to meet all of the initial requirements of the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) we are being considered for a potential fast

track for our project. This is exciting news for which I will keep you posted in this column. The construction of a new school will allow us to close out up to three older buildings and maybe a fourth.

On a side note, the city's school enrollment hit a high point in 1975/1976 at 7325 pupils and as of October 2010, we stand at 5945 pupils. The MSBA has been analyzing our future enrollment projections for the next 10-15 years as part of the new school project. When I get the final report I will post it on the city's website at [www.cityofwestfield.org](http://www.cityofwestfield.org).

We have also formed a committee (much smaller) to coordinate the Green Repair program for our schools. This is also a state requirement. The schools included in the Green Repair program are Highland, Southampton Road, Westfield Voc – Tech, Papermill and Munger Hill. The program covers rooftops, boilers and windows. Our city may receive up to 62% reimbursement for the program. The reimbursement rate is determined by the number of free and reduced lunch students a district has.

Other committees that have been hard at work include the municipal building review committee and the senior center committee. The municipal building review committee's focus has been on selecting an architectural consultant to review the conditions of the city owned (non school) buildings. We have asked the consultant to provide us with information on the level of disrepair of each building, a cost to repair or renovate, fire and life safety code upgrades, and accessibility upgrade costs. Also included is the projected cost to move the school department from its headquarters on Ashley Street and the cost to demolish the Ashley Street School. I expect a full report in the next month. It was a big job and some of our buildings are in tough shape and I will work together with the city council to address the problems.

The other hard working committee has been the Senior Center Building Committee. A number of Council on Aging members and other interested parties have been working on site selection with our hired consultant. We anticipate an announcement in the coming weeks on the site selection. I promised in my campaign to have site selection done in 2010 and a finance plan for council consideration in 2011. So far with a lot of help, we are on target. If you have any suggestions for what you want to see in the new building contact Tina Gorman at (413)562-6435 .

Some people ask why we form committees. In the case of the school projects, that is a state requirement. For our local projects, it makes sense to put our technical experts in purchasing, legal, building, planning, zoning and engineering on these committees as they help with the drafting of the requests for proposals, selection of architects and contractors and provide technical advice along the way. With the spending of public dollars, this is the best way to ensure they are well spent and not

wasted. There are many other things happening with your city that I will update you on in the next article.

As always if you have any questions call or email me at 413.572.6201 or [mayor@cityofwestfield.org](mailto:mayor@cityofwestfield.org).

Respectfully,

Dan Knapik