

TOWN BULLETIN BOARD

TOWN AND SCHOOL EVENTS AND HOLIDAYS

March 25 Good Friday — Town Hall and Schools Closed
April 2 Annual Rabies Clinic
9 a.m.-noon at Westwood High School.
\$10 vaccination for dogs and cats.
Call Board of Health with questions.

April 18 Patriots' Day — Schools Closed
April 18-22 School Spring Vacation
May 30 Memorial Day — Town Hall and Schools Closed
June 21 Last Day of School

PUBLIC LIBRARY PROGRAMS

Main Library Programs for Preschoolers

Mar 21-May 2 **Terrific Twos** - Ages 2 & up with caregiver
Mondays, 10:15-10:45 a.m.
Mar 22-May 3 **Parent/Child Storytime** - Ages 2½ and up
with caregiver
Tuesdays, 10:15-11:00 a.m.
Mar 23-May 4 **Storytime** - Ages 3½ and up
Wednesdays, 10:15-11:00 a.m.
No Wednesday storytime on April 27th.
Mar 25-May 6 **Babies & Books** - Under 2 years with caregiver
Fridays, 10:10-10:30 a.m. & 11:10-11:30 a.m.

Children must be the appropriate age by the first day of each session. Registration is required. There are no sessions during school vacations or holidays.

Main Library Social Hours

Apr 7, May 5 **Early Childhood Council/Library Program**
Thursdays, 10:00-11:30 a.m.
Social and educational event for families.
Registration begins two weeks prior to programs

Main Library Programs for School Age Children

Mar 22-May 3 **Wishing Well** - Ages 5 and up
Tuesdays, 3:30-4:30 p.m. Registration is required.
April 9 **Storytelling Saturdays** - Ages 2½ and up with
families.
Librarian favorites
Saturday, 10:30-11:30 a.m. Registration begins 1
one month prior.
Mar 2 -April 6 **Babysitting Clinic** - Grades 6 and up
Wednesdays, 3:30-5:00 p.m.
Registration required. Participants must attend all
sessions to be certified.
April 14, **A Story for Every Season**- All ages
June 9 An Early Childhood Council, Council on Aging and
Library CPC Program
Thursdays, 1:00 p.m. Registration required,
please call the COA.

Young Adult Book Group

Mar 16, Apr 13, **Grades 8 and up**
May 25, June 8 Early release Wednesdays, 2:00-3:00 p.m.
April 27, May 4 **Grades 6 & 7**
June 15 Early release Wednesdays, 2:00-3:00 p.m.

Great Beginnings/Bright Futures LSTA Grant Programs

March 5 **Sanity Survival for Toddler Parenting –
Messess and Meltdowns**
March 26 **Sanity Survival for Toddler Parenting –
Who's the Boss?**
Saturdays, 10:30-12:00 p.m. Registration is required.
April 4 **Grandparents and ME**
Literacy activities for grandparents and
grandchildren/grandfriends.
Monday, 1:00-2:00 p.m.
Registration is required.
Apr 22, May 13 **Mothergoosercise**
Nursery rhymes and music for 2s and under.
Fridays, 10:30 a.m.

Islington Branch Programs

Mar 24-May 5 **Storytime** - Ages 3½ and up
Thursdays, 9:30-10:15 a.m.
Registration required.
March 8, 15, **Young Reader's Book Club** - Grades 2-4
March 22, 29 Tuesdays, 3:30-4:15 p.m.
April 21 **Wingmasters** - Ages 5 and up
Thursday, 9:30 a.m.
Registration is required.

*For additional programs and further information, please call the Main
Library Children's Department at 781-320-1042 or the Islington Branch
at 781-326-5914 or visit the web site at
www.westwoodlibrary.org/home.*

This Spring in Westwood
580 High Street
Westwood, MA 02090

Presort Standard
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit #22
Westwood MA 02090

RESIDENTIAL CUSTOMER

Westwood, MA 02090

THIS SPRING IN WESTWOOD

A COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

Volume 17 Number 3

SPRING 2005

Preserving Two Historic Buildings

Two historic buildings, the Obed Baker House and the Colburn School, are being preserved through the efforts of the Board of Selectmen. To do this in the most effective and economically feasible manner requires articles to be voted on at the annual Town Meeting. Members of the general public are encouraged to attend and participate in the discussions of these plans which will occur at the Finance Commission hearings on the Annual Town Meeting Articles, and at Town Meeting itself. So that Westwood residents understand the significance of these buildings a short historic description and the plan for its preservation follows.

Obed Baker House

The Obed Baker House dates from circa 1810 when Obed Baker gave it to his wife, Betsy, as a wedding gift. Betsy taught the women of both the Baptist and Unitarian churches how to make plaited straw hats which soon became a cottage industry and later a thriving industry requiring factories. The bonnet making began in her home. The Massachusetts Historical Commission claims the house is "an extremely well preserved example of Federal Period architecture."

Originally located at the corner of High and Pond Streets, the Obed Baker house was purchased by the town for use as two units of affordable housing and moved to the land at the entrance to the Baker Cemetery, 909 High Street. The Historic Society has offered to accept responsibility for restoring the Obed Baker home to its original historic character and a transfer of ownership of the building to the Society will occur. Once the Historic Society takes ownership of the building, it will initiate a campaign to raise the funds necessary

to complete its restoration. The Town is pleased the Society has initiated this solution and views this favorably given the past success of the Society in raising funds to move and restore the Fisher School now located next to the Thurston Middle School. It is the Historical Society's plan to use the former Obed Baker home to further promote interest in Westwood's history and civic affairs.

Colburn School

The Colburn School was built in 1874 and named after Warren Colburn. The Massachusetts Historical Commission reports, "The Colburn School is a Victorian style building with a foundation made of placed granite stones. The schoolhouse was considered to be a beautiful, convenient, and well-heated building. It had four classrooms and a hall that was used for exhibitions, parties, lectures, meetings, and for a short period of time, a library. Two new classrooms were added during the 1930s."

The Board of Selectmen is evaluating opportunities to transfer title of the Colburn School to a private organization, in exchange for a commitment to restore and use the school for a private business. Since the Colburn School is currently located where the Board of Library Trustees is proposing to build a new library under the state's Library Construction Grant Program, the Colburn School will need to be relocated on the site, possibly to the rear of the parcel. This concept of privatizing ownership of the Colburn requires rezoning the land currently occupied by the Library, Colburn School, and a portion of 646 High Street to Local Business A zoning. □

Did You Know . . .

- **The John J. Cronin Public Service Award**, named for the late John J. Cronin, Town Treasurer and exceptional elected official and volunteer, is presented each year at the Annual Town Meeting to an individual who has demonstrated exceptional service to the Town. Nomination forms can be picked up at the Town Hall and Library and are to be submitted by March 31, 2005 to the John J. Cronin Public Service Award Committee, 580 High Street, Town Hall, Westwood, MA 02090. For any further information call 781-326-4172.
- **Director of Veterans' Services, Jim Sullivan, presented Corporal Joseph S. Fierimonte with a plaque honoring his recent tour of duty in Fallujah, Iraq.**
- **The Library will begin its second community wide reading program in February 2005.** The book chosen for this year's program is *Snow Island* by Katherine Towler, published in 2002 to wide acclaim. Set in New England during World War Two, *The Boston Globe* called the book "luminous and moving." The Library will arrange a variety of discussion opportunities including a visit from Ms. Towler on Thursday, April 14, 2005. Copies of the book are available at both libraries. For more information visit the Library's web site at www.westwoodlibrary.org.
- The Westwood Board of Health is pleased to announce that **Westwood Cub Scouts, Pack 2, will be participating in the Town's Mercury Recovery Program by collecting button batteries as a community service project.** Button batteries are the small batteries used in watches, cameras, calculators, hearing aids, and toys. The five dens of Cub Scout Pack 2 have placed collection boxes in public buildings and retail establishments. The Cub Scouts check the boxes monthly, thereby helping the Board of Health recycle them as part of the mercury program. Residents are asked to save button batteries to put in one of the collection boxes or bring them, with mercury containing thermometers, thermostats, switches, and products that contain liquid mercury, to the Board of Health office, located at the Carby Street Municipal Office Building, 50 Carby Street, Westwood between 9:00 A.M. and 1:00 P.M. Monday through Thursday. For more information, contact the Board of Health office at (781) 320-1026/1027.



- **The Massachusetts Highway Department (MHD) reconstruction of High Street, from the intersection with Hartford Street to the I-95 overpass, will begin in Spring, 2005.** The \$4 million cost to reconstruct High Street is being funded by the Federal and State governments. Although Westwood requested landscaping and period streetlights in the downtown district, these are beyond the scope of the traditional MHD roadway construction program and will be funded locally. The Department of Public Works will provide weekly progress reports for the coming week in local newspapers, on the Town's web site at www@townhall.westwood.ma.us or to residents' email addresses if requested.
- **The Town of Westwood is committed to promoting Wellness to their employees.** In November, employees participated in the Great American Smokeout and were provided with "tips for quitting." In December, employees were invited to a seminar on "Stress Reduction & Healthy Eating" for the holidays. Nutritional information on different foods and drinks was included. In February cholesterol and glucose screening was offered to employees considered to be at high risk. Information on reducing the risk of heart attacks was provided to all employees.
- **The Town of Westwood is now required by the State to perform an annual interim revaluation of property,** rather than the past requirement of revaluing property every three years. This is being done in order to maintain uniform values and equity in taxes. It means that property values may change every year. As a result, the Westwood Board of Assessors will be obliged to do more frequent inspections of your homes and review of assessment data. This revaluation timing change will not affect the method used in determining the actual value of property. In fact, it will hopefully minimize the dramatic fluctuations in value that resulted under the prior method. Please contact the Assessors Office at 781-320-1003 with any questions.
- **The Board of Health is beginning to plan for mosquito control for 2005.** If residents do not want their property sprayed, notify the Town Clerk in writing with a copy sent to Norfolk County Mosquito Control Project, 34 Endicott St., Norwood, MA 02062. ☐

Send all correspondence to:
Westwood Community Newsletter
580 High Street
Westwood, MA 02090
Barbara M. Friedman, *Editor*

Dollars & Sense

Good News on State School Building Assistance Funds . . .

In November 2004, Westwood received notice that state reimbursement would begin in FY05 for the Martha Jones and Downey school projects.

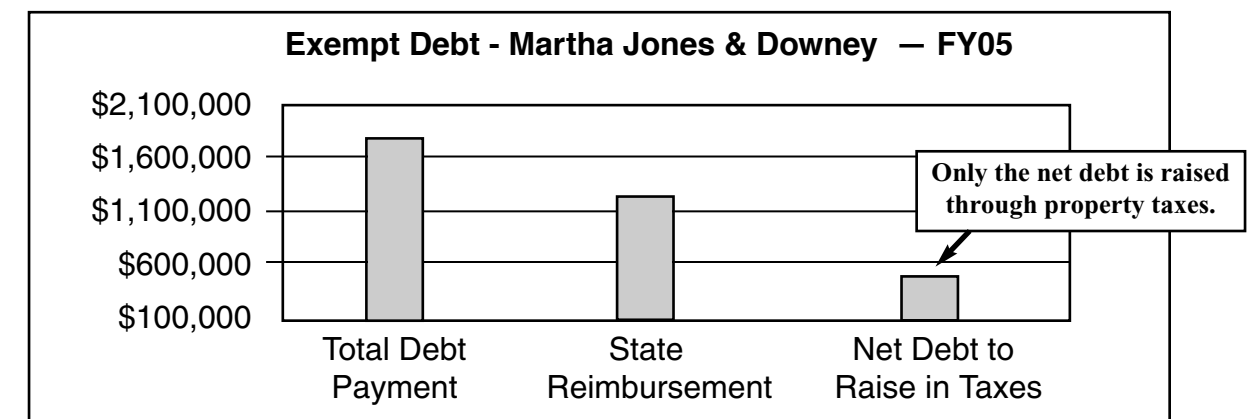
The state will reimburse the Town the following amount in total for these projects:

Downey School	—	\$ 5,006,352
Martha Jones School	—	\$ 5,537,992
Total	—	\$10,544,344

- The funds will be received over an 8-year period to match the remaining bond payments.
- 1999 Downey School — \$625,794 per year FY2005 — FY2012.
- 2000 Martha Jones School — \$692,249 per year FY2005 — FY2012.

Beginning in the current year, this revenue is applied *directly* to the principal and interest payments on the school bonds. Specifically, when the money is received from the state, it *directly* reduces the taxes collected for the projects. The funds cannot be used for operating budgets.

Significant Tax Impact Benefit – FY05				
	Martha Jones	Downey	Total	Approximate Tax Implication
Total FY05 Debt Payment	\$969,480	\$848,295	\$1,817,775	\$272
State Reimbursement	\$692,249	\$625,794	\$1,318,043	\$197
Net Debt to Raise in Taxes	\$277,231	\$222,501	\$499,732	\$75



The Town is currently owed 59% state reimbursement for the high school project; it is anticipated these funds will be received in FY2006 or FY2007, as outlined by the new Massachusetts School Building Authority.

- High School — \$1,859,412 per year for 20 years.

This page will provide brief updates on particular aspects of the Town's finances. What would you like to know? We welcome your comments and/or suggestions. Please contact Pam Dukeman at Town Hall.

New Economic Development Tool That Can Make a DIFference!

In July of 2004, the governor approved the final rules and regulations implementing Massachusetts General Law Chapter 40Q, commonly known as District Improvement Financing (DIF). This economic development tool, which provides a way to fund the infrastructure necessary to attract commercial growth, had been authorized the previous summer for municipalities to use as part of a Municipal Relief package. Genuine *tax increment* financing, which is what DIF really is, was pioneered by Minnesota as far back as 1947. More than forty states already use it. The New England Chapter of the National Association of Industrial and Office Properties (NAIOP) had been lobbying for DIF legislation for nearly ten years. Finally, it is available to every city and town in Massachusetts.

What is District Improvement Financing (DIF)?

DIF is a tool that enables municipalities to pay for the public works and infrastructure necessary to attract growth by pledging the future incremental tax revenue resulting from growth within a designated area to service bond financing obligations.

What DIF is Not:

DIF is not a tax abatement tool, a new tax, and does not increase future taxes. Nor does DIF reduce or redirect current property taxes. And DIF does not require blighted or substandard conditions. Property owners in the designated district do not pay additional fees; rather a portion of the real estate taxes from the new development goes to a dedicated fund to pay off the bonds.

How does DIF work?

Through a public process, a municipality defines a development district and documents a development program describing, among other things, how DIF will encourage increased commercial, industrial, and/or residential activity within the district. The municipality must also detail the public improvements (the development plan), financing plans, and community benefits. **The municipality must have private development partners and the certainty that the project(s) will generate new growth and new revenue.** This is *not* a “build it and they will come” program.

In order to go forward, the State’s Economic Assistance Coordinating Council (EACC), operating under the aegis of the Massachusetts Office of Business Development, must review and approve the municipality’s development districts and development plans.

- The town undertakes a baseline valuation of properties in the redevelopment area and then freezes taxes at that level.
- A bond is issued to pay for land acquisition, site preparation, or public improvements, depending on the needs of the proposed development project as outlined in the development plan.
- Subsequently, commercial or industrial projects, or even housing projects are developed and financed privately.

After the property is improved, a new valuation is conducted and tax receipts in excess of the original valuation are “captured” and escrowed to pay for the public improvement costs.

The *tax increment* is the property tax paid upon the “captured assessed value” of the property in the development district, i.e., the amount by which the current improved value of the development district exceeds the original assessed value of the district. **A municipality can choose to pledge all or a portion of the tax increment towards the repayment of the bonds.**

Why does Westwood need District Improvement Financing?

The ideal way to provide relief to residential taxpayers is to have a stronger commercial tax base in the community. Many economic development projects need public improvements, such as public parking facilities, roadways, sewers, drainage facilities, parks and landscaping, in order to be successful. Yet the costs of providing these privately often make such projects uneconomical for developers. Public provision of such infrastructure is similarly infeasible when other priorities are already straining the budgets of municipalities, and severe limitations exist on state funding. **So DIF provides a way to direct and even accelerate the natural growth in real estate taxes from the development in a designated area to the payment for the infrastructure needed to make such development happen.** In an area like Everett/Glacier, DIF can be the tool that finally makes a difference.

TOWN OF WESTWOOD TELEPHONE DIRECTORY

Department	Telephone	Department	Telephone
Animal Control Officer	326-1903	Recreation	461-0070
Assessors	320-1001	School Administration	326-7500
Board of Health	320-1027	Deerfield School	x1504
Building	320-1091	Downey School	x1386
Cemetery	320-1037	Hanlon School	x1324
Conservation Commission	251-2580	High School	x1310
Customer Service	320-1073	Martha Jones School	x1322
Department of Public Works	326-8661	Sheehan School	x1320
Economic Development	320-1024	Thurston Middle School	x2303
Fire, Business	326-3885	Selectmen's Office	326-4172
Fire, EMERGENCY	911	Senior Center	329-8799
Housing Authority	320-1031	Tax Collector	320-1014
Information Systems	320-1021	Town Accountant	320-1018
Islington Community Center	326-5347	Town Clerk	326-3964
Islington Library	326-5914	Town Counsel	251-2579
Main Library	326-7562	Town Hall	326-6450
Personnel	320-1028	Treasurer	326-4962
Planning	251-2581	Youth & Family Services	320-1006
Police, Business	320-1000	Y&FS High School Office	251-2575
Police, EMERGENCY	911	Veterans	320-1008
Public Health Nurse	251-2576	Zoning Board of Appeals	251-2595

FOR INFORMATION ON:

Assessments, Abatements	Assessors	326-1904
Birth Certificates	Town Clerk	320-1013
Blood Pressure Clinics	Board of Health	320-1027
Board, Committee Appointments	Selectmen's Office	326-4172
Building, Electrical, Plumbing Permits	Building Department	320-1091
Burning Permits	Fire Department	326-3885
Business Certificates	Town Clerk	320-1013
Business Development	Economic Development Officer	320-1024
Census	Town Clerk	320-1013
Community Signs	Community Sign Coordinator	320-1016
Death Certificates	Town Clerk	320-1013
Dog Licenses	Town Clerk	320-1013
Elections	Town Clerk	320-1013
Excise Tax Bills	Collectors	320-1014
Flu Shots	Board of Health	320-1027
Fuel Oil Storage	Fire Department	326-3885
Housing – Lotteries / Affordable	Housing	320-1031
Insurance, Liability	Town Accountant	320-1018
Lights, Street	Police	326-1903
Liquor Licensing	Alcohol Licensing Coordinator	251-2598
Marriage Certificates	Town Clerk	320-1013
Mosquito Control	Norfolk County Mosquito Control	762-3681
Property Tax Bills	Collectors	320-1014
Recreation Programs	Recreation Department	461-0070
Senior Assistance, Programs	Council on Aging	329-8799
Sewer Bills	Department of Public Works	251-2587
Streets	Superintendent of Streets	320-1037
Swimming Pool	Recreation Department	461-0070
Trash, Recycling	Department of Public Works	251-2592
Trees	Tree Warden	320-1037
Veterans Services	Veterans	320-1008
Voting and Registration	Town Clerk	320-1013
Warrant Articles – Town Meeting	Selectmen's Office	326-4172
Water	Dedham Westwood Water District	329-7090
Zoning	Building Department	320-1091