

ROAD AGENT

As the Highway Department plunges into another year, we like to look back to see exactly what was accomplished. We had a great year in 2007, the Highway Department finished up a big project on Dugway Road. Safety issues and drainage problems are the biggest reasons why these roads need attention, sometimes because of storm damage, but often times it is do to the increased traffic in our town as it continues to grow. Dugway Road is now significantly wider for the non-stop traffic that comes in and out of the Transfer Station.

We started some storm water management projects. Thornell Road and Goulds Hill Road were the first two spots. We cleaned out drainage swales and replaced with erosion stone. As required, we have to comply with Storm Water Management and Best Management Practices. We are working with the other boards on these Best Management Practices. We have now mapped out the entire town, showing every culvert, catch basin, drainage area and hydrants which all totaled together gives the road crew over 182 locations to maintain. We now can put these sites on a regularly scheduled maintenance plan as suggested by our Storm Water Best Management Practices. The goal here is to pay special attention to potential contaminants from stormwater runoff generated from impervious surfaces such as parking lots, roadways, industrial/commercial sites, and residential developments. When developments are being constructed the new roads can create drainage issues and interrupts the natural flow of groundwater on abutting lands. We try to provide for necessary road drainage in order to minimize impacts to neighboring landowners. We hope you understand that we can only do a certain amount of work because of budget restraints. We schedule our jobs on a priority basis, taking into consideration safety first, then groundwater runoff problems and so on down the list.

The Conservation Commission has a good working relationship with us and we continue to work as a team when it comes to work by wetlands, Shoreland, and any buffers and swales that may be needed as required by various Boards and State. Working towards healthy ground water run-off is the goal. We advise them of any potential problems and often times, join forces to find a solution to problems we may face together.

We also have to continue to do roadside cutting of trees and limbs when they are damaged by storms. Although we attempt to keep on top of things, we encourage you to call if you have any questions or concerns. When working on any of the scenic roads in town we notify the Conservation Commission. The work done on these roads comes under the jurisdiction of the Conservation Commission as described in RSA 231:157 and RSA 231:158. The list of Scenic Roads are: Gale Village Road, Currierville Road, Maple Avenue, Goulds Hill Road, Heath Street, Bartlett Street, Town Hall Road & Thornell Road.

This year we were able to send Harry Castle and Rick Harris from our road crew to the 66th Annual Convention sponsored by the Local Government Center held in Manchester NH, from November 7-9, 2007. They were able to take classes in Storm Water Management, Dams, Bridges, Drainage, Impervious Surface recommendations, & Culvert Repair. It is important to keep the road crew educated, as new information is made available by the state and Local Government Center.

Hayman Circle is another project that was addressed this year. It has had a bad water problem at the beginning of the street for years. We raised the beginning of the road up higher than Heath Street so the road would be higher than the water. Then we resurfaced the project area.

Another area of concern is when a resident attempts to excavate, or disturb ditches, shoulders or embankments by the edge of the road. This requires permission by appropriate officials. In addition to this, sometimes it is a vehicle that has done damage to a roadway because of an accident or possibly exceeding the weight limit restrictions. The owner of that vehicle will be responsible for paying for road restoration, and any other area that was damaged, including but not limited to sidewalks, stone walls, wetland vegetation and shoulder swales. The road agent and road crew are constantly watching for this type of damage so it can be repaired as necessary.

As always, the road crew is out every day trying to keep up with the general maintenance. The Town is getting bigger every year with more projects to attend to and new regulations to comply with. This makes it difficult for the guys to get ahead, but it will keep them very busy. Roadwork is one of those things that typically stays in the background and remains as something we take for granted, until something goes wrong. We don't usually think about how important our roads are until we can't use them. Without the ability to drive and be mobile, our quality of life could drastically change and our basic needs of everyday life would be compromised. Regulatory issues and lack of funding constantly challenge the ever-increasing demand for the repair, replacement, expansion of our roads and bridges to maintain and improve our infrastructure.

Thank you for all your continued support and your questions and suggestions are always appreciated

Respectfully submitted,
Frank E. Gibbs
Road Agent

NCAT-20

The Newton Cable Access Television - Channel 20 has four years left in its current contract with Comcast. NCAT moved into its new location early in 2007 giving the Cable Committee the much need room to grow and expand.

I have been asked many times by residents if there are other cable providers who might be interested in bringing cable service to the Town of Newton. So far only one other provider has approached the Town and the provider has at this point informed the Cable Committee that it has changed its mind and has no intentions of providing cable service to Newton in the foreseeable future.

The Cable Committee is always looking for new members to help us serve the community that we live in. Anyone looking to join the Committee to either get involved or to help tape Town Events please contact the Selectmen's Office.

Respectfully submitted,
Andrew P. Morse, Chairman
Newton Cable Committee