

Sudbury State of the Town, Aug 24, 2020 Daniel E. Carty

Hello, my name is Dan Carty and it with great honor and deep humility that as the Chairman of your Sudbury Board of Selectmen I deliver to you this State of the Town report. In normal years I would be standing at the podium at our Annual or "Spring" Town meeting, would turn to Beth Quirk and start off by saying "Thank you Madam Moderator". But as you can see, I am alone in my office and pre-recording this in advance of our Town Meeting to be held on September 12th. I do not mean to state the obvious, but this year has been far from normal. Years are generally measured either in calendar or fiscal terms, but here in Sudbury we think it terms of Town Meeting to Town Meeting. Sixteen months will have passed since former Chairman Bob Haarde addressed you in this forum, giving a Master class in Sudbury history. I probably should have consulted Town Historian Chris Morely but there is a high probability that this has been the longest year on record for Sudbury! Spring Town meeting is being held in September, and while our Town Meeting tradition goes way back into the 1600's and I suspect it's been done before, we will be meeting outside for the first time in recent history. Of course, the driving factor in these differences has been the State of Emergency that Sudbury remains under due to the Covid19 pandemic.

When some consider a "State of the Town" they may think in financial terms; It is true that in this time of uncertainty we have indeed crossed the \$100,000,000 threshold in terms of annual budget. Yet we maintain our AAA bond rating and we have a strong cash position to deal with what may come our way. Others may expect a "State of the Town" to include a list of accomplishments and we certainly have had our share of those too. This year public transportation came back to Sudbury with the establishment of the Route 20 shuttle to the Riverside T station, we finally started the reconstruction of the unsafe Landham Road intersection, we crossed the 25% design milestone of the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail and are bringing the voters a real negotiated option to obtain the CSX corridor to perhaps eventually extend that trail down into Framingham, and we have been recognized by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts as a Housing Choice Community, as Sudbury is one of 73 other cities and towns, or 20% of the total in Massachusetts, that together have produced over 70% of all of the housing in the Commonwealth over the last five years.

But upon reflection it was not hard for me to decide on what to report out to you as I was inspired by another soon-to-be-accomplishment, the update of the Town's Master Plan. Led by John Sugrue and the rest of your Planning Board the Master Plan Steering Committee is planning for the future of our Town. I have seen a draft of it and can tell you this plan will start off by stating what makes Sudbury special. With no surprise it calls out our rich history, our bountiful natural areas and open space, and our excellent public schools. But it also highlights

two more features, our exceptional volunteerism, and our sense of community. During the past sixteen months as Chairman I have been afforded the luxury of meeting and being directly involved with some truly wonderful people, both involved with Town Government and not. If my count is correct, we have 243 people serving on 42 Boards and committees, volunteers all, and all should be commended for their service. But there are many other inspirational people giving of their time helping to make Sudbury a better place. People like George Cooley, Scott and Emily Fisher, Fiona and Kim Prendergast, and Pastor Joel Guillemette of Sudbury United Methodist Church; together they broke the gender barrier and founded Troop 65 of Sudbury BSA, formerly Boy Scouts of America, which very quickly became one of the largest girl troops in New England. In just a few short months they enabled many girls to contribute hundreds of hours of community service to Sudbury and neighboring towns. People like Marc Gallagher and Amy Unckless who apart from both working full time and raising two wonderful children selflessly offer their time to coach sports teams, serve on school PTOs, Town committees, and pretty much anything else that needs to be done. People like Alice Sapienza who is nothing short of a force of nature when it comes to making Sudbury more livable. People like Joel George and a couple dozen of his Lincoln Sudbury High School friends that started "Coupons for Covid" where they trade their goods and services in exchange for donations to help homeless shelters provide food, shelter, and stability to those hit hardest by the COVID epidemic. I wish I could mention all our volunteers by name but know that your efforts are appreciated.

Which brings me to the Sudbury sense of community. When I reflect on the past sixteen months and what community may mean I go back to a Friday evening in May of 2019 when in front of hundreds of friends and family members dozens of Eagle Scouts of all ages posthumously bestowed the Eagle Charge upon LS Senior Chris Manente who left us all way too soon. I think of a Friday in September 2019 when, as Hurricane Dorian approached, we as a Town announced our first positive case of EEE. Subsequently hundreds of Sudburians rallied around Dave and Kirsten Garabedian when it became known the victim was their wonderful six-year-old daughter. I think of the killing of George Floyd and the collective impact it had on all of us, and while other cities and towns experienced violent and destructive protests, I am brought back to a Tuesday this past June when our children, Lincoln Sudbury students Kayleigh Barrera and Caitie Sams, worked with our Police and other Town officials to instead hold a peaceful demonstration that involved hundreds of people. I think of a Sunday just a few days later when Dr. William "Smitty" Smith and the rest of the Sudbury Race Amity team celebrated friendship with a national audience and advanced access, equity, social justice, and unity. I think of a Friday this past May when I flipped on the news only to see an inspirational story about Erich Ledebuhr, a Sudbury resident and principal of the Hanscom school in Lincoln, and how he created his own morning show to help guide his students through the uncertainties of Covid and set them up for success. I think of a Saturday in December 2019 when thousands of residents came out to pay their respects to beloved coach and teacher Yoskitaka Ando and longtime and treasured resident Vernon Clark. In the context of that particular day I offer, in a

tip of the cap to Ando, this quote by legendary coach John Wooden: “The true test of a man’s character is what he does when no one is watching”. Knowing that certain Town Senior Staff members will probably be angry at me for telling you this, many of our public safety officials, without fanfare, donated their time that day to help ensure both services were able to be held simultaneously and safely so that we could all pay our respects.

This last example is but one of many that demonstrate to me that our community goes beyond our residents. It also includes our hundreds of staff members across our various Town departments, Sudbury Public Schools, and Lincoln Sudbury Regional High School. Starting right at the top with our Executive position we have had significant change in the last sixteen months. We said farewell and good luck to outgoing Town Manager Melissa Murphy-Rodrigues after four great years of service to us all. Upon Melissa’s departure Maryanne Bilodeau stepped in as Interim Town Manager and on her first day – **her very first day!** - we announced the EEE case. And in her last couple of weeks we declared a State of Emergency due to the Covid-19 pandemic. In between those six months we had more activity than I can account for here, including helping my Board find her replacement, and Maryanne performed wonderfully. Maryanne, I have said this to you privately, but may I publicly offer you a hearty, and heartfelt, “Thank you”. Then on Wednesday April 1 Henry Hayes took over. This was no time for April Fools jokes; Henry calmly walked into our State of Emergency and immediately put into **our** service his thirty years of leadership in the US Air Force, most recently as Hanscom Air Force Base Command Chief. Using Henry’s own words, he is working to provide us a “safe, secure, and serviced Sudbury”. I look forward to Henry’s continued success in doing just that. Welcome Henry.

Much like with our volunteers I simply cannot individually name all our employees, but I feel that there is one more group of each that I must. Between EEE and Covid-19, and on top of everything else they deal with in a normal year, I think of the literally countless hours our volunteers on our Board of Health - Carol Bradford, Susan Sama, and Linda Huet-Clayton and our employees in our Health Department – Bill Murphy, Bethany Hadvab, Phyllis Schilp, Patricia Moran, Mitch Sanborn, Elizabeth Porter, and Dr. Peter Hoenig, along with school nurses from L-S and SPS – have spent trying to keep us all safe this year. I really do not know what else to say to you other than thank you, thank you, thank you.

We live in an era where issues at the national, state, and local level often result in derision amongst us. This is the 381st Sudbury Town Meeting; we have disagreed before, and we will again. But it is my hope that we can agree that all the people I mentioned look to make Sudbury a better place for all of us, regardless of what political lens they may look through. I also hope that we can all agree that this has been one heck of a year, all sixteen months of it.

Sudbury's history is full of names you see on buildings and street signs, names like Rice, Curtis, Bent, Loring, Haynes, Nixon, Noyes, Goodnow, Ford, and Ruth. My final hope as your Chairman is that someday this year fills a chapter in the Sudbury narrative and that some, if not all, of these names are recalled fondly.

Perhaps Coretta Scott King articulated it best when she said, "The greatness of a community is most accurately measured by the compassionate actions of its members". This year has been challenging for certain, and more challenges certainly await us. But it is my opinion that this year our community, our Sudbury, made up of residents, volunteers, and staff alike, has exemplified the words of Ms. King.

In closing, welcome to Democracy in its purest form. Welcome – **finally!** - to Sudbury Town Meeting 2020.