

Text of the correspondence submitted to City Council electronically, cc'ing Mayor Holaday, dated March 28, 2010

Please read bold text for quick review; Note → pointing to key info/input.

Some content may be taken/tailored from existing material; please be advised that Comity's side of the communications may be forwarded to other parties with a foreword.

For easier review, particularly given extensive annotations/footnotes/links communication(s) may be archived online, linked from the Comity.org Correspondence webpage found at this [hyperlink](#).

"Information is the currency of democracy."

Thomas Jefferson

[Ed. note: Please (re)view Comity.org website [hyperlink](#) for more insight]

***** AS ADDRESSED ABOVE *****

This electronic exchange is addressed to all City Councillors --- cc'ing the City Clerk with hopes that he not only 1) receives and files but 1a) transmits this communication to the sole councillor (w/o published email address) omitted from the electronic distribution list (but present at the meeting mentioned below).

NOTE: Mayor Holaday (and as suggested) her mayoral aide Lois Honegger are also cc'd in this exchange. Other parties may be forwarded this communication with a foreword, as mentioned in the closing of this communication.

***** INTENT/CONTENT OF COMMUNICATION(S) *****

While initially planning a follow-up communication to a previous correspondence (forwarded in a Motion of Comity to City Council President and the Mayor, dated 3/9/10, item #10 of the 3/15 meeting agenda, as referenced/linked at footnote * no. 4 below) ---

In its stead, the gist of that communication (drafted as less formal letter to the editor) was submitted and published by the Newburyport Daily News on 3/25 (see footnote [1] below, nos. 3 and 3a).

***** FOLLOW UP *****

→ Wish to follow up with those addressed in this exchange --- in particular, to further address the discussion point broached during (our) Ward 3 meeting conducted by Councillor Cronin on 3/25: the matter of "improved communications." [2] ---

NOTE: At that point, while Councillors Derrivan and Jones had departed for the Planning and Development standing committee scheduled upstairs, Councillor Heartquist was in attendance.

***** FOLLOW-THROUGH (WORDS AND DEEDS) *****

→ Although plans to continue the conversation after the meeting would be deferred --- given an urgent personal matter which Councillor Cronin had shared to the participants [3] --- as we departed Councillor Cronin counseled that many of the changes would be under the auspices staff not a ward councillor.

However, we maintain that to attain this goal [4] --- we need both arms of government (representatives of the Third Estate) to get "our arms around this" solution. Along with volunteers (the body politic of the Third Estate) to lend a hand to accomplish that which is rather "routine and rote." And we need the Fourth Estate, in its ever-evolving state, to become part of the solution (and the resolve).

But paramount to (sur)mounting this issue is to acknowledge the need, without seeming to castigate any one for lapses. And realize that it is more than to declare a policy for "transparent" government, but to implement a process and put it into practice. The practice and administrators [Ed. note: (dis)bursars of the information/currency to coin a phrase] must change, or rather, be perfected [5].

***** ON THE "KEY NOTE" REGARDING "THE PROCESS" *****

On that "key note" or rather "big note" [6] --- this progress and progress is in harmony with what we sense will be the follow up conversation to the mayor's 3/6 forum --- and the follow through (with an "all hands on deck" approach) --- launched at later point in time. Comity hopes to keep up the momentum with this "forward movement" --- and resume the conversation, not only with our Ward 3 Councillor Cronin as well as at-large (and other interested) councillors --- but also pursuing the (in)quest (of sorts) with Councillor Heartquist. [7]

➔ When engaging both arms of city government --- as indicated by the steps footnoted [at 7 below] --- in addition to the Mayor's office, have also engaged a member of the Mayor's transition team [see 7(d)]. At that time encouraged to pursue these steps as health allows, with subsequent "arrangements" choreographed between others parties and partners as "the process" proceeds --- with "forward movement" toward "progress"

***** LOOKING FORWARD *****

We thank you for your consideration, and look forward to further exchange from any and all interested parties.

Until then ...

Selah.

Forwarded in a Motion of Comity ---

Forwarded by the Waterside Committee of Correspondence
Comity, so called ("on behalf ye rest")
www.Comity.org
www.LordTimothyDexter.com

***** ANNOTATIONS/FOOTNOTES *****

[1] The reader is invited to SMILE (Seek More Information/insight Logged/linked Electronically) about this "meeting of the minds" at the following hyperlinks:

- 1) Councillor Cronin's post on 3/21/10 and advance mention on 3/14/10 on his blog at the hyperlink <http://croninward3.webs.com/blog.html>
- 2) Virtual Wolfe Tavern discussion thread at this Comity.org [hyperlink](#) which also cites:
- 3) Letter to the Editor published 3/25/10 (following the communication item #10 of the 3/15/10 City Council meeting) at this NewburyportNews.com [hyperlink](#)
 - a. Unabridged/annotated text of that letter to the editor can be found archived (as a pdf file) at this Comity.org [hyperlink](#)
- 4) The text of the 3/9 memorandum can be found archived at the Comity.org [hyperlink](#)
- 5) With an additional post and posits to the Virtual Wolfe Tavern thread (ref #2) applying Councillor Cronin's post/update tomorrow and other notes taken at the 3/25 meeting
- 6) And another piece of correspondence (re nomination as the Google ultra-high-speed fiber optic network) and portions of this content archived from the Comity.org Correspondence webpage at [hyperlink](#).

[2] Which was broached later in the meeting after addressing concerns about the issues (and status) related the Mark Richey Woodworking's wind turbine and the wind turbine ordinance, the and other "quality of life" issues (e.g., Bradford and Bigelow exhaust system) --- as well as the Rail Trail, Senior Center (and related to that the book drop). And while Comity was there to "audit" and not to "audition" any solutions --- we did have the opportunity to make the suggestion to for a follow-up discourse (and follow-through on a course of action) before the July 1 deadline mandated by the state (to post meeting agendas).

[3] Given the devastating automobile accident reported in the local daily the following day which reported about that which Councillor Cronin mentioned when closing the meeting --- we are all awaiting good news that his close friend, transferred to Boston, is well on the road to recovery. He remains in our prayers.

[4] Also bringing a member of the Back Bay Neighborhood Association into the conversation to (ap)ply the lessons learned with the first wind turbine project, given prior comments about BBNA's desire that both the policy and process be improved before another such project is visited upon another neighborhood. It was conveyed that direct/broader measures for notification would be key improving the wind turbine ordinance. With respect to communication, insight about the recurrent problem/issue of proper notification was also revisited with examples (e.g., the High Street bike lanes issue which surfaced during a past administration).

[5] Interestingly, while addressing the broader issue, when one (Dominique) made a point about not having to funnel/post website information/content for posting through a single (or limited) source [8] --- using the calendar as a simple example --- another participant in the meeting (assertively) asserted that there IS a calendar on the city website (if I didn't know it) and that it is updated and to date. (Despite the fact that this very issue was once again brought up by another party at the mayor's 3/6 public forum, with everyone in agreement it should change. Which has been the mantra since the city website first went online closing in a decade ago.)

While not certain how versed this person is in searching the city website or the Microfiche. Or how many times she fields calls for information that is not readily found --- particularly with someone who wanted to make plans to attend a meeting which is not posted. I know for a fact that sometimes the calendar is posted/updated by late Friday afternoon, sometimes meetings that we know of are excluded, causing (any)one to wonder if they are canceled or simply omitted in error. At times it differs from the Daily News.

[6] For those who had listened to the "Top of the Morning" program broadcast on WNBZ 1450 AM on Sunday mornings (from 10AM to Noon) --- (which is co-hosted by former Mayor Mary Carrier, who coincidentally held office when the Waterside movement was launched anew in 1999 --- the song "The Process" was requested and played dedicated to all incoming city officials. The hosts discussed the Inauguration event and wished the new officials of both arms of government and the school committee well as they served during the coming term, which is projected to have fiscal/budgetary challenges.

The Comity.org webpage which posts and posits "Something to SMILE (*) about the Process" ([hyperlink](#)) includes an MP3 player to hear this most appropriate song --- with the refrain: "Sing the big note."

* SMILE is an acronym coined to "Seek More Information/insight Logged/linked Electronically" about "all matters and things."

[7] Something revisited with Councillor Heartquist at the first city council meeting on 1/11 --- resuming a conversation during an encounter (last summer) with various candidates for the posts of councillor (attended by both then ward councilor candidates Heartquist and Cronin). [Ed. note: Also broached with both City Councilor President, who encouraged pursuing this through (our ward) councilor and other interested councillors (as the proper process).] Thereafter revisited with our ward councillor and given the opportunity on 3/25, broaching a "collaboration" of sorts with Councillor Heartquist.

This, to update previous research about the implementation and evolution of Amesbury's website --- which transpired during the same timeframe that Waterside community of Newburyport was coming "online."

- a) NOTE: During which Amesbury's user community was engaged as the "system" was defined, refined, (originally) outsourced (design/servers) then brought "in house." And as ever, maintained "in house" by a broad number of (public) servants (and we presume) interns and volunteers.
- b) FURTHER NOTE: While recalling an article published in the Newburyport Daily News (published around the time of Newburyport's inauguration) --- archived at this [NewburyportNews.com hyperlink](#) --- Councillor expounded/explained that the Amesbury website not only maintained "in house" but was designed and hosted on "in house" servers. Once again, while we personally "covet" our neighbors "process" in the implementation, and the practice of keeping the information current, we are not advocating that we (sup)plant things here in port. Simply "vet" that "process" and "progress" in affecting an effective tool as one "way of better communicating as a community."
- c) FURTHER STILL (and instilled): Do hope that proceeding is not considered out of line --- for these will be very much in line with what will be an eventual event (i.e., follow up forum to the mayor's 3/6 forum) --- as well as the mayor's requests to consider the necessary hardware upgrades to support improvements to the "virtual and current state" of all communications systems, including telephony.
- d) Having already engaged a key member of the mayor's transition team, and promise (in advance) to make this an open process at every turn. A webpage linked from the Comity.org homepage is in progress, hopefully online by the Full Sap (or Worm or Corn) Moon. Until that is online, please drop by the Virtual Wolfe Tavern for some "dribs and drabs" to

“prime the pump.”

e) Leaving to the discretion of the Council President and Mayor Holaday whether yet another advisory committee is formed. [8] And just take note that at the point in time the final draft of this correspondence (at Saturday, 3/27, 9PM): the coming week’s meetings were not posted at <http://nbpt.us/calendar.html>. Often the calendar may be posted on Sunday or Monday, the latter by the time it is published by the Fourth Estate [9]. And in fact, when reviewing this draft for transmission midday Sunday, 3/27 --- the calendar is now posted.

- a) NOTE; However, none of the standing committee meetings are defined/described, although we have been fielding inquiries whether the presentation to site the parking garage to be made consultant (Tetra Tech Rizzo) at 6:30PM in City Council chambers (as cited in the Daily News piece archived at this [hyperlink](#)) will still take place.
- b) FURTHER NOTE: Of course, we realize that in 2007, both the Planning and Development and City Clerk made strides to update their own webpage (although to our understanding there is still a conduit via the IT Directory. And much as the Youth Commission website evolved as the Youth Department website and there are other “complements” to the components on the city website.
- c) FURTHER inSTILled: Once again, this is not to castigate those charged with posting this input. Simply to consider we no longer resist changing the practice in place. And consider the timeline for change, especially given the state mandate which looms ahead on July 1.

[9] DEEDS RECORD BY/WITH THE FOURTH ESTATE: On occasion, the calendar may be posted by the time the Daily News comes out with their Monday morning edition which includes the week’s meeting schedule on page 3 (as part of the City Notebook). In conversation with Katie Farrell Lovett, one had mentioned what was mentioned before to the editors. And since Katie completes the Newburyport City Notebook on Friday --- why couldn’t that schedule be published upon completion, if not for print on Saturday, for publication online.

This last footnote positions/posits us for the next step: a forum about “ways of better communicating as a community.” A timely conversation, all that is needed is to set the time and place to set the “forward movement” in motion.