

Priorities from page 4

before anything is presented to the town at the School District Meeting, and the Task Force urges the public to attend these hearings and let their ideas and concerns be heard.

Safety And Code Compliance

Charlie McCrave outlined maintenance concerns under Safety and Code Compliance and explained that many of them are too costly to be included in the annual budget as maintenance costs.

Non-friable asbestos is found in approximately 7,600 square feet of floor tiles in the older parts of the building. Five thousand square feet is in the gym alone. Most of the other asbestos-containing tiles are covered by carpeting in classrooms or by rubber stair treads. The tiles are inspected every three years by an EPA-qualified inspector. Andover maintenance staff monitor the tiles on a daily basis and use special sealant to coat the floors.

The asbestos-containing tiles do not constitute an immediate danger to students and staff. However, the tiles continue to deteriorate and crack with age and will need to be removed eventually. Any renovations in the areas containing the tiles will require removal of the asbestos, according to state and federal regulations. Removal would be part of a larger project.

Ventilation is also an area of concern. Proper ventilation means good air circulation, efficient heating, and

exchange of air for health and comfort. The original 1934 section of the building has no ventilation other than windows, some of which do not open. The gym has no ventilation other than an exhaust system.

The new 1992 wing has ventilation, but the air quality needs to be tested and measured for regular monitoring purposes. The school does not meet any of the current code requirements for ventilation.

Windows should be addressed in a larger project, as there are approximately fifty which need to be checked for replacement. The windows in the library open, but sometimes fall out. Many of the windows in the old section of the building do not open properly.

Roof Systems

Charlie next addressed the roof systems throughout the school. The good news is that the roof on the 1992 wing is in good condition. The membrane on the roof over the cafeteria section of the building was replaced five years ago and is in good condition. The gym roof membrane is shrinking, causing leaking as well as cracks in the mortar where the membrane attaches to the bricks. The membrane should be replaced in the next year or two.

The hip roof on the old section of the school has been compressing over the years, causing the struts to buckle. There were concerns that the roof would not withstand normal snow loads, and the original recommendation by the engineer was to replace the

entire roof system from the classroom ceilings up. Careful reconsideration by the engineer and the Board resulted in recommendations for bracing to include metal pipes and strappings which would bring the roof up to current code. This could be funded from this year's maintenance budget.

Further work on the roof surface, installing a water and ice shield, and replacing the shingles with a metal roof or new shingles, will have to be done next year and could be included in a larger project.

Space Needs

Alan Hanscom addressed non-educational space needs beginning with the cafeteria.

The cafeteria feeds 250 to 280 students in four separate meal periods. Lunch periods begin at 11 AM and end at 1 PM. There are 22 minutes of actual eating time at each lunch period. The older students are given a snack time to get them through to their 12:30 lunch period.

The cafeteria is also the performance area, so assemblies and performances must be planned around meal times. Noise is a serious concern, with no sound barriers between the gym and the cafeteria, and insufficient sound barriers between the gym/cafeteria and the kindergarten and fourth grade classrooms.

The kitchen is crowded and overheated. The location of two classrooms adjacent to the kitchen with no fire barrier constitutes a serious safety threat in the event of a kitchen fire. The classrooms' only egress is directly past the kitchen/cafeteria.

Six refrigerators and freezers are kept in the cafeteria because of lack of kitchen space. There is no bulk cold storage, which does not allow for bulk purchasing. The smaller units in the cafeteria sometimes get unplugged resulting in food loss.

The kitchen does not have a proper loading dock, so the food has to be handed or tossed from the truck through the door to the kitchen. Supply trucks must drive through the playground area to access the kitchen, which brings up

safety concerns.

Due to overall lack of storage, the school pays \$100 per month for a storage trailer which houses the stage risers, chairs, tables, and seasonal sports equipment. The trailer is located behind the gym.

The school lacks much-needed storage space for instructional supplies and books, as well as dry, fireproof, locked storage for student records.

The gym is substandard in size with little room for spectators. The floor surface is very slippery from dirt and sand tracked in during games and events, despite the best efforts of our maintenance staff. A lot of gym equipment is stored along the periphery of the gym, causing safety concerns during games.

Also lacking are changing rooms for sports teams and adequate storage for sports equipment. The gym office/storage room is now being used for instructional space.

Alan reminded the public that the school gym was built in connection with the sale of the old Town Hall. The gym became the community center and is used for as many as 30 scheduled events throughout the year, many times requiring the cancellation of physical education classes.

Town sports, One-Wheelers, Scouting events, Lions Club, and Snowmobile Club dinners and breakfasts, Town Meeting, School District Meeting, voting, and many other community concerns vie for the use of the gym. Some events, such as Voting Day, require the school to be unlocked and fully accessible to the public. It is difficult to control access to the entire building, posing a huge safety concern.

Specific Code And Safety Issues

Rene Lefebvre, East Andover's Fire Chief, was able to speak knowledgeably about specific safety and code compliance issues. As an opener, Rene said that the school was in good hands thanks to Principal Jane Slayton, the school staff, the School Board, and the Superintendent's office. However, the school's infrastructure needs to be ex-

See Priorities on page 6

Peter Christian's Tavern
Established 1975

Take a break and leaf it all behind!
Join us for our delightful Fall Fare
Main Street, New London - 526-4042
Open 7 days, 11:30 AM 'til closing
www.peterchristianstavern.com

Tax Bills To Arrive In Mid-November

By Charlie Darling
Beacon staff

Expect to see your annual property tax bill in your mailbox around the middle of the month. For two-thirds of the town, there should be no surprises in the bill. But a third of the town may see a change (up or down) in their assessment.

As part of the Town's on-going efforts to keep its database up to date, the Selectmen contracted with Avitar Associates to inspect a random third of the properties this year to verify the accuracy of the Town's data on those properties. The property owners were contacted by mail in early May, and Avitar representatives made their rounds in late May and early June.

Town Administrator Mark Stetson says that most of the discrepancies Avitar found were small, usually in-

volving a new outbuilding appearing or an old outbuilding disappearing, or a basement or attic that has been finished. These kind of changes usually raise or lower a property's assessment by a relatively small amount.

In the few cases where Avitar found large inaccuracies that would cause a significant change to the property's assessment, Mark has contacted the property owners directly.

In each of the next two years, Avitar will verify another third of the properties in town, ensuring that the database never drifts too far out of date. If you didn't get the "Dear Property Owner" letter this year, you've got a 50/50 chance of being chosen at random next year. And if your property doesn't get inspected next year, you can count on it the year after that.