

Fourth of July Committee Plans Some Changes for 2015

But a parade rain date seems impractical

By Bob Ward
Fourth of July Committee

Well, this year's Fourth of July Celebration was pretty much a total wash out! But the Fourth of July Committee has already begun planning for the Fourth of July 2015, and we want to make next year's celebration a great one, in keeping with Andover's finest tradition.

First of all, for those groups who started building their floats for entry in the 2014 parade ... don't throw anything away if you still have parts of your float out in your barn or garage. In order for groups to use whatever they had assembled or fabricated for their 2014 parade float, we have decided that the parade theme for 2015 will be the same as this year's theme: "Summer Time." So if you still have any parts of your 2014 float, you will be able to use them for the 2015 parade.

The Committee has given very serious thought to having a rain date for the parade starting next year, but the practical difficulties with re-scheduling the parade due to rain are so monumental that we have decided to continue with the policy, which the Fourth of July Committee has had for decades, which is no rain date re-schedule for the parade.

However, the Committee is working on a rain date proposal for most of the other activities of the celebration.

If anyone has a way to overcome the logistical difficulties associated with a parade rain date re-schedule, they are certainly welcome to come to a Fourth

of July Committee meeting to present their ideas for the Committee to consider. Our next two meetings are Wednesday, October 1, and a date yet to be set for January 2015. The Committee meets at the Andover Fire House meeting room at 7 PM.

Speaking of the parade, the Committee is going to break up the parade organization responsibilities from just one person doing all the work to a different set-up in which we have several people sharing the work load by taking on different tasks for organizing the parade. We are actively looking to recruit several people to take on these various organizational assignments, so if you are interested in helping organize the parade, please come to the October 1 Committee meeting. We would welcome the help!

The Committee also got feedback from a few folks about the fireworks this year. The feedback was critical of the ground fireworks display and also the low-altitude fireworks.

So starting next year we are going to put a provision into the fireworks contract that all of the fireworks rockets shall be "high-altitude exploders" so that everyone can see them. There may be a slight increase in the cost of the fireworks contract, but the Committee feels it will be worth the cost increase.

That's about it at this very early point in the planning for Andover's 2015 Fourth of July Celebration, but the Fourth of July Committee is doubly committed to have an even better Fourth of July Celebration for next year! And anyone who would like to help out in organizing this major event is welcome to pitch in.

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and violence against women:

HB 1410 allows victims of domestic violence to get temporary protective orders to extend to the family pets if there is an immediate threat.

SB 205 allows a court to order that visitations by juveniles only occur at centers with metal detectors and creates a committee to study procedures.

SB 318 designates domestic violence as a specific crime instead of simple assault or another crime. Responders will then be able to see whether a repeated pattern of domestic violence exists. Both bills were responses to the murder of 9-year-old Joshua Sayvon. His father wasn't scanned on entering a Manchester YWCA with a gun he used to kill Joshua and then himself. There was overwhelming support for both bills.

SB 253, Termination of Parental Rights. Women becoming pregnant due to rape now are able to request a court to permanently keep the rapist out of their lives.

SB 319 creates Protest Buffer Zones and makes protesting within 25 feet of reproductive health facilities providing abortions illegal. Groups such as the Alliance Defending Freedom have filed lawsuits, and the buffer zone is not being enforced until the courts have ruled on the law's constitutionality.

These are some of the other important bills passed by both houses of the Legislature:

HB 1624, two energy bills combined into one. The first allows the Public Utilities Commission to decide if PSNH can sell off some old plants to save their customers money. The second lays out guidelines to be followed by the state when approving wind projects, including evaluating aesthetic, environmental, and noise effects.

SB 367 increased the state tax on gasoline by 4.2 cents per gallon on July 1, the first increase since 1991. This increase is designated for sorely needed infrastructure improvements all around the state, including roads, bridges, and widening the southern portion of Interstate 93. It also removes tolls at Everett Turnpike Exit 12 and creates a committee to find out whether the Department of Transportation is using its money wisely. Some of the money from the annual increase of about \$32 million is already being spent on road construction.

HB 1360: Starting in 2015, talking on a handheld cell phone while driving is illegal. Texting while behind the wheel is already banned by law. Talking on hands-free devices is still permitted, and you can use your phone when legally parked at the side of the road.

HB 1415: Establishes a non-lapsing fund for Robotics Education, providing funding to school districts for develop-

ing robotics teams and accepting gifts, grants, and donations to make robotics available to more high school students. In order to get this bill accepted by a House and Senate conference committee, it had to be part of a bill allowing wine and liquor stores to distribute limited free tasting samples to their customers.

SB 240: Allows non-residents to be issued temporary OHRV registrations for 10 consecutive days from May through October at a reduced rate of \$34, with funds going to the Department of Resources and Economic Development and the Department of Fish and Game. This will help tourism in Coos County by bringing in even more visitors to the recently developed, interconnected, extensive ATV trail system of over 1,000 miles called Ride the Wilds, the largest in the Northeast.

HB 1282: This hybrid bill establishes minimum inventory registration and reporting requirements for fuel oil dealers offering prepaid contracts for home heating oil and other petroleum products and makes failure to deliver under such contracts a violation of the consumer protection act.

More importantly, it passes on to some towns in Merrimack County House District 25, affected by the Merrimack River Flood Control Compact, the 2012 portion of funds paid to New Hampshire by Massachusetts. Salisbury should receive \$25,670 and Webster should receive \$8,239.

Funds for 2013 are still owed the towns by the State of New Hampshire. The House Finance Committee recommended killing Senate Bill 370 authorizing the payments, but pressure by some of us got the 2012 portion owed the towns attached to the heating oil bill by a House and Senate Committee of Conference as an amendment.

SB 207, Paycheck Fairness, updates state law to ensure that all workers, regardless of sex, can earn a fair and equal paycheck.

HB 256: Establishes a voluntary \$25 Hike Safe Card for Fish and Game search and rescue operations and makes people without the card, a hunting or fishing license, or an OHRV or snowmobile registration liable to Fish and Game for the costs of a search and rescue response.

HB 1555: Makes it a crime to financially exploit the elderly and mandates a prison sentence for anyone doing so more than once.

HB 1624: Raises the juvenile age back up to 18 as suggested by advocates of juvenile justice as more appropriate when sentencing youths convicted of crimes.

I encourage you to contact me if you have questions about these bills or any other legislation. I can be reached at ElectDavidKarrick@gmail.com, at 456-2772, or on Facebook.

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