



The WHATELY SCOOP

Certified News for the Town
with the Milk Bottle...

Volume 23 ❖ Number 3 ❖ March 2026 ❖ Whately, Massachusetts

23 Years and going strong. Thanks to you!

A Comprehensive Plan for Whately

By Megan Rhodes, FRCOG Livability Program

Work on the Whately Comprehensive Plan continues! Final draft chapters will be posted on the project website for public review by early April. Stay tuned for in-person events in late May to review the entire draft plan and recommendations. But for now, the Plan needs a name! Go to www.whatelyplans.org and vote for your favorite plan title. If you have other name suggestions, email them to Megan Rhodes at mrhodes@frcog.org.

Possible Comprehensive Plan Names:

Planting our Future: Whately Comprehensive Plan

Roots & Routes: Whately Comprehensive Plan

Imagine Whately: A Comprehensive Plan

Growing with Purpose: Whately Comprehensive Plan

A Vision for all Seasons: Whately Comprehensive Plan

Thrive Whately: A Comprehensive Plan

Legacy & Opportunity: Whately Comprehensive Plan

Rural Roots, Bright Futures: Whately Comprehensive Plan

Harvesting our Future: Whately Comprehensive Plan

Calling Tech Support

by Rich Vaden, the Franklin County Digital Navigator (United Way)

Want to learn how to use your phone, computer or tablet better? Want to manage storage on your device to get more space? Want to clear out your inbox and better manage your email? Want to feel more empowered with digital skills?

If it's on a computer, phone, or tablet, the Franklin County's Digital Navigator, can help! Whether you need support with devices or skills, I offer FREE services to help you build your confidence with technology. Come visit me during his drop-in tech help visit on Wednesday, March 18, from 1-3 pm at the S.

White Dickinson Library in Whately. No appointment required, drop-in service is first-come, first-served. Service is provided by the United Way of the Franklin and Hampshire Region.

Roadside Cleanup

by Monserrat Archbald

Join us for another fun, rewarding roadside clean-up! We'll meet at the old Town Hall at 9 am on Saturday, April 25, rain or shine. Bring bags to reuse if you have them (feed/seed/pellet bags work well), gloves, and your own water bottle. Dress for getting dirty. We'll have lots of our own reused bags and a truck for the final haul. Questions? Call or text Becky Jones (413-387-7746) or Montserrat Archbald (413-559-9998).

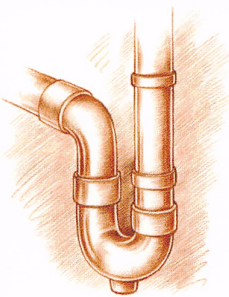
Whately's new Community Development Administrator

By Caroline Gurek

Hello everyone! I'm thrilled to introduce myself as Whately's new Community Development Administrator. The warm welcome I've received from staff and residents has been wonderful, and I'm enjoying learning more about our town each day.

Even in these early weeks, I've had the opportunity to work on some exciting initiatives. Garrett, our Highway Superintendent, and I recently applied for MassDOT's Unpaved Roads grant program to help purchase a new front loader for the town. Cyndi, our Library Director, and I also submitted a LifePath grant application for new outdoor benches at the library. We hope to hear positive results on these soon!

Two important projects need your input and attention. First, Whately's Comprehensive Plan is currently being drafted by the FRCOG,



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and several chapters are ready for community review. Please visit <https://whatelyplans.org/review-comment/> to read the chapters and leave your feedback. This is a critical document that will guide the future direction of our town, and your input matters.

Second, thank you to everyone who provided feedback on the pollinator garden designs for the elementary school, library, and town offices! The final designs are being developed now, and we're planning a spring activity to bring them to life.

These are just the beginning—there are many more exciting projects on the horizon for Whately. I'd love to hear your ideas or discuss ways you might want to get involved in town initiatives. Please stop by the Town Offices on Tuesdays and Thursdays to chat! (communitydevelopment@whately.org)

Update on a home for the South County Senior Center (SCSC)

By Joyce Palmer Fortune, SCSC BOO Chair

The South County Senior Center (SCSC) Staff & SCSC Board of Oversight continue to explore the opportunity to relocate to **112 Amherst Road**. At the heart of this conversation is a simple question: how do we continue supporting older adults in Deerfield, Sunderland, and Whately in a way that is both compassionate and financially responsible?

This will be discussed in detail at numerous community forums and meetings. There will be additional walkthroughs of the potential new space in the coming month. Important meetings include:

- Community Forum at Frontier High School, March 19th at 6 pm. (Cafeteria)
- Three Town Joint Finance Committee & Selectboard Meeting, March 30, 2026, Deerfield Town Hall at 6 pm.
- Walk Throughs (112 Amherst Road) Mar. 10, 1 PM, Mar. 19, 1 PM, Mar. 23, 5:30 PM

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If you care about this issue, please attend any of the above meetings that you can.

If you only have time for one, perhaps the most important one is the Joint Fincom/Selectboard meeting, since it is a chance to speak to and hear from leaders in all three SCSC communities as they build the budgets we will be voting on at town meetings this spring.

Whately Agricultural Commission News By Bill Obear

It's finally time that the Whately Agricultural Commission made its presence in the SCOOP. As you know farming is a predominant commercial activity on Whately's land and forests and has been repeatedly supported by the town's people in numerous surveys of our agricultural heritage. Whately is one of the most noted agricultural communities in the Pioneer Valley for which we are very proud. Your Ag Commission has always been at work promoting and protecting our Agricultural Resources. This past year was no different.

So what does one see as they travel around Whately? Farms of many sorts producing fruits, vegetables, milk, beef, hay, nursery plants, perennial garden plants, forest products, flowers, horse boarding, livestock auction services, hospitality venues etc.

Millions of dollars in revenue and hundreds of jobs are a result of all of this farm related activity.

When the Whately Ag Commission was established in December 2004, one of our first functions was to establish, through town meeting, a Right to Farm bylaw which was eventually passed in April 2006. This bylaw "encourages the pursuit of agriculture, promotes agriculture-based economic opportunities and protects farmland within the Town of Whately by allowing agricultural activities to function with minimal conflict with

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abutters and town agencies”.

To compliment this bylaw the Ag Commission has recently produced signs to be displayed this spring at several prominent locations near Whately’s borders. Much thanks goes to Joanne Denehy for her professional assistance in helping prepare these signs.

Other recent Ag Commission activities include an update of our successful Farms of Whately brochure, as well as our active participation with the Whately Giving Garden Committee and hands on assistance this spring with the renovation of the Whately Elementary School gardens. We welcome your comments and suggestions. bearpath@comcast.net

News from the Whately Church

by Cynthia Harrington

The church observed an Ash Wednesday Service to begin the Lenten season. All are invited to the Sunderland Congregational Church on March 15th. at 2:00 pm for a Lenten retreat. A pot luck supper will follow.

Our Easter observance begins on Thursday April 2nd with a simple supper (soup and bread) and a Maundy Thursday worship. On Easter April 5th, we will meet behind the library in Whately for a sunrise service at 6:15 am. Follow us back to the church for an Easter continental breakfast. Our Easter worship - always a high point of the Christian year - will be at 10:00 am in the sanctuary. We hope that

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Don’t miss our fabulous Church Tag Sale will be Saturday May 2nd for 8:00 am -2:00 pm.

We worship each Sunday at 10:00 am and invite you to drop in to be welcomed by our friendly and inviting community of faith. Until mid March, we enjoy the warmth of the parish hall but return to the upstairs (accessible) sanctuary for Palm Sunday and the Easter Celebration.

Union 38 Family Network

by Amy Battisti

The Union 38 Family Network and the S. White Dickinson Memorial/Whately Public Library are excited to announce that the popular youth program “Monday Morning Music & Movement” with Janet Ryan will resume on Monday, March 16th at 10am. This program will run for 10 weeks each Monday (except holidays). Caregivers are encouraged to bring their youngsters aged 0-6 for a fun and educational time! Mondays, March 16, 23, 30, April 6, 13, 27, May 4, 11, 18, and June 1st. Contact Amy Battisti at amy.battisti@frsu38.org or [Cyndi Steiner](mailto:Cyndi_Steiner@cwmares.org) at csteiner@cwmares.org with questions. The Union 38 Network is funded by the Coordinated Family and Community Engagement (CFCE) grant awarded to the FRSD by the Massachusetts Dept of Early Education and Care.

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State Funding for Local Village Groups: Valley Neighbors Receives \$10,000

By Debra Carney

Thanks to successful legislative advocacy by State Senator Jo Comerford and State Senator John Velis, ten local Village organizations were awarded FY26 state funding via LifePath, the area’s agency on aging. Valley Neighbors, based in Whately, is one of the Villages who each received \$10,000 to strengthen community-based, neighbor-to-neighbor supports for older adults across the region.

Valley Neighbors provides free transportation, phone check-ins, friendly visits, household help, and tech assistance to seniors 60 years and older in Whately, Sunderland and Deerfield.

With this funding, Valley Neighbors hopes to recruit more volunteers, particularly those willing to drive their neighbors to local destinations (doctor appointments, essential errands like shopping). VN trains all its volunteers and provides supplemental insurance as well as mileage reimbursement. Volunteers choose when and how they can help their neighbors. All receive heartfelt thanks.

While a great place to age, older adults in the northern Pioneer Valley often face challenges that Villages can help to overcome in partnership with senior centers, Councils on Aging, and agencies like LifePath. The funded Villages reflect a range of development stages, from newer initiatives building foundational capacity to more established Villages expanding programs and volunteer engagement. As Fran Fortino, Board President of the Valley Neighbors, explains, Villages perform “organized acts of kindness.”

For more information or to volunteer, please contact us:

Valley Neighbors, Inc., PO Box 281, Whately, MA 01093 • 413 453-9057 • info @ valleyneighbors.org. Valley Neighbors is a 501(c)3 non-profit community organization

funded through gifts from individuals and organizations in our communities. More at: www.valleyneighbors.org

Whately Giving Garden: Growing Food, Community, and Kindness

By Amy Lavallee

Tucked into our small but mighty town, the Whately Giving Garden continues to flourish as a beautiful example of what neighbors can accomplish together. This volunteer-run garden and open pantry provides fresh, locally grown produce to residents in need while also offering a welcoming space for learning, sharing, and connecting.

Seed Starting Workshop

Join us on April 12 at 1pm at the Whately Library for a seed starting and home garden workshop. All materials will be provided, or bring your own. Limited to 16 people. Please contact Amy Lavallee at 413-665-4400 X 3 or townclerk@whately.org to reserve your spot.

Fresh Produce Available During Harvest


During the growing season, fresh fruits and vegetables will be available every other Saturday at the Transfer Station from 9am-12pm. Offerings vary by week depending on what is ready to harvest, but may include items such as: tomatoes, peppers, cucumbers, zucchini, and greens, herbs like basil, parsley, and cilantro, and seasonal fruits when available

Keep an eye on town email updates, social media posts, or bulletin boards for current availability and pickup information.

The Giving Garden is about more than vegetables. It’s a place where neighbors meet, children learn where food comes from, gardeners of all skill levels share tips and laughter, community spirit grows alongside the crops

How can you help? Volunteer for a workday, Donate seeds, tools, or garden supplies, help water neighbors’ gardens during dry spells, spread the word to friends and neighbors. Even a small amount of time makes

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a big difference. Contact the garden organizers at townclerk@whately.org or j.waggoner@whately.org.

As we look ahead to another growing season, the Whately Giving Garden reminds us that kindness, like gardening, thrives with care and attention. Thank you to everyone who has helped make this project a success. Together, we are growing something truly special in Whately.

Library News

By Cynthia Steiner

Happy Spring from all of us here at the S. White Dickinson Memorial Library. We enjoyed seeing so many of our patrons braving the winter weather to get books to read while staying safe and warm inside.

After a brief hiatus, Monday Morning Music and Movement with Janet Ryan returns in March. Please check our website and Facebook Page for dates and times.

Free Gentle Yoga for Everyone, Tuesdays March 3 - April 14, 6-7:00pm - free one-hour yoga classes in the Community Room, thanks to a grant from the Massachusetts Cultural Council. Join us for a relaxing hour of stretching, balancing, and breathing exercises to make you feel good from the inside out. Bring a mat if you have one. All levels, ages, and abilities welcome! Dates: March 3, 10, 17, 24, (no class March 31), April 7, and 14.

Do you enjoy reading Historical Fiction? Do you like books with strong female characters? If so, come and join us on Wednesday, April 8 at 6pm for a new Book Group starting at the library. We are starting with Historical Fiction, focusing on books that have strong female characters. If this sounds like something you would be interested in, then please join us. Hosted by Janine Papesh.

Do you enjoy doing puzzles? Have you lost count of how many times you have put the puzzles you have together? Are you looking for new puzzles to put together but don't really want to buy new ones? Bring them to the library during our open hours! We are hoping to get puzzles so that patrons can come in and exchange the puzzles that they have for new ones. When finished putting them together, bring them back and exchange for more. Please bring your gently used puzzles to the library. We ask that all the pieces be there and so that

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none of the pieces get lost that you put them into a storage bag inside the box. Thank you for helping us build a puzzle exchange collection.

Please check our website page and Facebook Page for more great upcoming events

Holiday Closings:

Patriots' Day Monday April 20

Memorial Day Monday May 25

Foothills Health District News

by Lily Stafford, Foothills District Public Health Nurse

There are some exciting things coming up! The Community Health Center of Franklin County's (CHCFC) Mobile Health Vehicle will be coming to the Whately Town Offices parking lot to deliver care right here in town! Residents from Whately and surrounding towns/counties are welcome, all ages, regardless of insurance. You must be a primary care patient for visits. We hope you can use this opportunity for physicals, preventative health screenings, immunizations, and sick visits. Stay tuned – more to come once the official date and time is set. Reach out to Public Health Nurse, Lily Stafford with questions at fhd.phn@burgoyne.org

Also coming this spring – check out a blood pressure (BP) cuff at the Whately Library! Home blood pressure readings on an accurate and calibrated machine can be crucial in the management of your blood pressure! The American Heart Association's initiative known as Libraries with Heart will enable residents to check out a BP machine to record blood pressures at home, and provide to your doctor. More information will be shared once the machines are received and library staff is trained.

Reminder: Open clinic hours for Whately are from 10-11:30am on the 2nd and 4th Tuesdays of the month at the Whately Town Hall. Come see me for blood pressure checks, referrals, wound checks, resource connection, substance use disorder support and more.



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Way down below the quiet ground
All life continues, all year round
We may not feel it, see it, hear it,
But every year that lively spirit
pushes up to greet the Spring
And soon the birds begin to sing

We cast aside our Winter blues
As sun begins to spread good news

We will be warm, all things will bud
And hardened dirt will turn to mud
Viruses their strength will lose
So listen for Spring's subtle clues.

The scoop has been re-running poems from our late poet Laureate Marianne Simon for about a year. If you have poetry of your own that might be appropriate for this space, please see below to submit your work!

The Whately Scoop

*Cost for printing and mailing the Scoop was provided by
the businesses who placed ads within. Please patronize our local businesses!*

If you misplace your copy of The Scoop, do not despair! You can always find it on the resources page at www.whatelyhistorical.org.

The closing date for submissions to the May 2026 issue of the Scoop is **Weds. May 13.**

Please email your our literary contributions to jpfortune@comcast.net before that deadline. Also use this email if you want to be on the reminder list and get an email from me about 3-4 weeks before the deadline, or if you would like email delivery of the scoop.

Business card sized ads are \$100 for 1 year (four issues).

Please make checks out to: The Whately Scoop and mail to 152 Westbrook Rd RFD So. Deerfield, 01373

Like the Scoop? Want to see it continue? Here's what you can do:

- 1) Volunteer to write articles
- 2) Volunteer to help prep the scoop for mailing
- 3) Volunteer to help on mailing day
- 4) Ask your favorite local businesses to place an ad
- 5) Make a donation to help us cover costs

If you are interested in any of those please call or email Joyce at 665-6739; jpfortune@comcast.net.