

Municipal Update



Scenes of Bruce Freeman Rail Trail construction in progress. Completion is expected in June 2025.

Next Stop: Sudbury's Rail Trails

A century ago, Sudbury was at the intersection of two active railroads. The Framingham and Lowell Railroad ran north to south from Lowell to Framingham and the Central Massachusetts Railroad ran east to west from Northampton to Boston. These two rail corridors are now being redeveloped as rail trails: the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail (BFRT) and the Mass. Central Rail Trail (MCRT), respectively. Construction on the BFRT is winding down and construction on the MCRT is expected to commence in the spring of 2025. There are many benefits to these multi-use trails for the Town, its residents, businesses, and visitors.

Continued on Page 2.

Inside:

Sudbury Holiday Village - 12/7/24

Dr. Jean Twenge Presentation

Invasive Japanese Hop

Deer Overpopulation

plugIN Sudbury

From the Select Board

TABLE OF CONTENTS



3

PARENTING TODAY'S SUPER-CONNECTED KIDS

4

INVASIVE SPECIES: JAPANESE HOP

6

2024 TOWN FORUM: MUNICIPAL FINANCE

7

DEER OVERPOPULATION

10

PLUGIN SUDBURY

SUDBURY HOLIDAY VILLAGE

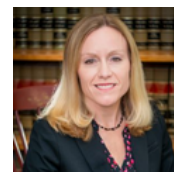
Saturday, December 7, 2024

FROM THE SELECT BOARD

Hosmer House
by Lisa Kouchakdjian



The Path to Annual Town Meeting
by Jennifer Roberts



Rail Trails, cont...

One of the most obvious benefits is the transportation benefit. The trails provide an alternative commuting option, providing a safe and scenic route to commute. In addition, the trails connect various parts of town. Both of these features have the potential to lessen the reliance on cars and ease traffic flows. They also will provide safe means for children to get around town on their own, whether to school or to visit friends.

The trails provide health benefits by promoting walking, running, cycling, and other activities. This contributes to an overall improvement to public health. Such activities have been shown to reduce stress and improve mental health. The trails also open up access to natural areas that many residents have never seen.

The trails will unlock economic opportunities in Town, as well. Increased activity along the corridors will give a boost to local businesses such as coffee shops, eateries, and other retail establishments. This in turn can lead to job creation. Furthermore, the benefits rail trails have on property values is well recognized. Real estate listings regularly list proximity to rail trails, as they are of keen interest to many buyers.

Overall, these trails are set to enhance the quality of life in Sudbury, offering a blend of transportation, health, and economic benefits. I can't wait to get out and explore!

Andy Sheehan
Town Manager



TOWN MANGER OFFICE HOURS

Andrew J. Sheehan

Tuesday

November 26, 2024

2 PM - 3 PM

Flynn Building

278 Old Sudbury Road

2nd Floor (Silva Room)

New Time and Location

PARENTING TODAY'S SUPER-CONNECTED KIDS

JEAN TWENGE, PhD.



Kids these days can seem like a mystery – plus they're always on their phones. Dr. Twenge, preeminent researcher whose work is featured in *The Anxious Generation*, offers ideas for how to help your family find a better balance with technology and be healthier and happier. Register at: <https://bit.ly/TwengeTalk>

Tuesday, November 12 | 7:30 PM

Lincoln Sudbury Regional High School
390 Lincoln Road

Registration



We Hopped Right on This

BY LORI CAPONE, CONSERVATION COORDINATOR

With its freshly paved surface and new landscaping taking root, the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail (BFRT) is coming into focus. But it has brought more than a new recreational opportunity to Sudbury. It brought a new invasive plant, Japanese Hop (*Humulus japonicus*).

When the Conservation Office was notified that there might be Japanese Hop growing along the BFRT, the conservation staff took swift action. **Japanese Hop is an aggressive, climbing vine that can grow 20-30 feet in one growing season, quickly smothering adjacent vegetation.** We immediately identified and investigated the extent of infestation. The bad news was that it was present throughout the corridor. The good news was that the plant was just about to flower and form seeds, so we had one month to make sure this plant was removed from the corridor.

MassDOT was informed of this plant and presented an action plan to the Conservation Commission at their July 29th meeting. This plan relied heavily on focused herbicide treatment but was the only way to be able to eliminate the threat given the timeframe we were faced with. MassDOT immediately implemented the plan, which was very effective. However, additional attention is needed to ensure no plants or seeds escaped.

Their rapid growth and aggressive spreading behavior can allow them to quickly dominate the landscape, posing significant ecological challenges, threatening native plant communities and altering local ecosystems. They can form dense mats several feet deep, blocking light to plants underneath. Growth is less vigorous in shade and on drier soils, but it can grow in disturbed areas with fairly moist soils, including roadsides and forest edges, the type of environment present along the rail trail.

We need *your* help to ensure this plant does not get established in Sudbury.



Japanese Hop

Japanese Hop, cont.

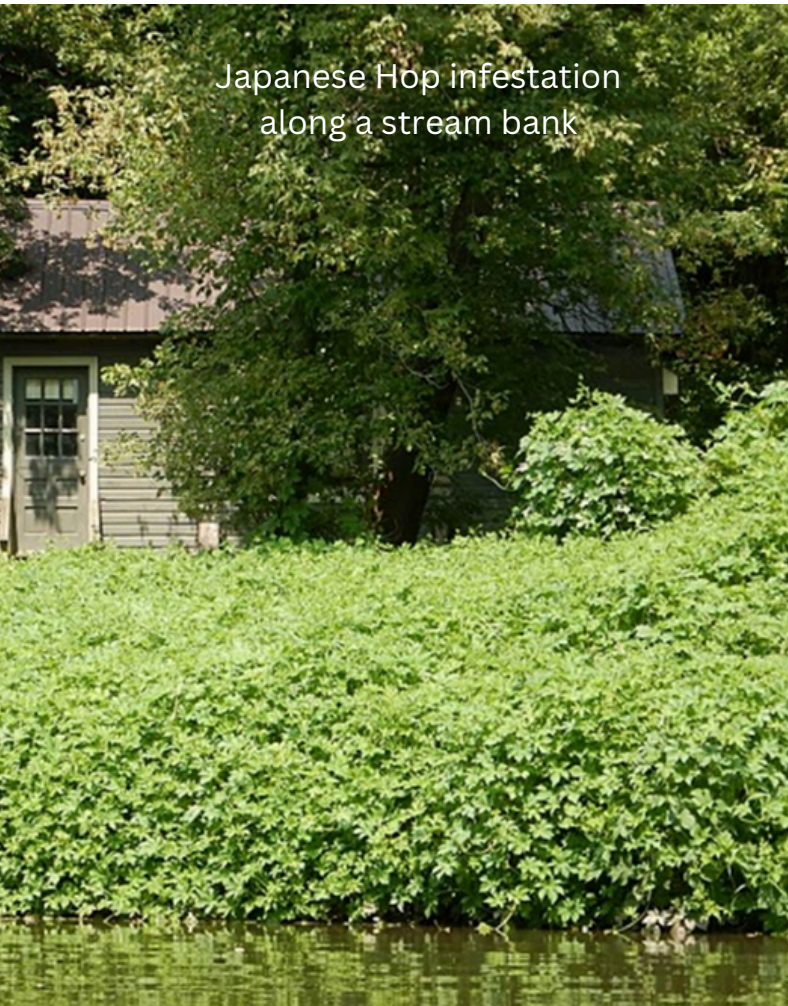
The leaves of the hops are similar to two of our native vines, Virginia creeper and grape, yet are quite distinct with its 5-7 serrated lobed leaves, on a very sticky vine. If you brush past it, it will grab onto you and your pets. It wraps itself around adjacent vegetation similar to bittersweet but the plants die back completely every year. It spreads through seeds which can be dispersed on clothing, pets, wind, and equipment from infested areas. Flowering occurs in July and August with seeds maturing through September. After that, growth slows and the plants begin to decline. The first hard frost of autumn kills the vines and they quickly disintegrate.

Since it is an annual plant, hand pulling or repeatedly mowing plants before they go to seed is the best management technique. Pulling is an effective method but care must be taken to remove the root and not just break the stem off at ground level. Hand weeding needs to be started early in the growing season (April - May) while the roots are small and before the vines become tangled with other vegetation. Monthly pulling and monitoring will be needed until the infestation is eradicated. This plant can quickly irritate your skin, so if you do remove it, please wear gloves and a long-sleeved shirt and pants.

The seeds are viable for about three years. Areas where the hops were most prevalent are at Parkinson's Field and along Route 117 between Davis Farm and Davis Field. In the late Fall, small plants were also popping up along the future Mass Central Rail Trail corridor. Therefore we must remain vigilant over the next few years to ensure this plant is eradicated from Sudbury. **If you do see this plant in your yards please contact us as we would like to track its presence.** Feel free to send us a picture if you are unsure whether you have this plant in your yard. This is particularly threatening to our streams.

With the rail trails crossing both Hop and Pantry Brooks, help us keep this plant from *hopping* into our waterways.

For more information on invasive species you may have in your yard, please see our Invasive Plants and Insects of Sudbury page at: <https://sudbury.ma.us/conservation/invasive-plants-and-insects-of-sudbury/>.



Japanese Hop infestation along a stream bank



TOWN FORUM: MUNICIPAL FINANCE



Wed, December 11, 2024
7 - 8:30 PM

HYBRID EVENT

Town Hall - 322 Concord Rd

Zoom - <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84038297954>

Questions? TownForum@sudbury.ma.us

Just Browsing?

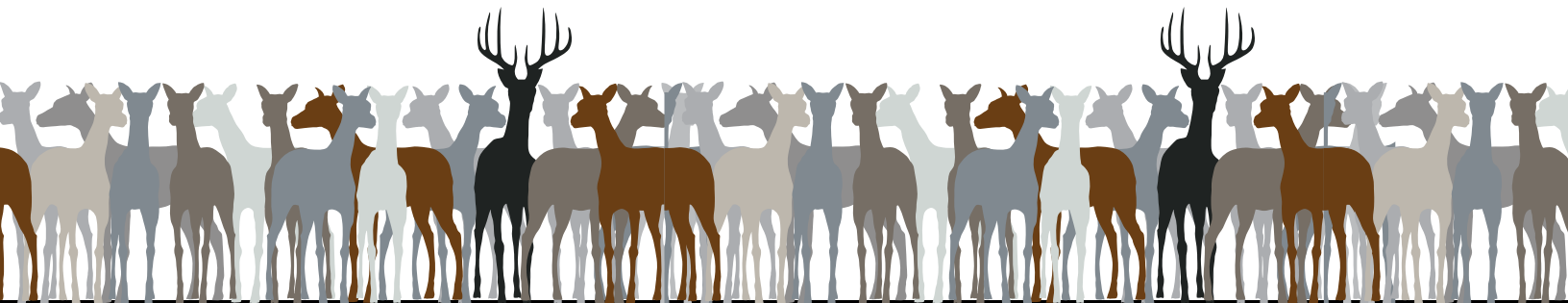
The Consequences of Deer Overpopulation

BY JOSEPH MILLER, LAND MANAGER

Deer populations in Massachusetts have soared in recent decades. Historically, the state's deer numbers were balanced through natural controls, but the current population is estimated at much higher levels than what the land can sustainably support. High deer densities lead to a host of concerns, increasing the risk of conflicts between deer and humans, including crop damage and car collisions. Chief among those concerns from the point of view of environmentalists, is the damage caused by over-browsing. To mitigate these impacts, managing the deer population has become a top priority for conservationists and local communities alike.

In the 19th century, an estimated 95% of America's white-tailed deer population were eliminated through deforestation and over-hunting. Conservation efforts of the 20th century were able to restore that population, while changes in the ecosystem they returned to have led to unchecked population growth across much of the US.

A significant factor contributing to deer overpopulation is the reduction in natural predators. Historically, wolves and mountain lions played a key role in controlling deer numbers in Massachusetts, but these predators were largely eliminated from the region by the end of the 19th century. Although coyotes have in some ways filled this niche, their impact is not sufficient to control deer numbers effectively. Coyotes are generally only able to successfully hunt young or sick deer, not enough to put a significant dent in the population.



Deer Overpopulation, cont.

Furthermore, the expansion of suburban and rural developments in Massachusetts has created an ideal environment for deer. Fragmented forests and sprawling neighborhoods provide ample food sources such as ornamental plants and gardens, while limiting hunting opportunities. This land use change has also disrupted natural habitats, pushing deer into closer proximity to human activity. As deer thrive in these modified landscapes, over-browsing becomes more pronounced. In the fragmented habitat that remains, they can cause irreparable damage to forest health, creating an imbalance in the ecosystem and negatively impacting native flora and fauna alike. **A single deer can eat about 4,200 seedlings, or approximately 7 pounds of fresh vegetation, per day!**

Deer overpopulation is also detrimental to the deer themselves, as it leads to increased competition for limited food and habitat resources. With too many deer in an area, the available vegetation can't sustain the herd, leading to malnutrition, weakened health, and lower reproductive success. Overcrowded conditions can also increase the spread of disease among deer populations, further contributing to poor health and higher mortality rates. Without population control, the overall well-being of the deer is compromised, resulting in a weaker, more vulnerable population.

Deer over-browse also facilitates the spread and success of invasive species. As native plants are selectively grazed by deer, less palatable invasive species thrive and outcompete the remaining native flora. This further reduces biodiversity and alters habitat structures, making it harder for native wildlife to survive. The lack of plant diversity limits food and shelter options for various species, creating a less resilient ecosystem overall.

This makes effective deer management a necessary piece in the broader conservation mosaic of protecting the forests in the Commonwealth. Efforts to address deer over-browse are crucial for preserving the ecological balance in Massachusetts. Local governments, conservation groups, and residents can work together to mitigate the impacts through strategies such as controlled hunting, habitat management, and public education. To learn more about Sudbury's deer management program, please visit our webpage, [here](#).

Below you can see a healthy oak forest. Note that the trees that make it up are of a variety of ages, providing a continuous cycle of trees as the older trees die off. Herbaceous plants such as blueberry and sassafras cover the forest floor, holding the soil in place, replenishing soil nutrients, and providing habitat for a diverse collection of forest creatures. This is an example of a forest that will continue in the natural succession cycle, and one that is well-equipped to resist the threats of invasive species and climate change.



Deer Overpopulation, cont.



In contrast, shown above is **Piper Farm Conservation land in Sudbury**. Here we see a forest that has been decimated by deer over-browse. The oak trees are generally older, as few saplings are able to survive long enough to become established due to the pressure they face from deer. This can lead to catastrophic problems for the forest health, as there will be no new trees to replace the current oaks when they eventually die off. Additionally, the understory is nearly non-existent, and the few plants that have survived below the old oaks made up almost exclusively of glossy buckthorn, an invasive species.

Left unchecked, deer over-browse can lead to the collapse of entire ecosystems, as native shrubs and trees are lost and invasive species take hold. The resulting imbalance in the landscape has far-reaching consequences, from weakened forest regeneration to decreased habitat for wildlife. Addressing this issue through proactive deer management is critical to ensuring the long-term health and resilience of our natural environments. By understanding the role of deer in the ecosystem and working to control their population, we can help preserve the beauty and biodiversity of Massachusetts' forests for future generations.



Join your neighbors, electrify your home, and plug IN!
A collaboration between The Town of Sudbury, Sustainable Sudbury and MassEnergize



bit.ly/plugINSudburyMA

plugIN helps residents create healthier homes and communities by reducing pollution.



Community Solar

Pay an electric bill? Get a discount with community solar



Heat Pumps

Add comfort and A/C with heat pumps



Home Solar

Lower our climate impact and cut your electric bill

FROM THE SELECT BOARD

Fall 2024

Town of Sudbury

The Hosmer House - A Literal Time Capsule

**BY LISA KOUCHAKDJIAN,
SELECT BOARD**

One of the most iconic and historic buildings in Sudbury is a large prominent house in Town Center. As one enters the center of Sudbury, this building is one of the first structures that greets our residents and visitors. Asher Goodnow built this home in 1793. Captain Elisha Wheeler was the first owner. At one time the building housed a candy shop. The building also contained a country store and was the town's post office. This 11-room home was constructed in the Federal Style, with a center entrance.

In 1896, the Hosmer family purchased the home for \$2,000. The Hosmer family owned the home until 1959 when Florence Hosmer deeded it to the Town of Sudbury with the stipulation that she could remain in the home for the remainder of her life. She passed away in 1979 at age 97. Florence wanted the house, its contents, her family's personal possessions and her paintings to be on display in memory of her father.

Florence Hosmer first moved into the home when she was 16 years old. In 1902, Florence graduated from Massachusetts Normal Art School in Boston. She taught art for more than 20 years in Sudbury, Wayland, and Framingham. At one time, she had an art studio in Copley Square and later, on Newbury Street. Her original art studio sign is on display in the Hosmer House.



FROM THE SELECT BOARD

The Hosmer House, Continued

Over the years, since taking on its ownership, the Town of Sudbury has made some changes to the home including taking down a large barn that held cattle in 1980. The Town also reduced the height of the 4 chimneys to 6 feet from their original height of 12 feet. Structural work was also done to reinforce the first floor and the ballroom on the second floor.

In a recent conversation with Sandra Duran, Sudbury's Combined Facility Director, Duran stated that upcoming capital improvements for the Hosmer House are needed. Once capital improvements are made, the Town will be able to institute good maintenance practices for the property. She did caution that if the needs of the building are not addressed, the structure will continue to deteriorate. Additionally, if the repairs are not made now, they will likely be more costly in the future.



There are currently three articles before the Community Preservation Commission (CPC) to address the Hosmer House's needs. Duran targeted CPC funds to preserve this historically relevant structure.

1. The first article seeks to address the building's structural issues and landscaping pursuant to the Historic Structure and Cultural Landscape report.
2. The second article supports a new roof. The current failing asphalt roof would be replaced by a historically accurate cedar shingle roof. The funding will also address drainage issues, including gutters, downspouts, flashing and drip edge.
3. The third article seeks to address preservation issues regarding the contents/collections within the Hosmer House, including but not limited to, historically significant paperwork, art, furnishings, and textiles. This project will be the first phase of the implementation of the recent Hosmer House collection consultant study recommendations.



Florence's bedroom in the Hosmer House

FROM THE SELECT BOARD

The Hosmer House, Continued

In 1968, the Town established the Sudbury Historical Commission. The purpose of this Commission is to preserve and protect the historical assets of the Town. The Hosmer House is one of the assets the Commission manages. In a recent conversation, Chris Hagger, the Chair of the Commission stressed the importance and value of the Hosmer House. Hagger shared that it is a very rare thing for a municipality to own a historic house as it existed many years ago. He indicated that for most municipal house museums, few if any artifacts remain from prior owners. The Hosmer House is unique in that the Town owns everything that was the possession of the Hosmer family, everything from their personal paperwork, to their housewares and linens. Hagger remarked that the Town owns and possesses two generations of Hosmer family personal property.

The Hosmer House is a virtual time capsule that transports its visitors back in time. Visitors experience the home as the Hosmer family experienced it. In fact, Hagger shared that it was Florence Hosmer's wish that the home be open to the public. We honor the memory and wishes of the Hosmer family when we visit the Hosmer House, a piece of Sudbury's valuable history. With the generosity of the Hosmer family comes the obligation and responsibility to preserve and protect this true gem in our community. We value and appreciate the incredible work and sacrifice of the volunteers in our community who maintain and care for the home.



Florence Hosmer self-portrait

In the spirit of Florence's wishes, the Hosmer House is open to the public at certain times during the year. Typically the home is open on the third Sunday of every month from 1:00-3:00 p.m.

This season, the Hosmer House will be open during the Sudbury Holiday Village on Saturday, December 7th from 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. It will also be open to visitors on December 8th from 12:00-2:30 p.m.

The author referred to the town's website regarding the Hosmer House to research this article. To learn more about the Hosmer House, please visit its website at

<https://sudbury.ma.us/hosmerhouse>

FROM THE SELECT BOARD

The Path to Sudbury's Annual Town Meeting

BY JENNIFER ROBERTS, SELECT BOARD



The work of Sudbury Town Government is a combination of day-to-day operational work and planning for upcoming years. For planning, the Town follows a cyclical financial process each year which culminates in the Annual Town Meeting in May. This schedule starts in the fall when individual Town departments assess their budget requirements and capital needs. This information is shared with the Town Manager and team members who then start the complex process of prioritizing these requests. The proposed projects are assessed and, if deemed necessary, are added for the upcoming year or future years on the Five-Year Capital Plan. The Town Manager and Finance Director also determine the maximum amount of funds that can be spent in the upcoming year based on estimated tax revenues, free cash, new growth, and local or other government aid/grants.

Parallel to this work, the Community Preservation Committee kicks off its annual process. CPA (Community Preservation Administration) is a program that helps communities preserve open space and historic sites, develop outdoor recreational facilities, and create affordable housing. In October, the Committee Preservation Committee receives requests for various projects from Town staff, committees, and residents to be considered for CPA funding. Project proponents present their projects through a series of public hearings, and CPC members listen and ask questions. Once hearings are complete in December and into January, the CPC then determines which projects it will support and move forward to Town Meeting for consideration by residents.

FROM THE SELECT BOARD

Path to Town Meeting, Continued

In late fall the budget, selected capital plans, and other projects are finalized and drafted into Town Meeting descriptive “articles” which will make up the building blocks of the Town Meeting warrant. Individual committees may also create articles to present, which may or may not require funding. Also, there are periodically citizen petition articles, which means they are brought forward by an individual citizen or group.

The proposed Town Meeting articles then go through formal review by Town Counsel which may lead to further refinement to be legally compliant. The completed warrant with its articles is formally accepted by the Select Board each year by January 31st. After this date, no more articles are added to the warrant. By February 15th, a meeting called “Capital Night” is held which brings together the Select Board, Finance Committee, and Capital Improvement Advisory Committee (CIAC). At this meeting, Town staff present their capital articles, and committee members engage in dialogue with substantial Q&A. This is also a great opportunity for members of the public to learn about the capital items being proposed.

Over the next two months leading up to Town Meeting, various committees review articles and take formal positions of support or non-support. These opinions are to be presented to Town Meeting participants for consideration when deciding votes. The warrant is mailed to Sudbury residents in April and preparation gets under way for the logistics of Town Meeting.

According to Sudbury Town bylaws, Town Meeting is to occur on the first Monday of May and may extend over the course of multiple days. Town Meeting is a vestige of colonial times when there was an effort to organize settlements into communities and create mechanisms for leadership and decision-making. Serving as the legislative body of our town, Town Meeting is comprised of registered voters. Sudbury’s elected Town Moderator moderates the meeting. It should be noted that Town Meetings are occasionally called in the fall or other times of year if there are pressing matters that cannot wait until May.

I encourage Sudbury residents to follow this cycle throughout the year and even consider joining one of the many Town committees involved. [SudburyTV](#) is an excellent resource to view key meetings live or later at more convenient times. It is vitally important that Sudbury residents seek to attend the Annual Town Meeting. It is the fundamental body that keeps Sudbury functioning in a democratic manner. The ability to participate in this legislative process is truly a privilege that we enjoy, where one’s vote can have a direct impact on the management of our community.

TOWN OF SUDBURY

ANNUAL TOWN MEETING

STARTING
MAY 5, 2025





**SHARE YOUR OPINIONS
MAKE YOUR TOWN BETTER**



**Make your voice
HEARD.**

Sign up today.

Resident input is essential to the town's decision-making process. FlashVote sends one-minute surveys on important local matters to residents who sign up to share their opinions. When each survey ends, FlashVote sends the anonymized results to everyone who participated, and the town gets valuable feedback from the community.



[SUDBURY.MA.US/FLASHVOTE](https://sudbury.ma.us/flashvote)



Town of Sudbury

HOLIDAY VILLAGE

SAT, DECEMBER 7

11 AM - 2 PM TOWN CENTER

ICE SCULPTURE LIVE MUSIC
GIFT MARKET FOOD HALL & MORE

SUDBURY.MA.US/HOLIDAYVILLAGE

