



# The Norfolk Boomerang

*A Norfolk Tradition since 2005*

Volume 5, Number 46 Friday, July 23, 2010

Norfolk, Massachusetts

\$36.00 yearly



## Silo of Norfolk

This is the second installment of I Spy Norfolk, our new series of photos of out-of-the-way items in town or everyday items from unusual perspectives. Can you tell where this is? Be as specific as you can. Send answers by email to [NorfolkBoomerang@gmail.com](mailto:NorfolkBoomerang@gmail.com). We're still awaiting confirmation of a winner from last week's contest, incidentally. Answers for that one are welcome, too. Last week's picture was of ... well, that would be giving it away, now wouldn't it?

Photo by Matt McDonald

## Where Has All The Water Gone?

**Town Officials Float Idea of  
'Pilferage'  
of Norfolk Water**

*By Matt McDonald*

Is somebody stealing Norfolk town water?

Town officials are perplexed enough about unaccounted-for water to wonder.

There's no proof, but the evidence is disconcerting to selectmen.

The town currently has more water unaccounted for than it did a few years ago when new (and presumably more accurate) water meters were installed at the homes and businesses of town water customers. And revenue is down, even though the town has more town water customers than it used to have.

As the town's public works director, Remo "Butch" Vito, put it recently, the new water meters were supposed to help decrease the amount of lost water and increase revenue, but the opposite has happened: lost water has actually increased and revenue has decreased.

"This really is mind-boggling," Vito told selectmen last week.

Pinhole leaks in some homeowners' underground water pipes explain at least some of the loss in town water, but it's not clear to town officials whether they can possibly explain the whole picture.

Selectman Rob Garrity, board chairman, suggested during the selectmen's working session meeting Tuesday, July 13 that leaks shouldn't explain why the town's figures for actual consumption of town water have decreased at a time when it has more customers. The new water meters should have shown at least an increase in the amount of water town water customers are using.

"But the figures show the exact opposite. Consumption goes down, dramatically, it drops 32 million gallons a year after the new meters come in. ... So the leaks have got nothing to do with the drive-by meters," Garrity said.

Garrity noted that the leaks shouldn't affect how often residents use a washing machine or flush toilets.

Vito mentioned the continuing problem with leaks, but Selectman Jim Lehan noted that the leaks occur between the town water main and the home where the meter is.

"It doesn't make sense, Butch. All the loss that takes place is prior to metering. If it's metered, it's in the house. So ...why is there such a drop? We've had more homes. We've had more people hooked up. I mean, it should be up, not down," Lehan said.

Vito said eliminating leaks would at least let town officials pinpoint the lost water problem.

**See Water, Page 3**

## Access Road Feasibility Under Study

**Whether To Build It,  
How To Pay For It  
Are Among Topics**

*By Matt McDonald*

An ad hoc committee looking at building a temporary access road from Rockwood Road to the Freeman-Centennial School grounds off Boardman Street has divvied up tasks among members to see if it's feasible to build the road.

Selectman Jim Tomaszewski, who ran the first meeting of the committee this past Wednesday night, emphasized that whether to build a permanent access road isn't on the committee's agenda.

"We're here to look at this purely as a construction access road. This is not a permanent road. If anything happens with that a year or so from now, that's a different story. We're chartered just with trying to look at the possibility of coming up with an access road for this construction process, which would be up to about two years in length," Tomaszewski said.

The access road has stirred up a storm because some town officials say it's necessary and some residents are dead set against it.

Supporters of a permanent access road say an alternative access to the school grounds is needed in case of an emergency and that such a road could help divert traffic from Boardman Street, which is heavily congested in the mornings and afternoons.

Supporters of a temporary access road during construction of a new elementary school to replace Freeman-Centennial worry about the safety of children and others while hundreds of trucks are coming in and out of the work site off Boardman Street.

Residents of Ware Drive, Malcolm Street, and Geneva

Avenue are against both a permanent and a temporary access road out of concern over the effects on their homes and neighborhood. If the access road were connected to Geneva Avenue, it could make the neighborhood a cut-through instead of a cul-de-sac. Residents are also worried that existing flooding would get worse.

Town officials have gotten a cost estimate of \$110,000 to build a temporary gravel road during construction. Tomaszewski said he was impressed with the level of detail the architect provided him recently to justify the cost estimate. The amount covers site preparation, earth work, grading, and about \$15,000 for fencing and gates so the road can be closed off.

But it remains unclear where the money would come from.

Town officials say they don't have money in the town's operating budget that could be used to build either a temporary or a permanent access road.

It's theoretically possible that local officials could use a portion of the \$36.9 million appropriated to build a new school for the access road.

But town officials would need permission from the Massachusetts School Building Authority, which is providing about half the money for the project and which has oversight over it.

The Norfolk School Building Committee's consultants have said it's unlikely the state authority will approve the access road because the school project is already at the 8 percent maximum cost for site work the state has set for the project.

During a selectmen's meeting July 13, Selectman Jim Lehan floated the idea of approaching state officials to reconsider allowing the school appropriation to cover the cost of the

**See Access Road, Page 2**