

Greater Cape Ann Community Updates August - September

Local Business News

- Manchester Athletic Club owner Anthony Simboli has sold the facility to Cell Signaling Technologies. Simboli will operate the facility until September 30, On October 1, a new operator will begin managing the Manchester facility. In an email sent out to members in August, Simboli cited that COVID was a factor in his decision, along with the decline in membership and increased operational costs.
- The Silva Family will no longer operate Topside Grill citing staffing shortages and the pandemic as leading factors
- Retail stores Cuddlefish and Arts Abound have closed
- Many new restaurants have still not opened, The Rudder, Fleur Cuisine, Oak to Ember. Magnolia Café is expected to open soon.
- Some restaurants are needing to increase costs to keep up with inflation

Municipal News

- Rockport still has not found a replacement for Debbie Powers, the Administrative Assistant to the Town Administrator and Board of Selectmen. This has caused some delays with committee meetings like the EDC
- Ipswich has hired a new Town Manager, Stephen Crane
- Gloucester Held its 3rd community session on its Harbor Plan, including past and current proposals for 14C2

Outdoor Entertainment Policy

- Ipswich is currently reviewing a draft outdoor entertainment policy including recommendations from the working group. A big difference from the earlier draft of the policy is that town/community events do not have to apply for a permit (e.g Ipswich Downtown Tuesday's and Illuminations). Previously, they would be held do the same process and standards as businesses

Zoning/Housing

- The Zoning Board denied Geoffrey Engler's permit for the development of a 136-apartment complex on Shingle Place Hill. Environmental and safety concerns were two main reasons, in addition to zero support from the community as part of public comment.
- Essex has applied for a \$75k grant to continue implementation of zoning bylaw recommendations by MAPC. No updates on the grant application status at this time.

Environment

- Water restrictions/ water bans in all 5 communities. Gloucester deemed hand pouring non-essential and is no longer permissible. Many of the towns have seen a positive decrease in water usage.
- Gloucester & MAPC have finalized the City's Climate Action Resiliency Plan. The public comment period is now open. After public comment ends, the next step will be implementation of strategies.
- National Grid is working on finalizing incentives for EV Charging Stations. These incentives should increase the amount of EV stations at businesses and in municipalities across Massachusetts.