

State Representative Marie J. Parente's

Report to the District

For residents of Milford, Mendon and Hopedale

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Legislature preserves funding for local towns

The Legislature voted to override several of the Governor's vetoes of local funding priorities, preserving local projects to repair Milford Town Park, repair traffic signals in Hopedale, and help Mendon deal with highway traffic.

During formal sessions held in late July, the House voted to override the Governor's vetoes and preserve funding for the local projects. The Legislature had included in the state budget \$100,000 for Milford Town Park, \$30,000 for Mendon and \$25,000 for Hopedale.

Chapter 70 School Aid -- Milford, Mendon and Hopedale all received higher funding for local school districts in the final version of the State Budget.

Milford will receive a total of \$11,663,825 in Chapter 70, school choice, school lunch and charter school reimbursement funding, an increase of \$1,235,807 over last year. **Mendon-Upton Regional Schools** will receive \$12,450,887, an increase of \$1,237,433. **Hopedale** will receive \$6,409,350, a \$574,479 increase. **Blackstone Valley Regional Schools** will see an increase of \$1,278,007 to \$6,621,477 for the new fiscal year, which began on July 1. *(Continued on Page 3)*

Rep. Parente highlights legislative activity

During this session of the Legislature, several legislative initiatives filed or co-sponsored by Representative Parente have been approved.

Language to maintain a full-time, full-service **Registry of Motor Vehicles** branch office in Milford was signed into law as part of a Supplemental Budget bill. Also included in the same legislation was **\$600,000 to cover damage caused by floods and storms in Milford, Mendon and Hopedale**. An additional \$16,000 was approved to **repair and upgrade the traffic signals at Route 16 and Hopedale Street in Hopedale**.

Another major accomplishment was the passage of legislation authorizing the state to negotiate with the town of Milford for the purchase of the National Guard Armory on Pearl Street, which currently houses the Milford Youth Center. The special legislation was filed by Rep. Parente and Sen. Moore at the request of Milford Town Meeting.

Language was included in the recently approved Economic Stimulus Bill requiring businesses having Tax Increment Financing (TIF) agreements with a city or town to inform local officials of any major change in *(continued on Page 2)*

Have a question? Need help?

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Helpful Contact Information

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Milford, MA 01757
(508) 634-2307

Mendon Town Clerk
Town Hall, P.O. Box 2
Mendon, MA 01756
(508) 473-1085

Hopedale Town Clerk
Town Hall, 78 Hopedale St.
Hopedale, MA 01747
(508) 634-2203 ext. 15

Milford Council on Aging
60 North Bow Street
Milford (508) 473-8334

Mendon Council on Aging
62 Providence St.
Mendon (508) 478-6175

Hopedale Council on Aging
43 Hope Street
Hopedale (508) 634-2208

Milford Public Schools
31 West Fountain Street
(508) 478-1100

Mendon-Upton Regional Schools
(508) 634-1585

Hopedale Public Schools
(508) 634-2217

Blackstone Valley Regional HS
(508) 529-7758

Towns work to address 40B issues

Local towns still face the challenge of trying to regulate growth of housing developments without running afoul of a state law allowing developers to circumvent local permitting if less than 10 percent of the housing is considered to be affordable. State regulations allow towns some leeway if they demonstrate efforts to reach that goal, however local officials need more tools to protect the public's interest when faced with developers who are represented by experienced 40B attorneys.

In Milford, for example, there are 304 units at *Rolling Green*, all of which count towards the Subsidized Housing Inventory. At *The Groves* (formerly Brook Village South), however, only 38 units have a tenant with a so-called enhanced voucher. If the tenant moves the voucher goes with them and the unit reverts to market-rate status. The federal Department of Housing and Urban Development created the enhanced voucher program to preserve affordability in expiring-use developments, which are projects funded in part by the government to encourage private developers to create rental units.

As of June 1, 2006 Milford had 7.1 % affordable housing units; Mendon had 2.6 % and Hopedale 4.7 %. Towns may request an update of their inventory at any time, provided they can document a change in the number of units (including proposed developments filed with the town). The next inventory of subsidized housing in all cities and towns will be published in January, 2007. A survey will be conducted over the next several months by the State Department of Housing and Community Development.

Growth in rural towns such as Mendon is especially problematic due to the limited water resources and capacity to handle increases in population. Local residents and officials seek to preserve the town's unique historic character, and prevent water-well contamination or other negative consequences of increased development.

Rep. Parente honors Civil War veterans

Representative Parente recently participated in a ceremony at the Consigli-Ruggerio Funeral Home in Milford honoring six Massachusetts Civil War Veterans who were returned home for burial at the National Cemetery in Bourne. The six men were members of the 1st Massachusetts Infantry, who died at the Battle of Blackburn's Ford in Mannassas, Virginia in 1861.

On June 10 the six soldiers were buried with full military honors at the Cape Cod cemetery, 145 years after becoming among the first Union soldiers to die in battle during the Civil War.

"Every year we pay homage to American soldiers who have given their lives in the defense of our country," said Rep. Parente. "It was a real privilege to participate in an event to honor the memories of these men from Massachusetts."

In recognition of her participation in the ceremonies, Representative Parente received a letter and special medallion from the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War. Mr. Franklin N. Haley of Bellingham, who serves as the Department Secretary for the organization, thanked Rep. Parente on behalf of Commander Perley Mellor for attending the memorial service.

According to published reports, the six soldiers were found in 1995 and 1997 by a Northern Virginia organization called Relic Hunters. The bodies were eventually exhumed and turned over to the National Smithsonian Institution. A member of the Relic Hunters, Mr. Dalton Rector, then performed research to determine the identity of each soldier.

His research claims that the soldiers are identified as:

George Bacon, 24, of Chelsea; **Gordon Forest**, 32, of Malden; **Thomas Roome**, 30, of Boston; **James Silvey**, 23, of Boston; **William H. Smart**, 20, of Cambridge, and **Albert F. Wentworth**, 17, of Chelsea.



Legislative Activity from Page 1

operations, such as layoffs or the outsourcing of company functions. The legislation was filed at the request of Milford Selectman William Buckley.

In other news, **State Treasurer Tim Cahill** visited Milford on May 3rd to present town officials with a check from the School Building Authority for nearly **\$4 million**. The money reimbursed the town for work done on Milford High School and Middle School East.

Rep. Parente has also regularly attended meetings of the **Draper Reuse Committee in Hopedale** since its formation in May, 2005. The committee is working to find ways of utilizing the mostly vacant structure which was once home to the former Draper/Rockwell Corporation. The primary concern of the committee has been the potential public safety hazard posed by the 1.2 million square foot complex. On June 13, a small fire broke out in a

portion of the building, but was quickly brought under control by firefighters from six towns. A bill giving local officials more power to enforce laws requiring owners of **abandoned buildings** to secure their property and provide detailed building plans is also making its way through the Legislature.

Thousands of Massachusetts veterans and their families will be eligible for various forms of tax relief thanks to legislation approved by the State House of Representatives. The **Massachusetts Military Enhanced Relief Individual Tax (MERIT) Plan** bears the name of Edward G. Connolly, a U.S. Army veteran and an eight-term state Representative from Everett who passed away in May.

In other news, Rep. Parente became one of 18 co-sponsors of legislation filed by Senator Bruce Tarr (R-Gloucester) **to fight the use of illegal workers** by companies doing business in Massachusetts.

Funding for local towns preserved

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In addition, the Legislature also lifted the cap on State Lottery aid receipts for local cities and towns, resulting in an increase of \$173 million statewide for communities that depend upon the aid to help support local services.

Hopedale saw its share of Lottery aid increase by \$142,185 over last year's figures. **Mendon** will receive an increase of \$102,836, and **Milford** will receive an increase of \$613,123 in additional Lottery aid.

\$500,000 in state funds for Milford Pond

The Department of Conservation and Recreation will release \$500,000 in state funding to be applied to the non-federal share of the Milford Pond Project. The state released the funds after being told by federal officials that bidding for the project would occur in January, 2007 (subject to Federal appropriation.)

Rep. Parente received correspondence from DCR Commissioner Stephen H. Burrington in response to her request to release the state funding which was authorized in a 2002 Environmental Bond Bill.

"I would like to see 'shovels in the dirt' sooner but it is a welcome development for a project that has been years in planning," said Rep. Parente, reacting to the news. "Every dollar paid for by the state or federal government is one less that the town will have to contribute."

The total cost of the project is estimated at \$8.8 million, and involves dredging approximately 45 acres of Milford Pond to stop eutrophication, or the decomposition of organic matter growing on the bottom of the shallow body of water. The project would be administered by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

Rep. Parente said the Milford Pond Restoration Committee has worked for more than 15 years on the project, and she has helped the town gain funding in the past for engineering studies and planning. State and local funding would cover approximately 44 percent of the costs.

Common Cents

Save money at the grocery store

If possible, shop for two weeks of groceries at a time, to reduce impulse shopping. Plan your menus ahead of time, make a specific list, and stick to it. Never go food shopping when you're hungry.

Stay away from already-prepared foods -- even some deli and bakery items -- avoid shopping the outer aisles where these products are featured.

Clip coupons and use them whenever possible. Buy a newspaper on Sundays, and use a store discount card.

If you bring children, make sure they are well fed and have some toys to keep them occupied while you shop.

Purchase store brands. Check the labels: Are you paying more for fancy packaging or for a brand name?

The most expensive items are usually at eye level. The best bargains are closer to the floor.

Shop when the stores are quiet so you can compare prices. Some grocery stores put sale items out early.

Beware of displayed items. Always check the store aisle where this item is normally stored. You may find other cheaper brands.

Compare prices per ounce found on the price tag attached to the shelf. The economy size isn't always cheaper.

Buy meat when it's on sale and store it in the freezer.

Search for snack cakes, bread, and chips at thrift stores.

Check out the so-called dollar stores. Don't buy toiletries at the grocery store or drug store. Go to one of the large discount stores. Bath soap, shampoo, toothpaste, shaving cream, and other such items such as detergent and fabric softener can be 20% to 50% less.

(Tips were collected from various consumer resources)

Governor approves bill allowing Milford to appoint two local men as police officers

On July 27 the Governor signed into law legislation allowing Milford to appoint two individuals as police officers.

Chapter 182 of the Acts of 2006 authorizes the town to appoint Antonio Dinis and Robert Tusino as members of the Milford Police Department, although they are older than the maximum age requirement of 32. Town Meeting approved the home rule petition on February 13, 2006.

Both men are graduates of Milford High School. Antonio Dinis works as a dispatcher for the Milford Police Department and also serves on the Framingham State College campus police force. Robert Tusino, a certified emergency medical technician, serves as a member of the New York City Police Department, which he joined shortly before September 11, 2001. He was one of the first responders to the World Trade Center terrorist attacks. Mr. Dinis is fluent in Portuguese.

"It has been a long wait for both men," said Rep. Parente, reacting to the Governor's action. "These are two local residents who want very much to serve their community, and have been persistent in trying to attain that goal."

Both men received strong public endorsements from Milford Police Chief Thomas O'Loughlin, and both passed their Civil Service examinations. The special legislation states that if Dinis and Tusino meet all other requirements for certification, they may be appointed as police officers.

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Constituent Survey Results

1. **Draper Complex in Hopedale** -- The vast majority of respondents suggested the creation of affordable 55 and over housing, either rental units or condominiums. A mixed use development was also proposed, containing shops or other small businesses on the first floor, with housing above. Other survey responses indicated support for a nursing or rest home facility. Many people expressed concern over the potential fire hazard posed by the property.
2. **Mendon Water Supply** -- Among those who responded, one person suggested that Mendon purchase water from the town of Milford, while another person suggested using water from Lake Nipmuc. A third possibility would seek federal funding to drill for new sources of water for drinking and fire fighting.
3. **Milford National Guard Armory** -- Suggestions for re-use of the Armory included maintaining the current Milford Youth Center for young people, as well as renting out part of the space for various public and private functions. Another person proposed using the Armory as a voting location, and still another person recommended using the building as an emergency shelter.
4. **Slot machines at racetracks** -- Nearly 90 percent of the people responding to this question said that any state revenue derived from racetrack slot machines should be used for property tax relief. Some of the respondents suggested using such potential revenue to provide additional elder services, and a few people recommended dividing up the proceeds equally among local aid for education, property tax relief, and elder services. No one expressed opposition to the proposal.

What other ways can we improve our communities? Please send your comments and suggestions to the following address: **Representative Marie J. Parente, State House Room 155, Boston, MA 02133.**