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6 takeaways from Special Town Meeting

Emily Scherny

The Herald News
USA TODAY NETWORK

SWANSEA — More than 430 town residents made their voices heard at the Oct. 27 Special Town Meeting where several agenda items, from infrastructure updates — such as park accessibility improvements, dam removal, and solar arrays — to new rules of develop-

ment that could dynamically increase Swansea’s housing stock, were struck down by a vocal majority. The biannual town meeting that began at 7 p.m. in the auditorium of the Joseph Case High School, 70 School St., invited all registered Swansea voters to weigh in on the 21 issues that were up for deliberation on the agenda, many of them recommended for approval by the town’s Advisory and Finance Commit-

tee. Amid of flurry of social media posts urging residents to attend the meeting, the Oct. 27 hours-long public forum saw higher turnout that usual that contributed to raucous tamping down of proposed bylaws and funding for the purchase of new equipment. Here are six key takeaways from Swansea’s Special Town Meeting on Monday night:

Town votes down study looking further into Cole River dam

The town defeated Article 1 that asked voters to approve \$49,500 in federal grant match funding to cover the cost of a study that will bring town administrators closer to forming a decision about the Cole River dam on Route

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Rich Perry, The Egg Man, hands a dozen eggs to a resident picking up food at the weekly Westport Food Pantry drive-through at the Westport Grange on Main Road in Westport. PHOTOS BY PETER PEREIRA/THE STANDARD-TIMES

Westport Food Pantry adds walk-in shopping

Kathryn Gallerani

The Standard-Times
USA TODAY NETWORK

Neighbors help neighbors pick up food outside the Westport Food Pantry at the Westport Grange or shop the old-fashioned way inside so they pick out food themselves. When Food Pantry Director Cindy Wilson joined the Westport Food Pantry part-time two summers ago, she was committed to expanding its services and making their clients feel welcome. The Westport Food Pantry was created in April 2020 by the town during the COVID-19 pandemic and eventually relocated to the basement of the Grange building as its own charity.

Adding to the food pantry

Expansion of the Westport Food Pantry has been made possible by a grant the Westport Grange received to waterproof the basement and renovate the entryway.

“With the redoing of the entryway,



Westport Grange, located at 181 Main Road in Westport.

we were able to add in-person shopping,” she said. It allows the food pantry to open its doors to residents who want to shop inside rather than lining up outside in their vehicles and using the drive-through system for distribution. Wilson has surveyed multiple food pantries and said Westport is one of the

few that offers in-person and drive-through pickups. “A lot of people like the convenience of the drive-through, and a lot of the people that come to the drive-through have mobility issues and navigating the store is a challenge,” she said.

The Westport Food Pantry’s partners

Last fall, the food pantry received a grant to purchase a walk-in freezer. Wilson keeps track of the names, number of children and seniors in each family and reports that to the Greater Boston Food Pantry every month. A year and a half ago, the food pantry partnered with the Greater Boston Food Pantry to give out frozen foods to those in need. Families can choose frozen meat and vegetables from the freezer. The food pantry gets about 6,000 pounds of food a month twice a month. The pantry also purchases food from Aldi in Dartmouth through Citizens For Citizens Inc., a social services agency in

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Grants aim to increase homegrown food access

Matthew Ferreira

The Standard-Times
USA TODAY NETWORK

Out of a total of 113 food security grants going to entities across Massachusetts, 16 of them are headed to SouthCoast area organizations like PACE, Inc. in New Bedford, Round The Bend Farm in Dartmouth and others, to help address food insecurity, according to the Healey-Driscoll Administration. More specifically, the grants — totaling \$22 million — “will help strengthen Massachusetts’ food production and distribution sectors, which will allow residents more access to fresh, locally grown and produced food,” a press release reads, noting the funds come thanks to the Mass. Department of Agricultural Resources’

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Man pleads guilty to killing his girlfriend

Frank Mulligan

The Standard-Times
USA TODAY NETWORK

FALL RIVER — Tyler Dow Baglini will serve a life sentence for second-degree murder with parole eligibility in 25 years for the murder of 31-year-old Kerri Fidalgo, whose grieving family and friends filled the courtroom. The sentence had been agreed upon by prosecutors and the defense and was affirmed by Judge Raffi Yessayan during the Oct. 28 hearing in Bristol County Superior Court in Fall River. Assistant Bristol County District Attorney Karen O’Sullivan said Fidalgo had been stabbed and cut 14 times to the neck, head and torso. There were wounds to her hands consistent with attempts to defend herself.

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