



Manchester-by-the Sea

Select Board

Community Update January 2026

Happy New Year Manchester-by-the-Sea! We wish you good health and prosperity in 2026. During the winter calm, Town Hall is bustling and preparing for the Annual Town Meeting and the next beach season. Enjoy this serene season by the sea. "No winter lasts forever; no spring skips its turn."
-Hal Borlan, American Author.

Downtown Zoning Updates

Last Spring, the Planning Board began working on new zoning for Manchester's downtown. A project that was identified in the Town's Master plan and discussed during the MBTA zoning process. A consulting firm was brought on to guide the Planning Board through a visioning process for Manchester's town center. Over 60 residents attended a public visioning session at the High School which concluded that residents wish to see a vibrant downtown area that includes a variety of shops, services, and some additional housing.

The Planning Board has since worked on drafting a new zoning bylaw for the downtown. Twenty meetings including public forums and walking tours have been held to discuss the draft proposals and receive feedback from residents, property owners, and businesses.

The proposed bylaw creates two new zoning districts downtown, the Town Center District and the Harbor Edge District. The new zones will allow for the construction of additional housing to help support downtown businesses above and behind retail spaces. It will also remove many of the regulatory barrier's business and property owners currently encounter.

During the month of January, the Planning Board will finalize the draft zoning and submit the final Article to the Select Board in February for the Annual Town Meeting. To view a draft and map of the zoning scan the QR code or visit manchester.ma.us/838/Downtown-Zoning. Additional meetings and public forums will be held in t Questions or comments on the proposal may be directed to the Land Use Department.



Statutory Exemptions Reminder

Applications for statutory Senior Citizen and Veterans property tax exemptions for the upcoming fiscal year are due no later than April 1, 2026. Eligible residents are encouraged to submit their applications by the deadline or contact the Assessor's Office at 978-526-2010, with any questions regarding eligibility requirements or the application process. The Assessor's Office is available to provide assistance and can be reached at Town Hall during regular business hours.

Winter Community Bonfire



Start the new year with warmth and light at the Winter Community Bonfire on Friday, January 9 (rain/wind date January 10) at Masconomo Park starting at 6 PM.

The Town will light the night with Christmas trees collected by DPW. Residents are asked *not* to drop trees off at the park. Parking will be available along Beach Street, Old Neck Road, behind Town Hall, and the Singing Beach parking lot.

Winter Weather Guide



Winter weather is here so it's a good time to learn how the Town communicates, operates, and clears roads during snow and ice storms. Visit manchester.ma.us/223/Public-Works or scan the QR code to brush up.

Water Meter Replacement Update



The replacement of new water meters for all municipal water users began in November. Manchester households were divided into twelve groups to organize the roll-out process. Residents are encouraged to schedule their appointment as soon as the installation letter is received. Once the new meter is installed don't forget to download the *Eye on Water™* app to monitor water usage and detect leaks.



Visit manchester.ma.us/826/Water-Meter-Replacement or scan the QR code to learn more.

Town Clerk Notes

Resident Stickers

2026 Resident stickers will be mailed in February to residents whose vehicles are currently registered in Manchester. These stickers are good for the transfer station and parking at Singing Beach and in resident-only spaces throughout town. If you do not receive your sticker by April 1, please contact the Town Clerk's Office. Reprints for lost stickers will cost \$10, so please check your mail and put the sticker on the car as soon as you get it.

Dog Licenses

Current dog licenses expire March 31, and 2026 dog licenses will be available for purchase starting in mid-January online, by mail, or in-person at the Town Clerk's Office. Proof of rabies vaccination will be required if not already on file. Under state law, dogs 6 months or older must be licensed annually, so please remember to renew! Late fees will start April 1, per town bylaw.

Annual Census Forms

Annual Street Listing (Census) forms will be mailed to all residents in January. Please be sure to include all household members on your form. If anyone has moved out of the household, please mark the form appropriately. By law, these forms need to be returned with a signature within 10 days of receiving them, even if no information has changed. Attention to this document is very important for your voter and resident status, state aid, representation, schools, and public safety.

Town Election

Nomination papers for Housing Authority, Library Trustees, Moderator, Planning Board, School Committee, and Select Board will be available at the Town Clerk's Office starting January 5 and due back by March 31. The Annual Town Meeting will be on April 27 and the Annual Town Election on May 19.

Think Spring! Rain Barrels on Sale



The Department of Public Works will once again, partner with the Great American Rain Barrel Company to offer residents the opportunity to purchase a rain barrel for their watering needs and to help conserve water.

The rain barrels are re-purposed food grade shipping drums used to transport olives and capers from Spain to the US. Each barrel holds 60 gallons of water and comes in three earth tone colors. The Town is offering residents an additional 50% off of all barrels. However, the billing zip code must be 01944 and use coupon code *man26*. To place an order please click the QR code here or visit



greatamericanrainbarrel.com/community/. The deadline to place orders is March 29 and pick up will be on April 11 at the DPW yard. Please contact the DPW office with questions at 978-526-1242.

Sustainability Corner



Tiny plastic particles, called microplastics, are increasingly polluting our oceans, soil, and air we breathe. A major source? Synthetic fabrics like polyester and nylon that shed fibers during washing, with an estimated 700,000 microplastic fibers released in an average wash cycle. What can you do to help?

Choose Better Materials: Opt for natural fibers like organic cotton, linen, and wool.

Wash Smarter: Use cold water and gentle cycles to reduce agitation. Ecofriendly detergents tend to be less harsh on fabrics while also reducing harmful chemicals.

Skip the Dryer: Air drying helps retain fabric integrity and extends the life of your clothes.

Avoid Fast Fashion & Support Circular Brands: Invest in durable, well-made clothing and white goods.

Join the Sustainability Committee at their monthly meetings.

250th Fundraising Event



Save the Date! Saturday, March 7 is the *March Into Summer Party* to raise funds for this year's July 4 festivities. The event will be held at the American Legion Hall and will feature The Lisa Love Band. With this year's 250th anniversary

the July Fourth Advisory Board is working to make this year memorable. Learn more at manchester.ma.us/389/July-4th-Advisory-Board.

Support for Veterans

Cape Ann Veterans Services is an inter-municipal resource hub serving Veterans and their families in Gloucester, Hamilton, Manchester-by-the-Sea, Rockport, and Wenham.



They connect our community's Veterans to a wide range of services available at the municipal, state, and federal levels. Scan the QR code for the Veterans Guide.

Manchester-by-the-Sea

Dates to Remember

January 1 - New Years Day, Town Hall Closed

January 6 - Curbside Christmas Tree Collection

January 9 - Town Bonfire, Masconomo Park

January 15 - Open Burning Season Begins

January 19 - Martin Luther King Day, Town Hall Closed

February 2 - Q3 Property Tax Due

February 16 - Presidents' Day, Town Hall Closed

March 8 - Daylight Savings Time Begins

March 31 - Dog Licenses Expire

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