

The future is now at Puffer's

By [Scott Merzbach](#)
Staff Writer

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ANNA MILLER

Lani Sherlock, of Pelham, watches her daughter, Chhendara Um, 6, play with her grandmother, Jean Sherlock, in Puffer's Pond.

Puffer's Pond and its surrounding watershed in North Amherst is recognized as a much-loved destination for swimming, sunbathing, picnicking, fishing and hiking.

But with a steady increase in use of the pond and its environs in recent years, and a corresponding decline in municipal funding for maintaining the conservation area, a subcommittee of the Conservation Commission, known as Puffer's Pond 2020, is being established.

For David Ziomek, the town's director of Conservation and Development, the popularity of the pond during warm weather, such as the three straight days in April that brought out more than 400 people to swim, is something this subcommittee will study.

"The challenges are, how do we deal with peak days," Ziomek said. "How do we establish rules and guidelines that allow them to enjoy the pond and protect the resources that are there?"

The committee is expected to examine how the pond can continue to remain a destination, while being protected from serious problems such as soil erosion and illegal trash disposal.

Town Manager Larry Shaffer, who frequently swims at the pond, said Puffer's is a tremendous and beloved asset, but it has not gotten the attention it deserves from the town.

"The committee should look at how Puffer's Pond is utilized and how its management will best accentuate the beauty and use of the pond," Shaffer said.

Ziomek said the subcommittee will spend the next several months putting together information by researching the history of the pond and the nearby trails, conducting meetings at the pond and interviewing people who use it.

"We want to engage the community of users to talk about Puffer's Pond," Ziomek said.

The scope of the committee's work will be the entire greenway that extends from the Silver Bridge near the intersection of Leverett and East Leverett roads west to Montague Road, a region that also encompasses Mill River Recreation Area.

There are multiple lenses with which the subcommittee will be expected to look at the pond, Ziomek said. One is the ecological: soil erosion can impact fish and freshwater mammals.

There has also been what Ziomek terms a cycle of overuse that needs to be mitigated both at the pond and on its nearby trails. "We want to concentrate the impact, rather than spreading it out," Ziomek said.

Another lens is recreational, where the focus will be on how to make swimming and picnicking compatible with conservation. The panel will examine whether current rules in place regarding swimming, boating and fishing are sufficient.

Ziomek said that in recent years swimming has expanded from the traditional south beach along State Street to the north beach off Mill Street. And on warm days in the spring and fall, with college students in town, the entire pond can be rimmed with people looking to cool off.

A third lens is safety, as some serious incidents have occurred in the past 40 years, including nine drownings, and people who risk injury by jumping from the cliffs or getting caught in a current that takes them over the dam.

"We feel as though it may take 10 years to get to the point of implementing all the recommendations and reaching those benchmarks," Ziomek said.

One immediate concern is the diminished money available to care for the pond. The town had been appropriating \$12,500 to hire summer staff to work at the pond and do trail maintenance, with a person at Puffer's every day from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. from Memorial Day through Labor Day to deal with crowd control.

Now, care for the pond is dependent on fundraisers, such as the Friends of Puffer's Pond, which brought in \$4,000 through its annual breakfast this year.

This may only be enough money for caretakers to be at the pond on weekends.

Shaffer said the subcommittee should look at ways of maintaining the pond without tax revenue, which might mean implementing user fees. Elements of the plan that is developed could also be eligible for funding through the state's Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs, Ziomek said.

Puffer's Pond 2020 will be chaired by commission member Elisabeth Hamin, a professor in the department of Landscape Architecture and Regional Planning at the University of Massachusetts, and will also have one additional commission member, one Planning Board member, one Select Board member, and seven at-large seats.

Residents interested in serving are encouraged to fill out citizen activity forms online at www.amherstma.gov or at Town Hall.

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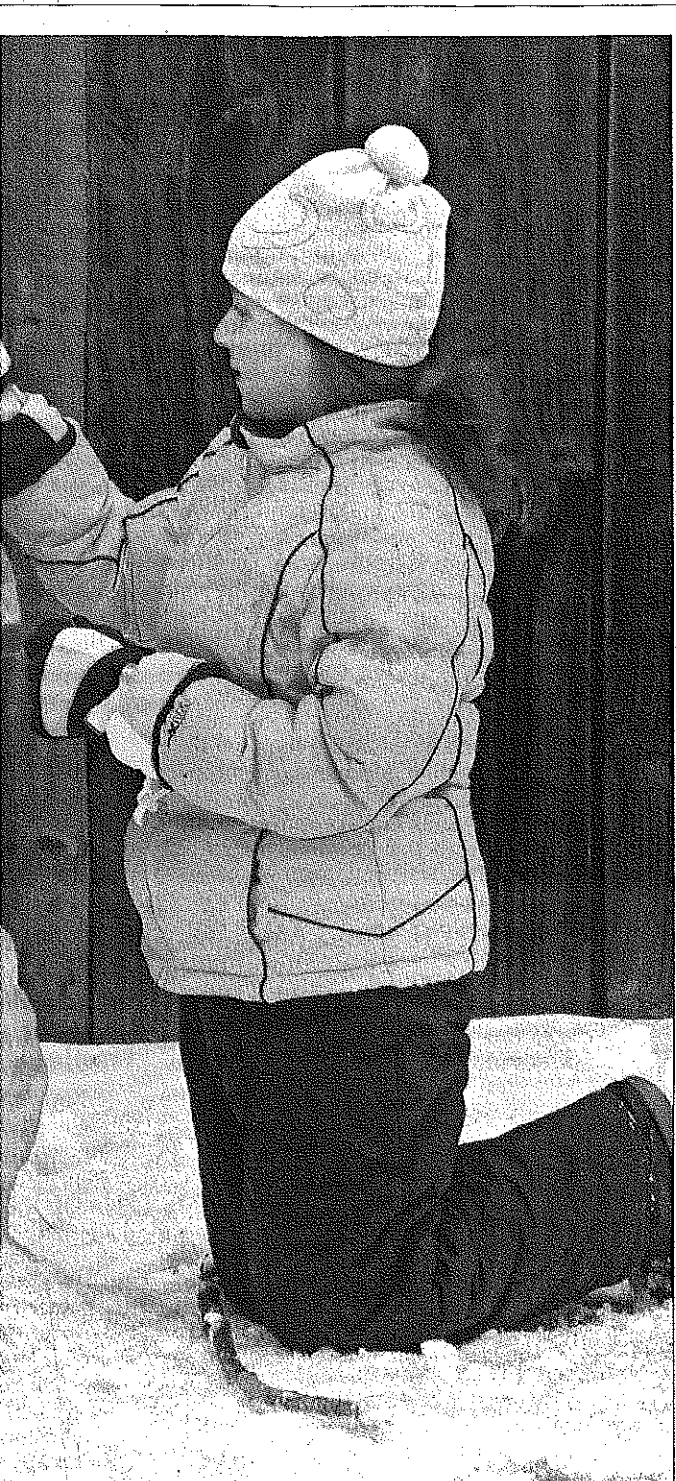
and administrators in the school buildings to have a understanding of educational and a general vision for the system.

need something that holds together," she said. "It's important those elementary schools

finalist for Easthampton school superintendent.

know what's happening in our middle school. Teachers in one building need to talk to teachers in another building."

Needham said that her work back-



GORDON DANIELS

ity
land, makes a snowman last week, using her father's cane
ure look different. During her vacation, Julie got in some
y moved here from New Orleans five years ago. Julie says

n lends a hand in Haiti

activities that make them vibrant because schools are "an economic engine," Needham said.

"If you let our schools go, we'll be in a big mess," she said.

As superintendent in Vermont, Needham said she helped bring a dance program to the school, one of the few

the final two candidates — Elizabeth Zielinski and Nancy Follansbee — on Monday and Tuesday, respectively. The interviews will take place at 5:30 p.m. at 50 Payson Ave. and are open to the public.

Matt Pilon can be reached at mpilon@gazettenet.com.

Puffer's panel suggests changes to shield pond

By SCOTT MERZBACH
Staff Writer

AMHERST — Vehicular traffic patterns that pass Puffer's Pond on State Street might be altered to better protect the community resource and enhance accessibility for those who regularly use the body of water for swimming, hiking and fishing.

Changes to the street are among the most significant of a series of draft recommendations from the Puffer's Pond 2020 Committee, whose members made a presentation to the Select Board Monday on a report it expects to finish by the end of April.

"I think we have consensus on our committee that State Street has to be different, but it affects everything else," said committee member Meg Gage.

The ideas surrounding the street changes range from closing it entirely to vehicular traffic between Sand Hill Road and the railroad underpass, making it a one-way street from Sand Hill Road to Bridge Street, adding bicycle and pedestrian lanes to the sides of the street, and building parking lots off the street that could accommodate up to 120 vehicles. Each concept depends on whether future efforts will be to promote mostly conservation, foster mostly recreation or maintain the status quo.

Puffer's Pond 2020 was established in July 2009 with a charge to "consider options for the use, restoration, beautification and preservation of Puffer's Pond and surrounding conservation lands, including the Mill River/Cushman Brook Greenway ... and to make recommendations to the Conservation Commission."

Whatever final management and improvement plan is recommended by the committee would be implemented by the Conservation Commission.

Select Board member Diana Stein said she would support changing conditions on State Street, because the



KATHLEEN DUNCAN

Rain Tuesday causes water over Puffer's Pond dam to move fast along the river in Amherst.

road was meant to be rural and is not built to handle the heavy load of traffic driving and parking on the street, especially during the summer.

How State Street is changed will likely affect other recommendations, including those designed to protect water quality and improve surrounding trails, and where the commission decides to place its emphasis.

Gage said her committee wants to have a unified plan with a proactive conceptual approach. "We see our mission as balancing things that all have interests at the pond," Gage said.

Striking a balance

For instance, the committee is looking at striking a balance between swim-

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Stop & Shop, union extend contract talks

By OWEN BOSS
Staff Writer

Stop & Shop and the union representing some 45,000 store employees

Meanwhile, Stop & Shop spokeswoman Faith Weiner said all 240 stores would remain open this week.

"All parties have agreed to an ex-

church, with visi-
to 5 p.m. Burial
Massachusetts
Memorial Cemetery

Springfield Cur-
funeral Home is
of arrangements.
may be made to
of Cooley Dick-
al, P.O. Box 329,
MA 01061.

Funeral homes

He was a
of Immaculate
Church and an ac-
member of AA.

His loving wife, Pa-
en-Irons, Walter
by two stepsons,
son of Greensboro,
Michael Menton of
; one stepdaugh-
Menton-O'Brien
rida; one brother,
ns; two sisters,
k of South Caro-
prence Keefe of
five grandchild-
r, Alexander, Mia,
very. He was pre-
a stepdaughter,
on, last year; and
Kenneth, Walter,
Donald, earlier.

Liturgy of Chris-
or Walter will be
day, Feb. 27, at 10
Immaculate Con-
ch, 33 Adams St.,

be private and
calling hours.
Funeral Home, 18
Northampton, has
with providing
are and services.
request, in lieu
onations can be
Salvation Army,
Northampton, MA

Northampton native



family are invited
celebration of Joe's
Bluebonnet Diner
m, in Northampton,
Feb. 27, at

Tom, who passed away in 2008.
She leaves her children Lance
Corbett of Leeds, Luke Corbett

Ignac Mackos, 96, WWII veteran, carpenter

EASTHAMPTON — Ignac "Iggy"
Mackos, 96, of Glendale St., passed
away on Feb. 21, 2010 at the Calvin
Coolidge Nursing and
Rehabilitation Center
in Northampton.

Born in Easthamp-
ton on Nov. 19, 1913,
he was the son of the late Mary
(Kopcienska) Mackos. Iggy was a
lifelong resident of Easthamp-
ton and a World War II Army veteran.

Puffer's

Continued from B1

mers and hikers, between the
current relaxed atmosphere
with no admission charges and
the implementation of possible
rules and fees to make the pond
more sustainable, and between
the preservation of the pond's
surroundings and maintaining
its appeal as a popular swim-
ming hole.

Committee member Emlen
Jones said the one point of uni-
versal agreement is that park-
ing needs to be formalized for
safety and to better control use
of the resource.

Depending on how they are
implemented, the draft recom-
mendations could make access
to Puffer's Pond easier or more
difficult and will determine how
much the current uses are al-
tered.

David Ziomek, director of
conservation and development,
said the balance of the recom-
mendations is demonstrated by
the committee's asking whether
the pond should be dredged,
helping it to stay open for swim-
mers, or not dredged, in which

He retired as a carpenter for his
brother from the former Thad-
deus Mackos Construction Co. in
Easthamp-
ton.

He leaves his brother, Thad-
deus Mackos of Easthamp-
ton; his sister, Clara Blakesley of East-
hamp-
ton; and several nieces and
nephews. Services will be at the
convenience of the family. The
Boucher-O'Brien Funeral Home
is handling his arrangements.

case the pond would naturally
fill in with sediment over time.

The pond was last dredged
in 1986 at a cost of \$250,000 to
\$300,000, Ziomek said. Town
Meeting has set aside just
\$15,000 to begin this work.

But Ziomek said with the
report nearing completion,
the town could begin submit-
ting applications for grant
funding, possibly in June, to
enact some of the ideas, such
as dredging.

The committee found in its re-
search that the Puffer's Pond's
water quality remains high, but
surrounding trails and beaches
are suffering from erosion and
compaction. The Lester Trail
from Mill River is in bad shape
and a trail surrounding the pond
is sloughing into it.

These illustrate a major con-
cern of the committee, which
noted the pond is getting too
much use from the community
and at the same time too little
funding for management pur-
poses.

Stein said she appreciated the
work the 11 committee mem-
bers have put into the study.

DISTRICT COURTS

In Northampton District Court
Wednesday before Judge Rich-
ard J. Carey:

ARCHAMBAULT, Erica L., 21,
491 Bridge Road, Florence, was
placed on pretrial probation for
one year on a charge of assault
and battery; ordered to abide by a
restraining order.

SOUZA, Kaitlyn L., 20, Holy-
oke, submitted to facts sufficient
for a guilty finding on a charge of
leaving the scene of a motor ve-
hicle accident with property da-
mage; continued without a finding
for three months, ordered to com-
plete a driving safety program.

In Eastern Hampshire District
Court Thursday before Judge W.
Michael Goggins:

EGERTON, Rodney, 48, Spring-
field, had dismissed at request of the
victim a charge of assault and bat-
tery.

Drive, South Hadley, had decrimi-
nized charges of trespassing and
using a motor vehicle without the
owner's authority, fined \$250.

VASSALLO, Paul, 53, 18 Green
Meadow Lane, Granby, placed on
pretrial probation for six months on
a charge of assault and battery; or-
dered to no longer abuse the victim.

TOEPLITZ, Ilana R., 22, Rich-
mond, submitted to facts sufficient
for a guilty finding on a charge of
negligent operation of a motor ve-
hicle; continued without a finding
for one year, ordered to complete
a driving safety course and 100
hours of community service.

POWERS, Derek, 24, Leices-
ter, submitted to facts sufficient
for a guilty finding on three counts
of shoplifting by concealing mer-
chandise; continued without a
finding for six months, ordered to
complete a Stoplift program and

ing emails to an Amherst resi-
dent in incidents first reported
in December and again Monday
at 5:17 p.m., police said.

A 22-year-old Amherst man
will be summoned to court on
charges of domestic assault and
battery and assault and battery
on a pregnant woman after he
struck a woman in the face at a
South Amherst home in an in-
cident reported Friday at 12:50
p.m., police said. The woman
didn't need medical attention,
police said.

Belchertown

Robert E. Kane, 55, of 31
Church St., Huntington, was
arrested Saturday about 10:45
p.m., on the charges of driving
while under the influence of al-
cohol and failing to stay within
marked travel lanes after he
was stopped on Daniel Shays
Highway for erratic driving.

Pierre A. Khiri, 21, of 191
Slater Ave., Springfield, was
arrested Friday about 10 a.m.,
on the charges of possession of a
class D substance with intent
to distribute and driving while
his license was suspended af-
ter he was stopped following a
random computer query of his
license plate showed his license
was suspended and four bags
of marijuana and a digital scale
were found in his car.

Easthamp- ton

Ethan M. Hill, 19, of 15
Zabek Drive was arrested Sun-
day at 12:59 p.m. on Plain Street
on the charge of being a person
under 21 in possession of al-
cohol, according to police, who say
Hill was in possession of vodka.

A Division Street resident
reported Saturday at 12:22 p.m.
that someone had broken into
her vehicle overnight and taken
two debit cards, according to
police.

James Briant, 47, of 47 Holy-
oke St. was arrested Saturday at
1:59 a.m. on Holyoke Street on
the charge of assault and bat-
tery, according to police.

Hadley

Karl A. Campbell, 26, of 20
Triangle St., Amherst, was ar-
rested on Route 9 Sunday at
10:46 p.m. on a charge of operat-
ing a motor vehicle under the in-
fluence of alcohol, police said.

Carlton R. Barry, 18, of 445
Michael Sears Road, Belcher-
town, was arrested on Bay Road
Sunday at 4:26 p.m. on charges of
speeding and failure to stop for
police, police said.

William Besse, 46, of 476
Northampton St., Holyoke, was
arrested on Route 9 Sunday at
1:35 p.m. on two warrants, police
said.

Dmitri A. Powers, 19, of

Two vehicles parked outside
Planet Fitness on Route 9 were
reported broken into Saturday
at 9:52 p.m. and 10:33 p.m., police
said. In both cases, a window
was reported smashed; a pocket-
book was missing from the first
vehicle and a GPS unit from the
second, police said.

Christopher A. Foley, 21, of
Westborough was arrested on
Route 9 Saturday at 12:35 a.m.
on a charge of operating a motor
vehicle while under the influence
of alcohol, police said.

George Baxter Milam IV,
35, of 86 Mount Warner Road
was arrested Friday at 3:26 p.m.
on a warrant and on charges of
defrauding an innkeeper of more
than \$100 and larceny over \$250,
police said.

Northampton

Conrad Eddie Kruzal, 36, of
Springfield, was arrested Mon-
day at 7:36 p.m. at Haymarket
Cafe Bookstore on Main Street
on an active warrant out of
Holyoke District Court for pos-
sessing an unidentified class A
substance and trespassing, po-
lice said.

Jonathan Anthony Lau-
rence, 49, of 43 Center St.,
Northampton, was arrested
Monday at 8:30 p.m. in Cooley
Dickinson Hospital and charged
with assault and battery on a po-
lice officer. Laurence reportedly
attacked paramedics and hospi-
tal staff while being evaluated
and when police were called to
calm him down he reportedly
struck an officer in the chest
with a closed fist, police said.

A woman reported about
3:55 p.m. Sunday that someone
had stolen her purse after she
left it accidentally at Kentucky
Fried Chicken and Taco Bell,
225 King St., about two hours
earlier. Police are investigating.

Kyle Von Schmidt, 27, of
Greenfield, was arrested Satur-
day at 3:58 p.m. on Hampton Av-
enue on charges of operating a
motor vehicle with a suspended
license, operating a motor ve-
hicle with no registration in pos-
session and failure to notify the
Registry of Motor Vehicles of an
address change, police said.

Police took a report Satur-
day at 2:18 p.m. that a vehicle
parked at the Hotel Northamp-
ton, 36 King St., had a window
smashed and around \$500 worth
of items were stolen.

Jessica Marie Morris, 23, of
491 Bridge Road, Unit 414, Flo-
rence, was arrested Saturday
at 2:02 a.m. at Meadowbrook
Apartments on a charge of do-
mestic assault and battery after
she allegedly kned a man in the
groin, punched him in the
chest and slapped him across
the face, police said. The man
didn't require medical attention,
according to police.