

- public notices -

THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION – HIGHWAY DIVISION
NOTICE OF A VIRTUAL DESIGN PUBLIC HEARING
Sturbridge-Charlton-East Brookfield Intersection
Improvements on Route 49 at Putnam Road, Walker Pond Road & Route 20
Project File No. 611967

A Virtual Design Public Hearing will be hosted on the MassDOT website below to present the design for the proposed project in Sturbridge and Charlton, MA.

WHEN: 7:00 pm, Wednesday, August 12, 2026

PURPOSE: The purpose of this hearing is to provide the public with the opportunity to become fully acquainted with the proposed project. All views and comments submitted in response to the hearing will be reviewed and considered to the maximum extent possible.

PROPOSAL: The proposed project was initiated as part of the Intersection Improvement Program due to the presence of a Top 200 Statewide Crash Location at Route 49 and Putnam Road. Two other crash clusters were identified (although not in the Top 200 Crash Locations) along the cor-

ridor and have been included for safety improvements. Location #1 - Putnam Road at Route 49, Location 2- Walker Pond Road, and Location 3 - Route 20. The targeted safety improvements include construction of a roundabout at Putnam Road, improved sight lines at Walker Pond Road, and slip ramp modifications at Route 20. Bicycle improvements will be included at Location 1 to provide a Shared-Use Path circulating the proposed roundabout, meeting MassDOT Healthy Transportation Policy Directive and applicable design guidelines.

A secure right-of-way is necessary for this project. Acquisitions in fee and permanent or temporary easements may be required. The Commonwealth of Massachusetts is responsible for acquiring all needed rights in private or public lands. MassDOT's policy concerning land acquisitions will be presented at the hearing.

Project inquiries, written statements, and other exhibits regarding the proposed undertaking may be submitted to Carrie E. Lavallee, P.E., Chief Engineer, via e-mail to MassDOTProjectManagement@dot.state.ma.us or via US Mail to Suite 7550, 10 Park Plaza, Boston, MA 02116, Attention: Project Management, Project File No. 611967. Statements and exhibits intended for inclusion in the hearing transcript

must be emailed or postmarked no later than ten (10) business days (14 calendar days) after the hearing is hosted.

This hearing is accessible to people with disabilities. MassDOT provides reasonable accommodations and/or language assistance free of charge upon request (e.g interpreters in American Sign Language and languages other than English, live captioning, videos, assistive listening devices and alternate material formats), as available. For accommodation or language assistance, please contact MassDOT's Chief Diversity and Civil Rights Officer by phone (857-368-8580), TTD/TTY at (857) 266-0603, fax (857) 368-0602, or by email (MassDOT.CivilRights@dot.state.ma.us). Requests should be made as soon as possible, and prior to the hearing, and for more difficult to arrange services, including sign-language, CART, or language translation or interpretation, requests should be made at least ten business days before the hearing.

This hearing will be hosted, or a cancellation announcement posted, on the internet at https://www.mass.gov/orgs/highway-division/events.

JONATHAN GULLIVER
HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATOR
CARRIE E. LAVALLEE, P.E.
CHIEF ENGINEER
07/31, 08/07/2026

- community -

UMass professor gives lecture on ticks

By Zacharias Fragkiadakis
Staff Writer
zachf@turley.com

BARRE – The Tewksbury Public Library hosted Dr. Stephen Rich, a professor of microbiology at the University of Massachusetts Amherst to give a presentation about ticks and tick borne diseases.

The presentation was held on Zoom, and offered to many libraries in the state, including the Woods Memorial Library.

Lyme disease

The presentation started with Rich talking about Lyme disease, one of the diseases associated with ticks.

Rich said it was discovered in 1975, because young people were experiencing juvenile arthritis. He said doctors looked into it, and found that the arthritis was being caused by a bacterium that is spread through ticks.

According to Rich, Lyme disease became a reportable disease to the Centers for Disease Control in 1991, and cases in North America have increased since then.

Rich said that as of 2026, Lyme disease is the most common vector borne disease in the continent. He said New England is a common place to find them because of our large population of white-tailed deer, which he said can have thousands of ticks at a time on them.

Rich said historically, Lyme disease was not thought of as something that could affect humans, but more of an agricultural problem. He said people often thought of it as just infecting cows and chickens.

He said a lot of the thought around vector diseases has been around mosquitoes, since they carry malaria, yellow fever and Dengue fever.

He said there are differences in the biology of tick borne and mosquito borne diseases, as tick borne diseases are infections of wildlife that spill over into humans, and cannot be prevented by a vaccine.

Tick life cycle

Rich said the life cycle of a black-legged tick is two years, and it has different stages including egg, larval, nymphal and adult.

He said in each stage of the tick's life other than the egg, they only take one blood meal.

He said if people can prevent ticks from getting onto them, they can help prevent the life cycle of that one tick from completing.

He said a female tick can lay up to 5,000 eggs at a time. Rich said Lyme disease spread is most common in the nymphal stage because it feeds for a long time, and gives more time for anything in the tick to enter into the blood.

Tick behavior

Rich said ticks do not jump, fly or fall from the air, rather they quest. He said questing is crawling to the edge of a surface such as a branch or leaf, and if something comes close enough to it, crawling on it.

He said there are various ticks that live their whole life on one animal.

Lyme vaccine

Rich said there is not currently a vaccine for Lyme disease available to the public, although one is being worked on. He said even if we did have a successful Lyme vaccine, it would just target that one bacterium that causes it, and not target the many other diseases ticks can cause.

He said people should not go backwards in protecting themselves if there is a vaccine for Lyme.

Other diseases from ticks

He said other than Lyme disease, there are diseases called ehrlichiosis and anaplasmosis. He said about 10%+ of black-legged ticks test positive for anaplasmosis, and it is widely known by doctors in the northeast, but not many other places.

Babesiosis is another disease that is spread by ticks, which Rich said is a parasite that infects red blood cells, and does not respond to antibiotics like other tick borne diseases. He said the treatment for this is anti-malarials.

Powassan is a virus spread by ticks, Rich said, which is similar to West Nile virus spread by mosquitoes, and can cause encephalitis. He said most cases of it are in the northeast, and the majority of people who get it do not end up in the severe circumstance of encephalitis.

He said alpha-gal syn-

drome is another disease that can be spread by ticks, and is most commonly known for people infected developing an allergy to red meat. He said it is spread by the lone-star tick, and was discovered in the mid 2000s.

He said there is no test to determine presence in the body, but it is a clinical diagnosis. He said about 450,000 Americans may be affected, but only a small percent of them have the full effects of the disease.

Prevention of disease

Rich said there is not much that can be done to eradicate ticks on a grand scale, and the efforts are individual and localized. He said to prevent disease, it's best to understand the risks of ticks and practice mitigation strategies.

Rich said any tick borne disease starts with a tick bite, and not every tick is affected by a disease. He said the risk of disease increases with feeding time.

Rich said ticks are most active in the spring months and around Halloween, with some peaks in activity in the summer. He said they are not very active in January or February.

He said right now, we are getting close to the time of year where there is a decrease in adult ticks and an increase in nymphal ticks.

Some mitigation strategies Rich presented include wearing light colored clothing, tucking pants into socks, and checking for ticks after being outdoors. He said there are some repellants that have DEET and picaridin, which are safe to use and effective.

He said for topical use of these, they have to be replaced every few hours.

Rich said people can also treat their clothes with acaricide or permethrin, which are toxic to ticks but have low toxicity for humans. He said there are yard barriers, but they have to be replaced and can unintentionally harm pollinators. Rich said natural products may not be safe or effective.

About Dr. Rich

Other than being a professor at UMass, Rich owns a company called MedZu Inc., which provides services to tickreport.com, which is a website that gives risk assessments about ticks.

Smola supports economic development legislation

BOSTON – State Rep. Todd M. Smola (R-Warren, Ranking Member, Ways & Means Committee) recently supported comprehensive economic development legislation aimed at expanding housing opportunities, streamlining local permitting, strengthening key industries, and encouraging private-sector investment across the Commonwealth.

The House of Representatives gave preliminary approval to House Bill 5562 on July 8 by a vote of 148-2 following debate on nearly 700 funding and policy amendments. The legislation is a revised version of an economic development proposal originally filed by Governor Maura Healey.

Smola noted that one of the most significant changes made by the House was the removal of the governor's proposed GlobalMass initiative. This proposal would have required the Pension Reserves Investment Management Board to dedicate \$50 million in pension assets to a new investment fund intended to attract global business investment to Massachusetts.

"I supported this legislation because it makes targeted investments that can strengthen our economy, encourage housing development, and help communities grow while also removing a proposal that would have placed public employee pension funds at unnecessary risk," said Smola. "Economic development should be driven by responsible investments that protect taxpayers and public employees while creating opportunities for businesses and residents across Massachusetts."

Smola also expressed

concern with a provision allowing multifamily housing to be constructed on land owned by religious institutions for at least three years. He noted that if these developments are ultimately deemed tax exempt, then municipalities could face increased demands on local services such as schools, public safety, and infrastructure, without receiving the corresponding property tax revenue needed to support those costs.

The House Ways and Means version of the bill authorizes \$425.1 million in spending, including \$305 million in capital authorizations for economic development initiatives, \$120 million in housing related grant programs, and \$100,000 for local economic development grants.

The bill's major investments are: \$25 million for capital grants to help private businesses construct or expand commercial, industrial, and manufacturing facilities; \$75 million to support the development and application of artificial intelligence technologies in industries including life sciences, health care, advanced manufacturing, and climate tech; \$20 million for capital grants supporting facilities that attract early-stage and high-growth businesses; \$100 million for capital investments and public infrastructure that promote economic growth and job creation within the defense sector; \$10 million to support food science, agriculture, food innovation, and agricultural technology; \$25 million in competitive grants for robotics research, development, commercialization, and workforce

training; \$25 million in competitive grants to strengthen downtowns, main streets, commercial corridors, and other walkable mixed-use districts; and \$25 million in capital grants supporting arts, culture, and the creative economy.

The legislation also provides \$50 million in grants and technical assistance to help municipalities convert commercial properties into residential housing. Another \$20 million is dedicated to the Veterans Supported Housing Initiative, while \$50 million is provided to support housing development on former state-owned properties requiring asbestos, lead, or hazardous material remediation.

To improve the local permitting process, House Bill 5562 establishes uniform statewide standards for municipal site plan review and creates a no-cost training program for members of local planning boards, zoning boards of appeal and special permit granting authorities.

Additional policy provisions adopted during House debate include allowing municipalities to establish housing tax increment financing agreements, strengthening fair housing training requirements for real estate professionals, creating a permanent working group to address double utility poles, and directing the Department of Public Utilities to establish a process by July 31, allowing a single qualified contractor to remove all double-pole attachments during one site visit.

House Bill 5562, as amended, now advances to the Senate for further consideration.

Quaboag Current

OBITUARY POLICY

Turley Publications offers two types of obituaries.

One is a free, brief **Death Notice** listing the name of deceased, date of death and funeral date and place.

The other is a **Paid Obituary**, costing \$275, which allows families to publish extended death notice information of their own choice (with a word limit of up to 500 words) and may include a photograph. **Death Notices & Paid Obituaries** should be submitted through a funeral home to: obits@turley.com.

Exceptions will be made only when the family provides a death certificate and must be pre-paid.

PUBLIC NOTICES ARE NOW ONLINE

- 1 Email all notices to notices@turley.com
- 2 Access archives and digital tear sheets by newspaper title.
- 3 Find a quick link to the state of Massachusetts' public notice web site to search all notices in Massachusetts newspapers.

Public notice deadlines are Friday at 3 p.m.

visit www.publicnotices.turley.com

Troop 163 hosts ice cream social/open house

STURBRIDGE – Do you like camping, hiking, swimming, biking, fishing, kayaking, whitewater rafting, sailing, exploring with friends and more? You might like being a Scout.

Come to an ice cream social and open house held by Troop 163, an all-girl

troop of Scouting America, on Sunday, Aug. 30 from 4-6 p.m. at Bethlehem Lutheran Church, 345 Main St.

Learn about lassoing and how to use a sling shot and other activities. Families are welcome.

Stop by, have fun, and

learn about Scouting and the troop.

The troop is open to girls aged 11-17, and while based in Sturbridge, is open to residents of any town. Please email troop-163sturbridge@gmail.com with any questions.

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