Town of Simsbury

933 HOPMEADOW STREET, SIMSBURY, CONNECTICUT 06070

Lisa L. Heavner - First Selectman

First Selectman's Report – October 24, 2016

Public Information Brochure – Proposed Revised Town Charter

On November 8th, residents will have the opportunity to vote on proposed Simsbury Town Charter Changes which include: changing the form of government to Town Manager, changes to provisions governing the Economic Development Commission, the elimination of the Human Relations Commission, the expansion of membership to the Open Space Committee, changes to the Town budget and appropriations process, and incorporating gender neutral language into the Charter. To see the sample questions and an information brochure prepared by Town Counsel, please visit: http://www.simsbury-ct.gov/sites/simsburyct/files/uploads/160912_docs-1356784-v1-explanatory_text_simsbury_charter_revision_tfc_adopted.pdf

Simsbury Receives Main Street Investment Fund Grant of $460,760 for "Streetscape" Improvements

The Town of Simsbury has received a Main Street Investment Fund grant from the Connecticut Department of Housing in the amount of $460,760 for improvements in the town center including the installation of paver sidewalks, ornamental pedestrian lighting and Americans with Disabilities Act-compliant sidewalk ramps. The streetscape project is part of a larger and more comprehensive plan of developing "Complete Streets" which ensure streets are safe for people of all ages and abilities and support the local economy and the natural environment. Thanks to Housing Commissioner Evonne Klein, the Board of Selectmen, Senator Witkos and Representative Hampton for supporting this project, as well as Town staff and Main Street Partnership for their work in preparing and submitting the application.

Simsbury Ranked in the Top 20 Safest Cities in Connecticut

The SafeWise Report has released its 2016 Safest Cities in Connecticut and Simsbury is ranked the 11th safest city in Connecticut, and top in the Farmington Valley. To identify the 20 safest cities in Connecticut, SafeWise reviewed the most recent FBI Crime Report statistics along with population data. Simsbury takes a Community Policing approach to law enforcement and has received national accreditation from CALEA for their excellence.
http://www.safewise.com/blog/safest-cities-connecticut/

Veterans Memorial Project – Dedication Ceremony on November 13th

Please join us to dedicate the Veterans Memorial on Sunday, November 13th at 2:00 p.m. The ceremony is the culmination of a five year effort by local veterans and Terri Hahn of Landscape Architectural Design Associates. The memorial will honor the 98 residents of Simsbury who died while in service to their country since the Revolutionary War.

The project was funded through generous citizen donations, a State STEAP grant and capital funding through the Town. Thanks to our veterans, donors, volunteers, the residents of Simsbury, the Board of Selectmen, the Board of Finance, our State representatives and Town staff who supported our veterans on this project.

Plan Like Your Children Will Live Here - POCD

Wondering what all those red signs with the word "Plan" are about? At Henry James Memorial School on November 3rd at 7:00 p.m., the Planning Commission will kick-off its planning process for Simsbury's common vision for the future of our community and policies that will help us get there. The process, over the next year and a half, will culminate in an updated Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD).

All are welcome to this informative and interactive first meeting. A number of planning exercises will be used to engage the public to help identify the key issues facing Simsbury. At its most basic level, planning is a process for making informed decisions about the future based on what we like about our town, where we want to go, and how to enhance what we already have. Please join us and be part of the conversation!!

Congratulations to Simsbury Bike Challenge Riders - #1 in the U.S.!

Congratulations to all of our Simsbury Bike Challenge riders. Our Advocacy Challenge finished *#1 in the U.S.* with 137 riders logging 105,900 miles. *Wow!*
http://media.wix.com/ugd/ddd34f_02e1874ea26a46588a4f9d12a33672c8.pdf

Conservation Commission – *Seeing Red*

Part of the Conservation Commission's responsibility is to preserve the natural resources of the Town. One issue facing Simsbury and the entire state is the increasing number of invasive plants that overtake native plants. Now is the time of year we admire those beautiful red burning bushes that bring so much visual pleasure to our home landscapes. But did you know they are actually invasive plants that are wreaking havoc in our woods – *sadly true!*

After feasting on the berries of this invasive, non-native bush, birds deposit these berries in their droppings in local woodlands. There, burning bushes create dense thickets that dominate the landscape, replacing native plants. The Conservation Commission recommends residents consider removing these plants from yards and replacing them with native shrubs such as High bush blueberry (*Vaccinium corymbosum*) or Red chokeberry (*Aronia arbutifolia*). Our woods will thank you!

To learn more about the impact some of our non-native garden plants are having on our wild areas, check out the article "Invasive Species and Connecticut's Forests: An introduction to their impact — potential and realized" at the following link:
http://www.ctwoodlands.org/sites/default/files/woodlands_2009_winter.pdf

Drought Advisory in Effect Statewide

All Connecticut residents and businesses are requested to voluntarily reduce water demand by 10 percent. Reductions in lawn watering are encouraged as the best way to meet conservation goals. Check out these tips to conserve water from the Farmington Valley Health District: http://www.fvhd.org/

Farmington River, Riverbank Stabilization Project

The Town of Simsbury has begun work to stabilize the bank of the Farmington River in the area of Mathers Crossing and Riverview Court. This project is designed to prevent further erosion of the bank and protect the 30 inch sanitary sewer that runs adjacent to the river. Black and Warner Construction Co. from Unionville, CT has been engaged to complete the work which began the week of October 17, 2016.

In order to access the project area, construction vehicles will be required to cross the Greenway (*Farmington River Heritage Trail*) in the area of the Weatogue commuter lot and behind Mitchell Auto Group. Signs will be posted to alert trail users.

Please contact the Water Pollution Control office at 860-658-3258 if you have any questions of concerns during the project.

Household Hazardous Waste Collection

The Town of Simsbury, in conjunction with the towns of Avon, Canton, Granby and Farmington, will be holding a Household Hazardous Waste Collection on November 5th from 8:00 a.m. until 1:00 p.m. at the Simsbury Public Works Facility, 66 Town Forest Road, Simsbury, CT**.** For information, please visit the Public Works webpage or click on the link: http://www.simsbury-ct.gov/home/news/household-hazardous-waste-collection-is-june-18-in-simsbury

Election Day November 8th

Election Day is November 8th! Visit the Town of Simsbury's Registrar of Voters page to find out everything you need to know about registering to vote; changing your name, address or party affiliation; obtaining an absentee ballot; deadlines and polling locations.

Please note that all mail-in and in-person voter registration applications must be **received or post-marked by Tuesday, November 1, 2016 by 8:00 p.m.** in order to be accepted for the November 8, 2016 election. This is also the deadline to register to vote using the On Line Voter Registration System. http://www.simsbury-ct.gov/registrar-of-voters

Election Day Registration Voters: If you are not already registered to vote, you may appear in person at the Registrar of Voters' office on Election Day, register, and cast a vote by Election Day Registration (EDR) ballot.

Please be aware that the Registrars must contact applicants' previous municipalities to confirm that new applicants have not already voted elsewhere before issuing a ballot. Allow sufficient time to cast your ballot by 8:00 p.m.

Revaluation of Real Estate in Simsbury

In accordance with State law and in order to make sure residents are taxed on the fair value of their properties, revaluation of all real estate in Simsbury is now underway. Over the next 18 months each property in town will be reassessed in-line with current market values. You may see town employees and contractors from *Municipal Valuation Services* assisting with this process.

The first phase is a pre-review which includes comparisons between what is actually observed at the property and what is shown on the assessor's card. The next phase beginning in December includes property questionnaires, updating records for work done under building permits, inspection of recently sold properties and valuation. Revaluation notices culminate the process and are expected to be mailed to taxpayers in December 2017. For questions, please contact the Director of Finance Sean Kimball at skimball@simsbury-ct.gov or (860) 658-3244 or the Tax Assessor David Gardner at dgardner@simsbury-ct.gov or (860) 658-3251.

Energy Assistance Available

The Simsbury Social Services Department has been designated as an official intake site for residents wishing to apply for the Connecticut Energy Assistance Program. This program is available to assist households paying for primary heating bills incurred after November 9th. The program also has a "heat included" component for renters. Incomes and asset limits apply. For further information or to schedule an appointment, please call the Social Services Department at (860) 658-3283.

Live Longer, Stronger

Join the Simsbury Aging and Disability Commission for free presentations and discussions led by healthcare experts regarding emerging trends across all healthcare settings. All programs will be held at the Simsbury Public Library, 725 Hopmeadow Street from 6:30 – 8:00 p.m. The last program will be held on November 29th: The Impact of Medication Management on Chronic Diseases.

Trunk or Treat at Simsbury Farms is Back! – October 29th

The 2016 Simsbury Trunk or Treat will be held on Saturday, October 29th, starting at 12:00 p.m. at Simsbury Farms (100 Old Farms Road, Simsbury). Pre-registration for a parking space is required, and can be done on www.simsburyrec.com. Prizes will be awarded to families for the best decorated trunks. We will also have a Monster Mash dance party, an inflatable slide donated by *Bounce About Inflatables*, and so much more! Mark your calendars for this super-fun event! For questions, please contact Simsbury Farms at (860) 658-3836.

Simsbury *Spooktacular* Chili Challenge – October 29th

Save the date for great chili in Simsbury at the Chamber's Simsbury *Spooktacular* Chili Challenge on October 29th from noon to 5:00 p.m. This is a great family event with trick-or-treating, live entertainment, costume contest and something for everyone. Tickets are $10 and admission is free for children aged 10 and under. New this year - a local restaurant competition for the "best darn chili" in the Valley! For more information, visit: simsburychili.com or simsburycoc.org.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

SBA Economic Injury Disaster Loans Available in Connecticut Following Secretary of Agriculture Disaster Declaration for Drought

Federal Economic Injury Disaster Loans are available to small businesses, small agricultural cooperatives, small businesses engaged in aquaculture and private nonprofit organizations located in Connecticut as a result of the drought. Applicants can apply online using the Electronic Loan Application (ELA) via SBA's secure website at https://disasterloan.sba.gov/ela or at disastercustomerservice@sba.gov/disaster.

Wednesday Night is Business Night at the Simsbury Library

The Library is offering programming on a consistent night for business people or those interested in business. Be on the lookout for *Wednesday Night is Business Night!* events this fall. Currently scheduled programs include:

- *How to Use LinkedIn to Grow Your Business*, Wednesday October 26, 2016, 6:00 PM to 8:30 PM

To register for these free programs or to see all the great educational programs offered to assist small businesses in Simsbury, please visit the Library website:
http://www.libraryinsight.com/calendare.asp?jx=sc&xc=1

Open for Business

Congratulations and welcome to Luis Valentin of *Sabor Olive Oil Co. and Art Gallery* and Pinar Ozy of *Happiest Inc.* on the opening of their new businesses in the Simsbury Town Shops across from Town Hall. A ribbon cutting was held on October 6th to welcome these new businesses. Stop by to say hello and check out these wonderful new shops in Simsbury!
Sabor Olive Oil Co. and Art Gallery: http://www.saboroliveoil.com/
Happiest Inc.: www.happiestinc.com

Best Cleaners A ribbon cutting was held on October 11th to welcome *Best Cleaners*, located at 1227 Hopmeadow Street. *Best Cleaners* is committed to environmentally responsible cleaning practices. They also offer on-site tailoring, free home delivery and same day service. Committed in being a great community partner, Best Cleaners donated two bicycles to Simsbury Free Bike – thank you! Stop by to say hello and check out their website at: http://www.bestcleaners.com/

Under Construction in Simsbury

Green Tea Chinese Restaurant, located at 570 Hopmeadow Street is undergoing significant renovations, and will re-open with a new name and a new Asian-fusion style menu. Looking forward to the re-opening mid-November! Their new name will be *Table 570 Asian Fusion*.

Benny's located at 562 Hopmeadow Street is undergoing a new dining room expansion, package store improvements, and parking and landscape improvements. They will remain open during construction. http://bennysofsimsbury.com/

Garden Homes on the south side of town along Hopmeadow Street is now under construction – building foundations have been completed and framing has started. This development was approved for 181 residential rental units, including townhomes and apartment style housing. Commercial and retail units were also approved as part of the Planned Area Development (PAD), but zoning and specific site plan approvals have yet to be sought and therefore only the

residential component is under construction at this time. You can visit Garden Homes' website at http://www.gardenhomes.com/ for more information about the development company.

Highcroft: 272 residential rental units off Powder Forest Drive are also under construction by Landworks Development/Nelson Construction team. The project includes *Highcroft Apartment Homes* with 224 apartment units and *Highcroft Townhomes* with 48 units. Move-ins commenced in July 2016 and construction is expected to conclude on the first 128 unit phase in late spring 2017. You can visit their website at: http://www.lifeinsimsbury.com for information on their sale and rental offerings or http://www.highcroftapartments.com/.

Berkshire Bank: At the Corner of Bushy Hill and Albany Turnpike, Berkshire Bank is waiting on interior fit-out and is not yet open.

Permitted

Big Y has indicated that they have delayed a start date in Simsbury for at least a year and possibly into 2018 based on internal financial priorities and commitments elsewhere, but will begin removal of the buildings on their property. Big Y further indicated that they are still interested in Simsbury and confirmed that they have all their town and state permits in place for when they do begin.

Hoskins Road Workforce Overlay Zone (WHOZ): The Town planning boards have approved 88 residential units for the property with twenty percent affordable housing. Although the project has been approved there is currently no activity.

Chestnut Hills: Located on the corner of Drake Hill and Hopmeadow Street, 46 unit apartments have been approved for the historical building and the surrounding property. This property is currently for sale.

On the Horizon

The Silverman Group: Simsbury's Planning Department has been advised that The Silverman Group continues to press forward on their plans to develop/redevelop the site located at 200 Hopmeadow Street (formerly The Hartford). The property underwent a Charrette planning process and is currently zoned for residential, commercial and retail. The demolition of the original Hartford building is complete. Preliminary plans were presented to the Zoning Commission on September 19th. To see the presentation on SCTV, please visit: http://simsburytv.org/v/CZS6vtqZk0k. **A public hearing is scheduled for November 21st at 7:00 p.m. at a location to be determined.** The purpose of the hearing is to receive comments on the Silverman's application for a master development site plan.

Girard Brothers Corporation: 32 and 36 Iron Horse Blvd. (Simscroft-Echo Farms). Initial concept plans have been presented to Design Review, Planning and Zoning for a multifamily residential community. The Planning presentation can be viewed on SCTV at the following link: http://simsburytv.org/v/4rffJvkGMTA

To receive a copy of the First Selectman's Report by email, please visit the Town website: www.simsbury-ct.gov and click on the "subscribe" button. Sign up for Town News and Announcements.