
FIRST SELECTMAN'S REPORT

TO: Board of Selectmen
FROM: Eric Wellman – First Selectman
DATE: January 28, 2019

Key Dates for Budget Season

- Monday February 25th – Town Manager's budget presentation to the Board of Selectmen
- Saturday March 2nd – Board of Selectmen's budget workshop (BOS reviews each section of the budget in detail with department heads – public is welcome to attend)
- Tuesday March 19th – Board of Selectmen presents its proposed budget to the Board of Finance
- Tuesday April 2nd – Public budget hearing at the library
- Tuesday May 14th – Budget referendum at Henry James Middle School

Christmas Tree Collection

- Allwaste customers can put their trees at the curb on the regular trash day the week of January 28th (this week!)
- Paines has already held its collection

Help with Taxes

AARP Tax-Aide Volunteers are providing free individual income tax filing assistance on Thursdays February 7th through April 11th and Tuesdays March 5th – 26th at the Simsbury Public Library.

Appointments are available from 10am – 3pm. Please book an appointment ahead of time by calling the Simsbury Senior Center at (860) 658-3273. Walk-ins will not be accepted.

The program is open to anyone who needs assistance, regardless of age, income, or town residence. The volunteers will be located in the Library's Program Room #2.

Planning Update

- A text amendment was approved by the Zoning Commission to permit distilleries and breweries in the town center. After the text amendment approval, an application has been filed for a distillery for the Hixon Building (old train station building behind Bank of America). This application is set for a public hearing on February 4th.
- 690 Hopmeadow Street (Ensign Mansion) is proceeding along. 5 apartments are being built in the historic building and the restaurant, Metro Bis will be moving into the Annex on the south side of the property. Metro Bis is on track to open in its new location this Friday (February 1st).
- 200 Hopmeadow Street (former Hartford property): The plan for the property consists of apartments, an assisted living facility, and some commercial development. Work has begun on one of two commercial buildings for the development. The Silverman Group has contacted the town concerning potential certificate of occupancies for 18 units. On the residential side, the Silverman Group will be requesting a certificate of occupancy for the first batch of residential units in early February. The assisted living portion of the development is scheduled to be open in late July/early August.

Martin Luther King Junior Celebration

If you were unable to attend the town's annual Martin Luther King Jr. celebration, you can find a link to the video [here](#). The program will also be shown throughout the month of February on SCTV. UConn

professor Joelle Murchison gave an excellent keynote address titled “Living the Dream in Times of Trouble.”

Bi-Annual Town of Simsbury Shred Event

Saturday April 6th is the Town’s bi-annual shred event. It’s free for residents of Simsbury who are invited to bring up to 3 grocery size bags per household. It will take place 9am – 1pm in front of Town Hall (933 Hopmeadow Street).

Economic Development Commission Seeking New Member

Economic development has been and continues to be a major priority for me and this Board of Selectmen. I believe that sensible economic development can expand our tax base and take some of the pressure off of residential taxpayers. Due to the resignation of a member of the commission, we are seeking one new volunteer interested in serving the town. We are conducting interviews this week and expect to appoint the new member at our February 12th Board of Selectmen meeting.

The new EDC will be focused on 4 areas in particular that were identified by the Board of Selectmen. They include identifying business incentive programs that make sense for our town, developing a roadmap of economic development priorities, refreshing branding materials, and developing a business visitation program. You can read more about the priorities [here](#).

Teens & Vaping

In my time as First Selectman, I have come to learn about the prevalence of vaping among high school and even some middle school students. A study released last month by the [University of Michigan](#) surveyed more than 44-thousand teenagers. It found while many forms of substance abuse are steady or declining, vaping continues to increase. Earlier this month, the Community For Care held an excellent program that you can view [here on SCTV](#).

Cell Phone Service

The need to improve cell service in town came up as one of the Board of Selectmen’s priorities. Verizon is in the process of installing 5 small towers to improve its local service, including one near Maple Tree Café, with the goal of improving service in our central business district. That tower is expected to be operating any day. Similar small cell towers have been installed already across from Simsbury High School and off Winslow Place. I frequently hear from residents who are concerned about the quality of cell coverage. In 2019, I will continue to work on this issue, engaging with other cellular carriers as well.

Simsbury’s 350th Celebration

I am excited about the planning that’s going into Simsbury’s 350th anniversary celebration, which will be comprised of numerous events throughout next year. I want to acknowledge the dozens of volunteers and organizations involved, and all of the people giving their time to plan this anniversary celebration. The 350th Committee gave a presentation to the Board of Selectmen at our January 14th meeting. You can see a tentative schedule of the signature events [here](#) (page 14). They include an antique show, a river day, a country fair, and many, many more! I also wanted to point you to a recent show on SCTV that gives a look into the planning going into next year’s celebration. You can find that [here](#).

Board of Selectman Priorities

At our last meeting in November, the Board of Selectmen unanimously adopted its priorities for the coming year. The priorities include infrastructure improvements such as connecting Tariffville to Simsbury with a bike path, and improved cell phone service, especially in our downtown. Other goals center around financial management, improving transparency and identifying opportunities for the Town to work more closely with the Board of Education on shared services. Other goals speak to quality of life, including improving transportation options for seniors. You can find the full list of goals [here](#).

Simsbury Trail News

I'd like to offer my thanks and congratulations to all who were involved in our Bicycle Friendly Community application. We got word from League of American Bicyclists that Simsbury will maintain its Silver status for another 4 years! Across Connecticut there are 9 Bike Friendly Communities and only Simsbury and New Haven have achieved silver status. Out of the state's 11 Bike Friendly Businesses, 3 are here in Simsbury. This application fills a three ring binder. I am so appreciative to Bike-Pedestrian Advisory Committee, the volunteers, and town staff who worked cooperatively to make this possible. It's a testament to the work that's been put in to encourage cycling, improve infrastructure, and improve cycling safety in our community.

See Simsbury.bike for a regional listing of upcoming events, rides, and meetings.

Stay Connected

You can sign up for email updates from the town so you always know what's happening in our community. On the homepage of the Town website, click "[subscribe to news.](#)" and you'll be able to specify exactly what kind of news you want to receive.

Opportunities to Serve Your Town

There are more than a dozen boards and commissions that serve our town whose members are appointed by the Board of Selectmen. We're always looking for volunteers willing to serve and I'm pleased to share that the Town has made the process easier and more transparent. You can learn more about all of our boards and commissions, current vacancies, and how to apply [here](#).

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

TO: Board of Selectmen
FROM: Maria E. Capriola – Town Manager
DATE: January 28, 2019

BOARD OF SELECTMEN BUSINESS:

Communications:

- As a reminder, the Board of Finance continues to work on developing a *capital budgeting policy*. The most recent draft of the policy is attached. The Board will be discussing the draft policy at their February 19th meeting. If Board of Selectmen members have comments or feedback on the draft policy, please send them to me and we will include that in the upcoming Board of Finance packet materials.
- If Board members have a desire in adopting the resolution that would allow the town to establish the *Tax Deferment Program for Federal Shutdown Affected Employees*, you may take action on this at your meeting this evening. You could simply adopt the resolution under the Communications section of the agenda, or move the item to the Selectmen Action section of the agenda.

DEPARTMENTAL NEWS & NOTES:

Culture, Parks and Recreation:

- Summer job applications for camp, lifeguarding and maintenance positions will be accepted February 1-March 31. Applications must be completed online, and can be found at www.simsbury-ct.gov/jobs
- New programs are being added all the time, including Paddle Tennis, Acting Workshops, Wellness Seminars & even a magic program. Please visit www.simsburyrec.com to see everything that is currently available.

Farmington Valley Health District: FVHD recently launched a new online monthly newsletter called Health Matters. This newsletter features information on timely public health issues, highlights the work of the health district, and alerts the public to trainings and others resources that may be available. To subscribe, visit <http://www.fvhd.org/>, click Contact Us, and enter “Newsletter” in the comment box.

Planning and Development: Congratulations are in order for Robin Newton. Robin was recently promoted to the position of Assistant Town Planner. In her new capacity, Robin will serve as our lead wetlands agent. Robin has 16 years of experience in the land use profession. She holds numerous certifications such as a certified zoning enforcement official, certified wetlands agent, and a certified aquifer protection municipal agent. She is currently the president of CAZEO, the CT professional association for zoning enforcement officers. A recruitment is currently underway to fill the Code Compliance Officer position previously held by Robin.

Police: Patrick J. (PJ) Gronski was sworn in as a Simsbury police officer on December 27, 2018 and began the police academy on December 31, 2018. PJ has his Firefighter Level 1 and Level 2 certifications. He has held an EMT-B certification and a private pilot license with a helicopter certification. For the last three years, PJ stayed at home as the primary caregiver for his two young children. Prior to that, he worked as a manager at The Bicycle Cellar for over 4 years where he became very familiar with Simsbury. He was responsible for the day to day operations, customer service and community outreach. He was a member of the Simsbury Bicycle Pedestrian Advisory Committee from 2012 – 2015 and a member of the Bike Sculpture Committee. PJ has been a volunteer coach for youth hockey and soccer in town.

PJ was selected to be the newest member of the police department for many reasons. His first responder training, customer service experience, communication skills, lively personality and commitment to community are some of the reasons. We are excited to have PJ join us and we look forward to his service to this community.

Public Works:

- I would like to commend Matt Kolakoski for going above and beyond during the recent winter storm on January 20th. During the storm a medical call for service occurred on Homestead Road in West Simsbury. Matt proceeded to clear the driveway and shovel the walkway so medical responders could access the home and the patient. I would also like to extend my appreciation for the hard work that all of our public works employees do during winter storm events to make sure Simsbury is safe.
- Congratulations are in order for Rich Gubetta who is retiring from the Town after 34 years of dedicated service at the end of this month. Rich is currently an equipment operator with the Department of Public Works. Rich has been a loyal employee and is an all-around great person. We wish him all the best in his retirement.

Town Manager's Office: Eversource will be conducting aerial inspections on their transmission and distribution lines to inspect the lines for damage from the recent storm. These flights will be done January 25th through the 30th from 8AM to 4PM, weather permitting.

Simsbury Volunteer Ambulance Association: Karin Stewart has been appointed to the position of Executive Director and Chief of Service of Simsbury Volunteer Ambulance Association (SVAA). She will assume the role on April 1, 2019. This will correspond with Mike Delehanty's retirement after 24 years as head of the association. Karin joined SVAA in 2003 as an EMT and served in various roles as a volunteer. In 2009 she became a paramedic and gained significant experience with American Medical Response and returned in 2011 as a per diem paramedic with SVAA. Karin joined SVAA as a career paramedic in 2012 and has overseen several strategic initiatives for the organization including the HeartSafe Project and Mass Casualty and Active Shooter drills. In 2017 she was appointed Chief Administrative Paramedic for SVAA. Recently Karin was appointed as the Town's representative to the North Central EMS Council's steering committee. I wish her all the best in her new role and this next chapter of her career. Congratulations Karin!

SPECIAL EVENTS & PROGRAMS:

Community and Social Services: The Department of Community and Social Services is collaborating with the Alzheimer's Association to provide two programs. First, they are hosting the program ***10 Signs and Symptoms of Alzheimer's*** on Tuesday, March 26th in the Library, Program Room 2. There will be a light supper at 5:30 and the presentation will start at 6:30. They are also hosting a three week series on ***Living with Alzheimer's***. This is geared towards those caregivers who have a loved one in the middle stages of Alzheimer's. The dates for this series are: April 11th, 18th and 25th and will be held in the Old Court Room at Eno Memorial Hall from 10:00-11:30am. Both programs are free and open to the public. Please rsvp at 800-272-3900 or communityresourcefinder.org.

Library: I encourage residents to attend the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving (HFPG) Listening Tour event Tuesday, February 12th, at 5:30 pm at the Simsbury Public Library. The Hartford Foundation for Public Giving wants to hear from residents what makes Simsbury great, challenges facing our community and how the Town and Hartford Foundation may work together to make Simsbury an even greater place to live. Join Hartford Foundation President Jay Williams in this important community conversation. A new initiative of HFPG is the Greater Together Community Fund. \$100,000 has been set aside for each community in the HFPG area, \$50,000 to be used in the near future with the remaining \$50,000 held in perpetuity as an endowment for future projects. The towns will appoint a Community Advisory Group which will determine projects on which to allocate the \$50,000.