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## FIRST SELECTMAN'S REPORT

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**TO:** Board of Selectmen  
**FROM:** Eric Wellman – First Selectman  
**DATE:** October 14, 2020

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### **Encouraging Low-Risk Halloween Activities**

Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the Town is discouraging residents from participating in traditional Halloween activities this year, including door-to-door trick-or-treating. This recommendation comes as a result of guidance received from the Farmington Valley Health District (FVHD), the Connecticut Department of Public Health (DPH), and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). As the father of an 8-year-old daughter, I understand how disappointing it is for families not to be celebrating Halloween in the traditional way.

Instead, residents are encouraged to focus on lower risk celebrations that maintain social distancing and follow face covering rules, such as virtual celebrations, drive-through events, or events held outdoors. In Simsbury, a Spooktacular Drive-Thru Celebration will be hosted by the Simsbury Chamber of Commerce, Culture, Parks, & Recreation Department, Simsbury Meadows Performing Arts Center, and the 350<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Committee. The event will be held on Sunday, October 18; pre-registration is required.

### **2020 General Election**

There are two ways to vote in the upcoming general election; in person on November 3, or by absentee ballot. Because of the Covid 19 pandemic, anyone can vote absentee this year. The Secretary of State's office has mailed absentee ballot *applications* to all registered voters. The applications can be returned in a pre-paid envelope or dropped off at Town Hall in the official election drop box. Ballots are being mailed from Town Hall when applications are submitted.

The deadline to register for the November 3 election is October 27, 2020. There is a seven-day registration blackout period before the election. If you miss the October 27 deadline, you may register and vote by personally appearing at your town's designated Election Day Voter Registration station. (Simsbury Public Library). Proof of identity and residence is required.

You can find many answers to your questions about the upcoming election on the [Registrar of Voters page](#) on the Town website. From that page you can confirm you're registered to vote, confirm your polling location, download and print an absentee ballot application, and more.

- For questions related to absentee voting, you can call our town clerk: 860-658-3243
- For any other election-related questions, you can call our one of our registrars:
  - Karen Cortes 860-658-3267
  - Susan Salina 860-658-3269

### **Updates from the Planning Department**

- Construction on Big Y is progressing, and the store is scheduled for a soft opening the last week of October.
- At their last meeting, the Zoning Commission approved the application for an electric car dealership on a vacant parcel just west of the Hoffman dealership.
- The Zoning Commission also approved a remodel of the Andy's Plaza, along with a small addition. According to the property owner, work is anticipated to be completed next spring. A rendering can be found on the [Design Review Board's webpage](#).

- A preliminary plan was shared with the Design Review Board for the re-development of the Simscroft Echo Farms property off Iron Horse Boulevard. The plans call for the construction of a multi-family housing development consistent with the Center Code and Charrette. Copies of the preliminary plans along with supporting documentation are available on the [Design Review Board's page](#).
- The Planning Commission will be scheduling a public work shop concerning the development of an affordable housing plan for Simsbury pursuant to CGS 8-30j for 10/27 at 7:00pm. Details will be posted with the Commission agenda on how anyone interested can participate in the virtual workshop.
- The Historic District Commission is planning to hold a public work shop on November 12<sup>th</sup> at 7:00pm. The intent of the workshop is discuss updating the district's handbook. Anyone interested is encouraged to attend. Information will be provided with the meeting's agenda on how to participate.

### **Simsbury SPIRIT Council**

The Simsbury Diversity and Inclusion Working Group, The Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities, the Simsbury SPIRIT Council, Simsbury Public Library and Block Bias bring you a participatory webinar. Meet with these grassroots, municipal, and state organizations to discuss current civil rights law regarding housing and education, how zoning affects these laws, and how that impacts socioeconomic diversity in our community. The event is free and pre-registration is required through the [Library's website](#). The forum starts at 6pm on October 21<sup>st</sup>.

### **Thank you to the Simsbury Chamber of Commerce**

I wanted to send a huge thank you to the Simsbury Chamber of Commerce and all of the individuals and businesses who donated to the Simsbury Art Trail. The Art Trail wrapped up the first week of October and featured 36 life-size statues throughout the community. The feedback on the Art Trail was just spectacular and it provided a much-needed escape during this difficult year.

### **Meadowood Conservation Purchase**

I wanted to provide an update on the potential acquisition of a nearly 300-acre parcel known as Meadowood. In September, [the Board of Finance](#) heard a presentation from the Trust for Public Land, a nonprofit organization that the Town has engaged to assist with the purchase. To learn more about the history of the property and the potential acquisition, you can [view a presentation](#) on the Town website that's posted on the Open Space Committee's page.

The proposal calls for the preservation of more than 100-acres of farm land, nearly 140-acres that would contain recreational trails, the construction of athletic fields on a 24-acre parcel, and the preservation of historic barns and a Martin Luther King interpretive display. The Trust for Public Land continues to work to secure grant funding of approximately \$4 million. The Town's share would be approximately \$2.2 million. The project would ultimately need to be approved by the voters at referendum, which would most likely occur in 2021.

### **350<sup>th</sup> Anniversary History Walk**

The History Walk: 350 Years of Simsbury in 350 Steps, will remain in place through the end of October. Located along the Greenway next to the Performing Arts Center, the History Walk tells the story of Simsbury with pictures, dates, and fun facts. The installation is a collaboration with the Simsbury Historical Society, The Simsbury Free Library, and the Simsbury Meadows Performing Arts Center. Thank you to Big Y Foods, Liberty Bank, Mitchell Auto Group, and Elkinson + Sloves, who conceived and designed the history walk.

Because of Covid, the 350<sup>th</sup> Committee has had to reschedule and reimagine many of the planned celebrations. You can find the latest at [Simsbury350.com](http://Simsbury350.com). There is also an online store where you can purchase 350 merchandise including a copper plated commemorative medallion that features Simsbury's most iconic landmarks.

### **How to Watch Town Meetings**

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, most town meetings continue to occur virtually, including the Board of Selectmen. All public meetings can be watched live on [SCTV](#) and are also archived at [SimsburyTV.org](http://SimsburyTV.org). Meetings can also be viewed on xfinity channels 96 and 1090 and Frontier channel 6071.

There are now two ways the public can participate in Board of Selectmen meetings. You can speak in public audience by joining the Zoom meeting. Please pre-register by sending an email to Tom Fitzgerald [tfitzgerald@Simsbury-ct.gov](mailto:tfitzgerald@Simsbury-ct.gov). You can continue to email your comments and they will be read out loud. Please send an email to Ericka Butler [ebutler@simsbury-ct.gov](mailto:ebutler@simsbury-ct.gov). I look forward to returning to in-person meetings as soon as it is safe and feasible to do so.

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## TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

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**TO:** Board of Selectmen  
**FROM:** Maria E. Capriola – Town Manager  
**DATE:** October 14, 2020

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### **CORONAVIRUS UPDATE**

Town Hall began welcoming back in-person visitors on Monday, October 5<sup>th</sup>. During this next phase of re-opening, in-person visits to Town Hall can be conducted from 8:30AM to 12:00 PM on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays with the first hour of the day reserved for seniors from 8:30AM-9:30AM. The vault in the Town Clerk's Office will not be available for walk-in visitors until further notice. Absentee ballot applications and ballots may be dropped off at the secure ballot box at Town Hall, 933 Hopmeadow Street, Simsbury.

The Library also welcomed back in-person visitors on a limited basis on Tuesday, October 6<sup>th</sup>. The Library is open for in-person visits on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 10am-4pm, with the first hour reserved for seniors from 10:00AM-11:00AM. They are also welcoming in-person visitors on Saturdays from 9:30AM-1:30PM with no specific senior hours. Patrons may browse and check-out materials during their visit. One hour of computer use per person, per day and one hour of workspace use in the Business & Career Center per person, per day is permitted. During all other times the building will remain closed to walk-in visitors; services are available through [curbside pickup](#) for those uncomfortable coming into the building and reference librarians are available by phone Monday-Friday, from 10:00 am to 5:00 pm to answer questions

For more detailed information regarding Town Hall and the Library receiving in-person visitors, please use this link: <https://www.simsbury-ct.gov/home/news/town-hall-library-to-welcome-back-in-person-visitors-on-a-limited-basis-beginning-the-week> We also continue to regularly update our website and social media accounts with information regarding the travel advisory: <https://www.simsbury-ct.gov/home/news/updated-guidelines-for-in-person-appointments-travel-advisory-for-patrons-residents-and>

Town employees continue to report to duty at all locations, and are still available to schedule in-person appointments during normal business hours for services that cannot be completed by phone, mail, email, or virtually, please see a list of our [online services](#) for items and services that you can use from home.

To provide the greatest level of protection to the health and safety of our patrons, Eno Memorial Hall/Senior Center will remain closed for walk-ins until further notice. However, the Department continues to provide services such as our food program, and has gradually re-opened a variety of medical services for seniors. Public health is our predominant priority. Staff continues to reevaluate reopening plans in connection with the latest public health data and guidance from the Farmington Valley Health District and the State of Connecticut.

As a reminder, the Board of Selectmen has extended the temporary suspension of cash payments through January 1, 2021 to help reduce the risk of spreading COVID. Payments can be made by check, debit card, or credit card. Checks may be mailed to the Town at 933 Hopmeadow Street, Simsbury, CT 06070 or left at our secure drop box at Town Hall.

The Transfer Station, playgrounds, basketball courts, tennis courts, skate park, golf course, parks, open space parcels and trails remain open. Social distancing is still strongly encouraged at these locations.

Meetings of town agencies will continue to be held virtually until further notice. Meetings are held utilizing Zoom and are broadcast on SCTV's television channels and SCTV's You Tube channel. Agenda items that are being discussed at a meeting will be posted online for the public to view.

We have received many inquiries from residents asking how they can help our fellow community members in need. Our Social Services Department is accepting donations of non-perishable food items, toiletries, laundry and dish detergent, baby items (wipes, diapers, baby food), kid friendly snacks, gift cards to grocery stores, gas stations, and laundromats, and financial donations for residents in need. For information on how to donate, please follow this link: <https://www.facebook.com/simscommunityandsocial/photos/a.732997960244104/1365939280283299/?type=3&theater>.

Our Social Services staff is helping to coordinate local efforts to both make and distribute sewn face masks to staff and members of our community. If you are a Simsbury resident or business, please don't hesitate to contact Social Services at 860-658-3283 if you need a free face covering.

Our Simsbury Main Street Partnership, Simsbury Chamber of Commerce, and our Business Resource Librarian Andrew Sherman have been doing a phenomenal job supporting our business community during this difficult time. For information regarding local businesses that remain open please visit [www.shopsimsbury.com](http://www.shopsimsbury.com). Our Economic Development Commission has conducted outreach with many stakeholders to determine what, if any, unmet needs our community is experiencing during the pandemic.

## **DEPARTMENT NEWS & NOTES**

**Library:** Congresswoman Jahana Hayes has nominated the Simsbury Public Library for the 2021 National Medal for Museum and Library Service. Library staff is working on the nomination form. This annual award is presented by the Institute of Museum and Library Services to institutions that demonstrate extraordinary and innovative approaches to community service. Since 1994, this award is the nation's highest honor for institutions that make significant and exceptional contributions to their communities. We expect them to announce winners in spring 2021.

**Public Works:** There will be a Household Hazardous Waste Collection on Saturday October 17<sup>th</sup>. The Collection will be held at the Simsbury Public Works Facility located at 66 Town Forest Road, West Simsbury from 8:00 AM to 1:00 PM. Information about the event can be found online on the Public Works page of the Town Website, by clicking [Here](#) or by calling Public Works at (860) 658-3222.

### ***Social Services:***

- **2020 Holiday Program:** Simsbury Community and Social Services is now enrolling families in the 2020 Holiday Program. Due to COVID-19, we will not be accepting donations of physical gifts this year. We will be offering gift cards to our participants. If you would like to adopt a family or be a recipient, please contact Community and Social Services at 860-658-3283.
- **Open Medicare Enrollment:** Open Medicare enrollment is Oct. 15, 2020 – Dec. 7, 2020. Medicare recipients are able to change their Medical Healthcare Plans for the year 2021 without penalty. Social Services' staff Carolyn Krystiniak is a certified Choices Counselor. She is available to give confidential assistance to whoever needs it. Please call 860-658-3283 with questions or to schedule a telephone or Zoom appointment. Our Senior Center will be presenting a Medicare Sign-up presentation via Zoom on Thursday-10/06/2020 at 1:00 pm. To register please call (860-658-3273) or email: [kmarschall@simsbury-ct.gov](mailto:kmarschall@simsbury-ct.gov)

- **Renters' Rebate:** If you have not already applied for Renters' Rebate it is not too late! You may qualify for an extension. Please contact Social Services at 860-658-3283 with questions or to receive the necessary paperwork to apply for the extension. Renters' Rebate checks are scheduled to be mailed on October 23<sup>rd</sup>. The Office of Policy Management's budget is insufficient to fully fund all of the received applications. All payments will be reduced by 8% this year.
- **Energy Assistance:** The Simsbury Social Services Department is accepting applications for the Energy Assistance 2020-2021 Heating Program. Due to COVID-19, applications this year will be completed by phone and mail. Please call Social Services at 860-658-3283 to set up an electronic appointment. Please see this [flyer](#) posted to social media for more detailed information.
- **Flu Clinics:** The Simsbury Senior Center and the Farmington Valley Visiting Nurse Association will hold a Flu Clinic on Tuesday, October 20, from 9:30 to 11:30 a.m. at Eno Memorial Hall, located at 754 Hopmeadow Street in Simsbury. Regular and High Dose vaccines will be given. Prescreening is required before your appointment, and you must wear a mask.

For an appointment, call the Farmington Valley VNA at 860-651-3539. Then visit [www.farmingtonvalleyvna.org](http://www.farmingtonvalleyvna.org) to print off the Consent Form. Complete the form and bring it, your medical insurance card, and driver's license or non-driver photo ID to the Clinic. Consent Forms will also be available to pick up at Eno Memorial Hall. For more information or questions, contact the Senior Center at 860-658-3273.

- **Blood Pressure Clinics:** The Farmington Valley Visiting Nurse Association will perform blood pressure and blood sugar screenings, each Wednesday from 11:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. in the back parking lot of Eno Memorial Hall, at 754 Hopmeadow Street in Simsbury. Appointments are not required. For those that are unable to attend the screenings, nurses will be available to contact residents via phone for wellness checks to assess the need for a home visit. For more information, contact the Simsbury Senior Center at 860-658-3273.

## **SPECIAL EVENTS**

***Culture, Parks and Recreation:*** The Simsbury Chamber of Commerce, Simsbury Performing Arts Center and the Culture, Parks and Recreation Department invite residents to join them for a Halloween Spooktacular to take place on Iron Horse Boulevard and at the Simsbury Performing Arts Center on Sunday, October 18. The event features a drive through Trick or Trunk with participating local businesses, and also live entertainment and food truck dining options. Pre-registration is required and is currently taking place at [www.SimsburyRec.com](http://www.SimsburyRec.com) Due to COVID-19 there is limited capacity for this event so don't wait to sign up!

***2020 Shop Local Campaign:*** The Simsbury Main Street Partnership and the Chamber of Commerce are joining forces for Black Friday/Small Business Saturday 2020, on November 27<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup>. This is an important effort to keep local dollars in Simsbury and highlight our amazing business community. There is no cost to a business to participate and the only caveat is that any participating business must have a physical store location in Simsbury.

Businesses can participate in two ways: by selling gift cards/certificates and/or participating in the Passport to Fun. The Simsbury Main Street Partnership and the Chamber of Commerce will create a town-wide mailer that gets mailed to every household/business address in Simsbury with the participating businesses and design, print and distribute posters/passports/stickers and market the campaign on social media. If you are an interested business, please email the Simsbury Main Street Partnership at [simmaint@sbcglobal.net](mailto:simmaint@sbcglobal.net) for more information. Businesses should contact them prior to October 20<sup>th</sup>.