
FIRST SELECTMAN'S REPORT

TO: Board of Selectmen
FROM: Eric Wellman – First Selectman
DATE: October 16, 2019

New Development

- Big Y is proposing to build a 52,000 square foot store on the north side of Simsbury. This is a project that has been on the table for a number of years. Big Y had previously gathered all of the approvals it needed to build, but has not moved forward until now. The company is in the process of coordinating with the Connecticut Department of Transportation for the excavation permit process and reviewing the plans with town staff. [Here is a link](#) to a Courant article about the development.
- 200 Hopmeadow Street (former Hartford property): The project includes 282 rental units (about half have been permitted so far), a 120 bed assisted living facility, and 11 thousand square feet of commercial space. All of the development is on the north side of the property. The south side, where the former Hartford building was located, has no development at this time. The assisted living facility has recently received a certificate of occupancy. Construction is proceeding on 124 out of the 282 rental units.

Ribbon Cutting

The Simsbury Main Street Partnership is hosting a ribbon cutting for Rhenium Salon and Spa to celebrate their grand opening Tuesday, October 22 starting at 5pm. Rhenium is located in the Ensign House at 690 Hopmeadow Street.

Local Elections, November 5

I wanted to remind our residents that on November 5, the Town will be holding local elections. The polls will be open from 6am to 8pm. Election information including polling locations can be found on the Town Website on the [Registrar of Voters page](#).

School Facilities Master Plan

Our school district is in the process of completing a [facilities study](#). Some of the goals of the project include developing a 10 year capital improvement and maintenance plan for each of our school buildings, evaluating energy saving opportunities, developing demographic projections for the district, and developing a long-range master plan.

- The next meeting of the Facilities and Enrollment Task Force is October 30th at 6pm in Town Hall. The public is welcome to attend, but no public comment will be taken.
- There is a public forum scheduled November 20th.

Rainbow Art Project

On October 11th the Town hosted a community event for the painting of a permanent rainbow walkway on the Greenway near the Performing Arts Center. In celebration of Simsbury's LGBTQ+ community, the walkway replaces the nearby crosswalk that was recently converted back to white stripes. The public art project consists of 6-foot tall letters on the Greenway that spell the word "Simsbury" in rainbow colors. There are also six lamppost banners designed by a local artist that hang above the trail. The banners were paid for by the Board of Selectmen and on September 30, the Board unanimously endorsed the concept.

I am always open to ideas about how we can celebrate the wide range of groups that make up the fabric of our community. If you would like to share any specific ideas, please reach out to me or any member of the Board.

Wildlife Management

State Senator Kevin Witkos is hosting a forum on coyotes at the Simsbury Public Library October 23, from 7 – 8:30pm. He'll be joined by a staff member from the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection and Mark Rudewicz, Simsbury's animal control officer.

I frequently hear from residents who are concerned about the growing interactions between animals and humans in our community. The Board of Selectmen has asked the Public Safety Subcommittee to work on an ordinance that would address the intentional feeding of certain kinds of wildlife. We are currently looking at draft ordinances from other towns and will be taking public input as part of the process. I'll provide an update in this space as this work progresses.

For more context on this issue, here's a link to a [recent article](#) on the topic from the Hartford Courant.

Tobacco Valley Solar

Construction is scheduled to wrap up around the end of October on the Tobacco Valley Solar development on the north side of town off of Hoskins and County Roads. Anyone with concerns can always reach out to me or to Aaron Svedlow, the project's Director of Development (aaron@nleservices.com).

At our August 12th Board of Selectmen meeting, Tobacco Valley Solar delivered an update on the project and its progress. You can find a link to that presentation [here](#).

I am frequently asked whether the Town benefits in any way from the project. When the solar installation is complete, Tobacco Valley Solar will be one of the biggest taxpayers in Simsbury. Estimated tax revenue is expected to be more than \$1 million per year for the first few years and will decrease over time as the solar panels depreciate. Over the life of the project, the tax revenue is estimated at more than \$500 thousand per year.

If you're interested in learning more about the project, we have aggregated additional information on the [First Selectman's Page](#) of the Town website.

Chili Fest

The 2019 [Spooktacular Chili Challenge](#) is scheduled for October 20th at the Simsbury Meadows Performing Arts Center.

Belden Forest Dedication

Belden Forest in Simsbury is the first forest in Connecticut to be included in the Old Growth Forest Network. On Friday October 25th there will be a dedication ceremony starting at noon near Boy Scout Hall followed by a walk in Belden. Everyone is welcome.

On Thursday October 24th, the documentary "The Lost Forests of New England" will be featured at the Simsbury Public Library. This 2018 film features stunning footage of rare Old Growth Forests in New England. Filmmaker Ray Asselin will introduce the film and join a post-film discussion.

Sensory Friendly Halloween

The Town is holding a sensory friendly Halloween event on October 28 from 4:30 – 6:30pm at Eno Hall. There will be trick-or-treating and crafts. Costumes are welcome. Thanks to the Aging and Disability Commission, Simsbury Social Services, and the Simsbury Public Library for co-sponsoring this event.

Caring for our Veterans

Community for Care is organizing a discussion focused on supporting our veterans, in partnership with the nonprofit Resilience Grows Here. It will take place on November 6, at 6:30pm at the Simsbury Public Library.

Opportunities to Serve Your Town

There are numerous boards and commissions that serve our town whose members are appointed by the Board of Selectmen. Here is a list of current vacancies:

- Aging and Disability Commission
- Community for Care
- Clean Energy Task Force
- Culture Parks and Rec (per charter this position needs to be filled by a registered Republican)
- Design Review Board
- Historic District Commission
- Recycling Committee
- Tourism Committee

If you're interested in applying for any of these opportunities, you can submit a [volunteer form](#) online. If you have any questions about what these committees do or the appointment process, you can always reach out to me directly at ewellman@simsbury-ct.gov.

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

TO: Board of Selectmen
FROM: Maria E. Capriola – Town Manager
DATE: October 16, 2019

BOARD OF SELECTMEN BUSINESS:

Zoning Commission & Short-Term Rentals: The Zoning Commission is respectfully requesting that the Board of Selectmen consider regulating the use of short-term rentals through an ordinance. If a work group is formed, the Zoning Commission would like to have a member appointed to the work group. We did not receive this information in time for your packet but I will include this as an item for consideration for your 10/28 meeting.

Request to Utilize Town Hall Parking Lot: We have received a request from Representative John Hampton's Office to use the Town Hall Parking lot this Saturday from 10am to noon for a food drive for the Simsbury Food Closet. Similar to the Clean-Up Day event, I would suggest that the Board of Selectmen add this item to your agenda if you are supportive of the event. The following suggested motion would be in order if the Board is supportive:

Move, effective October 16, 2019 to grant permission to State Representative John Hampton to use the Simsbury Town Hall Parking Lot (933 Hopmeadow Street) for a food drive on October 19, 2019.

DEPARTMENTAL NEWS & NOTES:

Culture, Parks and Recreation: On October 24th and 25th events will be held in conjunction with Belden Forest being designated as an Old Growth Forest. A reception will be held on Thursday, October 24, 2019 at 6:00pm at the Simsbury Public Library, followed by a film screening of *The Lost Forests of New England* at 6:30pm. Click [here](#) to register for this event.

The Old-Growth Forest Network designation ceremony will take place on Friday, October 25, 2019 at 12:00pm at Boy Scout Hall, 695 Hopmeadow Street, Simsbury. Dr. Susan Masino, a neuroscientist and professor of Applied Science at Trinity College and member of the Simsbury Open Space Committee, will be presented with a National Forest Advocate of the Year award from the Old-Growth Forest Network during the induction. Refreshments and a walk through Belden Forest will follow the presentation of the designation.

Fire District: Kevin Kowalski from the Fire District wants everyone to know that WSIM 103.5 is now streaming live on the internet! You can get the link to the live streams on their web site, or by clicking the following link: [Serving Simsbury, CT Since 1944 - Simsbury Volunteer Fire Company - Simsbury Volunteer Fire Company](#)

By live streaming WSIM 103.5 online you will now be able to tune in from anywhere that has an internet connection.

Police: In an effort to address safety and specific concerns from residents regarding large truck activity (safety, volume, noise, etc.), the Department reached out to the Connecticut Department of Motor Vehicles Commercial Vehicle Enforcement Division for support. At this point, they have dedicated two dates to work in Town. The first date was October 1, 2019, at which time 5 uniformed members of the Division worked in Town for several hours, concentrating on Bushy Hill Road, Tariffville Road near Terry's Plain

Road and Hopmeadow Street near Old Canal Way, Weatogue Park and the State D.O.T. facility. They stopped 16 commercial vehicles which resulted in the following:

- 6 level III inspections
- 10 level II inspections
- 1 trailer out of service
- 2 drivers out of service
- 3 citations (1 cellphone) resulting in \$422 in potential fines

We have another enforcement date scheduled for later in the fall.

We have our Community Services Officer (CSO) Jamie Ball working with the Division when they come out. We will look to continue the partnership as frequently as possible.

Public Works: Our Public Works Department is being recognized with the 2019 Distinguished Service Award by the CT Association of Street and Highway Officials. The award will be presented on November 23rd at the Aqua Turf Club in Southington. Congratulations to Tom Roy, Kevin Clemens, and the rest of our talented Highway team and a job well done!

Public Works: We have updated our Leaf Collection webpage to help residents determine when it will occur in their neighborhood this fall. Leaves will be collected from November 18, 2019, through November 29, 2019, weather permitting. Please note that all leaves must be contained in biodegradable paper bags--plastic bags will not be accepted. If you don't already have some, you can find biodegradable paper leaf bags at most hardware stores, grocery stores, and larger retailers.

Residents can also bring bagged leaves to the landfill during normal hours--Wednesdays and Saturdays, 8:00am to 3:00pm -- for free! For more information - <http://simsbury.mapxpress.net/leaf/>

Social Services: During the past two budget seasons funding was approved for our Director of Community and Social Services Kristen Formanek to pursue obtaining her LCSW, or Licensed Clinical Social Worker. This process included working with two licensed clinical social workers for 100 hours of supervised clinical experience. She also took a two day course specific to taking the Advanced Social Work boards. At the end of this summer all qualifications set by the State of CT, Department of Public Health were met, and last week Kristen successfully passed her vigorous board examination. Kristen would like to thank the Board and Town Manager for fully supporting this effort. With Kristen obtaining her LCSW designation, we are able to provide a higher level of direct service to our resident.

Town Manager's Office: The Town has launched an organization-wide Facebook page. We will be sharing information about news, announcements, and events on this Facebook page. You can find the page here: <https://www.facebook.com/TownofSimsbury/>

SPECIAL EVENTS:

Culture, Parks, and Recreation Department: The Simsbury Culture, Parks, and Recreation Department has scheduled a Public Information Meeting for October 29, 2019 at 7 pm in the Tariffville Room of the Simsbury Public Library. Please join us for a presentation of this exciting milestone in the Simsbury Parks and Open Space Master Plan. The consultant team will present initial findings, field observations, and survey results obtained through the planning process. We want your feedback and input!

Social Services: The Town will be hosting our third event in our Sensory Friendly Series, a sensory Friendly Halloween. The event will be held on Monday, October 28th from 4:30-6:30pm at Eno Memorial Hall. We will have trick-or-treating with social stories, arts and crafts, and snacks. All are welcome to join in this fun free event. Costumes are encouraged, but not required. This event is sponsored by

Simsbury Community and Social Services, The Aging and Disability Commission, and The Simsbury Public Library.