
FIRST SELECTMAN'S REPORT

TO: Board of Selectmen
FROM: Wendy Mackstutis – First Selectman
DATE: October 24, 2022

Apologies

I'd like to start out with an apology for 'skipping' my report at our last meeting on 10/12/2022. I know you are all out there anxious to hear from me! ☺ I don't know why, but October has proven to be a very busy month, with meetings, agenda items that require a good amount of research and studying, and thus, the First Selectman's Report fell by the wayside. This report will catch you up to speed on what's been going on.

Bristol Police Department

We were all devastated by the Bristol Police ambush and shooting that killed Lt. Dustin DeMonte, 35, and Sgt. Alex Hamzy, 34 on 10/12/2022. On behalf of our town and the Board of Selectmen, I send sincere condolences to family and friends of the deceased, to our neighbors in Bristol, to our Simsbury PD and to everyone across the state who feels the sadness of this unnecessary shooting. Town Hall was lit up with blue lights and draped in black bunting to honor those who lost their lives – thank you to our Town Manager Maria Capriola, Police Chief Nick Boulter, Director of Public Works Tom Roy and Facilities Supervisor Matt Hopkins for making that happen.

Diwali

Today is Diwali, which is a joyous holiday in India and is celebrated by Hindus worldwide. I'd like to wish all of our Simsbury residents who observe this festival a Happy Diwali, or Deepavali, for those in and from South India. This holiday symbolizes the spiritual victory of light over darkness, good over evil and knowledge over ignorance. Let's hope that these spiritual victories become actual victories given the current state of our country and the world.

Cannabis

I want to apologize to our residents for the change in plans and date of the Zoning Commission meeting cancellation at the last minute. Members of our board had all hoped to be there to listen to our residents share their views on retail cannabis sales in town. This decision was due to a scrivener's error in the legal notice that was posted.

Upcoming events and ways to be heard on all things Cannabis:

Letters and Emails – We are always happy to receive your thoughts and concerns in written format, which are shared with the full board, if you are not comfortable speaking in public. These can be sent at any time.

Public Hearing at the November 2 Zoning Meeting - At this meeting there will be a public hearing, and all are welcome. I hope you will plan to speak at this meeting. The agenda for the 2nd includes the Moratorium extension for the cannabis regulations. This will extend the timeframe needed to complete the zoning regulations by an additional 6 months. The current

moratorium is set to expire on November 8th. The hearing will be held at the Simsbury Public Library, 725 Hopmeadow Street, at 7pm.

Public Audience at the November 14 Board of Selectmen meeting - We always allow residents to express their views before our meeting and allow them to speak for up to 5 minutes.

Public Hearing at the November 21 Zoning Meeting- At this meeting there will be a public hearing, and all are welcome. The agenda for the 21st includes the text amendment for retail sales, including number of outlets and the proposed location(s). The hearing will be held at the Simsbury Public Library, 725 Hopmeadow Street, at 7pm.

Public Hearing at the November 28 Board of Selectmen meeting – An amendment to our agenda at tonight’s meeting (10/24/2022) was voted on and approved, to hold a Public Hearing by the Board of Selectmen to hear our residents’ views on whether to permit or prohibit retail cannabis sales in Simsbury. This will provide another venue for residents to be heard and will be held in conjunction with our regular meeting. It will be held at the Simsbury Public Library, 725 Hopmeadow Street, at 6pm. As always, all are welcome.

Our Board also voted to create a Workgroup at our meeting on 10/12/2022. We will be writing an ordinance to prohibit smoking on public property. This was something we found needed to be worked on alongside the retail sales regulations to alleviate the fear that people will be allowed to smoke cannabis in public. It will be prohibited, as will be smoking and vaping of tobacco products. This is currently a work in progress.

Please use facts if sharing information on the impact of cannabis in a community.

Here is the current information regarding towns in the area that our Town Manager’s office pulled together for us on approval, moratorium, and where it was being handled.

Town	BOS/Council Action - Y/N	Status of Land Use Agency Review	Retail Cannabis Allowed thru Land Use Regs - Y/N
<i>Simsbury</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>In process (Moratorium extension hearing 11/2)</i>	<i>In process</i>
Avon	No	No change to existing regs	No
Bloomfield	No	Complete	Yes
Canton	No	Complete	Yes
East Granby	No	Moratorium thru 11/2022	On Hold - Text Amendment Application Public Hearing 10/11
Granby	No	Moratorium thru 8/2023	On Hold
Farmington	No	Complete	Yes
Suffield	No	Complete	Yes

West Hartford	Yes	Complete	Yes
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Revenue that we will receive...

There will be three (3) taxes on retail sale of cannabis: the state’s usual 6.35 percent sales tax, a **3 percent sales tax dedicated to the city or town where the sale occurs**, and a tax based on THC content that will cost approximately 10 to 15 percent of the sale price. In total, the tax rate is expected to be approximately 20 percent of the retail price of cannabis, in line with the tax rates in Massachusetts.

COVID Relief Non-Profit Program

After tonight’s meeting, if the full Board approves, we will have provided funding to these non-profits as a result of the program created to use ARPA funds for agencies that met the requirements of the program.

Approved 10/12/2022

Farmington Valley Jewish Congregation, For All Ages, Gifts of Love, McLean, Simsbury Community Media, Simsbury Historical Society, Inc, Simsbury Granby Club Ed Dodge Charitable Fund, Inc (Rotary), VNA Valley Care, Ind dba Farmington Valley VNA, Inc

Approval Pending 10/24/2022 Meeting

A Promise to Jordan, Simsbury Main Street Partnership, Simsbury Meadows Performing Arts Center, Simsbury Second Chance Shop for The Villages, Simsbury High School Student Parent Teacher Council

Clifton!

Thank you to our residents for voting to support the ARPA money used in our budget to fund our new police service dog, Clifton. He has arrived back from training with officer Jamie Bell. His first public appearance was at the Senior Center Fashion Show and lunch on Thursday 10/20, where he ‘modeled’ and got rave reviews! He has proven to be a valuable asset from the get-go, as he was able to visit members of the police force in Bristol after the tragedy. We look forward to having him welcomed into our community. Given his size at 20 months, a better name for him might have been Clifford.

ADU

The ADU opt out vote is scheduled for 11/14/2022. We had to wait for a correction to the regulations regarding parking that were voted on at the 10/3/2022 Zoning meeting.

Simsbury Performing Arts Center

The Town is assisting the PAC as they develop a plan for completion of the backstage expansion, that will include bathrooms for town playground and trail users, which we funded last year during our budget cycle. This is a Public-Private partnership that will enhance the ability of the PAC to bring more arts and culture to our downtown area. More to come on this.

Latimer Lane Bids

The bids for the Latimer Lane expansion were due in last week. They will be discussed at the Public Building Meeting on 11/7/2022, and at the Tri-Board Meeting of the Board of Ed, Board of Finance and Board of Selectmen on 11/10/2022.

Year End Financials for 2021/2022

The year-end financials resulted in a Revenue amount over budget of \$1,937,104, and an under-budget expenditure amount of \$1,003,600 for a net increase to fund balance of \$2,940,704.

Election Day

Use your right to vote on Election Day November 8th. Voting will take place at your normal polling location. Absentee Ballot Applications are online and at the Town Clerks office. They can be completed and safely dropped in the Official Ballot Box in front of town hall. Anyone can vote absentee under the same covid reasoning that has been in place since 2020.

<https://www.simsbury-ct.gov/registrar-of-voters/pages/absentee-voting>

Wendy

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

TO: Board of Selectmen
FROM: Maria E. Capriola – Town Manager
DATE: October 24, 2022

CORONAVIRUS UPDATE

We are monitoring the state's municipal COVID alert system and are currently at "red" status for the period ending on October 23rd. This status indicates that we have more than 15 COVID cases per 100,000 residents. We are at 47 COVID cases per 100,000 residents in the last seven days. Over the most recent week, we had a total of 12 cases. We also had a positivity rate of 8.88%, a decrease from the prior period's rate of 11.27%. As a reminder, this data does not include positive test results from at-home test kits.

At this time, there are no counties in Connecticut considered to be "high" according to the CDC Community Levels categorization. In Hartford County, community levels are "medium." The CDC recommends that if you are at high risk for severe illness, talking to your healthcare provider about whether you need to wear a mask and taking other precautions. People may choose to mask at any time. People with symptoms, a positive test, or exposure to someone with COVID-19 should wear a mask. If you are experiencing symptoms, it is important to get tested.

For additional information on why the CDC changed from measuring Community Transmission to Community Levels, please click on this link <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/science/community-levels.html>

The FDA extended the shelf life for iHealth tests for an additional 3 months. For example, if the expiration date printed on your test kit box reads 2022-08, the updated expiration date is 2023-02. Click [here](#) for more info.

The Farmington Valley Health District is now booking COVID-19 vaccine appointments for individuals ages 18 and older. You can schedule online @ fvhd.org/vaccination or by phone at 860-352-2333 (calls received 8 AM to 4 PM Monday through Friday). Bring insurance information and proof of prior vaccination (if applicable) to your appointment, located at 95 River Road Suite A, Canton, CT 06019.

Data from the state ending October 19th reports that 23,055 Simsbury residents have received at least their first dose of the COVID-19 vaccine, or 90.79% of the population, while 84.55% of our residents are now fully vaccinated. Additionally, 57.81% of the population have received an additional booster dose. Further vaccination data for Simsbury by age group:

Age Groups	Received 1st Dose	Fully Vaccinated	Received Booster
0 - 4	31.35%	18.03%	N/A
5 - 11	71.51%	67.88%	16.06%
12 - 17	90.5%	85.57%	48.58%
18 - 24	100%	100%	66.11%
25 - 44	100%	98.21%	64.63%
45 - 64	88.54%	84.76%	66.09%
65+	100%	100%	97.88%

BOARD OF SELECTMEN BUSINESS

Additions to the Agenda:

- **Simsbury Community Media Request** - Simsbury Community Media has requested that the Board of Selectmen send correspondence to PURA to oppose the state's proposal to require regionalization of local community access stations. Communication for PURA Docket No. 22-06-26 are due by November 10, 2022. This item can be added to tonight's meeting agenda under Selectmen Action with a 2/3 vote of the body.
- **Schedule a Public Hearing to Receive Public Comment Regarding Whether the Town of Simsbury Should Permit or Prohibit the Retail Sale of Cannabis within its Town Borders** - Selectmen Peterson has requested discussion on the Board of Selectmen holding a public hearing to gauge the public's interest in whether the retail sale of cannabis should be permitted or prohibited in town. This item can be added to tonight's meeting agenda under Selectmen Action with a 2/3 vote of the body.

DEPARTMENT NEWS & NOTES

Public Works:

- **Retirement of Jimmy Berg** – After 41 years of service Jimmy Berg is retiring at the end of October. Jimmy started with the Town in 1981 as a Truck Driver in the Highway Department and worked his way up to Senior Crew Leader. During his long tenure with the Department he had been responsible for paving, drainage and plowing more snow than he cares to remember. With Simsbury receiving an average of 57 inches of snow per year, Jimmy has plowed just about 200 feet of snow in his career. He is looking forward to spending time at home with his wife. We thank Jimmy for all of his hard work and wish him well in his retirement.
- **2022 CT Creative Solution Award** – Our Simsbury Public Works Department has won a 2022 CT Creative Solution Award from the UCONN T2 Center for their protocols for continuation of essential services during a pandemic. In order to maintain staff safety while addressing the critical snow and ice operational needs of the community, Public Works Director/Town Engineer Tom Roy developed procedures that allowed drivers to quarantine in their plow trucks during snow and ice events, use private camping tents to prevent the spread of COVID during rest breaks, and provided for contingency plans with neighboring municipalities and other first responders to provide support in the event of a COVID outbreak with the Department. This plan was used as a model throughout the region. Earlier this year, the Department was also recognized by the American Public Works Association for this work. Congratulations to Director of Public Works/Town Engineer Tom Roy and all of our Highway staff on this award!
- **Tariffville Trail Construction** – Beginning next week, Shultz Corporation will begin construction work on the long awaited, Tariffville to Bloomfield multi-use path. This \$2.35M construction project funded through the LOTCIP grant program will continue into the early winter months as long as weather cooperates and will pick up again in the spring with an anticipated completion date of late September 2023. Once completed, the trail will provide an important non-motorized transportation link to connect residents of Simsbury and Tariffville with Bloomfield and Hartford.
- **Household Hazardous Waste Event** – On October 15, 2022, the Town of Simsbury hosted a household hazardous waste collection at the Town of Simsbury Public Works Facility. Collections like these provide an opportunity for residents to properly dispose of their hazardous household waste, keeping inappropriate and potentially dangerous items out of our landfills. 773

vehicles came to the event from participating towns, including: Avon, Canton, Farmington, Granby, Simsbury and Suffield. 304 of those vehicles were from Simsbury residents.