
FIRST SELECTMAN'S REPORT

TO: Board of Selectmen
FROM: Eric Wellman – First Selectman
DATE: November 25, 2019

Statement of Support for the Simsbury Police Department

The following statement was unanimously endorsed by the Board of Selectmen at our meeting on November 25, 2019:

Police officers have an incredibly difficult job and the Board of Selectmen has the highest respect for all of the sworn officers and staff in our police department. Through our hiring, training, and performance management process, the Town of Simsbury works to create a professional and motivating environment. We remain committed to supporting a police department that is of the highest quality to serve our residents.

There is a process, afforded by the union contract, that protects all of our officers. That process will take its course and the Board of Selectmen wants to afford the participants every remedy available to them. I ask that the public respect the process.

Chief Nick Boulter has served the Simsbury community for more than 20 years. In that time, he has developed a well-deserved reputation as a hard-working, honest, law-enforcement professional. The Chief has and continues to serve honorably and with the utmost integrity. He has the full support of the Town Manager, The Police Commission, and the Board of Selectmen.

School Facilities Master Plan

Our school district is in the process of completing a facilities study. At a forum on November 20, Tecton Architects presented a summary of its work to date and shared two options that would involve reconfiguring our current school setup. The community learned at the forum that among the reasons behind this project are aging school buildings and a growing school-age population, especially at the elementary level. The 40-minute presentation was followed by public comment, much of which centered on the possible repurposing of Tariffville School. I know that speaking publicly at such a meeting is not an easy thing to do, and I am so appreciative of the people who shared their experiences and perspectives. Following the forum, some of the next steps will include further developing additional school options and organizing a public forum to gather input on those options.

Further reading:

- [The website](#) where information is being stored on the master planning process
- [The presentation](#) shared by Tecton Architects at the November 20 forum
- [The follow-up communication](#) from the Board of Education

This is a process that is being driven by our Board of Education and it will eventually intersect with the Board of Selectmen, which is responsible with approving capital projects. I appreciate the residents who have reached out to me with questions and concerns about the options under consideration. Considering a change of this magnitude is not an easy thing. I have interest in the outcome, not just as your First Selectman, but as the father of a child in one of our elementary schools. Like many of our residents, I am still learning about the options and taking in information. I join our Board of Education in its commitment to a transparent process where timely information is shared and input is appreciated. I trust in the

collective wisdom of this community to arrive at a fiscally responsible plan that is in the best interest of our children.

Short-term Rental Ordinance

At our October 28 meeting, the Board of Selectmen formed a workgroup to develop an ordinance to regulate the market for short-term rentals in Simsbury on sites such as Airbnb. Selectmen Sean Askham and Chris Peterson are representing the Board of Selectmen on the workgroup. There will also be representation from the Economic Development Commission, The Tourism Committee, and the Zoning Commission. The model we are looking at developing would permit short-term rentals in our zoning code (rentals less than 30 days), and we would develop an ordinance that describes how short-term rentals would be regulated. Community input will be an important part of this process. The workgroup has not held its first meeting yet, but I'll be sharing more in this space as this work progresses.

Wildlife Feeding Ordinance

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. The next meeting of the workgroup is scheduled for December 6 at 8am in the Main Meeting Room of Town Hall. The meeting is open to the public. For more context on this issue, [here's a link](#) to a recent article on the topic from the Hartford Courant.

Sensory Friendly Santa

Children with disabilities and their families are invited to attend a free sensory friendly Santa event at Eno Memorial Hall on from 4 – 6pm on Friday December 6. There will be a picture session, crafts, and refreshments. This year's event is sponsored by the Simsbury Aging and Disability Commission, Simsbury Social Services, and the Simsbury Public Library.

Shop Simsbury

The Simsbury Main Street Partnership and the Chamber of Commerce have joined forces once again for the annual Shop Simsbury event on November 29 & 30, 2019. For every \$50 gift card purchased at the many participating Simsbury businesses over those two days, you will get a \$10 bonus. Residents and visitors can also visit participating businesses and collect 8 stickers and enter to win great prizes. Visit <http://www.ShopSimsbury.com> for more details.

Simsbury's 350th Anniversary

In the coming year, Simsbury will be celebrating its 350th anniversary since it was incorporated in 1670. Work is well underway to plan a series of events throughout the year to celebrate this milestone. You can learn more about opportunities to get involved at Simsbury350.com. You can also follow the committee's Facebook page at Facebook.com/Simsbury350.

Sustainable CT Certification

Earlier this year, Simsbury became a member of Sustainable Connecticut, which provides a voluntary certification program for communities across the state. I am excited to share that Simsbury learned that we have received Sustainable CT's Silver certification, the highest award currently offered by the organization. In receiving Silver status, Simsbury is recognized for implementing a broad range of sustainability initiatives. I want to thank the Clean Energy Task Force and the Sustainability Team, which headed up this effort. Also thank you to the Board of Selectmen for their support of this work. Going forward, the Clean Energy Task Force is working on developing an Energy Plan for the Town, and will be soliciting broad community input as part of the process. It will ultimately give the Town a roadmap of projects so we're approaching our Clean Energy work in a strategic manner. Going forward, I'll provide information on how to lend your voice to this process for anyone interested.

Opportunities to Serve the Town

There are numerous opportunities to serve the Town on boards and commissions whose members are appointed by the Board of Selectmen. You can find a list of current vacancies [here](#). You can find more information [here](#) on how to apply for one of those vacancies.

If you have questions about any of these opportunities, I'm happy to speak with any resident. Please reach out to me by email: ewellman@simsbury-ct.gov

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

TO: Board of Selectmen
FROM: Maria E. Capriola – Town Manager
DATE: November 25, 2019

BOARD OF SELECTMEN BUSINESS:

Save-the-Dates: We have a number of items for your calendar as follows:

- Board of Selectmen swearing in ceremony, December 2nd, 6:00pm, Eno Memorial Hall
- Tri-Board budget meeting, December 3rd at 5:45pm, Tariffville Room, Simsbury Public Library

Acknowledgement of Service: This past Wednesday marked Tom Horan's last day as a member of the Zoning Board of Appeals as he did not run for re-election. According to the Town Clerk, Tom has served on the ZBA since 1990 for nearly 30 years! Tom currently serves as the Secretary for the Board. His insight and presence will be missed on the Board. The Town of Simsbury would like to thank Tom for his thirty years of service as a member of the Zoning Board of Appeals.

DEPARTMENTAL NEWS & NOTES:

Assessor: Please join me, Finance Director Amy Meriwether, and Assessor Francine Beland in congratulating Jennifer Russo on her promotion to Assistant Assessor as of November 11, 2019. Jennifer joined the Town of Simsbury in October 2013 working with the Tax Collector and transferred to the Assessor's Office in December 2017 as the Assessor's Aide.

Her interrelationship with the Tax Collector's Office and Assessor's Office is invaluable and key to the successful relation of both departments. She has a Bachelor's degree in Business Finance, is a Certified Connecticut Municipal Tax Collector, and has successfully completed 4 out of 5 courses required towards her certification as a Connecticut Municipal Assessor. Congratulations Jennifer!

Engineering: Hop Brook Landing at the Flower Bridge, the new park area along the Farmington River, is substantially complete and re-opened to the public on Saturday, November 23rd. The Flower Bridge adjacent to the park will also be reopened for public access. There are minor items that remain to complete the project. These minor items will be completed in the spring of 2020 and a ribbon cutting will be held at that time. We appreciate your patience during the completion of the project.

Community and Social Services: Wendy LaMontagne will temporarily be assisting Community and Social Services as a part-time Program Assistant. She will focus on helping us coordinate our holiday programs and services, and provide general office support during our busy season and staffing transition.

Wendy recently retired after 28 years of service as the Parks & Recreation Director for the Town of Suffield, where she managed a comprehensive community recreation program for 14,500 residents. Prior to her municipal experience, Wendy worked as Director of Parks and Recreation for United Technologies, Hamilton Standard's then-new company recreation facility serving 9,000 employees. Wendy holds a Bachelor of Science in Recreation Management from the University of Connecticut, and a Master of Science in Human Resource Management from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute. She is currently active on the Simsbury 350th Committee, along with volunteering each week at our Senior Center, and each year at Simsbury Celebrates.

Community and Social Services: In follow-up to an inquiry at a recent Board of Selectmen meeting, Community and Social Services has prepared the attached informational flyer with ways that residents can donate their time, money, or items to help residents in need. Donations enable us to assist our neighbors

with food, shelter, heat, utilities and other necessary items. Our holiday programs are also underway. Interested residents can contact the department at 860.658.3283.

Police: Kelsey Chamberlain has been appointed to the position of Administrative Secretary II in the Police Department and will begin work in the next few weeks. Kelsey most recently worked as a pension analyst and has over ten years of administrative experience having held positions as an office assistant, payment specialist, legal assistant and accounts processing specialist. Kelsey holds a Bachelor's Degree in Mathematics from Westfield State University. Welcome Kelsey!

Public Works: On Saturday evening, Tom Roy and I attended the CT Association of Street and Highway Officials award ceremony. As you may recall, our Highway Department was recognized with the 2019 Distinguished Service Award. I would again like to extend my congratulations to Tom Roy, Kevin Clemens, and the rest of our talented Highway team and a job well done!

Public Works: Jerome Grant was recently promoted to the position of WPC Operator I. Jerome has been with the Town since March of 2017 in the position of evening custodian. We are excited that Jerome will be transitioning into a new role as he continues to grow and develop within our public works organization.

Public Works: Ray Harris has recently accepted the position of Project Administrator within the Public Works Department. Ray comes to us with a broad background in construction and project management and will be a great addition to our team. Ray graduated Mercyhurst University in Erie Pa, with a BS in Geology. He has most recently worked for the Mattatuck Museum as an Owners Representative and previously worked for Colliers International as a Project Manager and for Independent Materials Testing Lab as a Construction Materials Field Inspection Technician Ray will begin his Simsbury career on December 2nd, welcome Ray!

SPECIAL EVENTS:

Sensory Friendly Santa: The Simsbury Aging and Disability Commission, Community and Social Services Department and Public Library are sponsoring "Sensory Friendly Santa" on Friday, December 6th from 4:00 to 6:00pm at Eno Memorial Hall. There will be activities, refreshments and an opportunity for pictures with Santa. This event is free for all ages. For more information, contact the Community and Social Services Department at 860.658.3273.

Simsbury Celebrates: Simsbury Celebrates will once again be held the Saturday after Thanksgiving (Sat. Nov. 30th) from 5:00-8:30pm in downtown Simsbury. The event features a variety of entertainment and local food options. Highlights of the event include the decorated fire truck parade along Hopmeadow Street and a spectacular fireworks show at Simsbury Meadows. Visit www.SimsburyCelebrates.com for more information.

The following ROAD CLOSING NOTICE will apply to Simsbury Celebrates:

Simsbury Celebrates 2019 is scheduled for Saturday, November 30, 2019. The event necessitates the closing of Hopmeadow Street, Route 10, between Plank Hill Road and Drake Hill Road between the hours of **5:00 PM to 8:00 PM** and traffic will be detoured onto Iron Horse Boulevard. Only local traffic will be allowed to Plank Hill Road. All other traffic will be rerouted onto Iron Horse Boulevard.