
FIRST SELECTMAN'S REPORT

TO: Board of Selectmen
FROM: Wendy Mackstutis – First Selectman
DATE: December 18, 2023

12-18-2023

I hope everyone is safe after the storm that came through last night and into this morning. There were many road closures and power outages, along with school and other activity closings. Our EMS team, which includes Fire, Police, and Public Works are doing their best to make sure things are back to normal as soon as possible. Be careful while driving around town.

State Bond Commission Award

I'd like to start off and acknowledge that the Town of Simsbury was awarded a grant from the State Bonding Commission towards the Performing Arts Center 'Second Act' project. This project will include an enclosed backstage area, with dressing rooms, meeting rooms, and bathrooms, some of which will be available for public use along the trail, by the playground and the playing fields. State Rep Melissa Osborne worked with the town and the PAC on the application and was joined by State Senator Lisa Seminara in the request to bring the money to Simsbury, so it was a true bipartisan effort. Members of town leadership, the PAC Board and elected officials provided input to the application to show the importance of the project to local arts, culture, and economic development. It is a big deal to receive this funding.

Simsbury Public Library

For anyone that saw the recent inappropriate sign display at the library last week, the library sends their regrets and apologies for the display. It was quickly taken down. It referenced political thoughts on the Middle East conflict and included language that was upsetting and harmful to many. They are well aware of the poor decision that was made and will discuss it at the Library Board of Trustees meeting to make sure there is a policy in place, so this doesn't happen again.

Wreaths Across America

Saturday was the annual Wreaths Across America Ceremony and wreath laying. The event was held at Simsbury Cemetery at the top of Plank Hill Rd. All branches of the military were honored, with both elected officials and clergy speaking, along with members of the Abigail Phelps Chapter of the DAR who organizes this event every year. Thank you for inviting me to represent our elected officials and the Town of Simsbury.

Tri-Board Meeting/Bi-Board Meeting

The initial discussions on the fiscal year 2024/2025 budget will be held during the Board of Finance Meeting tomorrow night, Tues, 12-19 at 6:00 PM at the library. The public is welcome to listen to the discussion, either in person, or on Simsbury Community Media. The Tri-Board is made up of the Board of Education, Board of Finance and Board of Selectmen, along with our Town Manager, Finance Director, Budget Director, and members of the Town Leadership team.

Prior to the tri-board meeting, there will be a meeting with the Simsbury Volunteer Ambulance Association, the Board of Finance and Board of Selectmen to discuss the status and needs of the SVAA. That is also at the library but is at 5:00 PM.

Both meetings will be in the Friends of the Library Program Room.

Rt 189/Mountain Ave Intersection concerns

Thank you to all who have reached out to voice your concerns with the changes that have occurred on the bottom of Elm Street where the new bike path crossing has been implemented.

The town is aware of the concerns and are working with the State of CT (these are state roads) to determine what improvements or changes can be made.

CRCOG – ECG – Town of Simsbury Multi-use Trail

Here is the study that was presented to the BOS and is the proposed path for the next phase of the ECG, from Tariffville to Hopmeadow Street in Simsbury. There is an option to provide feedback, so please read and share your thoughts, as this has been a priority of the BOS.

<https://crocog.org/town-of-simsbury-capitol-region-ecg/>

Decorum Rules for Public Audience

At our organizational meeting, the BOS voted on new Rules and Procedures. These now specifically include decorum standards for those addressing the board during public audience.

We want to hear from all of you, but in a manner that is respectful to all – staff, residents, businesses, elected officials and other volunteers. Thank you in advance for adhering to these standards. The new rules have been updated in our town code. <https://ecode360.com/SI1160/laws/LF1933397.pdf>

§A162-4. Decorum & Standards of Conduct. The Board supports the right of a resident to criticize their local government. The Board strongly urges that all comments addressed to the Board be made appropriately and responsibly, with civility and discretion. This section is not intended to deprive any person their right to freedom of expression or speech, but only to maintain, a safe, productive, and harassment-free workplace and environment for Town staff and visitors. All meeting participants should address the Board, maintain a civil tone, and should not impugn the motive, character, or integrity of any individual. The Board reserves the right to curtail any speaker addressing the Board in a manner that is not consistent with this Section.

250th Anniversary of our Country

With the 250th Anniversary of the Boston Tea Party this past weekend, many across the country are gearing up for 2026, when we will be celebrating our anniversary. Local organizations, including the Simsbury Historical Society and the Abigail Phelps Chapter of the DAR are anxious to get moving, and are starting to reach out to the town to get involved and we will begin discussions in early 2024. More to come on this, but if you are interested in seeing what's going on at the state level, you can go to

www.ct250.org, and also reach out to the above organizations or to me, at wmackstutis@simsbury-ct.gov if you are interested in being involved.

Simsbury Farms Playground Opening

The brand-new playground at Simsbury Farms opened to the public with a ribbon cutting, cookies and hot chocolate on December 6th. There was a great crowd of residents and excited children there to try out the colorful play area that is accessible to all. Residents, members of the Parks and Rec Commission, Friends of Simsbury Farms, the Board of Selectman, and town staff all joined in the fun.

I'd like to end by wishing everyone a safe, happy, and healthy holiday season over these next couple of weeks. I'm hoping it's a time for all of us to slow down and enjoy family and friends.

I want to thank our Interim Town Manager, Lee Erdmann for taking a detour from his retirement to fill the gap over the last 6 month. He gave the town 100%, and then some, and we'll miss seeing him around. Our board has a lot of work ahead of us in 2024, so we plan to hit the ground running with our

new Town Manager, Marc Nelson. Our first meeting of the year is on January 8th, 2024. Feel free to reach out to me – contact info is all here: <https://www.simsbury-ct.gov/first-selectmans-office>. I'm planning to resume more regular office hours once January rolls around and will see you then. Happy Holidays, Merry Christmas, and a Happy New Year to all!
Wendy

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

TO: Board of Selectmen
FROM: Lee Erdmann – Interim Town Manager
DATE: December 18, 2023

DEPARTMENT NEWS & NOTES

Culture, Parks and Recreation:

- The Holiday Skate & Share event will be held at the Simsbury Farms Rink Friday, Dec. 22 from 1:30pm-3:30pm. This fun event, hosted by the Culture, Parks and Recreation Dept, the Simsbury Public Library, Simsbury Social Services Dept and the Simsbury Police Dept. features free skating admission with the donation of non-perishable food items to the Simsbury Food Closet. Free hot chocolate and cookies will be available, Santa Claus will be in the house for last minute visits, there will be a special reading of T'was the Night Before Christmas, holiday music and frozen turkey bowling. Get updates at www.SimsburyRec.com or follow the Simsbury Recreation Dept's Facebook page.

- There will be a special school vacation public skating schedule for the Simsbury Farms Ice Rink, giving residents many opportunities to enjoy some outdoor ice skating this winter. Please visit the Simsbury Recreation Dept at www.SimsburyRec.com to get info on the public skating schedule.