



Town of Simsbury

933 HOPMEADOW STREET, SIMSBURY, CONNECTICUT 06070

Lisa L. Heavner - First Selectman

First Selectwoman's Report – December 12, 2016

Budget Season Preview

Today, thanks to the hard work of many volunteers, elected officials and dedicated town staff, Simsbury is a Money Magazine *Top Ten* 'Best Place to Live in America'. Others are noticing what Simsbury residents have known for years – Simsbury is a great place to live, learn, retire and do business. Your tax dollars support all that makes Simsbury the place we call home and we work hard every year to ensure you get quality and value for every tax dollar you contribute.

In January we will kick off the budget season, beginning with discussions between the First Selectwoman, the Director of Finance and department heads about priorities and goals. The First Selectwoman's budget will be presented to the Board of Selectmen on February 27th for review and changes and then to the Board of Finance by March 31st. The voters will make the final decision on this year's budget at referendum in May or June.

Each budget season the Board evaluates "must spends," "should spends," and "want to spends." Priorities and goals are discussed and weighed against what our residents can afford. In addition to the tough choices we make every year at budget time, this year's budget has the additional challenges of a net loss in revenue of about \$900,000 from The Hartford building demolition and the State's continued fiscal uncertainty. Like all municipalities, we won't know the full impact of the State budget crisis on Simsbury until sometime this spring. Regarding the loss in revenue from The Hartford, fortunately, the Town has planned for this loss for a number of years and has set aside reserves to help cushion the tax impact. The good news is that within three to five years, we expect that loss to be replaced and exceeded with revenues from newly planned development.

We will continue to be cautious with our spending and find cost savings wherever we can. As we make hard choices and set priorities for the Town, I encourage all to be involved in the process. Give us your input and let us know what is important to you!

Simsbury Police Department's "Stuff a Cruiser" to be Held December 14th and 15th

The Simsbury Police Department is holding its annual "Stuff a Cruiser" event at Necker's Toy Store located at 1591 Hopmeadow Street on December 14th and 15th from 3:00 – 7:00 p.m. Please come see us and make a donation of a new, unwrapped toy to help make a child happy this holiday season!

Winter is Upon Us – like it or not! Now's the Time to Prepare for Weather Emergencies

In anticipation of the coming season, now is a good time to prepare for weather emergencies. When weather looks doubtful, please remember to stock up on gas, cash, water, medications,

food and other essentials. Check out the following site to help get ready for whatever comes our way: <http://www.ct.gov/dph/cwp/view.asp?a=3115&q=482616>,

Please also remember to sign up for emergency alerts on our Town website so we can keep you informed: <http://www.simsbury-ct.gov/alerts>

Snow Plow Ride-Along Program

Ever wonder what it is like to ride-along in a snow plow? If you're over 18 years of age, you can take a ride with one of Simsbury's outstanding plow drivers. Offered through the Department of Public Works, residents have the opportunity to ride-along with one of our snow plows during a winter storm. There is no fee. Residents can fill out an application with times they are available to participate. One or two days before a storm, staff will confirm your availability for the anticipated storm and schedule a time for your ride-along. Don't overdress – it's hot in the cab! There is a sign-up link on the Public Works page of the town's website, or you can "click" on the link below:

<http://www.simsbury-ct.gov/public-works/files/snow-plow-ride-along-program-information-application>.

Tariffville Water Tank Update

The Tariffville water tank is nearing completion with piping work to connect the new tank to the water main beginning in the next few weeks. Solar panels will be installed shortly to provide electricity. Next steps also include a carefully done sanitizing process, including water testing, to ensure the water in the new tank is safe before the tank water flows into the water system. Demolition of the old tank will occur in the spring. To see progress on the project including pictures, information and videos, please visit www.Tariffvillewater.org

Save the date: For those interested in an informative and interactive presentation about the project, mark your calendars for Wednesday, January 18th at 6:30 p.m. when Walter Banzhaf will present to the Tariffville Village Association at Trinity Church on Church Street in Tariffville.

Thanks to everyone who worked so hard to complete this project!

Drought Watch in Effect Statewide

A trip around town should be enough to remind us of the effect of the ongoing severe drought on our local wetlands and watercourses. All Connecticut residents and businesses are requested to voluntarily reduce water demand by 15 percent. Check out these tips to conserve water from the Farmington Valley Health District: <http://www.fvhd.org/>

Revaluation of Real Estate in Simsbury

In accordance with State law and in order to make sure residents are taxed on the fair value of their properties, revaluation of all real estate in Simsbury is now underway. Over the next year each property in town will be reassessed in-line with current market values. You may see town employees and contractors from *Municipal Valuation Services* assisting with this process.

The first phase is a pre-review which includes comparisons between what is actually observed at the property and what is shown on the assessor's card. The next phase beginning in March or April will include property questionnaires, updating records for work done under building permits, inspection of recently sold properties and valuation. Revaluation notices culminate the process and are expected to be mailed to taxpayers in December 2017. For questions, please

contact the Director of Finance Sean Kimball at skimball@simsbury-ct.gov or (860) 658-3244 or the Tax Assessor David Gardner at dgardner@simsbury-ct.gov or (860) 658-3251.

Energy Assistance Available

The Simsbury Social Services Department has been designated as an official intake site for residents wishing to apply for the Connecticut Energy Assistance Program. This program is available to assist households paying for primary heating bills incurred after November 9th. The program also has a “heat included” component for renters. Income and asset limits apply. For further information or to schedule an appointment, please call the Social Services Department at (860) 658-3283.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Simsbury Library Business Newsletter

Do you own a small business in Simsbury or are you thinking of opening one? To get up-to-date information about how to start a business or how to improve the business you already have, sign up for the Simsbury Library Business Newsletter. You’ll find information on social media marketing, free business counseling, unique programming, computer skills training and more! https://visitor.r20.constantcontact.com/manage/optin?v=001BR11GnvqHBRV2R0O0v7Y0ELJkZ_dfHK83vRbaajGjsYTrQDD9URRiwvcPsTiCoB5vRVPtHsw8j4SHSCG509DpW7U0pnxAg8L_eaFx9AM6IU%3D

Business Buzz at the Simsbury Public Library

The Business Resource Center at the Simsbury Public Library is happy to highlight business news on their [Facebook Page](#) and other social media. If you have news to share, add it in the comment section on their Facebook Page or contact Simsbury Public Library’s Business Resource Center Coordinator, Sarah Loudenslager at sarahl@simsburylibrary.info. #splbusinessbuzz

Wednesday Night is Business Night at the Simsbury Library

The Library is offering programming on a consistent night for business people or those interested in business. Be on the lookout for *Wednesday Night is Business Night!* events this fall. Currently scheduled programs include:

- *No More Boring Pitches* with Guest Speaker Kathy McAfee, Wednesday, December 14th, 6:00 PM
- *30 Business Books in 30 Minutes*, Wednesday, December 28th, 6:30 PM
- *Leveraging the Strength of LinkedIn*, Wednesday, January 11th, 6:00 PM
- *Legal Options in Creating and Operating a New Business*, Wednesday, January 18th, 5:30 PM

To register for these free programs or to see all the great educational programs offered to assist small businesses in Simsbury, please visit the Library website and click on the business tab at the top of the screen: <http://www.simsburylibrary.info/>

Open for Business

New to Simsbury! A ribbon cutting ceremony will be held for *Khagan Mongolian Grill & Sushi* on Wednesday, December 21st at 4:00 P. M., at 530 Bushy Hill Rd., Unit 170 (behind Chili's). Congratulations and welcome!

Congratulations and welcome to *Town Line Liquors* located at 1610 Hopmeadow Street on their new store which opened on November 21st. Watch for a ribbon cutting to follow!

Shred Fitness located at 17C Herman Drive will have an open house on Saturday, December 17th and they will be providing tours of the facility. Classes will begin on December 19th.

Table 570 Asian Fusion (formerly Green Tea) located at 570 Hopmeadow Street is open! A ribbon cutting was held on November 30th. Congratulations to James and Sandy Chen, along with Executive Chef Dan Fortin and team, who are bringing a new level of Asian Fusion Cuisine to the Valley.

A ribbon cutting for *Illumina Skin Care/Massage* was held on December 8th at 1 Grist Mill Road. Congratulations and welcome to Simsbury! <http://www.illuminaskincaremassage.com/>

Benny's located at 562 Hopmeadow Street has completed a new dining room expansion, package store improvements, and parking and landscape improvements. Congratulations! Watch for a grand re-opening and ribbon cutting soon! <http://bennysofsimsbury.com/>

Under Construction in Simsbury

Garden Homes on the south side of town along Hopmeadow Street is now under construction – building foundations have been completed and framing has started. This development was approved for 181 residential rental units, including townhomes and apartment style housing. Commercial and retail units were also approved as part of the Planned Area Development (PAD), but zoning and specific site plan approvals have yet to be sought and therefore only the residential component is under construction at this time. You can visit Garden Homes' website at <http://www.gardenhomes.com/> for more information about the development company.

Highcroft: 272 residential rental units off Powder Forest Drive are also under construction by Landworks Development/Nelson Construction team. The project includes *Highcroft Apartment Homes* with 224 apartment units and *Highcroft Townhomes* with 48 units. Move-ins commenced in July 2016 and construction is expected to conclude on the first 128 unit phase in late spring 2017. You can visit their website at: <http://www.lifeinsimsbury.com> for information on their sale and rental offerings or <http://www.highcroftapartments.com/>.

Berkshire Bank: At the Corner of Bushy Hill and Albany Turnpike, Berkshire Bank is waiting on interior fit-out and is not yet open.

Permitted

Big Y has indicated that they have delayed a start date in Simsbury for at least a year and possibly into 2018 based on internal financial priorities and commitments elsewhere, but will begin removal of the buildings on their property. Big Y further indicated that they are still interested in Simsbury and confirmed that they have all their town and state permits in place for when they do begin.

Hoskins Road Workforce Overlay Zone (WHOZ): The Town planning boards have approved 88 residential units for the property with twenty percent affordable housing. Although the project has been approved there is currently no activity.

Chestnut Hills: Located on the corner of Drake Hill and Hopmeadow Street, 46 unit apartments have been approved for the historical building and the surrounding property. This property is currently for sale.

On the Horizon

The Silverman Group: On October 17th the Silverman Group from New Jersey submitted an application to the Town's Zoning Commission for a Master Site Development Plan (MSDP) under the Hartford-Simsbury Form Based Code for the northern portion (40 acres) of the former Hartford property. Their application included plans for a 120 bed assisted living facility, 280 units of luxury rental housing (156 units in stacked flats and 124 units in town homes), a community center and 11,600 square feet of retail/office space in a Traditional Neighborhood Design (TND) setting. The Town's Design Review Board approved the Master Site Development Plan on November 21st.

On December 5th after two public hearings and considerable deliberations, the Zoning Commission approved the Silverman's application for a MSDP with seven conditions. The Hartford-Simsbury Form Based Code was adopted on July 7, 2014, and went into effect on August 1, 2014. It was adopted after a systematic study of the site was undertaken by the Town of Simsbury and The Hartford in 2013 utilizing various consultants (Gateway Planning, Kimley-Horn and Associates, Inc. Catalyst and CB Richard Ellis). The adoption of the Code solidified a two-step process. The first step was the application for and approval of a Master Site Development Plan (MSPD) which was accomplished on December 5th. The second step requires a subsequent application to the Zoning Commission for site plan approval conforming to the MSPD. Upon approval of the final site plan the applicant can begin the building permit process, pending any additional state approvals. It is anticipated that the applicant will apply for site plan approval in late February or early March 2017.

Girard Brothers Corporation: 32 and 36 Iron Horse Blvd. (Simscoft-Echo Farms). Initial concept plans have been presented to Design Review, Planning and Zoning for a multifamily residential community. The Planning presentation can be viewed on SCTV at the following link: <http://simsburytv.org/v/4rffJvkGMTA>

To receive a copy of the First Selectwoman's Report by email, please visit the Town website: www.simsbury-ct.gov and click on the "subscribe" button. Sign up for Town News and Announcements.