



Town of Simsbury

933 HOPMEADOW STREET, SIMSBURY, CONNECTICUT 06070

Lisa L. Heavner - First Selectwoman

First Selectwoman's Report – February 27, 2017

Budget Update and Important Dates

Each budget season the Boards of Selectmen, Education and Finance evaluate “must spends,” “should spends” and “want to spends.” Priorities and goals are discussed and weighed against what residents can afford. In addition to the tough decisions we make every year, this year has two additional challenges: A likely reduction in State aid due to the State’s continued fiscal crisis, and the Town’s net loss in revenue of about \$790,000 from the demolition of The Hartford building. We have been planning for a number of years for the loss in revenue from The Hartford and have set aside reserves to help cushion the tax impact. The magnitude of the State’s crisis, however, will be a challenge for Simsbury and all towns.

The *recommended* budgets by the First Selectwoman and the Superintendent of Schools are the first steps in a long budget process and will be reviewed and changed by the Boards of Selectmen, Education and Finance before final referendum. The First Selectwoman’s *Recommended Budget*, presented to the Board of Selectmen on February 27, proposes an additional \$691,014 (3.55% *Town/BOS increase*) in expenditures and the Superintendent’s *Recommended Budget*, presented to the Board of Education on February 14, proposes an additional \$1,670,601 (2.48% *BOE increase*) in expenditures. Cost drivers of the Town’s budget include health care, negotiated salaries, contractual services, additional staffing hours in the Building department to meet economic development needs and the addition of a police dispatch position for public safety. To see the details of both budgets, you can visit the Town and Education websites.

Although the Board of Finance will ultimately set the mill rate for Simsbury, the tax impact from these *recommended* expenditure budgets is an estimated 2.34% increase. This small increase comes after three consecutive years of no tax increases and preserves the quality of life in Simsbury we value: excellent schools, well-maintained roads, parks, athletic fields, the Library, Senior Center, Simsbury Farms, Police, open space, social services and much more.

We should be prepared, however, that the financial crisis at the State will likely place additional costs on Simsbury and lead to a higher tax increase. Governor Malloy has proposed an unprecedented and untenable \$4.3 million in additional costs for Simsbury. Were the Governor’s proposal fully adopted by the Legislature we would see an *additional* tax increase of approximately 6% with a 2.23 mill impact. We have reached out to Senator Witkos and Representative Hampton and will be working with them to advocate for Simsbury’s best interests. The Boards of Selectmen, Finance and Education will be working together with the Director of Finance to evaluate strategies and options.

We expect the budget that is ultimately passed by the Legislature to look vastly different from the Governor’s initial proposal, but will not know the final impact to Simsbury until later this spring. As we get better information from the State, we will further evaluate local budgets and seek your input to determine what is best for Simsbury.

We welcome your input at every step in the process and look forward to hearing your comments and suggestions.

Budget dates to remember:

- **March 4th**, beginning at 8:00 a.m. in the Main Meeting Room of Town Hall, the Board of Selectmen will hold a day-long budget workshop reviewing and making changes to the First Selectwoman’s budget.
- **March 7, 9** additional budget workshops will be held as needed.
- **March 14th** Board of Education presents its budget to the Board of Finance.

- **March 21st** Board of Selectmen presents its budget to the Board of Finance.
- **April 6th** Board of Finance holds a Public Hearing on the budget.
- **June 13th** tentative Budget Referendum.

For the most up-to-date information on this year's budget, please visit the Town's budget page: <http://www.simsbury-ct.gov/finance/pages/2017-2018-budget-information>

Board of Education budget information can be found at: <http://www.simsbury.k12.ct.us/page.cfm?p=2574>

Coffee and Donuts with the First Selectwoman - March 10th, 9-10:00 a.m.

All are invited to attend office hours with the First Selectwoman on March 10th from 9 -10:00 a.m. in the First Selectwoman's office in Town Hall, 933 Hopmeadow Street. With budget season in full swing, now is the time to share what matters most to you. Please join me for an informal conversation on the upcoming budget or any other issue you wish to discuss. Stop in for a minute to say hello or stay the whole time!

Warm Welcome to Melissa Appleby, Deputy Director of Administrative Services

We are pleased to welcome Melissa Appleby as our new Deputy Director of Administrative Services, replacing Sean Kimball who moved to the position of Finance Director. Melissa comes to us from the Town of Greenwich where she worked in the Office of the First Selectman as Senior Management Analyst. Melissa has also worked for the Town of Lexington, MA as Management Analyst/ICMA Local Government Management Fellow and has interned for a number of towns including Simsbury. Melissa received her Masters in Public Administration degree from the University of Connecticut and is a graduate of Vassar College. Please stop by Town Hall and introduce yourself to Melissa!

Simsbury Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD) Telephone Survey Underway

Don't be surprised if, over the next couple of weeks you receive a phone call asking you to participate in a telephone survey about Simsbury. The survey questions are designed to help the Planning Commission better understand the opinions of Simsbury residents about a variety of long-term conservation, development and infrastructure issues affecting the Town. The survey will provide an opportunity for Simsbury residents to identify issues of concern to them. The results of the survey will be incorporated into the town's Plan of Conservation and Development.

The caller ID will display "Great Blue Research."

The Plan of Conservation and Development is an advisory document used by the Planning Commission and other Town agencies to protect resources important to residents, guide growth and change, and identify the facilities and services needed to support the community we want to be.

The Latest Edition of the Senior Communicator is Hot off the Presses!

Check out the March-April editon of the Senior Communicator to see the great programs, services and opportunities for senior citizens in Simsbury. You can find information on special events, tax help, clubs, fitness classes, meals, trips and more! [http://www.simsbury-ct.gov/sites/simsburyct/files/news/march - april 2017 newsletter.pdf](http://www.simsbury-ct.gov/sites/simsburyct/files/news/march_-_april_2017_newsletter.pdf)

Simsbury Mini Maker Faire – April 1st from 10:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m. at the Simsbury Library

Join us for the greatest show (& tell) on Earth! Simsbury's Mini Maker Faire is part science fair, part county fair, technology expo, and part something entirely new! As a celebration of the Maker Movement, it's a family-friendly showcase of invention, creativity, and resourcefulness.

Mini Maker Faire gathers together tech enthusiasts, crafters, educators, tinkerers, hobbyists, engineers, science clubs, artists, students and commercial exhibitors. Makers come to show their creations and share what they've learned.

To sign up to be a maker participant or for more information, please visit:

<http://simsbury.makerfaire.com/what-to-expect/>

Help Us Keep Simsbury Safe by Clearing Fire Hydrants of Snow!

Help us keep Simsbury safe by clearing fire hydrants of snow. Local firefighters need quick access to hydrants during emergencies - *every minute counts*. A few minutes of clearing now can save a life during a fire emergency. And it's the law! A new town ordinance requires that fire hydrants be kept clear of any obstructions that would impede the use or maintenance of a hydrant. The ordinance can be found by control-clicking on the following link:

<http://www.simsbury-ct.gov/public-safety-subcommittee/files/fire-hydrant-maintenance>

Help with Taxes

Trained and certified volunteers with AARP are available to assist seniors and others with preparing and electronically filing federal and state taxes, free of charge. Appointments are available on Thursdays, February 2 through April 13 starting at 10 a.m. at the Simsbury Public Library. For an appointment, please contact the Senior Center at: (860) 658-3273.

Even Though it is Winter, Drought Watch Still in Effect Statewide

Just a reminder that 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 9, 2016.

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

Town of Simsbury Residential Development Trends

Wondering about the impacts of new development planned and anticipated for Simsbury? While Simsbury is down almost \$790,000 in revenues this year due to the demolition of the office building formerly owned by The Hartford, the good news is that within three to five years we expect that loss to be replaced and exceeded with revenues from planned new development. To see the informative report on *Residential Development Trends* prepared by Director of Planning Jamie Rabbitt, please visit: <http://www.simsbury-ct.gov/planning-and-land-use-department/pages/residential-development-trends>

Small Business Assistance Programs

For information on Small Business Assistance Programs from state, federal and Connecticut non-profit programs providing grants, loans and tax breaks to small businesses, please check out the Office of Legislative Research Report on Small Business Assistance Programs: <http://www.simsbury-ct.gov/first-selectwomans-office/files/small-business-assistance-programs-research-report>

Town-wide Energy Savings Campaign for Businesses

The Town of Simsbury, the Simsbury Chamber of Commerce and Eversource have launched a town-wide energy-saving campaign for businesses. Thanks to the Simsbury Clean Energy Task Force and the Department of Public Works for initiating and coordinating this program. The campaign encourages local businesses to participate in Eversource’s Small Business Energy Advantage program where technicians conduct a no-cost energy audit and propose recommendations for energy-efficient improvements. For every project completed by the Eversource-authorized contractors Artis Energy or JK Energy Solutions a \$50 donation will be made to the Simsbury Clean Energy Task Force. For more information, please contact 877-WISE-USE (877-947-3873) or visit <http://www.energizect.com/your-business>

Simsbury Public Library’s Business Resource Center Offers “Promoting Your Organization” Programs for Non-Profits and Small Businesses

The Simsbury Public Library through its Business Resource Center is offering a three-part program series called **Promoting Your Organization** which is designed to help non-profits and small businesses promote themselves. Information about the three programs and sign-up links for each follow:

Utilize the Connecticut Office of Tourism Website

Tuesday, March 21, 2:30 – 4:00 PM

Simsbury Public Library – Technology Learning Center

Link to sign

up: <http://www.libraryinsight.com/EventSignUp.asp?t=570940164&jx=scp&lmx=%C7ad%2C%AB%AA>

Develop a PR Strategy

Tuesday, March 28, 6:30 – 8:00 PM

Simsbury Public Library – Program Room 2

Link to sign

up: <http://www.libraryinsight.com/EventSignUp.asp?t=570940164&jx=scp&lmx=%C7ab%23%AE%AA>

Digital Marketing & Your Website

Wednesday, April 12, 6:30 – 8:00 PM

Simsbury Public Library – Program Room

Link to sign

up: <http://www.libraryinsight.com/EventSignUp.asp?t=570940164&jx=scp&lmx=%C6ag%23%AA%AF>

Thanks to Sarah Loudenslager and the Simsbury Public Library for their part in promoting economic development in Simsbury!

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 throughout the year. Currently scheduled programs include:

- *Business Development from the Inside Out* - Relationships drive the world. The more of the ‘Positive Type’ that you develop with clients, prospects, co-workers, family and friends, the more likely you are to be happy and successful in life. Wednesday, March 8, 6:30-8:00 PM
- *Taking Care of Your Prime Real Estate* – hands on program to help with organizational issues that keep you from reaching your goals. Wednesday, March 22, 6:30-8:00 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/> or contact Sarah Loudenslager, Business Resource Coordinator, at (860) 658-7663, ext. 2107

Simsbury Chamber of Commerce 9th Annual Business Leaders Breakfast on March 3rd

The Simsbury Chamber of Commerce is holding their 9th Annual Business Leaders Breakfast on March 3rd from 7:30 - 9:45 a.m. at the Simsbury Inn located at 397 Hopmeadow Street. New Britain Mayor Erin Stewart and Rebecca Lobo are the two featured speakers. For more information about the event or to register, please visit: <http://simsburycoc.org/m/events/view/9th-Annual-Business-Leaders-Breakfast>

Open for Business

New to Simsbury! Congratulations to Dana Kosior, the new owner of *Farmers Insurance – The Kosior Agency*. A ribbon cutting sponsored by the Chamber of Commerce was held on February 23rd from 4:30 - 5:30 p.m. at 522 Hopmeadow Street (Simsmore Square). Welcome to Simsbury!

Congratulations to Lisa and Matt Natcharian, the new owners of *Fiddler's Green*. Welcome to Simsbury!

A ribbon cutting ceremony sponsored by Main Street Partnership for *KR Styles* was held on Thursday, February 2nd at 5:00 p.m. at 14 Station Street. Congratulations on the new location and thanks for staying in Simsbury! Check out their website here: <http://www.krstyles.com/>

New to Simsbury! A ribbon cutting for *Shred Fitness* sponsored by the Simsbury Chamber of Commerce has been rescheduled for February 28th at 4:00 p.m. at 17C Herman Drive. Shred Fitness offers semi-private training, endurance and core crush classes. Check out their website: <http://shredfitnessct.com/>

Benny's located at 562 Hopmeadow Street has completed a new dining room expansion, package store improvements, and parking and landscape improvements. Congratulations! A grand re-opening and ribbon cutting sponsored by Main Street Partnership will be rescheduled 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 is underway. 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.