



Town of Simsbury

933 HOPMEADOW STREET, SIMSBURY, CONNECTICUT 06070

Lisa L. Heavner - First Selectwoman

First Selectwoman's Report – April 12, 2017

Budget Update

The magnitude of the State's fiscal crisis has become a challenge for Simsbury and all towns in the State of Connecticut. In addition to the tough choices we make every year at budget time, we are grappling with Governor Malloy's proposed budget that adds an unprecedented and untenable \$4.3 million in additional costs for Simsbury, if adopted by the Legislature. The largest and most harmful part of this proposal is the transfer of the teachers' pension costs from the State to the towns. *For Simsbury, that cost alone is \$3.6 million.*

Many decades ago, the teachers' pension program was developed by the State, designed by the State, and committed to by the State. As towns, we had no input. The State failed to meet its commitments and underfunded these pensions for decades - *leading to the current fiscal crisis in which the State faces a \$1.5 billion deficit.* To help solve this problem, the Governor has proposed shifting one third of this cost burden to municipalities.

We expect the budget 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.

Each year the Boards of Selectmen, Education and Finance, work collaboratively to preserve Simsbury's quality of life in the most cost efficient manner, providing residents with excellent education, well-maintained roads, community policing, parks, athletic fields, the library, senior center, open space, social services and much more. The Governor's proposal has added a level of uncertainty and made our task a challenge this year.

On April 6, 2017, the Board of Finance held a public hearing on the Board of Selectmen, Board of Education and Capital budgets. To watch the presentations from the boards and the public comment, please visit: <http://simsburytv.org/v/9sA5BkZweDQ>

An additional Board of Finance public hearing is scheduled for May 16, 2017 at 5:45 p.m. in the Main Meeting Room of Town Hall. The Board of Finance has given guidance to both the Boards of Selectmen and Education to prepare for reductions totaling \$1 million. The three boards will be evaluating options over the next several weeks.

You can find budget information on the Town and School websites:

- Town: www.simsbury-ct.gov/budget
- Board of Education: <http://www.simsbury.k12.ct.us/boe/budget>

All Board of Selectmen and Board of Finance meetings can be found on the Town website at www.simsbury-ct.gov and for the Board of Education on the Simsbury Public Schools website at www.simsbury.k12.ct.us

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

Congratulations to Simsbury's Fire Marshal and Deputy Chief Kevin Kowalski

Congratulations to Simsbury's Fire Marshal & Deputy Chief Kevin Kowalski for his induction into the Connecticut State Firefighters Association Hall of Fame on April 6, 2017. The award recognizes and honors members of the Connecticut Fire Service who have contributed to the betterment of the Fire Service on a local, county, state or national level. Well deserved!

Congratulations to the Tariffville Fire District Water Department for Receipt of the 2017 Small Community Public Health Drinking Water Merit Award

Congratulations to the Tariffville Fire District Water Department for their hard work for the residents of Tariffville which has earned the District a 2017 Small Community Public Health Drinking Water Merit Award from the State of Connecticut's Department of Public Health. The award is given during National Drinking Water Week to recognize small community public water systems serving fewer than 10,000 people that have made outstanding contributions to the field of drinking water. We've seen first hand just how hard the District works for Tariffville and join the State in congratulating them for their excellent work.

Nominations Sought for Simsbury Hometown Heroes

Since 1986, has Simsbury designated and recognized outstanding individuals for service in their community. We are looking for nominations for this year's Hometown Hero Awards. Nominations are due by April 18, 2017 to the Simsbury Hometown Hero Selection Committee, Town of Simsbury, P.O. Box 495, Simsbury, CT 06070 or can be dropped off at the First Selectwoman's office at 933 Hopmeadow Street, Simsbury, CT 06070. Nomination forms and guidelines can be found here: <http://www.simsbury-ct.gov/home/news/nominations-sought-for-simsbury-hometown-heroes>

Simsbury Library Commemorates the 100th Anniversary of America's Entry into World War I

The Simsbury Public Library is offering a series of programs commemorating the 100th Anniversary of America's Entry into World War I. Topics include the Evolved Roles of Aviation in World War I, Poetry, Dancing in the World War I years, a showing and discussion of "All Quiet on the Western Front," and a History of Memorial Day and the Simsbury Veterans Memorial. The series runs from April 13 to May 24. To check out these and more, visit: <http://www.simsburylibrary.info/100th-anniversary-americas-entry-world-war/>

The Future of Our Forests: Stewarding Our Lands Thoughtfully

Please join us for a forum on stewarding our lands thoughtfully. This Regional Forum will feature Dr. Edward Faison, Senior Ecologist from *Highstead*, a regional organization in Redding, CT, dedicated to forest research and long term monitoring. Dr. Faison will present information on how municipalities and land trusts can establish a landscape and historical approach to stewarding our protected preserves and better understand How, When and Why we should monitor and manage our forests.

We will provide a light supper at 6:00 pm with the program starting at 7:00 pm on April 17 in the Program Room at the Simsbury Public Library, 725 Hopmeadow Street, Simsbury CT.

Questions and RSVP's (by April 10th) to Helen Peterson, hkpeterson@comcast.net.

Please Help Simsbury Earn a National PlacesforBikes 5-Star Rating!

Simsbury is seeking to earn a national *PlacesforBikes* 5-star rating as a top U.S. community for biking. Our achievements as a Bicycle Friendly Community are likely to score well, but we need your help! We will only be rated if the community provides input. Residents, town employees, elected officials and community leaders are encouraged to complete the short *PlacesforBikes*

survey, whether or not they bike. The deadline is April 15. This is an opportunity for our community to shine on a national stage and promote Simsbury as an attractive place to live, work, and visit. To complete the survey, please control/click or copy and paste the following web address into your browser: <https://corona.researchfeedback.net/wh/s.asp?k=148665804820>

Simsbury Shred Event Scheduled

The Simsbury Police Department and the Simsbury Social Services are co-sponsoring a “Shred Event” on Saturday, April 22, 2017 from 9:00 a.m. until 1:00 p.m. The event will take place in front of Town Hall. This event is for Simsbury residents and there is a 3 bag limit (grocery size) per household.

Earth Day Events!

Thanks to Representative Hampton and the Farmington Valley Trails Council for hosting two Simsbury clean-up days in April!

- *Earth Day: The Latest Science on Climate Change and How to Reduce your Personal Carbon footprint.* Confused by all the information on climate change? CCSU Professor Dr. Charles Button will summarize the current science regarding climate change and provide audience members with actions they can take to reduce their carbon footprint at home and at work. April 22 from 2:00-3:30 p.m. at the Simsbury Public Library. <http://www.libraryinsight.com/eventdetails.asp?jx=scp&lmx=%C7%60b%26%AB%A8&v=3>
- *Earth Day Simsbury Clean-Up* with Representative Hampton: April 22 from 9:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m. Volunteers are asked to meet at the Simsbury Town Hall parking lot to receive clean-up assignments, gloves, trash bags and orange safety vests. Volunteers may also sign up for a section of road in advance by contacting Jason Knight at 860-240-8568.
- *Farmington Valley Trails Council* hosted a trails clean-up in Simsbury and in other towns including Avon, Granby, Farmington/Unionville, Collinsville/Canton on April 9th. Thanks to all who volunteered their time help keep our trails beautiful!

Summer Camp Registration Has Begun!

Registration is now open for Summer Explorers Camp, Awesome Explorers Camp, Junior Explorers Camp and Playground Explorers Camps. More camps are available for registration in the coming weeks, so keep an eye out for emails and check www.simsburyrec.com.

Pool Pass and Swim Lesson Registration Now Underway

The countdown to summer fun has begun! Pool pass and swim lesson registration is now underway at Simsbury Farms. New this season, Simsbury Farms pool will be open Monday-Friday from noon -1:00 p.m. for Season Pass Holders only. This extra hour will allow pass holders earlier access to the pool facility before camp programs and general public admission are allowed access beginning at 1:00 p.m. For more information or to register, please visit: www.simsburyrec.com.

Try Simsbury Adventure Triathlon – Sunday, May 21 at 11:00 a.m.

Try Simsbury is back this May! Join us for a quick 5k run on the re-established “River Walk” trail system, a 12 mile bike course on scenic country roads and a 2-mile paddle segment on the Farmington River. Post-race festivities take place at the Simsbury Performing Arts Center. To register online: www.trysimsbury.com

Talcott Mountain Music Festival at Simsbury Meadows Performing Arts Center

Celebrate all summer long at the Hartford Symphony Orchestra's annual Talcott Mountain Music Festival! Pack your picnic, attend with family and friends, relax under the stars, and enjoy the Hartford Symphony Orchestra under Music Director Carolyn Kuan and distinguished guest conductors.

- Celebrate America! Friday, June 30
- Sgt. Pepper's 50th! Featuring Classical Mystery Tour. Friday, July 7
- The Music of David Bowie. Friday, July 14
- Williams and Warner Bros. Friday, July 21
- Broadway A to Z. Friday, July 28

For more information, please visit: <https://hartfordsymphony.org/concerts-tickets/series/talcott-mountain-music-festival/>

Books to Your Door

Did you know the Simsbury Library will deliver books to our homebound patrons for free? Simsbury residents who are homebound, long term or temporarily, due to illness, disability or advanced age, can have books delivered to them. If you or anyone you know could benefit from free delivery and pick-up of their favorite library materials, please call the Library on Thursday mornings between 10-11 a.m. at (860) 658-7663 (ext. 2601) and you will be connected with one of our volunteers. We will select materials based on your interests and deliver them to your home every Thursday.

Simsbury Public Schools Has a Newly Designed Webpage – Check it out!

Visit the Simsbury Public Schools newly designed webpage to learn about Simsbury schools and to get important information: <http://www.simsbury.k12.ct.us/>

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 this spring 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.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Businesses Supporting our Community

Thank you to the Farmington Valley Trails Council for their annual clean-up day on April 9, 2017. Hundreds of volunteers came together to clean our trails around town and in other towns. Special thanks to our local businesses that supported this effort: Villari's, Fitzgerald's, Tulmeadow Farms and Valley Fine Wine.

Open for Business

Benny's located at 562 Hopmeadow Street has completed a new dining room expansion, package store improvements, and parking and landscape improvements. A grand re-opening and ribbon cutting sponsored by Main Street Partnership was held on April 6 at 4:30 p.m. Congratulations! <http://bennysofsimsbury.com/>

Congratulations and welcome to *Ideal Healthy Weight Loss* located at 760 Hopmeadow Street. A ribbon cutting was held on April 5. Welcome to town! <http://www.idealhealthyweightloss.com/>

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:

- *Strategic Planning* will be held on April 26 from 6:30-8:00 p.m. Learn about strategic planning, a suggested format and a proven structure to help you develop, crystalize and communicate your vision and strategic business plan.

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

Economic Development Implementation and Strategic Activities Report

Looking for an update on current and anticipated actions to promote economic development in Simsbury? Check out the *Economic Development Implementation and Strategic Activities Report* to see what we are working on. Our goal is to support and spur *Smart Growth* economic activity which will keep Simsbury affordable for families, businesses and retirees and to preserve Simsbury's unique character.

This plan builds upon the work of the many commissions and boards. Feedback was sought from residents and businesses through the 2015 Town Survey, the Economic Development Task Force and the Marketing Study focus groups. I want to particularly thank and recognize the Board of Selectmen for their work in setting priorities for sensible growth. In creating this plan, we have utilized the framework recommended by the EPA: *Framework for Creating a Smart Growth Economic Development Strategy: A Tool for Small Cities and Towns (January 2016)*.

To see the report, please visit: <http://www.simsbury-ct.gov/first-selectwomens-office/files/economic-development-strategic-plan>

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>

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 reaffirmed in April, 2017 that they have delayed a start date in Simsbury indefinitely based on internal financial priorities and commitments elsewhere. 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 April 4, 2017 the Silverman Group filed a Zoning application for site plan approval under the Hartford-Simsbury Form Based Code. Their application includes plans for a 120 bed assisted living facility (146,100 sq. ft.), 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. This application is the second part of the Hartford-Simsbury Form Based Code permitting process. The first part began back in October of 2016 when The Silverman Group submitted their Master Plan for the northern portion (40 acres) of the former Hartford property which was approved by the Town's Zoning Commission and Design Review Board.

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).

Girard Brothers Corporation: 32 and 36 Iron Horse Blvd. (Simscrest-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."

Contact Lisa at: lhevner@simsbury-ct.gov or (860) 658-3230