



# Town of Simsbury

933 HOPMEADOW STREET, SIMSBURY, CONNECTICUT 06070

Lisa L. Heavner - First Selectwoman

## *First Selectwoman's Report – July 27, 2017*

### **Budget Update**

#### **Important Notice to Simsbury Taxpayers**

The State still has not adopted its budget, leaving a high degree of uncertainty for all municipalities in Connecticut. Because there is no State budget, the estimated amount of revenue from the State of Connecticut indicated on your tax bill is subject to change.

Your tax bill also reflects current State law, which does not allow municipalities to assess a mill rate above 32 mills on motor vehicles effective July 1st. This mill rate tax cap on motor vehicles may be increased or eliminated altogether by the State legislature.

Once the state budget is adopted, the Town of Simsbury may need to adjust your tax levy to address any changes in municipal aid.

We know the State's failure to adopt a budget prior to the start of the Town of Simsbury's fiscal year is a major inconvenience for local taxpayers and we are doing everything in our power to mitigate the impact of the State's delay on our taxpayers.

### **Community Read with the First Selectwoman**

All are invited to join us for a community read event on August 16 from 6:30-7:30 PM in the Program Room of the Simsbury Public Library. We'll be discussing the book, *The Third Wave: An Entrepreneur's Vision of the Future*, by Steve Case – co-founder of AOL. Described as “a compelling roadmap for the future...that can make sense of the technological changes reshaping our economy and the world. A fascinating read.” (Sheryl Sandberg, Facebook COO and founder of Leanin.org). It's a little wonky, but a fast read. Hope to see you there!

### **Town of Simsbury and Simsbury Board of Education Receive CIRMA Members' Equity Distribution of \$48,834**

The Town of Simsbury and the Simsbury Board of Education have received Members' Equity Distribution checks totaling \$48,834 from CIRMA – the organization which provides workers' compensation and liability/property/auto insurance covering Town and Board of Education operations. CIRMA's services are provided solely to Connecticut-based public organizations and it specializes in the insurance challenges facing municipalities, providing training programs specifically designed for town workforces. CIRMA has issued members' equity distributions for several years, and this is the largest of the distributions received by the Town and the Board of Education.

## **Paving Work in Simsbury 2017**

Simsbury Public Works is hard at work improving our roads! To see which roads are scheduled for paving in Simsbury during the 2017 Construction season, visit [here](#).

## **Repair Café: Toss it? No Way!**



Remember the days when we darned our own socks or repaired broken household items? Have a small item that needs a quick repair? Before throwing it away, bring it to the Simsbury Public Library's first Repair Café on Saturday July 29 from 9:30-1:30 PM. Click [here](#) for more information.

## **Bear Safety Program – August 2 from 6:00-8:00 PM in the Library Program Room**

Please join Representative John Hampton, DEEP Conservation Police Officer Edward Yescot, and DEEP State Biologist, Jason Hawley for an informative forum regarding bears. Residents will learn what steps they can take to increase the safety of their families.

For additional information on bears, check out the Simsbury Animal Control Officer webpage [here](#).

## **Cyber Security Training Underway at Town Hall**

Town employees are currently undergoing cyber security training to ensure they have the latest information on how to recognize and defend against cyber threats. With cyber attacks against municipalities on the increase, the Town and the Board of Education have jointly contracted with cyber security training vendor KnowBe4 to provide periodic training and security testing. Training for Town employees started earlier this week and will continue throughout the year.

## **Simsbury High School 15kWh Rooftop Solar Array Completed**

A new 15kWh rooftop solar array was completed on Simsbury High School this past week. This solar array is the result of a \$40,500 grant from the CT Green Bank that was earned by the Town of Simsbury and the Simsbury Clean Energy Task Force. The Clean Energy Task Force began earning credits toward a solar array back in 2008 with the 20% by 2010 initiative and has continued to earn credits through our Solarize Simsbury and CPACE programs.

The \$40,500 grant from the CT Green Bank was intended to purchase a 9kWh array - however with the addition of \$17,600 from the Board of Education a larger 15kWh array was installed. This array will produce roughly 17,800kWh of electricity annually with a value of over \$3,000 per year. In addition to the electricity generation and cost savings, this array will be useful as an educational resource for the school. Plans are in the works for a system to report on the production of electricity from the array that can be used in the classroom.

A dedication for this new facility is being planned for September.

## **Bicycle-Pedestrian Master Plan**

The Town has entered into an agreement with Fitzgerald and Halliday Inc. (FHI) to develop a Bicycle/Pedestrian Master Plan for Simsbury. This plan will be developed with our stakeholder groups/residents to provide a road-map to improve our biking and pedestrian facilities with a focus on implementing a complete streets model for our future infrastructure improvements. This plan will establish both short and long term goals to improve upon the Town's biking and pedestrian infrastructure. For those who may be interested in serving on the Plan's advisory committee or who want to learn more, please contact Director of Public Works Tom Roy at (860) 658-3222.

## **Back to School Assistance Available**

Simsbury Social Services is once again offering its *Back to School Program* for Simsbury families. Eligible families will receive a Walmart gift card to purchase school clothes or school supplies for their children. To be eligible, families must be enrolled in a Social Services program (state or local). For further information or to set up an appointment, please call the Social Services Department at (860) 658-3283.

## **Renter's Rebate Program**

Simsbury's Social Services is now accepting applications for the Renter's Rebate Program that runs through October 1, 2017. Applicants must be at least 65 years of age, or be totally disabled – with proof of disability. Maximum gross income for a couple is \$42,900; and for a single individual is \$35,000. For more information and/or to schedule an appointment, please call (860) 658-3283.

## **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 summer, will include updating records for work done under building permits, property questionnaires, 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](mailto:skimball@simsbury-ct.gov) or (860) 658-3244 or the Tax Assessor David Gardner at [dgardner@simsbury-ct.gov](mailto:dgardner@simsbury-ct.gov) or (860) 658-3251.

## **Board of Selectmen Adopts a “Carry In, Carry Out” Policy for Simsbury Parks**

On May 8, 2017 the Board of Selectmen adopted a “Carry In, Carry Out” policy for Simsbury Parks at the recommendation of the Culture, Parks and Recreation Commission. The policy recommends the removal of trash cans from parks and fields and asks patrons to carry out anything they carry to the site. Youth sports groups and other organizations will still have the option of securing receptacles for trash disposal and contracting with a private hauler. In addition to saving tax dollars, “Carry In, Carry Out” policies have been effective in:



- Promoting environmentally friendly behaviors like recycling and biodegradable products
- Increasing safety by reducing bees, wasps, pests and animals (bears)
- Enabling staff resources to be redirected to other park improvements
- Leaving parks cleaner by eliminating excess trash, smells and messes
- Improving the health of wildlife by reducing their dependency on trash as a food source
- Fostering a partnership with our visitors by encouraging all to help maintain our parks
- Supporting Simsbury's commitment to conservation and sustainability
- Reducing illegal dumping

Thank you for working with us!

## **Friends of Simsbury Public Library (FSPL) Annual Used Book Sale**

Book collections for the FSPL Annual Book Sale began on Tuesday, May 30 and will continue through August 26. Books will be collected at the Library. Please bring your books and/or materials to the designated area on the lower level – just follow the clearly marked signs. A cart is available if you need one. Collection dates and times are Tuesday and Friday mornings from 10:00 a.m. – Noon; and Saturdays from 10:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. Thanks to all the volunteers who work hard on this effort and to those who donate!



<http://www.simsburylibrary.info/used-books-wanted/>

## **Simsbury Community Calendar**

Looking for something fun to do in Simsbury? Check out our *new* Simsbury Community Calendar on the Town website. If you have an event happening in Simsbury, you can post it to the community calendar managed by the Simsbury Main Street Partnership. *Check it out:* [www.simsburyevents.com](http://www.simsburyevents.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. The last concert of the season is *Broadway A to Z* on Friday, July 28<sup>th</sup>.

For more information, please visit:

<https://hartfordsymphony.org/concerts-tickets/series/talcott-mountain-music-festival/>

## **Simsbury Meadows Performing Arts Center**

Check out all the great events happening at the Simsbury Meadows Performing Arts Center.

<http://simsburymeadowsmusic.com/>



## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

### **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:

*Netiquette – Guidelines for Exemplary Internet Use:* Join guest speaker Karen Thomas to learn about the rules of behavior and acceptable business practices for internet etiquette. Topics include email, correspondence, social media and more. Wednesday, August 9 from 6:30-8:00 PM. For more information, click [here](#).

To register for these free programs or to see all the great educational programs offered to assist small businesses in Simsbury, please contact Sarah Loudenslager, Business Resource Coordinator, at (860) 658-7663, ext. 2107.

### **Economic Development Links**

- [Economic Development Strategic Plan and Activities Report](#)
- [Town of Simsbury Residential Development Trends](#)
- [Small Business Assistance Programs](#)
- [Town of Simsbury Parking Study](#)



### **IN SIMSBURY**

*Aspen Green (formerly referred to as 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. August 2017 is the targeted move-in date for some tenants. You can visit Garden Homes' website at <http://www.gardenhomes.com/> for more information about the development company. For information regarding rentals, you can visit their website at: <http://www.liveataspengreen.com/>.

*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 July, 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. Late Summer/early Fall construction is anticipated.

*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 was recently sold.

*The Silverman Group:* On May 3, 2017, the Town's Zoning Commission approved an application that was submitted on April 4, 2017 by Silverman SL for an approval under the Hartford-Simsbury Form Based Code. The approval permits the construction of 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 was 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. In order for construction to move forward, the applicant still needs to receive two additional permits from the State of Connecticut: the Connecticut Department of Transportation (CTDOT) and the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP). It is anticipated that construction will begin mid to late summer. The Silverman group is in the process of setting a date for their groundbreaking event.

[The Hartford-Simsbury Form Based Code](#) was adopted on July 7, 2014 and went into effect on August 1, 2014. The Code was adopted after a systematic study of the site was undertaken by the Town of Simsbury and The Hartford in 2013 utilizing various consultants, including Gateway Planning, Kimley-Horn and Associates, Inc., Catalyst and CB Richard Ellis.

### **On the Horizon**

*Deepwater Wind Tobacco Valley Solar Project:* Deepwater Wind has proposed a 26.4 megawatt solar project (Tobacco Valley Solar) located on 289 acres of property owned by Griffin Land off Hoskins and County Roads in the North end of Simsbury. The land is currently zoned for industrial and residential use. Under Connecticut State law, entities like Deepwater Wind, proposing to generate more than (1) megawatt of energy are permitted by the Connecticut Siting Council and are not subject to local zoning and land use requirements for the Town of Simsbury. Deepwater Wind has filed a Petition for Declaratory Ruling with the Connecticut Siting Council: Petition No. 1313, which can be found on the Connecticut Siting Council webpage [here](#).

The Town requested and was granted party status in the Connecticut Siting Council proceeding. A public hearing in Simsbury has been scheduled for September 12. To see the schedule for the hearing, visit [here](#).

To speak with a Deepwater Wind representative with questions, objections, concerns and suggestions, please contact Aileen Kenney at 401-648-0607 or [akenney@dwwind.com](mailto:akenney@dwwind.com).

Information about the Deepwater Wind Solar project in Simsbury can be found on the Town website [here](#)

*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>

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*To receive a copy of the First Selectwoman's Report by email, please visit the Town website: [www.simsbury-ct.gov](http://www.simsbury-ct.gov) and click on the "subscribe" button. Sign up for "Town News and Announcements." Contact Lisa at: [lhevner@simsbury-ct.gov](mailto:lhevner@simsbury-ct.gov) or (860) 658-3230*

*"Ask not what your country can do for you — ask what you can do for your country."  
– John F. Kennedy's Inaugural Address, January 20, 1961*