



# Town of Simsbury

933 HOPMEADOW STREET, SIMSBURY, CONNECTICUT 06070

Lisa L. Heavner - First Selectwoman

## *First Selectwoman's Report – August 14, 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.

### **Town of Simsbury and the Simsbury Housing Authority Awarded a \$750,000 Small Cities Grant for Owen L. Murphy Apartments, Virginia Connelly Residences**

The Town of Simsbury and the Simsbury Housing Authority have been awarded a federally funded Small Cities Program Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) from the State of Connecticut in the amount of \$750,000. The grant will be used for critical projects including paving, replacement of an outdated generator, removal of an underground oil tank and replacement of storm doors which are failing apart and failing to insulate resident apartments. The Owen L. Murphy and Virginia Connelly residences combined include 110 affordable housing units serving seniors and the disabled.

Many thanks to the Housing Authority, Town Staff, the Board of Selectmen and our State Delegation for their work and support of this project.

### **Town of Simsbury Awarded GFOA's Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting**

Hot off the presses from the GFOA: *"The Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting has been awarded to the Town of Simsbury by the Government Finance Officers Association of the United States and Canada (GFOA) for its comprehensive annual financial report (CAFR). The Certificate of Achievement is the highest form of recognition in the area of governmental accounting and financial reporting, and its attainment represents a significant accomplishment by government and its management."* Congratulations to Finance Director Sean Kimball and his staff for this accomplishment!

## **Simsbury Grange Applications Approved for Inclusion in Connecticut's 2017 Neighborhood Assistance Act Program**

Congratulations to the Simsbury Grange for its inclusion in the Connecticut Department of Revenue Services' 2017 Neighborhood Assistance Act program. Under the program, businesses contributing to one of the two Simsbury Grange projects will receive a 60% tax credit for their contributions. The first program would cover contributions of up to \$22,000 and is designed to create job training programs which focus on teaching cooking skills as well as developing the facilities necessary to provide the training. It also would provide space to the pediatric epilepsy community for use to share recipes and get together for cooking. The second program would, for \$14,000, allow the Grange to move forward with an energy conservation project including the installation of energy efficient replacement windows, insulation in the attic, energy efficient lighting throughout the Grange and other minor energy improvements. Businesses interested in contributing to these projects can access the "Business Application" form here: [NAA-02](#). Thanks to Susan Masino for leading these projects and to the Board of Selectmen for authorizing the applications.

## **Community Read/Discussion with the First Selectwoman – *The Third Wave***

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!

## **Simsbury Police Department Maintains National Accreditation through the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies (CALEA)**

The Simsbury Police Department has again been awarded national accreditation through the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies (CALEA). This national accreditation signifies excellence in public safety policy and practice. A team of assessors from CALEA arrived in Simsbury in March to examine all aspects of the Simsbury Police Department's policies and procedures, management, operation, support services and facility. Congratulations on maintaining this highly prized recognition of law enforcement professional excellence.

## **Simsbury Police Department Junior Police Academy a Success**

Thanks to the Simsbury Police Department and Chief Ingvertsen for hosting another successful Junior Police Academy (JPA). This was the largest academy so far, with 33 attendees and 8 team leaders. The team leaders, a new concept this year, were kids who attended the JPA in the past who had demonstrated the ability and desire to lead a small group through the week. They helped to guide the attendees through each day. In addition, one team leader was college student Marissa Fenn, who has volunteered her time for several years helping with the JPA.

The purpose of the Simsbury Police Department Junior Police Academy was to offer the youth of Simsbury the opportunity to experience hands-on methods and techniques in the profession of law enforcement. Throughout this process, respect, self-discipline, integrity, equality, education, and physical fitness were stressed. Attendees gained an understanding of community responsibility, problem solving, and the role of the public servant. The goal of the Simsbury Police Department's Junior Police Academy was to provide our youth with an introduction to the field of law enforcement. Through classroom training, hands-on instruction, and practical application, attendees were given the basic building blocks for a better understanding of policing in 2017.

### **Hike to the Mic Event at Heublein Tower – August 26 and 27**

Now's your chance to "Hike to the Mic" – a "Music and Arts Happening" on August 26 & 27, 2017. Those of you who journey the trails through Talcott Mountain State Park to the Heublein Tower will be rewarded with great musical entertainment, food vendors and fantastic family fun! The Hike to the Mic is a great way to celebrate summer and enjoy the "royal view" from one of Connecticut's premier hiking destinations. The event, presented by The Friends of Heublein Tower, sponsors and DEEP, will highlight local and regional talent to be featured at the iconic Tower as well as local food vendors. Proceeds will be used to enhance and restore the Tower. For more information about this wonderful event, click [here](#).

### **Farmington Valley Trails Council Farm-to-Farm Ride September 9**

Join the Farmington Valley Trails Council for their fourth annual Farm-to-Farm bike tour as we travel the scenic back roads of Simsbury for about 20 miles and stop at local farms. Farmers will be there to greet riders, give a history of their farm and what they have to offer. Riders will have the opportunity to purchase goodies at each stop. Farms include: Ryan Family Flower Farm, J.L. Hall Farm, Community Farm of Simsbury, George Hall Farm, Flamig Farm and Tulmeadow Farm. The ride departs at 9:30 AM from the parking lot at Iron Horse Blvd. and Jim Gallagher Way. Riders can expect to return at 2:00 PM. For more information about this event, visit [here](#).

### **Simsbury Women's Arts and Crafts Festival September 16 and 17**

It's almost that time of year again! Save the date for the Simsbury Women's Arts and Crafts Festival on Iron Horse Boulevard on September 16 and 17 from 10 AM to 5 PM. Over 100 juried artists and crafts persons will be displaying and selling their works. Valley Collector Cars will be on display. Admission is free.

### **Simsbury Grange Agriculture Fair on September 16**

Join the Simsbury Grange for their Agriculture Fair on September 16 from 10-3PM. Learn more about your local farmers and showcase your own tasty baked goods and healthy fruits, vegetables and flowers in one of our adult contests. Children can enter one of the many creative contests including Lego creations and photography. Activities include hayrides, kids' activities, contests, refreshments, craft fair, book sale, music, silent auction, and local agriculture displays. Free parking and free admission. For more information, visit [here](#).

### **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](#).



### **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!

## **Community Survey on Simsbury's New Town Manager**

In November 2016, Simsbury's residents voted to make changes to the Town Charter, including a change in the form of government from a First Selectman/Board of Selectmen to a Town Manager/Board of Selectmen form of government. The Board of Selectmen is currently in the process of hiring its first Town Manager, and it is seeking community input through an online survey.

Please visit the following link to fill out the survey and share your thoughts on the qualities the Board should look for in a Town Manager, as well your feedback on the goals and challenges for the community in the coming years: <http://app.surveymethods.com/EndUser.aspx?F0D4B8A0F4B6A5AAFA>

Responses are anonymous, and will be submitted directly to Municipal Resources Inc., the company that has been retained by the Town to assist with the recruitment process.

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

Book collections for the FSPL Annual Book Sale 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!



The book sale will be held September 9 and 10 at the Simsbury Public High School gym from 9-5 on Saturday and 10-4 on Sunday. For more information, please visit [here](#).

## **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)



## **Simsbury Meadows Performing Arts Center**

Check out all the great events happening at the [Simsbury Meadows Performing Arts Center](#).





## 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:

#### *How to Use LinkedIn To grow your Business Workshop*

On August 23 from 6-8 PM, Simsbury Public Library and Greater Hartford SCORE have teamed up to offer this great program on strategies using LinkedIn to grow your businesses. For more information or to sign up, please visit [here](#).

#### *Beyond Customer Service, Creating Customer Loyalty*

On Wednesday, August 30 from 6:30-8 PM, please join Michael Lynch's presentation on how to improve customer loyalty by creating unique points of connection for every customer. For more information or to sign up, please visit [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. The Zoning Commission recently approved signage for the tenant.

## **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. The project has been approved and the applicant is currently addressing conditions of approval with Town staff. The applicant expects to break ground on the project in the next 30 to 45 days.

*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: Congratulations on the groundbreaking of the project scheduled for August 16. Welcome to Simsbury!*

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. The applicant has received its permit from the Connecticut Department of Transportation (CTDOT). In order for construction to move forward, the applicant still needs to receive a permit from the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP). It is anticipated that construction will begin mid to late summer.

[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 five separate parcels of land totaling 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 of this size and output 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](#).

**A public hearing before the Siting Council will be held at Eno Memorial Hall on September 12 with a public field review at 1:30 p.m., an evidentiary session at 3:00 p.m. and a public comment session at 6:30 p.m. To see the Hearing information, click [here](#).**

**Members of the public will be allowed to submit written statements into the record within 30 days after the close of the hearing. Please reference Petition No. 1313 and send to Connecticut Siting Council, Ten Franklin Square, New Britain, CT 06051 or to [siting.council@ct.gov](mailto:siting.council@ct.gov).**

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. (Simscroft-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>

*“No one is born hating another person because of the color of his skin, or his background, or his religion. People must learn to hate, and if they can learn to hate, they can be taught to love, for love comes more naturally to the human heart than its opposite.”*

- Nelson Mandela from Long Walk to Freedom 1994

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