



# Town of Simsbury

933 HOPMEADOW STREET, SIMSBURY, CONNECTICUT 06070

Lisa L. Heavner - First Selectwoman

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

Dear Residents, Friends and Neighbors,

Thank you for the honor and privilege of serving as your last First Selectwoman under the current form of government. I am grateful to all who walked this journey with me and want to acknowledge my family, members of the Board of Selectmen, our state delegation, town staff, community volunteers and the many, many friends who have given me personal support throughout. I am proud of what we have accomplished working together.

When I stepped into this job three years ago, our community was in turmoil. We worked hard to turn dysfunction into a highly effective, bipartisan board.

Together, we responsibly navigated the state financial crisis, instilling fiscal discipline and planning for continued state disruption. Because transparency in government is the foundation of trust, we implemented a broad communications program, including a comprehensive First Selectwoman's Report and the opening of Geographical Information Services (GIS) to the public. To make the budget more accessible, we created the Town's first *Citizen's Guide to the Budget* and launched *OpenSimsbury*, a public financial and budget portal to improve transparency. To better communicate with the public, we revamped the town website and introduced social media in Central Administration.

To improve quality of life, we invested in town assets including main street improvements, Simsbury Farms renovations, upgrades at Town Forest Park, greenway expansions and the creation of a new park at the Flower Bridge. To save tax dollars, we made energy efficiency investments and regionalized services. To preserve open space, we legislated public process before any sale. To honor those who served our country, we supported our Veterans with their beautiful new memorial and to facilitate economic development, we implemented a business visitation program and developed a strategic plan.

Thank you for working with me to accomplish so much together.

While this is not a job one does for thanks, I want to acknowledge the many citizens who have expressed thanks to me these last few weeks. Your kind words mean a lot to me and I am grateful.

These next few years will be exciting as we turn the page from one form of government to the next. As noted by former President Obama, "The great American experiment in self-governance relies on the work of all our people to give it life and shape its destiny." It has been my pleasure to work with you and I know you will continue the work of shaping Simsbury's destiny for many years to come. We are a better community because of you.

Thank you.

Lisa L. Heavner  
First Selectwoman  
Town of Simsbury

## **Congratulations to Municipal Officials Elected to Office on November 7**

Congratulations to municipal officials elected on November 7 and thank you to *all* who ran for office. It's hard to put your name on a ballot and we appreciate your willingness to serve our community. Those elected to the Board of Selectmen include Eric Wellman as First Selectman, Chris Kelly, Mike Paine, Sean Askham, Chris Peterson and Cheryl Cook.

A swearing-in ceremony will be held on December 4 at 6:00 p.m. at Eno Memorial Hall. All are welcome to attend!

For all town election results, please visit [here](#).

## **Warm Welcome to Maria Capriola as Simsbury's New Town Manager**

Please join me in welcoming Maria Capriola as Simsbury's new Town Manager beginning January 29, 2018. Ms. Capriola brings fifteen years of municipal government experience to Simsbury and currently serves as Interim Town Manager for the Town of Mansfield, CT. She received her undergraduate degree in political science and her Masters of Public Administration from the University of Connecticut in 2003. Maria started her professional career in municipal government with the City of Savannah, GA where she worked as a Management Fellow and Management Analyst, Research and Budget Department. In 2006, Ms. Capriola returned to New England as Assistant Chief Administrative Officer for the City of Newburyport, MA.



Ms. Capriola has served as Assistant Town Manager for the Town of Mansfield and is currently serving as their Interim Town Manager since July, 2017. In addition to serving as the Town's Chief Executive Officer as Interim Town Manager, Ms. Capriola has long played a key role in Mansfield's budget development, human resources and collective bargaining as well as development and implementation of ordinances, program evaluation and development of shared services opportunities. Welcome!

## **Fond Farewell to Tom Cooke, Director of Administrative Services**

Please join me in wishing Tom Cooke, Director of Administrative Services, a fond farewell as he moves on from the Town of Simsbury. Tom served as the Director of Administrative Services and staff for the Board of Selectmen for seven years, giving excellent advice and counsel. We are pleased that he will continue to work in a part-time capacity for the next several months to assist with the transition to the Town Manager form of government.

Outside of his work for the town, Tom serves as the President of Voce, Inc., a nationally recognized choral group with a recording that is currently being considered for a Grammy! We wish Tom and Voce continued success and thank him for his service to the town.

## **Budget Update**

On Friday, November 17, the Town of Simsbury was informed that \$531,000 is being held back from state aid appropriated for Simsbury. Because of careful planning, the Town will be able to accommodate this cut through our contingency line item. The hold-back will, however, reduce the amount the Town can return to reserves and put additional pressure on planning next year's budget.

## **Celebrate the Season at the Senior Center!**



Join your Senior Center friends at the Holiday Party from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Thursday, December 7, at Eno Memorial Hall. The catered lunch will feature chicken piccata, glazed carrots, roasted potatoes, rolls and dessert.

The Intonations Choral Group will begin the festivities at 11 a.m. with a sing-along to follow! The cost is \$8. To reserve your spot, please call the Senior Center at (860)658-3273.

## **Public Skating Sessions at Simsbury Farms Have Begun!**

The ice rink at Simsbury Farms is open for the season with public skating sessions on:

Saturdays: 2:15-4:15 PM and 7:30-9:00 PM

Sundays: 2:15-4:15 PM



### **Public Skate Fees:**

Residents	Children 15 and under and Senior Citizens 65+ \$3.00
	Adults \$4.00
Non-residents	Children 15 and under \$5.00
	Senior Citizens 65+ \$5.00
	Adult \$6.00

*Come join the fun!*

## **Connecticut Energy Assistance Program Available**

We are here to help ensure that you stay warm this winter! The Connecticut Energy Assistance Program provides assistance with winter heating costs for Connecticut's lower income households. The Town of Simsbury Social Services Department is available to take applications for this program. Size of household, income, assets, and age will determine the amount of benefits awarded. Please contact us at 860-658-3283 to make an appointment or discuss eligibility.

## **Residents Reminded to Inspect Mailboxes Before Winter Storms**



Winter is coming and the Simsbury Department of Public Works recommends residents take a few minutes to inspect their mailboxes and mailbox posts for cracks, dry rot or deterioration, especially where the post goes into the ground. Posts with cracks, dry rot or deterioration will most likely fail when hit with wet snow during the Town's snowplowing operations. It is easier to replace a weak or worn out mailbox post during the fall months before the ground is frozen.

If you have any questions on preparing your mailbox for the winter season, please visit the link to the town's mailbox information [here](#) or contact the Department of Public Works at 860.658.3222.

## **Town Forest Park Improvements**

Improvements to Town Forest Park approved in the June referendum budget have begun with an anticipated completion targeted for November 30, 2017. Improvements will include replacement of the trailhead footbridge, paved parking lot, paved walking path to the trailhead and pavilion restoration. Access to the parking area, trailhead and pavilion will be prohibited during construction and we request that residents seek alternative access points to the trail system. Thanks for working with us!



## **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.

## **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)



## **Town of Simsbury Charter, Ordinances Available On-Line in Electronic Format**

The Town of Simsbury’s Charter and Ordinances are now available on-line in electronic format. The service is provided by a cloud-based platform called eCode 360© by General Code, and it simplifies how you can access and use Simsbury’s municipal code on-line. It is built with intuitive design, responsive navigation and robust search functionality which will assist staff, elected officials, board members and residents while researching the Town Charter and Ordinances. When an amendment is made to the Charter or Code, the electronic version will automatically be updated by General Code. The new on-line electronic format can be accessed [here](#).

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



### **Ribbon Cutting for Headdress Beauty Lounge**

A ribbon cutting sponsored by the Simsbury Chamber of Commerce for *Headdress Beauty Lounge* located at 1348 Hopmeadow Street was held on November 9, 2017, 5:00 – 6:00 p.m. Headdress Beauty offers beauty services in a way that nurtures inner beauty and peace. Check out their website [here](#).

### **Ribbon Cutting and Welcome to Dr. Douglas M. Hope**

A ribbon cutting for *Dr. Douglas M. Hope*, DMD, MAGD, at 8 Plank Hill Road sponsored by the Simsbury Chamber was held on November 15, 2017. You can check out their website [here](#). Glad to have you in town!

### **Ribbon Cutting and Welcome to Hello Lovely**

Congratulations to *Hello Lovely* located at 771 Hopmeadow Street, offering makeup and lash extension artistry. A ribbon cutting sponsored by Main Street Partnership and the Simsbury Chamber of Commerce was held on November 16 from 5:00-7:00 PM. Check out their website [here](#).

### **Ribbon Cutting for Thai Ocha**

Congratulations and welcome to Thai Ocha located at 1616 Hopmeadow Street, offering great Thai cuisine. A ribbon cutting, sponsored by the Simsbury Chamber of Commerce, will be held on November 28 from 5:30-6:30 PM. Check out their website [here](#).

### **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](#)
- [Doing Business in Simsbury Guide](#)

### **Wednesday Night is Business Night at the Library**

*Grant Writing for Businesses* – Wednesday, November 29, 5:30-7:30 PM

Guest speaker Rebecca Tuttle will show you how to incorporate grant writing techniques into your business plan. She will also discuss how to dig deeper into market research as it relates to developing your grant writing strategy. Co-Sponsored by the Greater Hartford SCORE. For more information or to register, click [here](#).



Aspen Green (formerly referred to as Garden Homes) on the south side of town along Hopmeadow Street is now under construction with some units occupied. 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). For information regarding rentals, you can visit their website at: <http://www.liveataspengreen.com/>.

Highcroft: 272 Rental residences off Powder Forest Drive with 224 apartments and 48 townhomes by the Landworks Development / Nelson Construction team. Phase 1 (128 apartments) is already leased-up and Phase 2 (96 apartments) is under construction with first move-ins expected Spring 2018. The final phase of 48 townhomes is planned for 2019. Please visit <http://www.lifeinsimsbury.com> for general information or <http://www.highcroftapartments.com/> for Highcroft.

Carson Way: 74 Single-family Planned Community Homes off Stratton Brook Road by Landworks/ Nelson. 21 Homes are complete with another 7 are under construction. Anticipated completion in 2020. Visit: <http://www.lifeinsimsbury.com/find-a-home/>

Mill Pond Crossing: 20 Luxury Townhomes on Mill Pond Lane by Landworks / Nelson. Only 4 homes left in this upscale brownstone and siding community within walking distance to Town Center. All 5 buildings are complete. Visit: <http://www.lifeinsimsbury.com/find-a-home/>

Cambridge Crossing: The Town planning boards have approved 88 residential units for the property along Hoskins Road with twenty percent affordable housing. The applicant has broken ground on the project. It is anticipated construction will continue over the next year.

Berkshire Bank: At the Corner of Bushy Hill and Albany Turnpike, Berkshire Bank has started their interior renovations. The Zoning Commission recently approved signage for the tenant. They hope to be open by the end of December.

### **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.

Dunkin Donuts: Great American Donut Inc. of East Plainville, CT received approval to construct a new Dunkin Donuts store at 1225 Hopmeadow Street currently owned by Antonio's LLS. Construction was approved on September 18, 2017.

*The Ensign House:* Located on the corner of Drake Hill and Hopmeadow Street, this property was recently sold to Mark and Ieke Scully, with the goals of preserving “the stone mansion, turning it into residential apartments and building additional net zero residential units on the property.”

*The Silverman Group:*

On May 3, 2017, the Town’s Zoning Commission approved an application by Silverman SL for an approval under the Hartford-Simsbury Form Based Code. The project 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 developer broke ground in mid-September.

**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.

The Siting Council concluded its public hearing on Petition 1313 – DWW Solar II, LLC on November 2, 2017. Counsel for the Town is currently preparing final briefs for the Siting Council.

*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>

*“I slept and dreamt that life was joy. I awoke and saw that life was service. I acted and behold, service was joy.”*

Rabindranath Tagore