
FIRST SELECTMAN'S REPORT

TO: Board of Selectmen
FROM: Eric Wellman – First Selectman
DATE: March 25, 2019

Budget Update

On March 19th, the Board of Selectmen presented its [adopted budget](#) to the Board of Finance. The budget, as it currently stands, maintains town services at their current level, and contains very few service enhancements. Healthcare costs and debt service have proven to be a significant budget driver. We are working hard to balance those obligations, the high expectations of our residents for services, and a desire to keep increases in the mill rate in check. You can find all of the budget materials [here](#), including the full budget document as well as a PowerPoint summary.

Since the Town is developing its budget at the same time the state is developing theirs, there is a degree of uncertainty in this year's process. Approximately 6% of the Town budget comes from state sources. According to Governor Lamont's proposed budget, Simsbury would lose a net \$244,000 in the upcoming fiscal year, with that number increasing in future years as towns take on a greater share of teacher pension costs. We have developed our budget to reflect the assumptions in Governor's proposed budget and we are in regular contact with Senator Witkos and Representative Hampton through this process.

The budget is likely to change before it is final. On **Tuesday April 2nd**, the Board of Finance will be holding a public hearing on the budget. The referendum at Henry James Middle School is scheduled for **Tuesday May 14th**.

I welcome your comments and feedback throughout this process. You can email me or any member of the Board of Selectmen through the [Contact All link](#) on the Board of Selectman page.

Wild and Scenic River Designation

I am excited to share that Congress has designated the lower Farmington River, which includes Simsbury, a Wild and Scenic River. The Wild and Scenic designation was created by Congress in 1968 to ensure certain rivers remain in a free flowing condition, while also recognizing their appropriate use and development. This designation would not have been possible without a decade plus of work by the Lower Farmington River and Salmon Brook Wild and Scenic Study Commission. The next step is to form an advisory committee to create strategies that bring communities together in protecting, enhancing, and managing local river resources.

Planning Update

- A new restaurant will be moving into the 1820 House (former Metro Bis location). The new operator has filed for a special exception with the Zoning Commission to change the type of liquor license for the facility. This is scheduled for a public hearing on 4/1/2019.
- Landworks will be breaking ground on 48 townhouses associated with the Highcroft Development off Powder Forest Drive.
- 200 Hopmeadow Street (former Hartford property): The plan for the property consists of apartments, an assisted living facility, and some commercial development. Work has begun on one of two commercial buildings for the development. The assisted living portion of the development is scheduled to be open in late July/early August.

Memorial Day Parades

The Town of Simsbury, American Legion Post 84 and the Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 1926 are organizing two Memorial Day parades on May 27th. The Tariffville parade will march along Winthrop Street starting at 9am followed by a ceremony at St. Bernard's Cemetery. The Simsbury parade will start at 1:30. As usual, it will proceed south along Hopmeadow Street from Owens Brook Boulevard to the Library. There will be a ceremony on the Simsbury Veterans Memorial following the parade. The theme this year is the 75th anniversary of D-Day. We will be recognizing our World War II veterans and the Scouts will tell stories of 5 of Simsbury's World War II veterans who died in service.

Alzheimer's Program

The Alzheimer's Association presents *10 Warning Signs of Alzheimer's*, a program at the Simsbury Public Library, March 26th from 5:30 – 7:30. A light dinner will be served from 5:30 – 6. RSVP: 800-272-3900.

Old Growth Forest Network

Earlier this year, the Board of Selectmen voted unanimously for Belden Forest to join the Old Growth Forest Network. In doing so, Simsbury became the first community in Connecticut to apply for this designation. The mission of the Network is to designate at least one publically accessible forest in each county to become a future Old Growth Forest. The designation is not legally binding. It's a statement of intent to let the forest evolve naturally. Belden Forest will continue to have hiking trails that are maintained to provide for safety, and a formal dedication will be planned at Belden this fall.

On Thursday March 28th there will be the Connecticut Premier of "The Lost Forests of New England" at 7:30 pm at Cinestudio, 300 Summit St., Hartford. This 2018 film features stunning footage of rare Ancient Forests. The filmmaker will be participating in a discussion after the showing.

New Park Construction

In June, the town is scheduled to begin work on a new park next to the Flower Bridge. It will include new landscaping, paver walkways, and a new pavilion. This project will also improve access to the river for the launching of kayaks. While this park will enhance an already amazing attraction, the town will unfortunately need to close the Flower Bridge for much of the 2019 season. It will remain open until June to allow for the annual Duck Race and Burgers on the Bridge Fundraisers.

If you have questions about the new park or the bridge closure, I encourage you to [review a presentation](#), which was recently delivered to the Board of Selectmen. The temporary closure of the bridge is not something we take lightly, but I'm very excited that we'll be able to unveil the new park in time for Simsbury's 350th celebration.

Sustainable CT

At our February 11th meeting, the Board of Selectmen adopted a resolution joining the Sustainable CT program. It's an environmental certification program that towns can join free of charge. The part of the program I'm most excited about is the structure it will provide our town in the creation of a roadmap of projects to make the town more environmentally friendly. You can see the presentation to the Board of Selectmen [here](#). Thank you to the members of the Clean Energy Task Force for taking the lead on this initiative!

Deepwater Wind Solar Project

Development and Management Plans have been filed for the Deepwater Wind solar project with the Connecticut Siting Council. The D&M plan is essentially a detailed overview of how the 26.4-megawatt solar array will be built. Staff evaluated the submission and feedback to the Siting Council. This project has tremendous public interest, so it's our intent to do a public presentation at an upcoming Board of

Selectmen meeting this spring. If you're interested in learning more about the project, we have aggregated information on the [First Selectman's Page](#) of the Town website.

Safe Cities

Each year [Safewise](#) shares its list of America's 100 safest cities. This year, Simsbury ranked 30th on the list. Connecticut had 14 towns make the list; the second most towns of any state in the country. I am grateful for the work of the Simsbury Police Department in all they do around crime prevention in our community.

Save the Dates!

The Board of Selectman has approved public gathering permits for the following 2019 events:

- [The Simsbury Flea and Smorgasbord](#) features vendors and food trucks at Simsbury Meadows on Saturday April 27th.
- [The Simsbury River Run](#) is 5K and 10K road race that's taking place Sunday April 28th. There will be family activities at Simsbury Meadows where the race begins.
- The annual [Mini Maker Faire](#) will take place May 4th at the Simsbury Public Library.
- [The Simsbury Triathlon](#) will take place May 5th. It includes a run, bike ride, and kayak portion. A duathlon (no kayaking) is also being offered this year.
- The Tootin Hills PTO is holding their annual [Duck Race](#) at the Flower Bridge on May 24th from 4-7pm.
- [The Iron Horse Half Marathon](#), 10k and 5k, will take place Sunday June 2nd.
- [The Valley Collector Club Car Show](#) will take place Sunday July 21st in the parking lots along Iron Horse Blvd.
- Simsbury is the summer home of the Hartford Symphony Orchestra! [The Talcott Mountain Music Festival](#) will feature five concerts June – July (6/28, 7/5, 7/12, 7/19, 7/26)
- The Simsbury Volunteer Fire Department is hosting a Chicken Barbecue on June 29th at the Weatogue Fire Station in celebration of their 75th anniversary.
- [Circus Smirkus](#) is a youth traveling circus that will be coming to the Simsbury Meadows Performing Arts Center July 30th and 31st for four shows.
- The Simsbury Woman's Club's [50th Arts and Crafts Festival](#) will take place September 14th and 15th in the parking lots along Iron Horse Blvd.
- The [2019 Walk MS](#) will take place September 15th starting at the Simsbury Meadows Performing Arts Center.

Help with Taxes

AARP Tax-Aide Volunteers are providing free individual income tax filing assistance on Thursdays now through April 11th and Tuesdays March 5th – 26th at the Simsbury Public Library. Appointments are available from 10am – 3pm. Please book an appointment ahead of time by calling the Simsbury Senior Center at (860) 658-3273. Walk-ins will not be accepted.

The program is open to anyone who needs assistance, regardless of age, income, or town residence. The volunteers will be located in the Library's Program Room #2.

Simsbury's 350th Celebration

I am excited about the planning that's going into Simsbury's 350th anniversary celebration, which will be comprised of numerous events throughout next year. I want to acknowledge the dozens of volunteers and organizations involved, and all of the people giving their time to plan this anniversary celebration. The 350th Committee gave a presentation to the Board of Selectmen at our January 14th meeting. You can see a tentative schedule of the signature events [here](#) (page 14). They include an antique show, a river day, a

country fair, and many, many more! I also wanted to point you to a recent show on SCTV that gives a look into the planning going into next year's celebration. You can find that [here](#).

Opportunities to Serve Your Town

There are more than a dozen boards and commissions that serve our town whose members are appointed by the Board of Selectmen. We're always looking for volunteers willing to serve and I'm pleased to share that the Town has made the process easier and more transparent. You can learn more about all of our boards and commissions, current vacancies, and how to apply [here](#).

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

TO: Board of Selectmen
FROM: Maria E. Capriola – Town Manager
DATE: March 25, 2019

BOARD OF SELECTMEN BUSINESS:

FY 19/20 Budget: The public hearing on the budget will be held next Tuesday, April 2nd at 6pm at Program Room 1 of the Simsbury Public Library (please note a location change from last year). We will be advertising in the newspaper, through social media, and will be posting notices on A-frame/sandwich boards throughout town. All are encouraged to attend. If a continuation for the hearing is needed, it will be held on April 23rd.

Sustainability Team Agenda Item: At their meeting on March 21st, the Culture, Parks and Recreation Commission endorsed the appointment of Sarah Cramer (R) to the Sustainability Team. It would be appreciated to add her name for consideration later this evening to the motion for the Sustainability Team appointments.

DEPARTMENTAL NEWS & NOTES

Engineering: Aquarion Water Company will be upgrading the existing water main servicing a portion of Firetown Road from West Street to the existing water tank south of Timber Ridge Drive. The water main is being replaced for a number of reasons including size, location, age, and break history. The work is scheduled to begin within the next few weeks and will continue through the summer. Signage and flaggers will be posted to alert motorists of temporary alternating one-way traffic through construction areas. At the end of each work day, the road will be opened to two-way traffic. Temporary water outages are expected to be less than an hour, and customers will be contacted by an Aquarion approved contractor or engineering inspector to coordinate switchovers. They will provide identification showing their credentials. All planned and unplanned outages will be communicated by Aquarion's Code Red phone calls, which is a free service that customers can sign up for on Aquarion's website (<http://www.aquarion.com/CT>). Residents in the neighborhood recently received a mailing from Aquarion regarding the matter.

Police: Police has a number of personnel related announcements.

- After serving 5 years as the Community Services Officer, Patrol Officer First Class Lauren Devin was reassigned to the Detective Division. Her new assignment as detective began in February 2019. She joins Detective Tim May and the supervisor of the Division Detective Sergeant Greg Samselski. She can be reached at (860) 658-3142.
- In February 2019, after serving almost 6 years in the Patrol Division, Patrol Officer First Class JP Lessard was assigned as the Community Services Officer. He is supervised by Sergeant Matt Christian and he can be reached at (860) 658-3131.
- Connor Arnold has been selected as the newest sworn police officer to fill a current vacancy. Connor has served with the Air Force Reserve since November 2016. He is pursuing an associate's degree in aerospace maintenance technologies. We welcome anyone from the public to join us for Connor's swearing-in ceremony in the Main Meeting Room at Town Hall on April 2, 2019 at 2:30pm.

Town Manager's Office: We are now accepting nominations for our 2019 Hometown Heroes Program. Nominations are being accepted in writing or online through 9am, April 22, 2019: <https://www.simsbury-ct.gov/hometownhero>. To be nominated a person should be a resident, a person who is active in the Simsbury community, or who lived in Simsbury during the time period that is under consideration and has demonstrated selfless and altruistic behavior which contributes significantly to the betterment of our Town. Hometown Hero nominations can't be accepted for a member of Town staff, a sitting elected or appointed official, or a person that has benefited economically from his/her endeavors on behalf of the Town for which they are being nominated. The annual Hometown Hero ceremony will be held on Wednesday, May 29th at 4:30pm at the Eno Memorial Hall auditorium.

SPECIAL EVENTS & PROGRAMS:

Veterans Coffee Hour: Join us at Eno Memorial Hall on Monday, April 1st, from 10am to 11am for a veterans coffee hour. This is a great opportunity to meet other veterans, share similar military experiences, discuss issues that concern veterans and their families, and learn about available resources. This event is co-sponsored by the Simsbury Senior Center and Resilience Grows Here, a community-based initiative of the Farmington Valley Health District focused on the mental health of veterans and their families. For more information, contact the Senior Center at 860-658-3273.

Sensory Friendly Spring Fling: The Simsbury Aging and Disability Commission and Community & Social Services Department are cosponsoring the first annual Sensory Friendly Spring Fling on Wednesday April 3rd. The event will run from 4pm to 6pm in the auditorium at Eno Memorial Hall. This event is open to all residents who would like to come welcome spring in a sensory friendly environment. Attendees will participate in hands-on sensory focused activities while enjoying snacks and refreshments. For more information please call Simsbury Social Services 860-658-3283.

Shred Event: On Saturday, April 6th the Simsbury Police Department and Community and Social Services Department are sponsoring a shred event from 9am-1pm at the Simsbury Town Hall parking lot. This event is open only to Simsbury residents and is free. There is a 3 bag maximum (grocery size) per household. If you have questions about the event, please contact PFC J.P. Lessard at 860-658-3131.

Household Hazardous Waste Collection: There will be a household hazardous waste collection on Saturday, April 27, 2019 at the Farmington High School, 10 Monteith Drive, Farmington, CT from 8:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. This regional initiative is open to all residents from Simsbury, Avon, Canton, Farmington, and Granby. Sample types of items accepted include: fluorescent and compact light bulbs; batteries; lawn care chemicals; switches or items containing Mercury; household cleaners; and chemicals from the garage or workshop. In addition to collecting household hazardous waste items, residents can also drop off electronics, used motor oil, and personal documents for shredding (up to 2 boxes) at no cost.