
FIRST SELECTMAN’S REPORT

TO: Board of Selectmen
FROM: Wendy Mackstutis – First Selectman
DATE: May 8, 2023

First Selectman Report 5/8/2023

I apologize for missing the Board of Selectmen meeting on Monday night, but I wasn’t feeling well and had to miss my first meeting since joining the board in December 2019. I’m feeling better and getting back up to speed. That’s why this report is going out a bit late.

Bike Awareness Month

At tonight’s meeting, the BOS presented a proclamation announcing Bike Awareness Month, which rolls around every May. Thank you to all of our advocates out there who continue the vision of Simsbury as a multi-use trail destination for all to enjoy.

Our Public Works Director Tom Roy has coordinated and scheduled the annual ‘Board of Selectmen and Friends Bike Ride’ for 2023, which will be held on May 30th at 5:30pm, starting in the Town Hall parking lot. Please join us for this easy ride along the Farmington Canal Heritage Trail from Iron Horse to Lake Basile, where we stop for a little break. Everyone is welcome!

PROCLAMATION

May 2023 is Bike Month in Simsbury, CT

WHEREAS, Millions of Americans engage in bicycling as an environmentally sound form of transportation, an excellent form of fitness, and a quality family recreation activity, and in Simsbury offers a great way to enjoy our scenic community and surrounding landscape; and,

WHEREAS, Simsbury led the state as Connecticut’s First Bicycle Friendly Community and bicycle-friendly communities have been shown to improve health and quality of life for residents, by making our town attractive to businesses and citizens who enjoy safe, outdoor recreation that offers sustainable transportation while contributing to economic development; and

WHEREAS, the Simsbury Bike and Pedestrian Advisory Committee, Simsbury Public Schools, Simsbury Culture, Parks and Recreation, Simsbury Police Department, Simsbury Public Works, Simsbury Public Library and various companies and civic groups will be promoting bicycling during the month of May 2023; and

WHEREAS, these groups offer many contributions to Bike Month as they help promote tourism, and advocate for greater public awareness of bicycle safety in an effort to reduce collisions, injuries, and fatalities, while improving the health and safety of everyone on our roads and multi-use trails;

WHEREAS, we recognize that investing in bicycle-friendly activities, safety, and our multi-use trails is good public policy that helps connect us to our neighboring towns, so others get to know Simsbury, while continuing to build on our great community spirit; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Town of Simsbury Board of Selectmen hereby proclaims the month of May 2023 as ***BIKE MONTH*** in beautiful and Silver Level Bicycle Friendly Simsbury, Connecticut and we urge all of you to get your helmets on and start pedaling.

Budget Referendum

Voting will be held at Henry James Middle School on May 16th from 6:00am to 8:00pm. Budget Mailers should be in your mailboxes to review the key facts and figures around the FY23/24 budget. Here is the link to this year's budget information. Make sure your voice is heard.

<https://www.simsbury-ct.gov/finance/pages/2023-2024-budget-information>

Hometown Heroes

Please join us as we present 2023's Hometown Heroes awards to the members of the community that were selected as this year's recipients. These community members were recommended by you, and reviewed by the Hometown Heroes Committee, where the final selections took place from those that met the criteria.

This event will be held outside at town hall, on Monday, May 22nd from 5:00pm – 6:00pm before our regularly scheduled Board of Selectmen meeting.

Town Manager Search Update

Just want to update everyone on where we stand in our search for a new Town Manager.

Chief Nick Boulter is our Interim Town Manager until June 1st, at which time Lee Erdmann will be joining us.

Lee brings a wealth of state-wide experience in multiple roles, but many years as the Town Manager of Wethersfield. The Executive Search Committee, made up of our full board, has gone thru presentations from the respondents to the RFQ process. There will be a special meeting next week that will be viewable to the public (date and time tbd), where the board will discuss and decide on the consulting firm to see us thru this process.

Simsbury Community Cleanup Day – April 22 Thank-you

A big thank you to all of you who helped make Simsbury cleaner on Earth Day!

Great job by Culture, Parks and Rec Director Tom Trybulski, and Public Works Director/Town Engineer for their organizational efforts and day-of management. Thanks to Deputy First Selectman Amber Abbuhl for working with the team to make this a success. We also appreciated the help from those involved with the Farmington Valley Trails Council for sharing information that day.

Chamber of Commerce Simsbury Public Servant of the Year

At the Annual Meeting and awards ceremony of the Granby-Simsbury Chamber of Commerce, the Board of Selectmen is always asked to select a deserving public servant of the year. This year, we selected Mark Deming, as the award winner based on all he has done for our community. He is an active member and past president of the Friends of Simsbury Farms, along with being a long-time member of the Simsbury-Granby Rotary. Mark was instrumental in the creation of Rotary Park, our boundless playground in the center of town, through a partnership with the town. He has contributed his construction skills and helped many organizations with projects in town, including the Performing Arts Center, Simsbury ABC House, Simsbury Historical Society and other local landmarks.

Touch-A-Truck and Open House – May 20, 2023

Please join our Public Works Department at the DPW facility at 66 Town Forest Road, West Simsbury, for a Touch-a-Truck and Open House on Saturday, May 20, 2023, from 9:00am to 12:30pm. Last year's event was well attended and a great event for the kids (and their parents!) that allowed all to enjoy a wide range of town vehicles up-close and personal. There will be giveaways and guided tours of the facility. Participants are encouraged to bring a non-perishable food item to "Fill-a-Truck." All ages, drop in. Rain or shine.

Necker's 75th Anniversary

I just give a shout-out and congratulations to Necker's, on being a Simsbury Landmark and thank them for providing us with a local option for our toy needs and much more. Our State Senator, State Rep and I joined the owners and members of our community to recognize their dedication to Simsbury, with proclamations and cake on Saturday, May 6th.

Wendy

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

TO: Board of Selectmen
FROM: Nick Boulter – Interim Town Manager
DATE: May 8, 2023

CORONAVIRUS UPDATE

As we enter the end of the federal pandemic emergency designation, tonight will be the final Coronavirus Update shared via the Town Manager's Report.

The state's municipal COVID alert system has not been updated for Simsbury for the period ending on April 30th. Five weeks ago, we had a total of 5 cases. We also had a positivity rate of 4.12%. As a reminder, this data does not include positive test results from at-home test kits.

In Hartford County, community levels of transmission are "low", as determined by the CDC. At this time, there are no counties in Connecticut considered to be "high" according to the CDC Community Levels categorization. For additional information on the CDC Community Levels of Transmission, please click on this link <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/science/community-levels.html>.

The federal government is again offering free COVID test kits. Each household is eligible to order 4 kits. You can order the kits at: <https://www.covid.gov/tests>.

BOARD OF SELECTMEN BUSINESS

Additions to the Agenda:

- **Department of Public Works Agriculture Grant** – The Department of Public Works has identified an agriculture grant that would prove beneficial to the Town by [INSERT]. This item can be added to tonight's meeting agenda under Selectmen Action with a 2/3 vote of the body.

SIMSBURY FOOD PANTRY UPDATE

On April 25, 2023, the Simsbury Food Pantry made an announcement via social media of their current needs, and encouraged residents and businesses to start a food drive. The announcement can be seen [here](#). Our office shared this announcement on the Town of Simsbury Facebook and Twitter pages. Current highly-needed items include Oatmeal, coffee, tea, canned meals, pasta sauce, granola bars, crackers, tuna, canned chicken and more. Items are dropped off at 7 Wescott Road, Simsbury. Questions may be directed to Rachael Loveland at Rloveland@simsbury-ct.gov.

DEPARTMENT NEWS & NOTES

Social Services: A big 'thank you' goes out to Tom Meek and his team of tax preparers for generously volunteering their talents and time this tax season. Tom and his team of 6 volunteers helped 216 taxpayers (184 were from Simsbury) file 220 tax returns, all at no charge to the residents. 84% of those assisted were 60 years or older and 125 people were able to get a refund on their taxes. Many thanks to the Senior Center and Library staff for their assistance in supporting the program.

Library: At the Connecticut Library Association Annual Conference last week in Mystic, Simsbury Public Library was awarded the Connecticut Library Association (CLA) Excellence in Public Library

Service Award for its 10 year commitment to bicycling as a Town initiative, a form of sustainable transportation and its 2022 recognition as a Silver Level Bike Friendly Business by the League of American Bicyclists, the first Library in CT to receive this distinction. Accepting the award were Library Director Lisa Karim, Head of Borrowing and Technical Services Rachel Gravel, who engaged with over 3,500 people on the Library's book bike last season, and Simsbury Bicycle Pedestrian Advisory Committee Member Debbie Thibodeau, who was instrumental in helping the Library receive its Bicycle Friendly status.

This is the 4th time in 10 years that Simsbury Public Library has received the CLA Excellence in Public Library Service Award.

Public Works:

- **Touch-a-Truck:** On Saturday, May 20, 2023, the Simsbury Department of Public Works will be hosting an Open House and Touch-a-Truck event at our facility on Town Forest Road. Kids will be able to get an up-close look at our Town's trucks and families can learn about our Public Works Department. We will have giveaways for the kids and guided tours of the facility. Participants are encouraged to bring a non-perishable food item to "Fill-a-Truck" for the food bank. This event is for all ages and will be held rain or shine.
- **Household Hazardous Waste Collection:** The Simsbury Public Works Department will be hosting a Household Hazardous Waste Collection at the DPW facility at 66 Town Forest Road, West Simsbury, on Saturday, June 10, 2023, from 8:00 AM to 1:00 PM. Participants should access Town Forest Road from Stratton Brook Road to keep the line orderly. This event is run in conjunction with the Towns of Avon, Canton, Farmington, Granby, and Suffield. Residents will be able to dispose of their qualifying items at no cost by providing proof of residency upon arrival. These collections are for items that cannot go into the regular trash, keeping hazardous materials from being deposited into the landfill. Residents can find more information on which items would be accepted at this collection by visiting the following: <https://www.simsbury-ct.gov/public-works/pages/household-hazardous-waste-collection>

Police Department:

- The Police Department hosted the 20th annual Citizen Police Academy and graduated where 12 attendees last week. The 10 week program allows members of the public to learn about the purpose and function of our police department and provides opportunities for the public and members of the police department to interact. If you have not attended one of our academies, I highly recommend it.
- The Police Department will be hosting the annual Junior Police Academy July 31 through August 4. The academy provides children of Simsbury (5th grade to 8th grade) the opportunity to experience hands-on methods and techniques in the profession of law enforcement. Throughout this academy, respect, self-discipline, integrity, equality, education, and physical fitness will be stressed. Attendees will also gain an understanding of community responsibility, problem solving, and the role of the public servant. Visit the police department website for more information and an application.

Appreciation

Last week was Municipal Clerk Appreciation Week and this week is National Public Works Week. The Clerk's Office is responsible for safekeeping town records, processing various administrative aspects of local government and front-line customer service for the town. Public Works connects all of us through infrastructure and service and plays a significant role in emergency management, stability and continuity. These two departments continuously strive to improve service and the quality of life in our community and are led and staffed by highly dedicated professionals who take pride in their quality of service.