
FIRST SELECTMAN'S REPORT

TO: Board of Selectmen
FROM: Eric Wellman – First Selectman
DATE: June 8, 2019

Planning Department

- The Planning Commission approved, pursuant to a judge's order, the affordable housing application involving the subdivision of 80 Climax Road. This application was remanded by the Court back to Commission to hear more information specific to the drainage design and function associated with the 19 lot development.
- 200 Hopmeadow Street (former Hartford property): The project includes 282 rental units (about half have been permitted so far), a 120 bed assisted living facility, and 11 thousand square feet of commercial space. All of the development is on the north side of the property. The south side, where the former Hartford building was located, has no development at this time. Construction is underway and the assisted living facility is expected to be open by August. Construction is proceeding on 124 out of the 282 rental units. Work has started on the sidewalk along Hopmeadow Street that will connect the project to the Bike Trail via Latimer Lane.
- Planning Director Mike Glidden recently shared an update with the Economic Development Commission, summarizing key projects around town that are either planned or underway. It has the latest update on projects we frequently receive questions about including the former Hartford property, Powder Forest, and the Big Y parcel. You can find the full PowerPoint [here](#).

Ensign Bickford Expanding Simsbury Workforce

I am pleased to share that The Ensign Bickford Aerospace and Defense Company is significantly expanding its Simsbury operation. The company is planning to create a center of excellence for electronic design and manufacturing for its Aerospace and Defense products. It plans on making over \$10M dollars of investment over the next 5 to 10 years and adding over 140 new jobs over the next 3 years right here in our community. Ensign Bickford has been the corner stone of Simsbury for the last 183 years and this investment helps to cement its future in Simsbury for many years to come.

Thank you EBAD for recognizing that Simsbury is a great place to expand a business, to the Simsbury Main Street Partnership, to our awesome town staff, and to the Board of Selectmen for working so hard to make this possible.

[Here is a link](#) to a recent Courant article with more information about the expansion.

Ribbon Cuttings & New Businesses

- We are pleased to welcome Soma Grille, which recently opened in the 1820 House. Their ribbon cutting will be held July 9th at 5pm.

Rainbow Crosswalk

On Friday July 5th the Town held a ribbon cutting for the new rainbow crosswalk near the Simsbury Meadows Performing Arts Center. The response I have received from the community has been overwhelmingly positive and I thank the Board of Selectmen for their unanimous endorsement of my proclamation declaring June LGBTQ Month in Simsbury.

Simsbury Public Library Fine Free Initiative

The Simsbury Public Library is conducting a pilot program for one year which eliminates fines on all but the most popular items. Instead, people with overdue materials will be encouraged to contribute to a voluntary donation jar. In eliminating fines, Simsbury joins a growing number of libraries across the country. The primary goal is to ensure all members of our community have access to our library's resources. Our research shows that other libraries that have gone fine free see an increase in circulation and no significant change in how quickly items get returned. We're going to monitor for a year and evaluate whether to continue.

[Here is a link](#) to a recent Courant article with more information on the initiative.

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. I frequently meet people who are interested in opportunities to serve, but don't know what's out there or how to get involved. Going forward, I'll be including a standing section in my First Selectman's report with current vacancies. Boards with openings include:

- Community for Care
- Historic District Commission
- Insurance Committee
- Recycling Committee
- Tourism Committee

If you're interested in applying for any of these opportunities, you can submit a [volunteer form](#) online. If you have any questions about what these committees do or the appointment process, you can always reach out to me directly at ewellman@simsbury-ct.gov.

Tobacco Valley Solar

Construction is underway on the Tobacco Valley Solar development on the north side of town off of Hoskins and County Roads. Construction is expected to wrap up in mid-October. I recognize how disruptive the construction process is for residents who live in the area. One of the most important things we can do is keep the lines of communication open through the summer. Anyone with concerns can always reach out to me or to Aaron Svedlow, the project's development manager (aaron@nleservices.com).

I'm told that the next 4 weeks will be the most disruptive from a noise standpoint due to the pounding of pilings into the soil. Toward the end of July/early August, the noise level is expected to be significantly reduced as the panels are installed on the stands.

At our May 29th Board of Selectman meeting, Planning Director Mike Glidden and town engineer Jeff Shea shared a presentation on the Tobacco Valley Solar Project, the 26 Megawatt solar installation. You can access a link to that presentation [here](#).

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

Summer Reading Program

The Simsbury Library's summer reading program is back and people of all ages are encouraged to participate. The program runs through August 10th.

- Log your reading to earn prizes
- Each time you visit the library you'll get a raffle ticket for the chance to win one of many great prizes

- Each week, the library will be doing different giveaways. This week is a tote bag and next week is a free swim pass to Simsbury Farms.

You can learn more about the program and sign up [here](#).

Bike at Rotary Park

Bring your bike to Rotary Park on Ironhorse Blvd. on July 10th from 2 – 3:30pm. There will be free helmet fittings provided by the Simsbury Police Department, bicycle safety checks provided by the Bicycle Cellar and a frozen treat for all who attend. Thank you to the Simsbury Public Library and the Bicycle Advisory Committee for organizing.

Picnic in the Park

The Aging and Disability Commission and the Simsbury Special Education Parent Teacher Organization invite all residents of Simsbury who have a disability to join us for a picnic, ice cream truck, and entertainment at St. Catherine of Siena Church. The event is free and will be taking place July 27th from 11:30 – 1:30. A big thank you to Kane’s Market and the Aging and Disability Commission for providing the food. Please RSVP to Diana Yeisley Yeisley2@comcast.net or call the Senior Center 860-658-3273.

School News

The Board of Education has engaged a consulting firm on a Facilities Master Plan to develop a roadmap to address concerns around aging buildings and student capacity. On June 5th, the District held a public hearing and information session to solicit feedback and share some initial findings around enrollment projections and building conditions. You can learn more about the work going on and find a link to that presentation [here](#).

New Park Construction

The Town has begun 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.

If you have questions about the new park or the bridge closure, I encourage you to [review a presentation](#), which was delivered earlier this spring 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.

Save the Dates!

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

- [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 2019 CT Volley DIG Tournament is a volley ball tournament that will be taking place August 3rd and 4th at the Simsbury Meadows Performing Arts Center. Spectators are welcome to watch for free.
- Septemberfest is a 3 day event at the Simsbury Meadows Performing Arts Center from September 6th – 8th. This year’s event will feature a fire truck parade on Iron Horse Blvd. in celebration of the Fire Department’s 75th Anniversary.

- 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.
- The annual [Fly-In, Car Show, and Food Truck Festival](#) will be taking place September 22nd at Simsbury Airport with a rain date of September 29th.
- The 2019 [Spooktacular Chili Challenge](#) is scheduled for October 20th at the Simsbury Meadows Performing Arts Center.

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

TO: Board of Selectmen
FROM: Maria E. Capriola – Town Manager
DATE: July 8, 2019

BOARD OF SELECTMEN BUSINESS:

Naming Rights Committee for Park at 1 Old Bridge Road: A reminder that naming suggestions for the new park at 1 Old Bridge Road are being accepted through next Monday, July 15th. Naming suggestions should be submitted to the Town Manager's Office: <https://www.simsbury-ct.gov/home/news/nominations-sought-for-the-naming-of-park-at-1-old-bridge-road>. The Naming Rights Committee is scheduled to meet July 22nd to begin their work.

DEPARTMENTAL NEWS & NOTES

Culture, Parks, and Recreation: The Parks and Open Space Master Plan is underway. The intent of this master plan is to identify our community's park, recreation and open space needs so we can proactively plan for the future. The master planning process includes numerous community engagement opportunities. Focus groups will be conducted July 24-26; participants will be asked a variety of questions to assess customer satisfaction, parks, recreation and open space needs of the community, and issues that should be addressed in the comprehensive plan. A public information session is planned for Thursday, July 25th from 7:00-9:00PM at Sejong Lecture Hall, on the Westminster School campus. Additional engagement opportunities such as an online survey and another public information session will occur this fall.

Town Manager's Office: On June 13, 2019, our Deputy Town Manager attended the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving's orientation for the new Greater Together Community Funds program. The Community Funds were created as a result of the listening tours that the Foundation held during the winter of 2018-2019; click [here](#) to view the video of Simsbury's stop on the listening tour. Through the Community Funds, each town served by the Foundation will receive \$100,000 – half of the money will be available for immediate use, and the other half will be endowed. A percentage of the endowed funds will be available every year as a grant. Each town is required to create an advisory committee, which will create a grant-making process to ensure that the funds have the greatest impact on the community. While the Foundation envisions local officials being involved in the process, the Board of Selectmen will not serve as the appointing authority and elected officials will not be eligible to serve on the committee. In addition, the Town will have no fiduciary or administrative role in the grant-making process. The Foundation will host regional meetings in the fall to further discuss the process for forming the advisory committees. Additional information is included in the Communications section of your packet.