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## FIRST SELECTMAN'S REPORT

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**TO:** Board of Selectmen  
**FROM:** Eric Wellman – First Selectman  
**DATE:** September 29, 2020

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### 2020 General Election

There are two ways to vote in the upcoming general election; in person on November 3, or by absentee ballot. Because of the Covid 19 pandemic, anyone can vote absentee this year. The Secretary of State's office has mailed absentee ballot *applications* to all registered voters. The applications can be returned in a pre-paid envelope or dropped off at Town Hall in the official election drop box. Ballots will be mailed out starting on October 2 to people who submit an application.

The deadline to register for the November 3 election is October 27, 2020. There is a seven-day registration blackout period before the election. If you miss the October 27 deadline, you may register and vote by personally appearing at your town's designated Election Day Voter Registration station. (Simsbury Public Library). Proof of identity and residence is required.

You can find many answers to your questions about the upcoming election on the [Registrar of Voters page](#) on the Town website. From that page you can confirm you're registered to vote, confirm your polling location, download and print an absentee ballot application, and more.

- For questions related to absentee voting, you can call our town clerk: 860-658-3243
- For any other election-related questions, you can call our one of our registrars:
  - Karen Cortes 860-658-3267
  - Susan Salina 860-658-3269

### Simsbury SPIRIT Council

At the Board of Selectmen meeting on September 29, we heard a presentation from the SPIRIT Council, an organization that was formed to help Simsbury move forward on the path to becoming a more open, diverse, and inclusive community. You can view their presentation [here](#). Deputy First Selectman Sean Askham and I will serve as co-liaisons to the SPIRIT Council, underlining the importance of this work. The Board of Selectmen unanimously passed a [resolution](#) declaring racism to be a public health crisis, and committed to 8 principles including becoming an equity and justice-oriented organization and capitalizing on opportunities to advance racial equity.

This Thursday, October 1, from 6:30 – 8pm, the SPIRIT Council is holding its third in a series of community conversations. In recognition of Disability Awareness Month, October's forum will focus on the experiences of individuals living with disabilities. The conversation will take place over Zoom and you must pre-register on the [Library's website](#).

### Updates from the Planning Department

- Construction on Big Y is progressing, and the store is scheduled for a soft opening the last week of October.
- The Zoning Commission has received an application for the development of a parcel that's currently vacant just west of the Hoffman dealership on Route 44. The application calls for the construction of a gas station and an electric car dealership, the first of its kind in Connecticut. The property was recently rezoned from residential to commercial.

### **Meadowood Conservation Purchase**

I wanted to provide an update on the potential acquisition of a nearly 300-acre parcel known as Meadowood. On September 16, [the Board of Finance](#) heard a presentation from the Trust for Public Land, a nonprofit organization that the Town has engaged to assist with the purchase. To learn more about the history of the property and the potential acquisition, you can [view a presentation](#) on the Town website that's posted on the Open Space Committee's page.

The proposal calls for the preservation of more than 100-acres of farm land, nearly 140-acres that would contain recreational trails, the construction of athletic fields on a 24-acre parcel, and the preservation of historic barns and a Martin Luther King interpretive display. The Trust for Public Land continues to work to secure grant funding of approximately \$4 million. The Town's share would be approximately \$2.2 million. The project would ultimately need to be approved by the voters at referendum, which would most likely occur in 2021.

### **Simsbury Art Trail Extended**

The Simsbury Art Trail, featuring 36 life-size statues, has been extended until October 5<sup>th</sup>. A closing ceremony will take place at the Simsbury Meadows Performing Arts Center on October 6<sup>th</sup>. Thank you to the Chamber of Commerce for organizing this spectacular trail and to the many individuals and businesses whose donations made it possible.

### **350<sup>th</sup> Anniversary History Walk**

The 350<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Committee has unveiled a history walk: 350 Years of Simsbury in 350 Steps. Located along the Greenway next to the Performing Arts Center, the history walk tells the story of Simsbury with pictures, dates, and fun facts. The history walk is a collaboration with the Simsbury Historical Society, The Simsbury Free Library, and the Simsbury Meadows Performing Arts Center. Thank you to Big Y Foods, Liberty Bank, Mitchell Auto Group, and Elkinson + Sloves, who conceived and designed the history walk.

Because of Covid, the 350<sup>th</sup> Committee has had to reschedule and reimagine many of the planned celebrations. You can find the latest at [Simsbury350.com](https://Simsbury350.com). There is also an online store where you can purchase 350 merchandise including a copper plated commemorative medallion that features Simsbury's most iconic landmarks.

### **Hometown Heroes**

Congratulations to our 2020 Hometown Heroes! Every year since 1986, the Town has celebrated its Hometown Heroes – residents who, through a deed or service make the town a better place to live. Each spring we accept nominations. Our ceremony was delayed this year because of Covid. Congratulations to our 2020 Hometown Heroes: Jean Miles, Katie Costolnick, Margaret Diachenko, Ann Long, Rob Cushman, Jim Fleming, and Gail Ryan.

### **Supporting our Food Programs**

Simsbury Social Services has nearly doubled the number of households it's serving during the Covid-19 pandemic. Before the pandemic the Town was serving approximately 80 households per month with our food programs, which has now increased to about 140 households. Over the summer, we increased the frequency to every three weeks. Now that school has started, we've returned to monthly because of sustainability concerns and also decreasing the amounts of gift cards we are distributing.

Local families continue to rely on your donations. Donations of money will help us purchase gift cards for groceries as well as fresh produce for our distributions. Donations of gift cards are also appreciated. We are also seeking donations of non-perishable food items, household cleaning products, and toiletries. Our goal is to give everyone at least one full bag of items at each distribution, plus a bag of produce, and a gift card.

There is a donation cart in front of Eno Memorial Hall, 754 Hopmeadow Street. If you have any questions, please call Social Services at 860-658-3283.

### **How to Watch Town Meetings**

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, most town meetings continue to occur virtually, including the Board of Selectmen. All public meetings can be watched live on [SCTV](#) and are also archived at [SimsburyTV.org](#). Meetings can also be viewed on xfinity channels 96 and 1090 and Frontier channel 6071.

There are now two ways the public can participate in Board of Selectmen meetings. You can speak in public audience by joining the Zoom meeting. Please pre-register by sending an email to Tom Fitzgerald [tfitzgerald@Simsbury-ct.gov](mailto:tfitzgerald@Simsbury-ct.gov). You can continue to email your comments and they will be read out loud. Please send an email to Ericka Butler [ebutler@simsbury-ct.gov](mailto:ebutler@simsbury-ct.gov). I look forward to returning to in-person meetings as soon as it is safe and feasible to do so.

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## TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

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**TO:** Board of Selectmen  
**FROM:** Maria E. Capriola – Town Manager  
**DATE:** September 29, 2020

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### CORONAVIRUS UPDATE

Town Hall is welcoming back in-person visitors beginning Monday October 5<sup>th</sup>. During this next phase of re-opening, in-person visits to Town Hall can be conducted from 8:30AM to 12:00 PM on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays with the first hour of the day reserved for seniors from 8:30AM-9:30AM. However, the vault in the Town Clerk's Office will not be available for walk-in visitors until further notice. Town employees continue to report to duty at all locations, and are still available to schedule in-person appointments during normal business hours for services that cannot be completed by phone, mail, email, or virtually, please see a list of our [online services](#) for items and services that you can use from home.

The Library is also welcoming back in-person visitors on a limited basis. The Library will be open for in-person visits on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 10am-4pm, with the first hour reserved for seniors from 10:00AM-11:00AM. They will also welcome in-person visits on Saturdays from 9:30AM-1:30PM with no specific senior hours. Patrons may browse and check-out materials during their visit. One hour of computer use per person, per day and one hour of workspace use in the Business & Career Center per person, per day will be permitted. During all other times, the building will remain closed to walk-in visitors; services are available through [curbside pickup](#) for those uncomfortable coming into the building and reference librarians are available by phone Monday-Friday, from 10:00 am to 5:00 pm to answer questions

For more detailed information regarding Town Hall and the Library receiving in-person visitors, please use this link: <https://www.simsbury-ct.gov/home/news/town-hall-library-to-welcome-back-in-person-visitors-on-a-limited-basis-beginning-the-week> We also continue to regularly update our website and social media accounts with information regarding the travel advisory: <https://www.simsbury-ct.gov/home/news/updated-guidelines-for-in-person-appointments-travel-advisory-for-patrons-residents-and>

We are taking a cautious approach to reopening the Senior Center/Eno Memorial Hall to walk-ins in order to provide the greatest level of protection to the health and safety of our patrons. Eno Memorial Hall will remain closed for walk-ins until further notice. Public health is our predominant priority. Staff continues to reevaluate reopening plans in connection with the latest public health data and guidance from the Farmington Valley Health District and the State of Connecticut.

The Department of Community and Social Services continues its food programs, and is partnering with the Farmington Valley VNA to provide free weekly blood pressure and blood sugar screenings. Flu shots will be offered on October 8<sup>th</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup>. The Simsbury Senior Center is pleased to announce that we will begin providing foot care and hearing clinics. Our foot care program will be running from 8:30AM to 2:30PM on the following dates: October 6<sup>th</sup>, October 7<sup>th</sup>, October 27<sup>th</sup>, November 3<sup>rd</sup>, and November 24<sup>th</sup>. Our hearing clinic will be running from 10:00AM to 12:00PM on October 19<sup>th</sup>, November 16<sup>th</sup>, and December 21<sup>st</sup>. Please call the Senior Center at 860-658-3273 to make appointments for both programs. All COVID-19 precautions will be followed and masks must be worn. Renters' Rebate applicants are encouraged to apply prior to October 1<sup>st</sup>. Applications for Energy Assistance will be accepted starting on October 1<sup>st</sup>; all applications will be taken virtually by phone, email, and mail.

As a reminder, the Board of Selectmen has extended the temporary suspension of cash payments through January 1, 2021 to help reduce the risk of spreading COVID. Payments can be made by check, debit card, or credit card. Checks may be mailed to the Town at 933 Hopmeadow Street, Simsbury, CT 06070 or left at our secure drop box at Town Hall.

The Transfer Station, playgrounds, basketball courts, tennis courts, skate park, golf course, parks, open space parcels and trails remain open. Social distancing is still strongly encouraged at these locations.

Meetings of town agencies will continue to be held virtually until further notice. Meetings are held utilizing Zoom and are broadcast on SCTV's television channels and SCTV's You Tube channel. Agenda items that are being discussed at a meeting will be posted online for the public to view.

We have received many inquiries from residents asking how they can help our fellow community members in need. Our Social Services Department is accepting donations of non-perishable food items, toiletries, laundry and dish detergent, baby items (wipes, diapers, baby food), kid friendly snacks, gift cards to grocery stores, gas stations, and laundromats, and financial donations for residents in need. For information on how to donate, please follow this link: <https://www.facebook.com/simscommunityandsocial/photos/a.732997960244104/1365939280283299/?type=3&theater> .

Our Social Services staff is helping to coordinate local efforts to both make and distribute sewn face masks to staff and members of our community. If you are a Simsbury resident or business, please don't hesitate to contact Social Services at 860-658-3283 if you need a free face covering.

Our Simsbury Main Street Partnership, Simsbury Chamber of Commerce, and our Business Resource Librarian Andrew Sherman have been doing a phenomenal job supporting our business community during this difficult time. For information regarding local businesses that remain open please visit [www.shopsimsbury.com](http://www.shopsimsbury.com). Our Economic Development Commission has conducted outreach with many stakeholders to determine what, if any, unmet needs our community is experiencing during the pandemic.

## **DEPARTMENT NEWS & NOTES**

### ***Culture, Parks and Recreation:***

- **Friends of Simsbury Farms Golf Tournament:** On Friday, October 2, the Friends of Simsbury Farms will be hosting their annual golf fundraiser at the Simsbury Farms Golf Course. The Friends will be honoring Simsbury Farms' long time Golf Superintendent, Michael Wallace, who will be retiring at the end of the year. Mike has been a true asset to the Simsbury Farms Golf Course and the improvements he has made to the course will benefit golfers for decades to come. For anyone interested in participating in the Friend's Golf Tournament or attending the Ceremony to honor Michael Wallace, please go to [www.FOSFgolf.com](http://www.FOSFgolf.com)
- **Halloween Spooktacular:** The Simsbury Chamber of Commerce, Simsbury Performing Arts Center and the Culture, Parks and Recreation Department invite residents to join them for a Halloween Spooktacular to take place on Iron Horse Boulevard and at the Simsbury Performing Arts Center on Sunday, October 18. The event features a drive through Trick or Trunk with participating local businesses, and also live entertainment and food truck dining options. Pre-registration is required and is currently taking place at [www.SimsburyRec.com](http://www.SimsburyRec.com) Due to COVID-19 there is limited capacity for this event so don't wait to sign up!

**Finance:** Our new accountant, Ann Anop, started work with the Town on September 8th. She comes to us from the Town of Southington where she served as their accountant for the last four years. Prior to that

Ann worked for the Southington Water Department as the Office Supervisor for 5 years. She has her bachelors in Economics/Finance from the University of Hartford and her Masters in Finance from the Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute. Ann has already become an essential part of the team in these short few weeks assisting with the accounting system transition.

**Library:** Beginning September 15<sup>th</sup>, curbside service was extended from 10am - 8pm to better accommodate patrons that needed evening hours. Please visit the Library's website, [simsburylibrary.info](http://simsburylibrary.info), to schedule a curbside pickup of Library material.

**Public Works:** There will be a Household Hazardous Waste Collection on Saturday October 17<sup>th</sup>. The Collection will be held at the Simsbury Public Works Facility located at 66 Town Forest Road, West Simsbury from 8:00 AM to 1:00 PM. Information about the event can be found online on the Public Works page of the Town Website, by clicking [Here](#) or by calling Public Works at (860) 658-3222.

### **Social Services:**

- **Open Medicare Enrollment:** Open Medicare enrollment is Oct. 15, 2020 – Dec. 7, 2020. Medicare recipients are able to change their Medical Healthcare Plans for the year 2021 without penalty. Social Services' staff Carolyn Krystiniak is a certified Choices Counselor. She is available to give confidential assistance to whoever needs it. Please call 860-658-3283 with questions or to schedule a telephone or Zoom appointment. Our Senior Center will be presenting a Medicare Sign-up presentation via Zoom on Thursday-10/06/2020 at 1:00 pm. To register please call (860-658-3273) or email: [kmarschall@simsbury-ct.gov](mailto:kmarschall@simsbury-ct.gov)
- **Energy Assistance:** The Simsbury Social Services Department is accepting applications for the Energy Assistance 2020-2021 Heating Program. Due to COVID-19, applications this year will be completed by phone and mail. Please call Social Services at 860-658-3283 to set up an electronic appointment. Please see this [flyer](#) posted to social media for more detailed information.
- **Flu Clinics:** The Simsbury Senior Center and the Farmington Valley Visiting Nurse Association will hold Flu Clinics on Thursday, October 8, from 2:00 to 4:00 p.m., and Tuesday, October 20, from 9:30 to 11:30 a.m. at Eno Memorial Hall, located at 754 Hopmeadow Street in Simsbury. Regular and High Dose vaccines will be given. Prescreening is required before your appointment, and you must wear a mask.

For an appointment, call the Farmington Valley VNA at 860-651-3539. Then visit [www.farmingtonvalleyvna.org](http://www.farmingtonvalleyvna.org) to print off the Consent Form. Complete the form and bring it, your medical insurance card, and driver's license or non-driver photo ID to the Clinic. Consent Forms will also be available to pick up at Eno Memorial Hall. For more information or questions, contact the Senior Center at 860-658-3273.

- **Drive Thru Flu Clinics:** The Farmington Valley Health District and Farmington Valley VNA are hosting two separate drive thru flu clinics this fall.
  - Wednesday September 30 from 1 – 5pm at the Avon DPW facility on 11 Arch Rd, Avon
  - Wednesday October 7, from 1 – 5pm at the Weatogue Fire Station at 251 Hopmeadow Rd.

Pre-registration is required. You can find more information on the Town website under [News and Announcements](#).

- **Blood Pressure Clinics:** The Farmington Valley Visiting Nurse Association will perform blood pressure and blood sugar screenings, each Wednesday from 11:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. in the back parking lot of Eno Memorial Hall, at 754 Hopmeadow Street in Simsbury. Appointments are not

required. For those that are unable to attend the screenings, nurses will be available to contact residents via phone for wellness checks to assess the need for a home visit. For more information, contact the Simsbury Senior Center at 860-658-3273.

- The IRS is urging people to claim their Economic Impact Payment. Individuals can still receive a payment of \$1,200 and \$500 per qualifying child. Payments can be received by individuals who are not required to file a tax return. Please visit [www.irs.gov/eip](http://www.irs.gov/eip) to claim your Economic Impact Payment.

***Town Clerk:*** When Town Hall re-opens to walk-ins on Monday, October 5th, the Town Clerk's Office would like to strongly encourage all voters who plan to vote by Absentee Ballot to **please utilize the lock-box outside of Town Hall to drop off applications and voted ballots**. The Town Clerk's Office is processing thousands of applications, and the lock-box is the most efficient way for the Town Clerk's Office to continue processing applications and then voted ballots in a timely manner. The Town Clerk's Office will be mailing out all ballots on Friday, October 2<sup>nd</sup> for all applications received by this date. All applications received after October 2<sup>nd</sup> must be processed by the Town Clerk's Office within 48 hours of receipt. The Town Clerk thanks the voters for their support and understanding during this time. Please watch this [Video](#) to see First Selectman Eric Wellman explain how to use the ballot box outside the Town Hall.