
FIRST SELECTMAN'S REPORT

TO: Board of Selectmen
FROM: Eric Wellman – First Selectman
DATE: September 9, 2019

New Development

- On September 16th, the Zoning Commission will be discussing Big Y's proposal to build a 52,000 square foot store on the north side of town. This is a project that has been on the table for a number of years. Big Y had previously gathered all of the approvals it needed to build, but has not moved forward until now. The company is in the process of coordinating with the Connecticut Department of Transportation for the excavation permit process and reviewing the plans with town staff. [Here is a link](#) to a recent Courant article about the 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. The assisted living facility has recently received a certificate of occupancy. Construction is proceeding on 124 out of the 282 rental units.

Ribbon Cuttings

- A Ribbon Cutting to celebrate the grand opening for Caccie's Bridal Closet (in the Holloway's Plaza next to Bosco's) took place on Tuesday September 10th at 5:00pm.
- A ribbon cutting to celebrate the new ownership of Huntington Learning Center, 530 Bushy Hill Rd., will take place at 12:00pm on Tuesday, September 17.
- A ribbon cutting to celebrate the grand opening of the Tariffville room, a new space in the Simsbury Public Library, will take place Sunday September 22nd at 1:30pm. The Tariffville room is a new program space on the lower level of the library that will be able to accommodate 80 people.
- Congratulations to the Zoo Health Club, which celebrated its new expansion last month.

Rainbow Crosswalk Update

For the past few weeks, the Town has been accepting ideas for a permanent rainbow installation near the Performing Arts Center in celebration of our LGBT+ community. The current rainbow crosswalk will be replaced by the new design, which will be placed on the bike path, out of the way of traffic.

On August 12th, the Board of Selectmen unanimously endorsed this concept. We will be reviewing the design ideas and getting additional feedback from the LGBT+ community. We plan to paint the permanent installation on October 11th, National Coming Out Day. Residents are welcome to attend and help roll paint! This date may be pushed back depending on the complexity of the final design.

Opportunities to Serve Your Town

There are numerous boards and commissions that serve our town whose members are appointed by the Board of Selectmen. Here is a list of current vacancies:

- Community for Care

- Clean Energy Task Force
- Culture Parks and Rec (per charter this position needs to be filled by a registered Republican)
- Design Review Board
- Historic District Commission
- 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 well 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. Anyone with concerns can always reach out to me or to Aaron Svedlow, the project's Director of Development (aaron@nleservices.com).

At our August 12th Board of Selectmen meeting, Tobacco Valley Solar delivered an update on the project and its progress. You can find a link to that presentation [here](#).

I am frequently asked whether the Town benefits in any way from the project. When the solar installation is complete, Tobacco Valley Solar will be one of the biggest taxpayers in Simsbury. Estimated tax revenue is expected to be more than \$1 million per year for the first few years and will decrease over time as the solar panels depreciate. Over the life of the project, the tax revenue is estimated at more than \$500 thousand per year.

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.

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.

Although there has not been any continuous activity on the site during the months of June and July, the construction activity on the project has ramped up in the past month. Abatement and demolition activities occurred in August along with initiation of site improvements. Landscaping is anticipated to be completed in September. The anticipated completion date for the project remains November 1st, 2019.

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.

Concerts on the Green

Downtown Simsbury's "Concerts on the Green" will wrap up the 2019 season on Saturday September 14th from 3-5pm with a special show featuring "Sweet Daddy Cool Breeze." Sweet Daddy Cool Breeze competed fiercely at Bushnell Park in June and was chosen to represent the State of Connecticut in the International Blues Competition in Memphis in 2020. Sweet Daddy Cool Breeze will play outdoors at the Simsbury Historical Society, 800 Hopmeadow St. as part of the ongoing collaboration between the Historical Society and the Grange. The rain location is Boy Scout Hall, 695 Hopmeadow St.

Simsbury Grange Agricultural Fair

September 14th is the date of the Simsbury Grange Agricultural Fair. Admission is free and the fair runs from 10 am to 2 pm at 236 Farms Village Rd. in West Simsbury. There will be hay rides, kids games, contests with cash prizes, demos, a bake sale, farm displays, local vendors, live entertainment and local food. Non-profits are welcome to a free table, and vendor tables are \$25. An all-access pass to children's games is \$5.

Belden Forest Dedication

Belden Forest in Simsbury is the first forest in Connecticut to be included in the Old Growth Forest Network. On Friday October 25th there will be a dedication ceremony starting at noon near Boy Scout Hall followed by a walk in Belden. Everyone is welcome.

On October 24th, the documentary "The Lost Forests of New England" will be featured at the Simsbury Public Library. This 2018 film features stunning footage of rare Old Growth Forests in New England. Filmmaker Ray Asselin will introduce the film and join a post-film discussion.

Simsbury Public Library Fine Free Initiative

Since July, The Simsbury Public Library has been conducting a pilot program 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 Courant article with more information on the initiative.

Save the Dates!

- 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 Trinity Church and Tariffville Village Association are hosting a fall festival September 15th from 11 – 4pm on the Tariffville Green.
- The Latimer Lane PTO is holding a 5K & Fun Run fundraiser on September 22nd at the elementary school.
- 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: September 9, 2019

BOARD OF SELECTMEN BUSINESS:

Additions to the Agenda: I have received requests to have appointments to the Tourism Committee, Board of Ethics and Zoning Commission added to the agenda. I am respectfully requesting that “Proposed Appointments to Various Boards/Commissions” be added to the agenda under Appointments and Resignations. This item can be added to your agenda tonight with a 2/3 vote of the body. Supporting documentation regarding this appointment was emailed to you today and hard copies have been provided.

Additionally we have also received a request for a public gathering permit to be added to the agenda. I am respectfully requesting that “Proposed Public Gathering Permit – Simsbury Recreation Department Movie Night” be added to the agenda under Selectmen Action. This item can be added to your agenda tonight with a 2/3 vote of the body. Supporting documentation regarding this item was emailed to you today and hard copies have been provided.

350th Anniversary Steering Committee: The 350th Anniversary Steering Committee has launched a Facebook page. Follow the 350th Anniversary Facebook page for up to date information about all the happenings: <https://www.facebook.com/Simsbury350/>

Economic Development Commission: The Economic Development Commission (EDC) continues to meet and work on the action items given to them by the Board of Selectmen. Under the “business recruitment, retention, and outreach” goal the EDC and Manager’s Office will be hosting a second business roundtable discussion on September 18th. Our intent is to host a small group of business owners (around 20-25) and seek their feedback on what they like about doing business in Simsbury, what concerns they have, and what the Town can do to help businesses grow and prosper in our community. We hope to conduct roundtables on a quarterly basis, with attendees changing each time. If a business owner is interested in attending a future roundtable event, please contact the Town Manager’s Office at townmanager@simsbury-ct.gov.

DEPARTMENTAL NEWS & NOTES:

Culture, Parks and Recreation:

- ***Parks and Open Space Master Plan Survey*** - The Town of Simsbury is working on a Parks and Open Space Master Plan. All residents are encouraged to have their voice heard in this process by taking part in a comprehensive survey regarding the Town's Parks and Open Spaces. The link to the survey can be found on the Simsbury Culture, Parks and Recreation website, www.simsburyrec.com, the Town's website, www.townofsimsbury.com or accessed directly at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/SIMSBURY-PARKSMP>
- ***Fall Registrations:*** Registrations for fall programs and winter ice skating lessons are underway at the Simsbury Culture, Parks and Recreation website, www.simsburyrec.com
- ***Golf Course Season Pass Promotions:*** The Simsbury Farms Golf Course is running a 2020 seasons pass promotions. New passholders can purchase a 2020 season pass now that includes fall 2019 golf privileges. Returning passholders can purchase 2020 passes now to avoid 2020 fee increases. These promotions end Dec. 1, 2019

Library: Simsbury Public Library is excited to launch a new "Borrow a Bag" program that will be a convenient and environmentally friendly benefit to library patrons and the community. Instead of offering a donated plastic bag or watching patrons juggle items in their arms, staff can now offer a Simsbury Book Bag which will be checked out on patrons' library cards. These Book Bags can be checked out for the same amount of time as a book (three weeks, with two automatic renewals). If patrons choose to keep the bag, a \$5 replacement fee will be added to their library card account. With the start of this new service, the library will no longer accept plastic bag donations, but patrons can recycle their unwanted plastic bags at Stop and Shop and at a number of other retailers. You can "Borrow a Bag" any time at both the Adult and Children's Circulation Desk at the library.

Police: The Simsbury Police Department has been phasing in their new blue uniforms since August 30th. Eventually the old gray colored uniforms will be replaced by new, navy blue uniforms for all officers. Over the next two months you may see officers wearing either option as we make the shift. A video describing the change featuring Chief Boulter and Lieutenants Sifodaskalakis and Sheehan can be seen on the Police Department's Facebook page, which can be accessed by searching "Simsbury, CT Police Department" on Facebook or by clicking the following link:
<https://www.facebook.com/simsburyctpolicedepartment>.

SPECIAL EVENTS:

Culture, Parks and Recreation: The Culture, Parks and Recreation Department and Simsbury Performing Arts Center are presenting a "Movie In The Park" on Saturday, Sept. 14th at Simsbury Meadows, 22 Iron Horse Boulevard. Bring your blanket and chairs and come enjoy the live action Disney movie Aladdin under the stars. There will be refreshments available for purchase but you may bring your own picnic to enjoy. A children's bounce house will be available to enjoy prior to the movie. There is no admission charge for this event and we hope everyone will come out and join in the fun. Gates open at 5:30pm.

Social Services: National Suicide Prevention Week is September 8th-14th. We have two programs in September addressing suicide prevention. Community for Care will be hosting Talk Saves Lives, A Brief Introduction to Suicide Prevention. This will be on September 11th at 6:30pm at the Simsbury Public Library. Social Services will be hosting QPR Training, provided by Justine Ginsberg of Farmington Valley Health District. QPR stands for Question, Persuade, Refer, three simple steps to help save a life from suicide. Training will be held on Monday, September 16th from 6:00-7:30pm at Eno Hall. Please join us in these important conversations.