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## FIRST SELECTMAN'S REPORT

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**TO:** Board of Selectmen  
**FROM:** Eric Wellman – First Selectman  
**DATE:** August 12, 2019

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### **Planning Department**

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 within weeks. 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.

### **Rainbow Crosswalk Update**

I am proud of our community for the overwhelmingly positive feedback we have received about the rainbow crosswalk that we painted in June by the Performing Arts Center. The plan was a temporary installation to coincide with LGBTQ Pride Month, so in the coming days Public Works will be returning the crosswalk to the standard white colors. My intent in painting the rainbow crosswalk was to create a symbol of inclusion that represents the kind of community I hope Simsbury strives to be. However, being a welcoming place should not be reserved for a particular time of year. That's why I'm supportive of a permanent rainbow installation near the Performing Arts Center, and I have heard from dozens of people who feel the same way.

I asked staff to review the current crosswalk and the feasibility of making it permanent. It's recommended that a better location for a rainbow design would be on the bike path near the Performing Arts Center, instead of in the road. On August 12<sup>th</sup>, the Board of Selectmen discussed that possibility and unanimously endorsed painting a rainbow design on the bike path adjacent to the Performing Arts Center. Over the coming weeks we will be soliciting design ideas from the community. We also plan to involve the community in the painting.

### **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. 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 12<sup>th</sup> 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.

The contractor has been obtaining product approvals, procuring materials for the project and completing a plan relative to the abatement of the structure to be demolished. There was a minor delay in securing an acceptable abatement subcontractor for the project. This has caused a delay in the demolition of the structure. To date, the contractor has completed much of the site preparation activities including invasive vegetation removal, clearing and grubbing, tree removal, relocation and storage of plant stock to be replanted, completion of utility disconnects to the structure, removal of porches and decks from the structure, removal of sewage disposal system, and removal of existing pavements and bollards.

Although there has not been any continuous activity on the site during the months of June and July, the construction activity on the project will be ramping up in the month of August. Abatement and demolition activities are anticipated 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 1<sup>st</sup>, 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 14<sup>th</sup> 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 14<sup>th</sup> 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 Thursday October 25<sup>th</sup> there will be a dedication ceremony starting at noon near Boy Scout Hall followed by a walk in the Belden Forest. Everyone is welcome.

On October 24<sup>th</sup>, 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.

### **Taste of Simsbury**

The annual Taste of Simsbury Presented by Liberty Bank is August 29<sup>th</sup> from 5:30 – 8:30pm at The Riverview. The event features samples from local restaurants and breweries. Proceeds benefit Simsbury Main Street Partnership.

### **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. Here is a list of current vacancies:

- Community for Care
- Police Commission (per charter this position needs to be filled by someone who is registered as unaffiliated)
- Culture Parks and Rec (per charter this position needs to be filled by a registered Republican)
- Design Review Board
- 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](mailto:ewellman@simsbury-ct.gov).

### **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 5<sup>th</sup>, 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](#).

### **Save the Dates!**

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

- Septemberfest is a 3 day event at the Simsbury Meadows Performing Arts Center from September 6<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup>. This year's event will feature a fire truck parade on Iron Horse Blvd. in celebration of the Fire Department's 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary.
- The Simsbury Woman's Club's [50<sup>th</sup> Arts and Crafts Festival](#) will take place September 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> in the parking lots along Iron Horse Blvd.
- The [2019 Walk MS](#) will take place September 15<sup>th</sup> starting at the Simsbury Meadows Performing Arts Center.
- The Trinity Church and Tariffville Village Association are hosting a fall festival September 15<sup>th</sup> from 11 – 4pm on the Tariffville Green.

- The Latimer Lane PTO is holding a 5K & Fun Run fundraiser on September 22<sup>nd</sup> at the elementary school.
- The annual [Fly-In, Car Show, and Food Truck Festival](#) will be taking place September 22<sup>nd</sup> at Simsbury Airport with a rain date of September 29<sup>th</sup>.
- The 2019 [Spooktacular Chili Challenge](#) is scheduled for October 20<sup>th</sup> at the Simsbury Meadows Performing Arts Center.

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## TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

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**TO:** Board of Selectmen  
**FROM:** Maria E. Capriola – Town Manager  
**DATE:** August 12, 2019

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### **BOARD OF SELECTMEN BUSINESS:**

***Additional Packet Materials:*** I have placed at your desk an additional suggested motion and background regarding a recommended interim appointment of Assessor, following David Gardner's retirement from service. That information can be discussed this evening during the agenda item on staff appointments and designations.

The fund balance appropriation spreadsheet has been revised and placed at your desk. The updated fund balance appropriation document and additional interim appointment memorandum will be uploaded to the packet on the website.

### **DEPARTMENTAL NEWS & NOTES**

***Finance:*** David Gardner is retiring after nearly 23 years of service to the Town as our Assessor. I deeply appreciated his work ethic and dedication. He was invaluable during the analysis and evaluation of the recent 690 Hopmeadow (Ensign mansion) and 632-640 Hopmeadow (EBAD) abatement applications, ensuring that the Town's interests were protected. While David is retiring from us, he has decided to join the Town of Farmington as their Assessor. I wish him all the best in his new endeavor.

***Engineering:*** The Aquarion Water Company water line replacement project on Firetown Road is continuing with all the main line work complete on Firetown Road. The contractor is currently completing the final section of new water main on Old Mill Road. Individual service connections to the new main will continue through early October. Temporary pavement repairs will remain in place through the winter months. Permanent pavement repairs will be completed by the Department of Public Works on Firetown Road and Old Mill Road in the spring of 2020.

***Library:*** The Simsbury Public Library is now accepting passport applications on behalf of the U.S. Department of State. U.S. citizens planning on international travel may apply for their passports by calling to make an appointment with the Library's Information Desk at 860-658-7663, menu option 2.

For additional information about applying for a new passport at Simsbury Public Library, please visit <http://www.simsburylibrary.info/passport-services/>. For application information forms, information on documentation requirements, fees, and a wealth of other passport and international travel information, visit the State Department at <http://www.travel.state.gov>.

***Planning Department:*** Building Official Henry Miga was recently recertified as a Master Code Professional. Henry has held this designation for almost 19 years now. This is the highest level of designation from the International Code Council. Henry is a part of a group of around 800 total Master Code Professionals in the world. To earn this designation Henry had to pass multiple Code Council exams and hold numerous certifications. This is a tremendous achievement and one that shows how lucky Simsbury is to have Henry as our Building Official. I encourage everyone to read the article written in the Building Safety Journal about this achievement. The link to that article can be found here: [https://www.iccsafe.org/building-safety-journal/bsj-perspectives/masters-of-code-henry-miga-achieves-the-gold-standard-of-code-certification/?utm\\_source=magnetmail&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_content=190808-bsj-f&utm\\_campaign=bsj](https://www.iccsafe.org/building-safety-journal/bsj-perspectives/masters-of-code-henry-miga-achieves-the-gold-standard-of-code-certification/?utm_source=magnetmail&utm_medium=email&utm_content=190808-bsj-f&utm_campaign=bsj).

**Police Department:** After 25 years of service, Sgt. Mark Critz is retiring. Mark was hired as a patrol officer with the police department in 1994. He has served in many assignments throughout his career. He was on patrol for several years before accepting a position as the Community Services Officer. In that capacity, he led a long history of programs such as the Child Safety Seat Technicians, Citizens Police Academy and the Officer Phil Program. He was a member of the regional Emergency Services Team (SWAT) and the regional Accident Reconstruction Team. He worked on state accreditation for several years as the Special Projects Officer and held the position of Youth Officer/Detective for many years. Mark was promoted to Sergeant in 2010 and assigned to Training/Administrative Services. He returned to the Patrol Division as a sergeant in 2015. Mark has been a long standing member of the honor guard, a firearms instructor and a bicycle officer. He is the recipient of many department awards.

**Public Works:** Included in your packet this evening are letters being sent to residents in the Musket Trail and West Street neighborhoods regarding upcoming sidewalk and multi-use trail repair work. It is exciting to see our sidewalk assessment and corresponding capital investment begin to come to fruition. Many thanks to the DPW team on this initiative.

**Social Services:** We received notification that the State Department of Children and Families has released the application for the Youth Service Bureau Enhanced Grant. Funding allocations are based on town size as established by census data. In years past we have received \$5,800. This year we are applying for an allocation of \$10,734, an increase of \$4,934. There is an anticipated increase to our funding allocation due to a surplus of funds available. We sent in our Enhanced application along with our traditional Youth Service Bureau application, as previously approved by the Board in July. No further action is required at this time.

**Town Manager's Office:** Due to favorable LAP (liability-auto-property) and workers compensation claims experience, along with CIRMA's financial strength, the Town and Board of Education have received a members' equity distribution in the amount of \$55,928 from CIRMA, our insurance provider, for these policies. The anticipated distribution will be applied to the appropriate accounts:

- Town and BOE LAP Policy - \$54,731
- Town and BOE Workers Comp - \$1,197

Since the members' equity program began in 2011, the Town and Board of Education have received a total of \$301,878 in distributed members' equity.