
FIRST SELECTMAN'S REPORT - NOVEMBER 14TH, 2018

Bears

This fall there has been no issue in town that has generated more community conversation than the increase in bear sightings. This is backed up by our emergency call data. We've received than 525 bear-related calls for service in 2018, which is more than 50% higher than any previous year on record, and the year is not yet over. I have heard from residents who are deeply concerned about the growing frequency of human-bear encounters and are advocating some action be taken to reduce the bear population. I have also heard from others who are just as passionate that no form of active wildlife management be taken. I wanted to share with you steps that the town has taken to get a better understanding of this issue.

First, if this is an issue that concerns you, I highly recommend you read a [joint memo from our Town Manager and Chief of Police](#) (starting on page 158). It contains a wealth of information about what we're experiencing in Simsbury, and how that compares to other towns in the Farmington Valley and around the state.

Second, we held a meeting with two officials from the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP), including Rick Jacobson, the director of the State Wildlife Division. Also present at that meeting were myself, Selectmen Sean Askham and Chris Peterson, Representative John Hampton, Senator Kevin Witkos, Town Manager Maria Capriola, Police Chief Nick Boulter, and Animal Control Officer Mark Rudewicz. We shared with the state officials data from the above memo along with concerns we are hearing from our residents.

We learned that DEEP is working with UConn on a study of the state's bear population, and Simsbury has requested that we be included in that study. We also learned that the state's bear population is growing at a rate of about 10% per year. Since the Black Bear has no natural predator in Connecticut, the bear population is expected to continue to increase from approximately 800 today to several thousand in the coming decade. We also learned about DEEP's bear response policy and our police department is working to ensure our policy is in line with theirs. You can find bear safety tips from our police department [here](#).

Next steps: wildlife policy is managed at the state level. Therefore, any changes to how DEEP currently manages the state bear population requires action by the State Legislature. I have been in regular contact with Senator Witkos and Representative Hampton, and some kind of legislation to address the bear population is expected in the next session of the General Assembly. In the mean – time, what we can do locally is ensure DEEP and state lawmakers have the very best data towns can provide. That's why we've reached out to the other towns in the Farmington Valley, shared our data with them, so that they may provide similar information to their representatives.

I encourage anyone with thoughts or concerns on this issue to reach out to me or any member of your Board of Selectmen.

30 years in business!

Congratulations to Steve Skaret, owner of Floors Reincarnated in Simsmore Square, which is celebrating its 30th anniversary this month!

Veterans Day

On November 11th, I had the honor of participating in our annual Veterans Day ceremony organized by Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 1926 and American Legion Post 84. This Veterans Day had extra special meaning because it was exactly 100 years since the signing of the Armistice ending World War I. I would also like to thank the Abigail Phelps Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR). In celebration of their 125th anniversary, they presented the Town with a flag as a gift, which will adorn the new program room at the library that's under construction. I am grateful for the work that all three of these organizations do for our town and on behalf of veterans.

Wreaths Across America

In December, the local chapter of DAR will be laying wreaths on the graves of veterans in Simsbury, as part of Wreaths Across America. On December 15th, they will be holding a noontime ceremony at the cemetery on Plank Hill Road. If you're interested in sponsoring a wreath (\$15) to honor a veteran, forms are available at the cemetery entrance along Hopmeadow.

Simsbury Trail News

National Bicycle Challenge

The 2018 Simsbury Bike Challenge concluded at the end of May, but more than 60 SBC riders continued to log their rides in the National Bike Challenge for the full 5-month (May to September) challenge. Nationally, our community finished 1st in our size class with 124,731 miles. We topped many sizable communities including Houston, TX; St. Paul, MN; and Albuquerque, NM. 7% of our logged miles were commutes to/from work. Congratulations to all of our SBC riders. Thank you for supporting local and national bike advocacy!

Bicycle Friendly Community

New Haven was awarded a Silver-Level Certification from the League of American Bicyclists. Congratulations to New Haven for becoming a "Silver" Bicycle Friendly Community! Simsbury expects to hear from the League any day on our application.

Calendar of Events:

- Friday, 11/16, Farmington Valley Trails Council Annual Meeting, Avon Senior Center, 6:30 PM
- Link: <http://fchtrail.org/events/Event.Detail.asp?id=1538522270>
- Monday, 11/19, Transport Hartford Multimodal and Transit Summit, Transport Hartford Academy, Hartford, 11:30 - 7:30PM

For more trail news and bike/ped events visit www.simsbury.bike

Stay Connected

You can sign up for email updates from the town so you always know what's happening in our community. On the homepage of the Town website, click "[subscribe to news.](#)" and you'll be able to specify exactly what kind of news you want to receive.

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. We're always looking for volunteers willing to serve and I'm pleased to share that the Town has made the process easier and more transparent. You can learn more about all of our boards and commissions, current vacancies, and how to apply [here](#).

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

TO: Board of Selectmen
FROM: Maria E. Capriola – Town Manager
DATE: November 14, 2018

BOARD OF SELECTMEN BUSINESS:

Budget Related Items:

- ***Budget Kick-Off:*** The tri-board meeting between the Board of Selectmen, Board of Finance, and Board of Education has been scheduled for Monday, December 3, 2018 at 6pm in Program Room 1 of the Simsbury Public Library. The Board of Finance had a preliminary discussion regarding budget guidance at their meeting last night in preparation for the December 3rd meeting.
- ***Capital and CNR Policy:*** The Board of Finance is currently working on a Capital and CNR Policy that would provide a framework for budgeting and financing capital projects. The goal is to have this policy adopted in advance of budget season so it can be utilized during preparation of the FY 19/20 capital budget. The policy will likely be on the agenda of the December 3rd Board of Finance meeting.
- ***Budget Monitoring:*** As you know, I have had a strong interest in implementing quarterly budget monitoring and reporting. Our Finance Director has created a budget status report and reviewed it with the Board of Finance last night. I will include this information in an upcoming packet for you. It is also available online with the November 13th Board of Finance packet. I'd like to commend and thank Amy for her efforts on creating the budget status report.

Economic Development:

- ***Economic Development Commission:*** The kick-off meeting for the Economic Development Commission has been scheduled for November 27th at 5:30pm in the Main Meeting Room of Town Hall. Staff has been preparing comprehensive orientation materials and resource materials for the initial meeting of the group.
- ***Business Development Incentive Committee:*** We are in receipt of a business development incentive application for 690 Hopmeadow Street. The Committee is reviewing the application and will likely forward a recommendation(s) to the Board of Selectmen for your November 26th or December 17th meeting as to what, if any, tax abatement or fee waivers could be granted.

DEPARTMENTAL NEWS & NOTES:

Culture, Parks and Recreation: Tom Tyburski has been elected President-Elect of the Connecticut Parks and Recreation Association. The position serves a two year term in a "vice-president" role and then assumes the President position for the following two year term. Tom has been on this board for the last four years as a "Director at Large." Congratulations Tom!

Engineering: Eversource will be performing electrical transmission line maintenance work in the eastern portion of Simsbury along Talcott Ridge over the next several months. This work is being completed by contractors working for Eversource Energy. The scope of work is to replace the existing wood electrical transmission structures with new steel structures. We have been told that this work will not interrupt electric service to homes or businesses. Work has been initiated and is expected to be complete by the spring of 2019. Work hours will be Monday through Sunday, 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. Eversource has made a request for temporary access to the work site through a town owned parcel; more information regarding this request to the town will be presented at the Board of Selectmen meeting on November 26th.

Planning and Community Development: The draft update for the region's hazard mitigation plan has been released. A natural hazard mitigation plan is a tool that helps a community understand risks and take specific steps to reduce property damage, injury, and loss of life. The plan identifies activities that communities can perform before natural hazards occur in order to minimize property damage, risk of life, and other costs. A public meeting is scheduled for Thursday, November 15th at the West Hartford Town Hall, Room 400 (50 South Main Street) from 5:30 pm – 6:30 pm. At this meeting, the Capitol Region Council of Governments (CRCOG) staff and the consultant will present the updated plan to the public. The public comment period on the plan closes November 21, 2018. Written comments are to be sent via US mail to CRCOG, c/o Lynne Pike Disanto, at 241 Main Street Hartford, CT 06106 or via email: lpikedesanto@crcog.org. After receiving public input, CRCOG will forward the plan to the State Department of Emergency Management and Homeland Security (DEMHS) for review. It will then be reviewed by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), which will issue an approval pending final adoption by each town's legislative body. You will ultimately be asked to approve this plan, most likely in late spring or early summer 2019. More information, including a link to the Simsbury component of the plan, can be found at the following link: <https://www.simsbury-ct.gov/node/102343>.

Police Department: Kyle A. Denalsky was sworn in as a Simsbury Police officer on October 31, 2018. He is a graduate of Simsbury High School. He has served in the United States Navy Reserve since March 2013, most recently as a Petty Officer Second Class. During his service, he was responsible for maritime security, hostile vessel interdiction and high value asset escorts as a Master-At-Arms. He served active duty off the coast of Africa during Operation Spartan Shield in 2016.

Kyle joined the Torrington, CT Police Department in April 2017. He completed the State of Connecticut Police Officer Standards and Training Council Police Academy in September 2017 and has since served honorably in the Patrol Division.

Among many other reasons, Kyle has been selected as a new member of this Department because of his successful dedication and commitment to the well-being of others. Kyle will carry on a family tradition of public service to Simsbury. For over 35 years, his father Kurt has worked in the Department of Public Works. Kyle's grandfather retired from the Simsbury Police Department as a sergeant and his great grandfather retired from this Department as a Captain.

We are excited to have Kyle join us and we look forward to his service to this community.

SPECIAL EVENTS & PROGRAMS:

Community and Social Services: The Community and Social Services Department offers multiple food programs to help those who struggle with food insecurity in the Town of Simsbury. Volunteers pick up several food donations on a weekly basis from local restaurants and grocery stores. Volunteers also assist with our largest food distribution day. We are in immediate need volunteers to assist with our food programs. If you are interested in making a difference and helping with our food programs please contact Social Services at 860-658-3283.

Culture, Parks and Recreation: Simsbury Celebrates will be held on Saturday, November 24th from 5-8pm. The Town's annual kickoff celebration to the holiday season features a variety of fun entertainment options, an incredible holiday lights fire truck parade and a spectacular fireworks show. More information about the event can be found by visiting www.SimsburyCelebrates.com. While the event is free to attend, it would not be possible without the generosity of many local businesses and families. This year, the Simsbury Celebrates volunteer committee will be accepting donations during the event.

Culture, Parks and Recreation: Family Open Gym Basketball will begin on Sunday, December 9th, 1:00-4:30pm, at the Henry James Middle School. The fee is \$2 per person, \$5 max per family. This weekly event will happen throughout the winter on non-holiday weekends.