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## FIRST SELECTMAN'S REPORT

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**TO:** Board of Selectmen  
**FROM:** Eric Wellman – First Selectman  
**DATE:** November 26, 2018

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### **Business Development**

My thanks to everyone who purchased a gift card from one of our local businesses on Black Friday and Small Business Saturday. This initiative, organized by the Simsbury Main Street Partnership, helps give businesses a bump in cash and ensures we keep our dollars local heading into the Holiday shopping season. Thank you, too, to those businesses that participated.

The Simsbury Chamber of Commerce is holding a ribbon cutting for Andy's Italian Kitchen on December 6<sup>th</sup> at 4:30.

### **Planning Update**

- On November 19<sup>th</sup>, the Zoning Commission approved the zone change for 18 acres off Route 44. The application was for a change from residential to business. The applicant is currently working with potential tenants.
- Town staff has been approached by another operator wishing to re-open the Mobil station in the center of town.

### **Simsbury Volunteer Fire Company**

Despite the threat of rain, Simsbury Celebrates went off without a hitch! I want to thank the nonprofits and the businesses who opened their doors and organized activities. I especially want to thank the Simsbury Volunteer Fire Company for an amazing parade.

Speaking of the Fire Company, Deputy Town Manager Melissa Appleby and I participated in a burn drill. That basically involved getting suited up and watching the fire fighters put out a burning building. I was amazed at how deeply disorienting it was to navigate a smoke-filled building and it gave me an even greater appreciation for the training and the professionalism of the men and women who serve our community in a volunteer capacity.

### **Wreaths Across America**

In December, the local chapter of Daughters of the American Revolution will be laying wreaths on the graves of veterans in Simsbury, as part of Wreaths Across America. On December 15<sup>th</sup>, 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.

### **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.

## **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.

For more trail news and bike/ped events visit [www.simsbury.bike](http://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](#).

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## TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

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**TO:** Board of Selectmen  
**FROM:** Maria E. Capriola – Town Manager  
**DATE:** November 26, 2018

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### BOARD OF SELECTMEN BUSINESS:

**Eversource Energy Temporary Access Permit:** For this evening's agenda item regarding the temporary access permit for Eversource, one attachment has been revised. In the first paragraph on page two of the temporary access agreement the sentence reading "*All such emergencies shall be determined at the sole reasonable discretion of CL&P*" has been removed (at the town's request).

### ***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. My budget kick-off with the leadership team is scheduled for December 6<sup>th</sup>.
- ***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 be on the agenda of the December 3<sup>rd</sup> Board of Finance meeting.

***Economic Development Commission:*** The kick-off meeting for the Economic Development Commission has been scheduled for November 27<sup>th</sup> 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.

### DEPARTMENTAL NEWS & NOTES:

***Planning and Community Development:*** Due to the snow storm on November 15<sup>th</sup>, the due date for comments on the draft Capitol Region Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan has been extended to Friday, November 30<sup>th</sup>. An additional public workshop has been scheduled by the Capitol Region Council of Governments for the public to learn about the plan, ask questions, and provide input at an informal drop-in session to be held on Tuesday, November 27, 2018, from 4:30 to 5:30pm at CRCOG's offices at 241 Main Street, Hartford – 4<sup>th</sup> floor Conference Room. Parking is available behind the building in the CRCOG Visitor Parking Lot on John Street. Written comments may be submitted by November 30, 2018 to: CRCOG, 241 Main St., Hartford, CT 06106, or via e-mail: [lpikedisanto@crcog.org](mailto:lpikedisanto@crcog.org)

### SPECIAL EVENTS & PROGRAMS:

***Community and Social Services:*** The Simsbury Aging and Disability Commission together with the Simsbury Community and Social Services Department will be hosting a Sensory Friendly Santa event. This event will be held on Friday, December 7<sup>th</sup> from 4:00-6:00pm at Eno Memorial Hall. This event is free for all ages. We will have pictures with Santa, activities, and refreshments.