
FIRST SELECTMAN'S REPORT - SEPTEMBER 12TH, 2018

Deepwater Wind Solar Project – Settlement Agreement

Background

On January 22nd 2018, the Board of Selectmen voted unanimously to appeal the Connecticut Siting Council's ruling that would have allowed a 26 Megawatt solar project on the north side of town to move forward. At the time, the Town had six primary areas of concern:

- Ensuring public health during and after the construction process (soil and water testing).
- Removing from the project, the 54-acre field south of Hoskins Road that is most visible to cars and neighbors.
- Providing appropriate screening that fits with the natural landscape.
- Developing and funding a comprehensive decommissioning plan that ensures the property will return to farmland upon the conclusion of the project
- Preserving historic barns on the property
- The option for the Town to purchase the property at a nominal cost after the project is decommissioned.

Where we are now

At our September 12th 2018 meeting, the Board of Selectmen unanimously approved a settlement agreement with the developer, Deepwater Wind. In the 7 months that have elapsed, Town staff has worked closely with our legal counsel, environmental consultant, abutters, and Deepwater Wind to address each of the issues above.

[You can review the full settlement agreement here.](#)

[You can find a summary of the settlement agreement here.](#)

The Board of Selectmen has emphasized throughout this process that our number one goal is ensuring public health and safety. Deepwater Wind has agreed to a soil management plan and a water testing plan that our environmental consultant is comfortable with.

Our second goal is reducing the impact to neighbors. Deepwater Wind has agreed not to construct solar panels on the parcel south of Hoskins Road that would have been most visible to traffic. They have also agreed to a visual screening plan that includes native plantings, berms, split rail fencing, among other things that fit with the character of the area.

In addition, Deepwater Wind has agreed to a comprehensive decommissioning plan and the Town will have the option to purchase the land for \$1 once the solar farm is no longer in use.

Next steps

- Deepwater Wind will submit its Development & Management Plan to the Siting Council.
- A permitting process will take place involving local and state agencies.
- Prior to construction, baseline soil and water testing will take place.
- Construction is expected to last about 18 months (no estimate of start date yet).

I am thankful to all who were part of this process and look forward to welcoming Deepwater Wind to Simsbury, a business that will make our town a leader in the production of renewable energy. I welcome anyone with questions to reach out to myself or any member of your Board of Selectmen.

Economic Development Commission

At our August meeting, the Board of Selectmen unanimously adopted an ordinance creating a new Economic Development Commission (EDC). Since that time we have received more than 15 applications and Selectwoman Cheryl Cook and I have been conducting interviews. I thank everyone who applied to serve our town in this capacity.

There are several important differences between this new Economic Development Commission and the former one that was dissolved last year:

- The ordinance requires the Board of Selectmen to provide direction to the EDC and for the EDC to report back to the Board of Selectmen on its accomplishments at least once a year.
- The new members of the EDC will be appointed by the Board of Selectmen based on their qualifications in a non-partisan manner.
- By resolution, the Board of Selectmen has identified specific areas of expertise that the new EDC as a whole should have (ex: tourism, marketing, communication, etc...)
- We have established term limits, so no Commission member is allowed to serve more than 2 3-year terms.

If you're interested in learning more about this opportunity to serve our town, [you can follow this link](#). We are still accepting applications for at least another week.

Short-term Rentals

Earlier this summer, the Town's Zoning Enforcement Officer sent a letter to property owners in Simsbury who post their homes on short-term rental sites like Airbnb to inform them that the use is not permitted by current zoning regulations. Since then, the Zoning Commission has asked staff to develop a draft regulation that would regulate short-term rentals from a zoning perspective. The draft will be shared at the Zoning Commission's September 17th meeting. Public comment will not be allowed at that meeting, but will be scheduled at a future date should the Zoning Commission choose to move forward with regulating short-term rentals.

Planning Update

- **690 Hopmeadow Street** (Ensign Mansion): building permits have been filed for the conversion of the existing mansion and annex to a first floor restaurant (7,160 sq ft) and office space (1,457 sq ft). The second and third floors of the mansion will be turned into 5 residential apartment units.
- **850 Hopmeadow Street** (former Getty Station): The underground tanks and gasoline pumps have been removed. Planning staff will be reaching out to the property owner to discuss their future plans for the site.
- **1225 Hopmeadow Street:** St. Mary's School and Church started work on an addition to the school and parish facilities.
- **710 Hopmeadow Street:** An application has been filed with the Zoning Commission for a façade update for FitzGerald's Foods. This will be heard at the October 1, 2018 meeting of the Zoning Commission.

Staff is working with the Zoning Commission on a comprehensive update of the zoning regulations. The intent of this work is to create a more user friendly version of zoning regulations. The subject will be discussed at the next meeting of the Zoning Commission on **September 17th**.

Simsbury Trail News

Since 2010, Simsbury has been named a Silver Bicycle Friendly Community by the League of American Bicyclists. I'm excited to share that the Bike Pedestrian Advisory Committee in partnership with the Town has submitted an application to renew that designation and we are hopeful that we may be in the running for gold status.

Part of the Application process is the opportunity to provide input via a [survey](#). The survey will help the League and the Town get feedback on current bicycling conditions in Simsbury and identify areas for improvement. If you enjoy getting out on two wheels, your feedback would be helpful!

I am also pleased to share that Bicycle Patrol Officer Jesse Marinak of the Simsbury Police Department is a recurring patrol presence on Simsbury's trails. When you see him making the rounds feel free to stop and say hello. If you have any questions, please call 860-658-3100".

For the latest bike news and events visit [Simsbury.Bike](#).

Eno Hall

Eno Hall has been under construction this summer. We are planning to host an Open House on **October 2, from 9:30 – 11:00** giving everyone the opportunity to see the updates. This will include the kitchen, the bathrooms, and improved sound proofing in the main auditorium, as well as the new office for the Director of Community and Social Services. We are also hopeful that our new Social Worker will also be on board to meet, a new position the Board of Selectmen created earlier this year.

Once the renovations at Eno are complete we will begin to offer a Café style lunch meal at the Senior Center on **Tuesdays every week. This is anticipated to begin on November 5, 2018**. Participants will pay \$2 per soup and \$2 per sandwich.

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](#).

Mark Your Calendar

Concert on the Green

Concert on the Green is a free concert series co-sponsored by the Simsbury Grange and the Simsbury Historical Society. **The next Concert on the Green is September 15th** at the Simsbury Historical Society. The music will be from **5:30 - 7:30** and feature the band "Livi Pop and Friends." Livi Pop is an internationally known drummer and his friends are Tim McDonald, Ray Morant, and Ed Corvo - all CT-based professional musicians. To make it accessible and affordable to everyone the concert is free with donations requested. Perfect Vision and Sound is generously providing sound equipment, and please contact the Grange or the Historical Society if you are interested in volunteering or helping to sponsor these concerts.

Simsbury Grange Agricultural Fair

September 15th is the date of the Simsbury Grange Agricultural Fair, the only certified Agricultural Fair in the Farmington Valley. **From 10 am to 3 pm**, at the Grange property at 236 Farms Village Rd. in West Simsbury, there will be hay rides, kids games, contests, a bake sale, farm displays, local vendors, live entertainment and local food. New this year is a life-size game of "Pub Skittles." Non-profits are welcome to have a free table, and vendor tables are \$25. Kids can get a site map stamped in exchange for a free hayride. Please contact the Grange at info@simsburygrange.org if you would like to be part of the fun!

Richman Spooktacular Chili Challenge

Saturday October 27th from noon to 5pm at Simsbury Meadows, the Simsbury Chamber of Commerce presents its annual Chili Challenge. Admission is \$10 for anyone 11 and older. Admission includes all the chili you can eat, music, vendors, and a more. For more information and to purchase tickets, visit SimsburyChili.com.

Forum on Sports Betting

Monday October 1st from 7 – 8:30pm at Eno Hall Senator Witkos is co-sponsoring an informational forum on sports gambling. The panel will include online and sports betting experts with an opportunity to ask questions.

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.

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

TO: Board of Selectmen
FROM: Maria E. Capriola – Town Manager
DATE: September 12, 2018

BOARD OF SELECTMEN BUSINESS:

Addition to the Agenda: We received a recent request from Trinity Church to hold their annual Tariffville Fall Festival on September 23rd on the Tariffville Green. A public gathering permit would be required. Since the Board is not meeting prior to that event, staff worked diligently today to collect the required information. Those materials have been placed in hard copy at your desk and will be posted online. I am respectfully requesting that "Public Gathering Permit – 2018 Tariffville Fall Festival" be added to the agenda.

Board of Selectmen Goal Setting Session: Please save-the-date for the Board of Selectmen goal setting session on Saturday, September 29th from 9am-noon. The meeting will be held in Program Room 1 of the Simsbury Public Library.

Economic Development Workshop: Please remember that the CERC economic development workshop is being held tomorrow, September 13th from 6-7:30pm at the Simsbury Public Library Program Room 1. As a reminder, the following groups were invited to attend:

- Planning Commission
- Zoning Commission
- Design Review Board

- Conservation Commission
- Tourism Committee
- Chamber of Commerce – Executive Director and Board representation
- Main Street Partnership - Executive Director and Board representation
- Tariffville Village Association – John Nagy and Board representation
- North Village Merchants Group
- Bike-Ped Committee

We are expecting approximately 20-25 attendees.

Non-Noticed Meeting: Time permitting, following adjournment of the meeting per §CGS 1-200(2) I would like for the Board of Selectmen and staff to meet to discuss strategy and negotiations with respect to collective bargaining for the unit represented by IBPO.

DEPARTMENTAL NEWS & NOTES:

Culture, Parks and Recreation: A reminder that construction is expected to begin within the next few weeks on the Simsbury Farms natural gas line connection. Once construction begins it is expected that contractors will be onsite for 3-4 weeks. The Apple Barn, the Simsbury Farms Main Building, Pro Shop, Restaurant and Paddle Tennis Courts will all be connected to the natural gas line resulting in an expected savings in utility costs going forward.

Police: Two members of the Police Department were promoted to sergeant on August 20, 2018 after the recent retirements of long-time members Sergeants Bob Soule and John Durkin. Patrol Officer First Class (PFC) Scott Sagan has been with the Department for 17 years. He has served in the Detective Division for the last 8 years and was a member of the regional accident reconstruction team for 10 years. PFC Jason Trombly has been with the Department for 10 years. He has served in the Detective Division for the last 3 years. PFC Trombly was a field training officer and instructor for the Department. He has been a crisis negotiator for the last 3 years. After a highly competitive process, PFC Sagan and PFC Trombly were selected for promotion to sergeant. Please join me in congratulating them on their promotions.

Planning and Development: Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has contacted the Town regarding conducting updates to the Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM) for the Farmington River Watershed. A discovery meeting will be scheduled for September 25, 2018. Mike Glidden and Jeff Shea will attend and represent the Town.

Planning and Development: Christine Campasano will start on September 17th as a part-time land use clerk with the Planning and Development Department. Ms. Campasano previously worked for the Town of West Harford as admin staff and assistant zoning enforcement officer for approximately 9 years. She is currently a part-time land use clerk with the Town of Avon. Christine possesses the designation of a certified zoning enforcement officer with Connecticut Association of Zoning Enforcement Officials (CAZEO). She holds a bachelor's degree from Trinity College in Political Science. Please join me in welcoming Christine to our team.

Public Works: Public Works, the Simsbury Public Library and our Parks and Recreation Department will be holding a Touch-a-Truck event at Boy Scout Hall on October 6th from 9:30am to noon. Kids and families are encouraged to attend this fun event where residents can better see the heavy equipment that is used to maintain Simsbury's infrastructure.

Public Works: Installation for the 109 kW solar array for the Simsbury Public Works facility is scheduled to begin later this month and will be completed this fall. This solar array will greatly reduce the energy costs for this facility for the next twenty years. Public works is finalizing the contract documents to have a 200 kW solar array installed at the Ice Rink at Simsbury Farms. An installation date has not been established for this facility.

Social Services: Simsbury Social Services is wrapping up its Renters Rebate program with the deadline for applications being Monday, October 1st. Staff will begin taking applications for the Connecticut Energy Assistance Program on Monday, October 1st. Please call the Social Services office at 860-658-3283 for updated guidelines and to make an appointment.

SPECIAL EVENTS:

Wellness Fair: The Simsbury Senior Center and Public Library are cosponsoring a Multigenerational Wellness Fair from 10am to noon on Thursday, Sept. 27, at the Simsbury Public Library. Participants include the Rushford Center, McLean, Farmington Valley Health District, Community for Care, Home Helpers, the Center for Dental Excellence, Simsbury Police Department, Fire Department, Volunteer Ambulance, Culture, Parks and Recreation, Community and Social Services, and the Housing Authority.

The fair will also include vision screenings, flu shots, balance assessments and chair massages. This event is free and open to the public.

Freedom of Information Act Training: Town employees, board, and commission members are invited to attend a training session on Monday, October 29th from 5:30-6:30pm in the Simsbury Public Library Program Room 1. The session will be presented by Tom Hennick, Public Education Officer at the Freedom of Information Commission (FOIC). Tom will explore a number of topics, including the definitions of public records and meetings, how to manage requests for public records, the rules governing executive sessions, and more. You can RSVP to the Town Manager's Office intern at tmintern@simsbury-ct.gov.