
FIRST SELECTMAN'S REPORT - SEPTEMBER 24TH, 2018

Deepwater Wind Solar Project – Settlement Agreement

(Note: this is the same updated that was provided in the September 12th report)

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.

Planning Update

- It's my pleasure to welcome a new business to town. MedSpa opened this month at Simsbury Town Shoppes.
- The Planning Department is in contact with the owner of the former Gibbs Mobil Station to inquire on the status of a new tenant. At this point, we are not aware of a deal for a new operator of that gas station.
- The St. Mary's School addition is proceeding. The addition will allow for the expansion of classroom space and centralize the business office for the parish. Completion is expected in Fall 2019.
- The property owner of 18 acres off Route 44 which abuts the Town of Canton presented a preliminary zone change application at the last meeting for the Zoning Commission. This was well received and a formal application will be coming. The property is currently zoned residential and the property owner would like to re-zone the property to business.

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. We expect to appoint the new members at our October 10th Board of Selectmen meeting.

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.

Simsbury Trail News

- National Walk to School Day is October 10th. Simsbury will be celebrating with Walk/Bike to school day events on:
 - Thursday October 4th – Latimer Lane School
 - Wednesday October 10th – Tootin' Hills School (*note: this is different than the original date*)
 - Friday October 12th – Squadron Line School

Drivers are reminded to take extra care on those days around arrival and dismissal time. These events are part of the national Safe Routes to School initiative. For additional information contact Debbie Thibodeau at challenge@simsbury.bike.

- During the first week of October, Eversource and their contractors will be replacing a transmission tower near where the trail crosses route 20. The Trail will remain open but there will be short delays when the crew and equipment must cross the Trail. Please use caution in that area.
- 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!

Gifts of Love – Farm Aid Tour

The Farm Aid Festival took place in Hartford this past weekend. On Friday, a group of food and farm activists had the opportunity to tour 3 Connecticut Farms and the Gifts of Love Community Farm in Simsbury was one of the three selected. It was a great opportunity to showcase the amazing work taking place at the Community Farm, which is on land that the Town leases to Gifts of Love at a nominal price. The produce grown at the farm goes directly to people in our community who are food insecure.

Celebrating a 53 year career

At the end of this week, Celia Roberts will be retiring from her position at the Simsbury Public Library after 53 years! Celia was originally hired September 1st 1965 and has remained in the position for her entire career. On Friday September 28th from 3 – 5pm there will be a celebration at the Library and a chance to wish Celia well. I want to thank Celia for her service to our town and wish her the best in retirement.

Friends of the Library Book Sale

I want to thank everyone who supported the Friends of the Library's Book Sale which took place over the weekend. It's an annual event that raises money to support the programs, equipment, and many other services provided at our library. Thank you to all who donated, sorted, and purchased books as part of this wonderful event. This would not be possible without the work of dozens of volunteers who give their time in support of our library.

Mark Your Calendar

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.

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.

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: Thomas J. Roy – Acting Town Manager
DATE: September 24, 2018

BOARD OF SELECTMEN BUSINESS:

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.

DEPARTMENTAL NEWS & NOTES:

Culture, Parks and Recreation: Join us for a spooky good time at the Simsbury Farms Trunk or Treat 2018! This free Halloween event will be held on Saturday, October 27th from 1-2:30pm at Simsbury Farms. Visit simsburyrec.com for more information and to register for your parking space!

Culture, Parks and Recreation: Fall recreation programs are now open to registration. Check out all the great things Simsbury Culture, Parks and Recreation staff have planned and join our email list to be the first to know when new programs and events are added - there is something for everyone! Visit simsburyrec.com for more information and registration details.

Culture, Parks and Recreation: Learn to skate at your hometown rink! Online registration for skating lessons will begin October 1st on simsburyrec.com.

Culture, Parks and Recreation: The Recreation Department is taking applications online for ice rink positions. The application deadline is September 30th. Please go to the Town's website, www.simsbury-ct.gov for more information and to complete the online application.

Library: Head of Adult Services Susan Ray was accepted to represent CT in the New England Library Leadership Program. She joined librarians throughout New England for this 3 day intensive workshop facilitated by national library consultant Maureen Sullivan. Susan was awarded a partial scholarship from CT Library Association to offset the cost of her participation.

Library: Head of Children's Services Stephanie Prato, and Head of Adult Services Susan Ray, will both be presenting at the upcoming New England Library Association Conference. Stephanie will share information about the Library's summer STEM camps and Susan will discuss the Library's Repair Cafe.

Social Services: We are planning to host an Open House at Eno Memorial on October 2nd from 9:30 – 11:00am, giving everyone the opportunity to see the updates to Eno. This will include the kitchen, the bathrooms, and the Director’s Office. We hope you and the community can join us!

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 - 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: The Highway Division has recently completed their roadway paving for this construction season. This season’s work included the difficult task of paving over three miles of West Mountain Road. A total of 9½ miles of Simsbury’s roadways were paved this season with a total value of \$1.1M.