

Westbrook events

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Selectman's Corner

COVID-19 AND BEYOND

COVID-19 has challenged all of us in ways that are without precedent. Your municipal government joins with all of you in expressing not only our frustration but equally and perhaps more importantly, our appreciation for your continued involvement as Westbrook residents.

I am well aware of countless examples of family, friends and neighbors who everyday demonstrate, by example, that our lives are inextricably bound together by acts of kindness, support and a willingness to weather this pandemic with resistance and fortitude as we move beyond the initial fears that were so menacing.

Our employees did an excellent job, beginning in March, to ensure that all their essential responsibilities were addressed on a daily basis and constant extensive messages to the public by our Health Director kept all of us informed of Governor Lamont's many Executive Orders that reinforced the CDC guidelines for the safety, health and wellbeing of our residents. We understand the importance of reliable communication as an essential function of good government. Boards and Commissions, via Zoom, met without interruption of service and, in fact, more individuals participated in virtual meetings than in typical in-person meetings prior to COVID-19.



Noel Bishop

Tropical Storm Isaias wrecked havoc on Westbrook and other municipalities. There was a clamor by our residents that sent a strong message to Eversource; namely they were not properly prepared and underestimated the damaging impact of the storm. As a member of the Executive Committee of the River Council of Government, I joined with the other 16 municipalities on the shoreline in documenting our deep disappointment in Eversource. We have demanded answers that we can communicate to our residents.

WHAT COMES NEXT?

- The Town Hall was opened to the public on Monday, September 14, 2020. Everyone is strongly encouraged to wear a mask; maintain proper social distance and utilize the hand sanitizer stations located throughout the building.
- Our Planning Commission has held several virtual meetings on our proposed Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD). This is a major initiative and reflects the importance of creating Westbrook's future and providing a roadmap for where we need to go in the next two to three years with very specific action steps. VA pilot program has been initiated to help determine
continued on page 5



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Selectman's Corner continued from page 3

how we can better manage ground and wastewater in Westbrook.

- This is a high priority and if implemented, will facilitate the expansion of businesses and restaurants in the Town Center.
- Several important capital improvement projects are underway. The Library Community Room, the replacement of two jetties, a sidewalk plan and the continuation of necessary paving of our roads.
- Our schools were opened on September 1st. Our Acting Superintendent Dr. Charles in working with parents, faculty and staff, thoroughly vetted a plan that provides all of the necessary guidelines for the health of students and school personnel.

These are just some of the projects that are essential to move us forward in the coming months and years. I encourage you to be involved, stay connected and access our town website, www.westbrookct.us that provides daily information.

It is very important that we continue to support our local businesses since many are struggling to survive and we cannot exist as a vibrant community without the long standing relationships with our businesses.

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Selectman's Corner continued from page 5

Finally, each year, some of our employees, as well as volunteer leaders, move on and/or retire. After 15 years of distinguished service as Westbrook's Assessor, Pam Fogarty retired at the end of August. Paul Connelly, who has contributed as a volunteer for over 40 years in the Fire

Department and for the past 15 years, as Chairman of the Board of Finance has retired. Under Paul's leadership and with the support of the Board of Finance, all of the budgets were passed successfully during his tenure at a Referendum or Town Meeting.

Best wishes to Pam and Paul. You will be missed.

Thank you for the privilege and honor to continue to serve as First Selectman.
Noel Bishop, Selectman

Harbor Management Commission

This has been a busy summer in the waters of Westbrook. Moorings in the Patchogue River have been reset and tackle renewed. Over 80 moorings have been permitted along the Westbrook Shoreline. We are grateful for the Beach Associations who have been most helpful in identifying abandoned and dangerous moorings which have been and are still being removed. (note that your mooring fees are used to remove these dangerous moorings). For those who did not get a permit for their moorings, please note that they are subject to removal by the Harbormaster.

Please note that on August 25, the Harbor Management Commission voted to amend the Harbor Management Plan to make moored jetski floats and docks illegal in the mooring fields. On July 4, fireworks were illegally fired from Duck Island, which is owned by CT DEEP, and closed to visitors from April 15 to

September for use as a bird sanctuary only. Both the Westbrook Marine Patrol and Harbormaster Harry Plaut are now actively enforcing the DEEP closure. Note that Menunketesuk Island, owned by the US Fish and Wildlife Service is closed to visitors year-round, and Salt Island visitors are allowed outside of the area marked as a bird sanctuary.

The US Army Corps of Engineers surveyed the Patchogue River and entrance channel in August. The River has silted in near red marker #6, and a new buoy, 6A, has been installed as a temporary measure to allow safe navigation into the River.

For those with docks that are not legally permitted, please note that the CT DEEP is currently pursuing an enforcement program.

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WESTBROOK Community Listings

IMPORTANT TOWN HALL NUMBERS

Accounts Payable.....	(860) 399-3008
American Legion Anderson-Hoxie Post 103.....	(860) 669-0336
Animal Control Officer	(860) 662-3117
Assessor	(860) 399-3016
Assessor Clerk.....	(860) 399-3045
Building Official	(860) 399-2035
Emergency Management.....	(860) 577-0622
Emergency Management website.....	www.westbrookem.com
Environmental Health	(860) 399-3018
Finance Director.....	(860) 399-3004
Finance Director / Assistant.....	(860)399-1235
Fire Department / Business calls.....	(860) 399-9492
Fire Marshal Office / Business calls.....	(860) 339-5621
Harbor Master	(860) 982-7555
Health Director.....	(860) 399-9869
Inland Wetland Enforcement.....	(860) 399-3017
Transfer Station	(860) 399-6356
Land Use - Planning/Zoning/IWWC Admin. Asst	(860) 399-3091
Land Use - Building/Health Dept. Admin. Asst	(860) 399-0339
Probate Court	(860) 510-5028
Recreation	(860) 399-3095
Registrar of Voters.....	(860) 399-3042
Selectman's Office	(860) 399-3040
Senior Center Director.....	(860) 399-3048
Social Services.....	(860) 399-3090
Tax Collector	(860) 399-3043
Town Clerk	(860) 399-3044
Town Garage	(860) 552-4496
Town Web site.....	www.westbrookct.us
Treasurer	(860) 399-3040
Westbrook Senior Center	(860) 399-2029
Zoning Enforcement/Planning	(860) 399-3041

SCHOOLS

Daisy Ingraham Elementary School	(860) 399-7025
Junior-Senior High School	(860) 399-6214
Middle School.....	(860) 399-2010
Superintendent of Schools.....	(860) 399-6432

HOME HEALTH CARE

Visiting Nurses of Westbrook.....	(860) 399-3088
Ambulance & Oxygen Business Calls	(860) 399-7000

POLICE DEPARTMENT

Resident Trooper	(860) 399-7304
State Trooper.....	(860) 399-2100

LIBRARY

Westbrook Public Library	(860) 399-6422
--------------------------------	----------------

USEFUL NUMBERS

9 Town Transit	(860) 510-0429
Community Foundation of Middlesex County	(860) 347-0025
First Congregational Church of Westbrook.....	(860) 399-9367
Garden Club.....	westbrookgardenclub@yahoo.com
Historical Society	(860) 399-7473
Westbrook Youth & Family Services.....	(860) 399-9239
St. Mark's.....	(860) 399-9207
St. Paul's Episcopal Church.....	(860) 399-5402

From the Assessor's Office

2020 PERSONAL PROPERTY DECLARATION

This is notification that the Business Personal Property Declaration for the 2020 Grand List must be filed and received by the Assessor's Office on or before November 1st, 2020.

The forms were mailed in September. All business owners of taxable personal property are required to file declarations of personal property with the Town Assessor where the property is located on the Assessment Date of October 1, or where the property has established situs in accordance with the "three month" rule.

Property owners must file a Declaration of Personal Property regarding their taxable personal property with the Westbrook Assessor on or before November 1st, 2020.

Any person who fails to file a declaration of personal property on or before the first day of November, or on or before the extended filing date as granted by the Assessor pursuant to section 12-42, shall be subject to a 25% penalty on the assessment of such property.

Motor vehicles registered in another state and unregistered motor vehicles, including campers, must be reported if they are garaged in a city or town in this state, pursuant to §12-71b(g).

If you have questions please call the Assessor's Office at 860-399-3045 between 9 am and 4 pm Monday through Wednesday, 9 am and 7 pm on Thursday and 9 am to noon on Friday.

TOWN HALL HOURS

Mon – Wed: 9:00 am – 4:00 pm
Thursday: 9:00 am – 7:00 pm
Friday: 9:00 am – noon

TOWN HALL CLOSED

October 12th Columbus Day
November 11th Veterans Day
Thanksgiving Holiday:
November 26th November 27th
Christmas Holiday:
December 24th December 25

Disaster Preparedness... Starts with You



Westbrook Emergency Management would like to remind our residents that Hurricane Season for Connecticut is most probable for the months of August, September, October and November.

Preparedness measures taken and incorporated into your lifestyle will help you for a hurricane or any other disaster that affects you throughout the year.

Step 1

Go to the Westbrook Emergency Management website: www.westbrookem.com. Review all the preparedness information and videos. This resource information is valid for all ages and for your household pets.

Are you signed up with CT ALERT to receive emergency notifications from the town on your cell phone, email, iPhone or Android device? If not, do it now. It's simple and it's free.

Step 2

Ensure your disaster kit and disaster plans are up to date and in a safe location. This includes appropriate food and water in your home, fuel for your vehicle/generator, gas grill and cash on hand. Remember, ATM's are not usable during a power outage. Don't forget about prescription medicine. Ensure you have a sufficient supply. Please adhere to all food safety precautions when power is disrupted.

Disaster Plans include going to a safe location, other than your home when you feel it's not safe or when town officials advise you to leave your home. Everyone must have an alternate location plan to stay with family or friends, outside of the imminent danger zone. We advise not to wait for the 'last minute' to take action.

When a weather emergency is forecasted, safely secure or bring inside lawn furniture, gas grill, garbage cans and other outdoor items.

Step 3

Important documents such as insurance policies, birth certificates, social security cards and other related documents should be stored in a fireproof / waterproof secure device or at your local bank in a safe deposit box; with copies in your custody.

Step 4

Westbrook Emergency Management supports two active social media accounts; Facebook and Twitter. They provide detailed emergency preparedness information and safety issues relating to the Westbrook throughout the year. 'Like' them and adjust your Push Notifications to receive their uploaded information immediately.

Donald Izzo
Emergency Management Director

Westbrook Visiting Nurses

THE HOLIDAY GIVING TREE

We will be keeping the holiday spirit going by continuing our tradition of the Holiday Giving Tree.

During the time of Covid, we realize that it is a difficult time financially for many of us. Please know how grateful we are to those who generously donate and how appreciative the recipients are of receiving their holiday gifts.

To prevent donors from making extra trips to shopping centers and malls, we are asking for cash donations instead. Generally the minimum gift is \$15-\$20. In turn, our staff will purchase the gift a resident may need, or provide them with a gift card.

Please keep in mind the earlier time frame we will be working with this year: November 2-December 4.

Cash/check donations can be marked Visiting Nurses and safely put in the secure mailbox outside of the entrance /main door at Town Hall. This box is emptied daily.

If you prefer to mail a donation, please send a check to "Westbrook Visiting Nurses." Please address envelope to:
Westbrook Visiting Nurses
Attn: Noreen "Holiday Gift Tree"
866 Boston Post Road
PO Box 281
Westbrook, CT 06498

FLU CLINIC

Come vote and get your flu vaccine. Our plan is to hold the Flu Clinic on Election Day, Tuesday, November 3 from 9:00 am 1:00 pm. We accept Medicare, Aetna, Anthem BC, Connecticut Commercial, and Medicare HMO plans.

If you do not have insurance, you may make a donation. Insurance coverage may change, due to the Pandemic. We are working out the logistics due to the Covid pandemic and will be following recommendations from our Public Health Director.

Please look for updates on the town's website, www.westbrookct.us.

Westbrook Town Hall Reopening

The Westbrook Town Hall reopened to the public on Monday September 14, 2020. This reopening date was thoroughly discussed and agreed upon by the Westbrook COVID-19 Recovery Committee. Westbrook-specific and State of Connecticut COVID-19 public health metrics support the Committee's decision.

It is still strongly encouraged for the public to conduct Town business via postal mail, e-mail, phone, and the drop-box located at the rear of Town Hall.

Measures have been implemented for the health and safety of all Town Hall employees and visitors:

- Masks or cloth face coverings required to be worn by all Town Hall employees and visitors, in accordance with the State of Connecticut's Safe Workplace Rules and Executive Order 7NNN.
- A document drop box available at the rear of Town Hall, which is strongly encouraged to be used.
- Outside table and chairs provided as an alternative to entering Town Hall (Call the specific Town Department you wish to do business with and they can bring property files and other documents outside).
- Hand sanitizer located throughout Town Hall at entrance/exits, hallways, and Departments.
- No-touch entrance/exit doors installed.
- No-touch restroom soap dispensers installed.
- Plexi-glass barriers installed on Department counter tops.
- Floor markings placed in Departments and hallways to depict 6 feet of physical distancing between one another, which must be adhered to.
- Clean pens provided to visitors as needed for document signing.
- Restrooms and high touch objects disinfected frequently throughout the day.
- Safe hygiene reminders posted throughout Town Hall.

Public Meetings

- Public meetings held in the multi-purpose room with social distancing between individuals and open doors for increased outside air ventilation.
- Public meeting capacity limited to 25 individuals in the multi-purpose room, in accordance with the State of Connecticut's limits on indoor gatherings.
- Public meetings broadcasted live online via Zoom or by telephone, which individuals are strongly recommended to utilize.

Town Departments

- The Senior Center remains closed until further notice.
- The Land Use Department strongly encourages the public to continue to conduct business via postal mail, email, phone, and the drop-box located at the rear of Town Hall. Property files and documents may be viewed at the outside table, as an alternative to entering Town Hall.
- The Resident State Trooper's Office is open by appointment for fingerprinting services, etc, as was the norm pre-pandemic. For information or questions on the Resident State Trooper's services, please call 860-399-7304.
- The Town Clerk's office will be open, but vault access will be limited to achieve social distancing. The public is encouraged to continue dropping off recordings, documents, marriage licenses, etc. in the outside drop box marked "Town Clerk." Requests for vital records, marriage licenses, hunting and fishing licenses, liquor permits, map copies, etc. will be by appointment only. For information or questions on Town Clerk services, please call 860-399-3044.
- The Social Services office is open by appointment. For heating assistance applications, please utilize postal mail and the drop box located at the rear of Town Hall. For information on Social Services, please call 860-399-3090.

In addition to wearing a mask or cloth face covering, the Town of Westbrook requires all visitors to maintain at least 6 feet of physical separation between one another.

Town Hall visitors must adhere to the 6 feet floor indicator markings to ensure proper physical separation between individuals when in Departments and hallways.

Town Hall visitors are asked to utilize hand sanitizer and wash their hands often.

If a visitor is experiencing, or has been around an individual experiencing any of the following symptoms, please DO NOT enter Town Hall.

Symptoms include:

- Fever or chills
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Fatigue
- Muscle or body aches
- Headache
- New loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Congestion or runny nose
- Diarrhea
- Nausea or vomiting

Please stay home and contact your medical provider as warranted.

Noel Bishop, First Selectman

Conservation Commission

THE WESTBROOK NATURAL HERITAGE SITE MAP

The Town of Westbrook offers many opportunities to enjoy the natural world. We are fortunate to have town managed Open Space, State Forests, Wildlife Management areas, Town Beaches, the Town Harbor, boat launches and barrier islands all within our town boundaries. To better help the public find these areas of interest, Molly Bernstein, a member of the Conservation Commission, took on the task of revising and updating the Westbrook Natural Heritage Site Map which provides interesting factual information as well as historical references to 13 unique locations in Westbrook and a map that clearly identifies the locations and what activities can be enjoyed at them.

The Westbrook Natural Heritage Site Map was started as an Eagle scout project by Harry Ruppenicker several years ago but was in serious need of an update. Darlene

Briggs was a tremendous help to Molly as they worked to include new entries, such as The Preserve, correct, revise and verify the language of the location descriptions and revise the map itself with new pictures, routes and descriptive icons. The map can be viewed and downloaded electronically by searching for "Heritage Map" at the Town Website (<https://www.westbrookct.us/>). You can also find trail maps of many of the locations on the Heritage Map on the town website at this location: <https://www.westbrookct.us/434/Trail-Maps---Take-A-Hike>.

The Conservation Commission plans to print a few hundred copies of the Westbrook Heritage Map and make it available for purchase at local establishments. All proceeds will be put towards the purchase and maintenance of open space within the Town of Westbrook and the preservation of our barrier islands.



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Westbrook Residents Invited to Weigh In on Town Center Mural



Westbrook has plans for a mural to invigorate its Town Center, and is asking residents to vote for their favorite of two renderings, currently on display at 14 Westbrook Place (former Nautical Needles storefront next to the Turtle Cafe.) The mural will cover the entire brick side of the building that houses the Turtle Cafe, and is visible from Route 1 as well as the parking lot facing Knothe Lane.

The Turtle plays a large part in Westbrook's maritime history and is featured in each of two mural designs, developed through an ongoing process with prominent mural artist Tony Falcone.

The Turtle, a one-man submarine, is the first submarine used for military use. Invented by Westbrook's David Bushnell in 1775, it attempted to ward off the British warship HMS Eagle during the American Revolution. Bushnell, the son of a Connecticut farmer, wanted to show how creativity and inventiveness might win the day for the colonies. Today, Westbrook's Economic Development Commission (EDC) remains committed to finding innovative ways to support economic growth in town.

The mural project, initiated by the EDC and Westbrook Town Center Revitalization Committee (TCRC), is part of a strategic plan to enhance the Town Center and honor Westbrook's maritime history. Funding for the project is anticipated to come from grants from local or state philanthropic organizations. Residents are encouraged to vote for their preferred choice in the online survey posted on the Town's website, www.westbrookct.us, through September 30, 2020. Comments and questions should be directed to Eric Knapp, Westbrook Planning, Zoning & Development Coordinator, at eknapp@westbrookct.us or by phone at 860-399-3041.

Submitted by M. Simon for EDC



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Back to School During COVID-19



Looking forward to a great school year

As Westbrook Public Schools return to class, space design, cleanliness, policies, and procedures must be rethought in the wake of the corona virus and all that we are learning about how it spreads.

To keep staff and students safe we have done the following:

- Extra furniture in classrooms removed to maximize distance between students.
- Students sit facing in the same direction.
- Masks are required in school.
- Each classroom has their own sanitizing products, hand sanitizer, wipes, and soap and water in classrooms with sinks.
- Clear desk barriers provided for students and staff.
- Face shields for staff who must come in close contact with students.
- Plexi shields in offices.
- Floor markers remind about 6' distancing and 10' for the teacher in front of the room.
- Schedules for recess, bathroom breaks, and mask breaks.

New Health and Safety Measures:

- Daily Electronic Screening (including temperature check) completed by parents/guardians for students before departing for school
- Staff complete daily electronic screening
- Follow-up health checks completed by school nurses
- Addition of isolation rooms and health aide
- Mandatory Reporting of positive COVID-19 Results to Westbrook Health Department
- Contact tracing to be completed by Health Department
- Decisions regarding quarantining cohorts and/or closing of school will be done upon advice of the local health department

Should we have a suspected case of COVID, or a confirmed case of COVID, the Health Department will be notified. Sick staff or students will be isolated to contain the spread of the virus. Individuals with symptoms consistent with COVID will be contacted by the Health Department and assessed.

Staff or students who have been sent home due to suspected symptoms may return to school if they meet the CDC criteria:

- At least 10 days since symptoms first appeared, and
- At least 24 hours with no fever without fever reducing medication, and symptoms have improved.
- A doctor's note will be preferred.

Visit the Westbrook Public Schools website for information about how the schools are addressing opening our schools during this pandemic. www.westbrookctschools.org.

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Westbrook Events During a Global Pandemic



1911 Trolley Accident, W.J. Neidlinger, photographer



Steven's Corner

Sitting here in Westbrook on an August Sunday morning thinking about how much has changed since March, reflecting and gaining perspective about local history and a global pandemic... The sun is shining. The osprey are calling out. The cricket's song is LOUD... too soon. The usual heavy summer traffic along the Boston Post Road, hardly there, almost as though school had started and the summer crowd had left. The Isaias salt-drenched leaves are falling before fall is officially here.

Historical societies are a repository of the good and bad times, recording both the laughter and the tears. By definition, we record human activity. While members continue to work on individual projects and field reference questions, our challenge is great without access to people or town records.

Maybe it's time to look around and re-discover where we live.

From Senator Needleman

Tropical Storm Isaias will be remembered for a long time in Connecticut, its name mentioned in the same sentences as Hurricane Irene and Hurricane Sandy. When a storm knocks out power to half the state, and it takes as many as ten days to get that power back in some corners, it will live on in our memories for years.

My colleagues and I on the Energy and Technology Committee will remember Isaias for a long time. I believe it exposed visible issues with the leaders of state utilities. While line crews and front-line workers fought tirelessly to bring power back to our state, I think the executives of some of those power companies failed the public. As such, we will introduce the Take Back Our Grid Act, ensuring that Connecticut utilities treat customers properly.

This bipartisan legislation is focused on improving the service for utility customers today, making sure corporate leaders pay

just as much attention to Main Street as Wall Street. It is still early in the works, but there are three solid pillars of change legislators hope to achieve in the near future: achieving equity for ratepayers, requiring reforms and curbing excessive profits.

To achieve justice for ratepayers, we aim to hold electric distribution companies legally liable for losses caused by extended power outages. The strategies to implement this include potential reimbursements for lost food and medicine, working to provide backup resources for individuals with hardships and bolstering the legal liabilities companies may be forced to pay.

To achieve reforms, we plan to require two major changes for utilities. The first would be to require minimum in-state staffing requirements for line crews. In past storms, time has been lost as companies recruited crews from other states, even Canada, to respond. After a storm, you need boots on

the ground to work as soon as possible. Adding more in-state workers will help speed recovery. Additionally, by burying power lines where possible, the state could shore up and safely improve its power grid, making it more resilient against damage.

For instance, have you noticed that the poles of the "Seabreeze" Trolley Route still exist? They run from west to east from the grove beach, along the Boston Post Road, behind the Captain Stannard B&B, over to Stannard Hill, and through Chapman Beach at Waldron Drive. The Trolley had its run in Westbrook starting in 1908, ending with several accidents and the advent of the bus in the late 1920s.

In 1925, John G. Holbrook built a garage and apartments at the corner of Trolley Road and Route 1. There was a loading dock in the back and a trolley waiting room near the front. At one time, it was known as Steven's Corner and later Cristy's Corner. The DeCristoforo family lived upstairs. Now, it is "Julie's Cup of Joe."

Catherine Neidlinger Doane, President, Westbrook Historical Society, Inc.

the ground to work as soon as possible. Adding more in-state workers will help speed recovery. Additionally, by burying power lines where possible, the state could shore up and safely improve its power grid, making it more resilient against damage.

Finally, we aim to bring the public into the process. This can include new public hearings that expose how rates are developed, require stake holders are properly represented in energy company decisions, and potentially even freezing rates for two years while work continues to provide a more consumer-friendly electric grid.

In coming months and years, we know our work is cut out for us, but it's a challenge my colleagues and I will gladly take. Connecticut deserves a better electric grid and the end of 10-day power outages, and these steps can help us get there.

The Westbrook Fire Department

The Westbrook Fire Department would like to remind everyone to prepare for winter. Have your furnace cleaned, clean your chimney and wood stove flue pipe. Chimney fires can be prevented if regularly maintained. Don't burn green wood, use dry well seasoned wood. Use safe fire starters and burn the fire over 250°. Have your chimney cleaned to remove all creosote. Chimney fires can crack your chimney and cause extension into your home.

We would also like to remind you that according to Article IV for the Westbrook

Code of Ordinances it is your responsibility to number your home with at least 3 inch high contrasting color numbers. Reflective numbers are a preferred on mailboxes or posts. Marking of homes off of a shared driveway is very important. The faster we can find your home the faster we can respond in an emergency to protect you and your property.

HALLOWEEN PARTY

Westbrook Chemical Engine Company No. 1 Inc. will be sponsoring a safe Halloween Drive by candy distribution. Mark your calendar for the Halloween

Party on October 31st from 6:00 pm to 8:00 pm. Children can dress up in their costumes and have their parents drive by headquarters at 18 South Main Street. We are looking forward to seeing your costume and giving you a bag of treats.

We will have more information for you as we get closer to the day. So start thinking about your costume now.

Just a hint: WE WILL BE DRESSED AS FIREFIGHTERS... DON'T TELL ANYONE!

The Westbrook Senior Center

Due to the risk of COVID-19 spreading among elderly persons in congregate settings, the closure of the Westbrook Senior Center to the public will continue until further notice. We continue to follow the Governor's Executive Order. As we work toward a "soft" opening (no date yet), you will receive communication from

our office, which will include services/programs being offered, along with schedule and capacity. You will also receive protocols required to ensure participants safety. Communications will be sent via US mail and email. If you, a friend or family member have not been receiving correspondence from our office, please

call 860-399-2029 to be added to our mailing list and/or email list. You can also check the Town website for updates. We appreciate your patience.

Courtney Burks, Director
Amber Shaw, Assistant Director

Senior Center Seasonal Recipe

APPLE FRIES WITH CARAMEL CREAM DIP

(Recipe Adapted From: <https://www.favfamilyrecipes.com>)

INGREDIENTS

For the Apples:

- 4 to 5 tart apples (Pink Ladies, Granny Smith or Gala)
- 1 cup buttermilk
- 1 cup sugar
- 1 cup flour
- vegetable oil for frying
- 1/2 cup sugar
- 1/8 cup cinnamon

For the Dip:

- 8 oz cream cheese (softened)
- 8 oz Cool Whip or 1 cup whipping cream with 1/2 cup sugar- whipped until stiff
- 1 cup caramel sauce store bought or homemade

Directions:

In a fry pan, or deep fryer heat vegetable oil for frying.

Mix together the buttermilk and sugar in a medium size bowl. Peel and slice apples and add them to the buttermilk mixture as you go to prevent browning.

In a shallow dish, put a layer of flour. Pull the apples out of the buttermilk mix, one at a time and lightly coat all sides in the flour.

When oil is nice and hot, gently place coated apples into the oil so they are not touching, when the bottom side begins to turn golden, flip over and brown the second side. Quickly remove to a tray lined with paper towels to soak up excess grease and cool. Sprinkle immediately with cinnamon and sugar while they are hot.

For the Dip:

Mix together the cream cheese and cool whip until completely blended then stir in the caramel sauce. Place into a bowl for dipping and drizzle a little extra caramel sauce over the top.

Westbrook Recreation Department

Fall is right around the corner and we are very busy with registrations in all our programs. From tots to seniors, we have programs that will interest everyone and all ages. These are some examples of our very popular programs. Our K-4 Karate program has children practicing twice a week on Mondays and Wednesdays after school at the Daisy Elementary School. Badminton is another very special program that everyone enjoys on Saturday mornings at Daisy in November. Our Middle School / After Care program is another favorite of parents. Parents love that the staff helps their children get all their homework done before they get them home. Space is limited with many of our programs so go on line and register soon.

Pickleball is the hot new program for adults of all ages. Our pickleball courts are located right next to the Ted Lane baseball field, right in the center of Westbrook. Pickleball is the fastest growing sport in the nation. We have two different classes teaching beginner lessons during the week and league play for beginners and advanced players. If you want to try a new, fun activity you have to try pickleball.

Soccer is the sports program everyone loves doing during the fall months. We always have a large number of children participating in our Tot and Recreational soccer program on Saturday mornings. Children between the ages of 4 – 10 years of age are welcomed. Sessions will focus on individual and small group play. Children will receive more touches on the ball and develop better foot skills in a fun environment. We make soccer fun so your child will have a wonderful experience.

Once soccer is over we will jump right into our recreational youth Badminton program. Badminton starts on November 7th and will run for six weeks. Children between the ages of 5 – 12 years old are all welcome to register. Your children will love playing with their friends as we teach them how to serve, set and spike. (Sometimes we even let the parents play!)

Our after/school child care program at the Middle School is also available to busy parents who can't to pick-up their children until after work. Your child will be in a safe and well supervised environment where they can study, do their homework and play with their friends. The cost is less than \$10.00 per day if you sign-up by the month for \$200.00. It will be \$15.00 a day if you wish to sign up for a day or two. We even give the children a snack each day. All children must be registered to participate in this program. Please call us at 860-399-3095 if you have any questions?

Adults and seniors will find quite a few new fitness programs that are reasonably priced. We have Essentrics, Yoga, Zumba and Chair Fitness programs available. Some programs are done after 5:00 pm so people don't have to rush over from work. The senior fitness programs are done on Monday, Wednesday and Friday mornings from 8:15 – 10:15 am. You can sign up for one day, two days or all three.

If you're interested in finding out more about all our other programs, please check us out at westbrookrec.com. All of our programs are available to everyone (resident and nonresidents). Why pay expensive membership fees when you can pay as you go and stop whenever you want?

Inland Wetlands & Watercourses Commission

UPCOMING COCKAPONSET STATE FOREST TIMBER HARVEST IN WESTBROOK

The Town of Westbrook has received notification from Emery Gluck, forester from the Connecticut DEEP Division of Forestry, that the agency is contracting to implement a commercial harvest in Westbrook. Mr. Gluck presented the plan to the Westbrook Conservation Commission on October 18, 2011 while he was developing the ten year Forest Resource Management Plan, and notified the First Selectman's office in June of 2012 that the draft plan was posted on Connecticut DEEP's website.

The objective of the harvest is to promote a new generation of shade sensitive oaks. Oaks are not sustaining themselves under current natural conditions. This is mainly due to the dense forests that have developed in the absence of once prevalent forest fires. Oaks are extremely valuable for wildlife for their acorns. Oak forests have much greater diversity and abundance of birds than maple forests. Birch, beech and maple forests are slowly displacing oak forests throughout the Northeast. This trend has been called an impending ecological crisis by one author. The creation of gaps and openings in the canopy will also provide habitat for a diversity of birds. The harvest should provide a good seed bed for this year's

acorn crop to germinate and enough sunlight to grow well for a few years. A subsequent harvest will likely be needed for the new oaks to remain competitive so they can eventually grow into a new oak forest.

For further information, please contact: Emery Gluck, Forester, Cockaponset State Forest, Division of Forestry, Bureau of Natural Resources, Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection, 18 Ranger, Haddam, CT 06438 P: 860.345.8522|F: 860.345.0687 |E: emery.gluck@ct.gov

Westbrook Building Department

The building department and the inspector are back in the field performing inspections in strict compliance with the CDC guidelines as required. This past quarter has again been challenging for us all. Fortunately, we have all worked together and have made progress on your projects and builders have adopted a new normal which seems to be working well. I just want to again thank everyone for your patience and understanding as we get through the rest of 2020. I think the famous song written by Charles Strouse and Martin Charnin may have said it best: "The sun'll come out tomorrow", Just thinkin' about tomorrow, clears away the cobwebs and the sorrow, 'Til there's none!" I also wanted to answer questions that I am often asked: What happens if I don't have the town's Building Department perform a final inspection for the work, I've completed under my building

permit? and, Why should you have a final inspection performed by the building department?

1. The most important reason is to ensure the work meets all safely requirements and is in compliance with the CT State Building Codes.
2. If you hired a contractor you may want to have your final inspection performed prior to allowing the contractor to fully complete the project and move on to his or her next job.
3. If you decide to put your house up for sale many financial institutions require a search of the building department files to ensure there are no open permits. Permits can only be closed after

final inspection and approval by the building department.

4. An open permit can prevent and/or delay the closing until the matter is resolved.

If you are unsure as to whether your permits were properly closed out, please send an email to my attention and I will review the file and get back to you. The last thing you should have to worry about when you are trying to move is whether that deck, pool or finished basement permit was closed out in your property file. Please don't hesitate to reach out me if I can assist you in any way. My email is: dmaiden@westbrookct.us or phone 860-399-0339.

David W Maiden, Building Official

Westbrook Youth & Family



REGISTER FOR FALL PROGRAMS:

- Sensory playgroups -Parents with young children, 0-6 years, are invited to share connections and fun activities. Kids enjoy open play and parents enjoy comfortable conversations and support. Please reach out to see the upcoming dates!

- School programming- Welcome back to all Westbrook Students! Be on the look out for the start of Lunch Bunch Groups, Peer Support Groups, and our Mindful Minute videos!

COUNSELING SERVICES

WYFS provides support and therapy for individuals, families and couples. Our therapists help strengthen family functioning, and support children and families working through life's challenges, including emotional and behavioral issues, stress, anxiety, grief, depression, trauma, peer issues and life transitions. Currently because of the COVID-19 health crisis all counseling services are taking place via Telehealth. Currently we are accepting new clients. Call 860-399-9239 for an appointment. Check us out at WYFS.org & Like Us on Facebook!

Westbrook Land Conservation Trust

The Land Trust has been raising money to help close the funding gap for the town purchase of the Toby Hill VII property for open space. The Trust promised to match up to \$5,000 in donations.

Toby Hill VIII constitutes 146.72 acres of undeveloped upland which will contribute to the open space greenway plan the town has been working on for years. It is contiguous to WLCT holdings Toby Hill Chase of 26.04 acres and Timberland

of 14.7 acres. Preserving it will protect water resources at the headwaters of Trout Brook and provide recreational access; not developing it will reduce future costs to the town for maintenance of roads and bridges.

There was an article in the Harbor News about this effort, a mass email and multiple WLCT FaceBook posts. So far, 10 donors have given \$810.66, and the Trust continues to look for more. The Facebook

page has had 310 visits, 26 likes and 15 shares since the announcement. The hope is that the likes can be converted to donations, which will be doubled, towards an investment in our town's future.

The Land Trust owns 31 land parcels totaling just under 141 acres as well as the conservation rights to an additional 51 acres.

continued on page 18

Land Conservation Trust continued from page 17

Founded in 1968, we celebrate our 50th anniversary this year.

The Land Trust always needs new members and board members to be responsible for these properties. If you appreciate the protected open space we preserve and are interested in helping us to maintain it, please consider joining the Land Trust. In

addition there are plenty of opportunities for more involvement including participating in clean ups, helping with our newsletter, stewarding our parcels, and becoming an active board member. As a member, you will receive our newsletter, be invited to our special events including hikes and programs with speakers, and get updates on important environmental issues such

as Preserving Plum Island and land use in Westbrook. If you are interested in joining the Land Trust write or email us at:

Westbrook Land Conservation Trust
PO Box 1124
Westbrook, CT 06498

WestbrookLCT@yahoo.com

Westbrook Health Department

THE IMPORTANCE OF PUMP-OUT NOTIFICATIONS

When purchasing or renting a house, whether it's brand new or left behind by previous owners for new families to reside in, it often requires proper care of the subsurface sewage disposal system, or SSDS, in order to ensure a safe and functioning property. Maintaining one's septic system, as found in the Connecticut Public Health Code's Technical Standards, is to ensure and "prevent [the] buildup of sludge, grease, and scum that will adversely affect the performance of the SSDS. In a properly functioning system, wastewater should not backflow from the leaching system into the septic tank at the time of pumping under normal use conditions." To prevent the flow of excess wastewater from leaking, a pump-out maintenance must be done in a timely manner. In Chapter 18 of Westbrook's Part II: Code of Ordinances, it is stated within Article III Section 18-36 that "All on-site sewage disposal systems located within the town shall be pumped-out and a septic tank inspection performed by

a septic tank cleaner or septic system installer not less than once in every five-year period." Additionally, such inspections apply to properties that accrue more sludge intake, such as "food service establishments, marinas, institutional establishments, day care facilities and multi-family dwellings. More frequent pumping may be required if the septic tank or cesspool is undersized for the use." Other important house-keeping rules to keep in mind when maintaining a septic system is to not flush sanitary napkins, coffee grounds, cooking fats, bones, wet-strength towels, disposable diapers, etc. down into your septic system, as they do not degrade in the tank and can clog the inlet or outlet baffles.

For more information, visit the CT Department of Public Health's website and search the Environmental Engineering page on septic systems.

Pamela Solis, BS, Westbrook Health Department

From State Rep Devin Carney

INSULIN, TELEHEALTH BILLS PASS IN SPECIAL SESSION

The Connecticut House of Representatives met in special session on Thursday, July 23rd. It was the first time the full legislature met since the Capitol closed due to coronavirus. During special session, the House and Senate overwhelmingly approved two healthcare bills regarding telehealth and insulin costs.

Earlier this year, Governor Lamont signed an executive order to loosen restrictions on telehealth appointments because of the pandemic. However, this executive order was set to expire in September, so the legislature voted to extend it legislatively. Under the legislation passed, the governor's order will be extended

through March 15, 2021. In addition, more providers will be able to utilize telehealth as an alternative to live appointments, including dentists and behavioral therapists. Telehealth includes both communications through platforms like Zoom and audio-only phone calls. These changes will allow those worried about contracting coronavirus to be able to have communications with their healthcare providers without having to see them in person. Next year, the legislature will revisit whether to extend the legislation past March 15th.

At the beginning of the legislative session, there was a large push to cap the costs of insulin and insulin-related supplies. The legislature heard from many individuals

affected by the skyrocketing costs of these life-saving products.

As a result, the legislature voted, nearly unanimously, to cap the monthly costs of insulin and other glucose-lowering medications at \$25 per month for insured patients. In addition, insulin-related supplies, such as blood sugar meters, pumps, and syringes, will be capped at \$100 a month for insured patients. These provisions go into effect in January 2022.

The bill also incorporates 'Kevin's Law', which gives pharmacists the ability to dispense insulin in an emergency.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact me at devin.carney@cga.ct.gov or (860) 240-8700.

From the Tax Collector's Office

REMINDER: THE LOW INTEREST RATE EXECUTIVE ORDER ENDS OCTOBER 2nd, 2020

Per Governor's Executive Order 7S, Low Interest Rate Program, the Town of Westbrook's Board of Selectman have made the decision to adopt Section 6B of the order ("Low Interest Rate Program.") This program provides a 'window' of 90 days from the due date of July 1st, 2020 where taxpayers would be able to pay at a reduced interest rate. Instead of the normal 18% per year, 1.5% monthly, the 90 day period would be 3% per annum or .25% monthly. If as of October 2nd, 2020 and thereafter, taxes are not paid and still delinquent, the statutory rate would again apply to the remaining delinquent tax owed. Meaning the tax interest rate would return to 18% per annum or 1.5% per month as of July 1st, 2020.

We encourage you to please pay by mail. A return envelope will be provided in your tax bill. They can be mailed to 866 Boston Post Road, Westbrook. Or you can pay online at www.westbrookct.us. Credit cards are accepted with a fee of 2.5% for credit cards, \$3.95 for a visa debit card and \$2.00 for e-check. There is a drop off box outside of the main entrance of the Town Hall if you wish to drop your bills off.

If you would like a receipt when paying your tax bill please send your entire bill in with a self-addressed stamped envelope.

Traffic tickets - please be advised that you only have 10 days from issuance of a traffic ticket to pay or the fine is doubled. Payment for traffic tickets can only be paid by cash or check and cannot be paid on line.

If you should have any questions or concerns about your tax bills, please do not hesitate to contact the Tax office at 860-399-3043

Tax Collector
Kimberly Bratz, CCMC

Want to reach every home

& business in town?

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at 914-806-5500*

Lewis Daniels Scholarship

To honor recently retired Library Director Lewis Daniels and his 40 years of exemplary service to our community, in partnership the Friends of the Westbrook Public Library, the Westbrook Public Library Board of Trustees seek to establish the Lewis Daniels Scholarship, through the Westbrook Foundation.

The scholarship is intended to encourage young people of Westbrook to pursue a career in librarianship or education. Contributions may be made out to the Westbrook Foundation, noting the Lewis Daniels Scholarship, and sent to the Westbrook Foundation at Post Office Box 528, Westbrook, CT 06498.

Submitted by: MaryJo Noonan, Chair
Westbrook Public Library Board of Trustees

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Surgeries are performed in Middlesex Hospital's state-of-the-art operating rooms, which are specifically designed to accommodate orthopedic surgeries. They may also be performed at an orthopedic outpatient surgical facility in Middletown.

Middlesex is certified by The Joint Commission in both hip and knee joint replacements, meaning that it meets

the highest national standards for safety and quality of care. When performing joint replacement surgeries, Middlesex surgeons often use technology to improve accuracy and outcomes. For example, the NAVIO Surgical System is a robotic tool that helps to place components of the knee with greater precision during partial or full replacement surgeries. ExcelsiusGPS, a robotic 3D navigation system, is used to perform minimally invasive spine surgery, specifically spine fusions.

For hip replacements, surgeons may opt to use an anterior approach. During this minimally invasive surgery, the hip joint is accessed by entering through the front of the body and only requires a small incision on the front of the hip. This can

result in much shorter recovery times and less pain for patients.

Regardless of what bone or muscle hurts, Middlesex Health promotes a team approach to your care in a healing and homelike environment with the goal of providing pain relief, improved mobility and a better quality of life. Its Center for Joint Replacement and Spine Surgery is recognized as an orthopedic center of excellence.

For more information about orthopedic services at Middlesex Health, visit MiddlesexHealth.org/Ortho.

TRANSFER STATION HOURS

Monday, Wednesday & Saturday
from 8:00 am to 3:00 pm
860-399-6356

TOWN GARAGE

185 Horse Hill Road
I-95 Exit 64
860-552-4496

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Social Services

CRT Winter Heating Assistance Program



This federally funded program is designed to help low to moderate income households offset heating costs during the winter months. Homeowners and renters may apply. Eligible households may receive help for such heating sources as oil, natural gas, electricity, propane, kerosene, coal and wood.

The financial eligibility is as follows:

60 % OF STATE MEDIAN INCOME GUIDELINES

2020-2021

Household Size	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Annual Income	37,645	49,228	60,811	72,394	83,977	95,560	97,732	99,904
Monthly Income	3,137	4,102	5,068	6,033	6,998	7,963	8,144	8,325

Additional asset limit guidelines are followed.

Households eligible for the winter heating program may also be eligible to receive weatherization assistance. This can help conserve energy and lower heating bills. Some may qualify for the furnace clean tune and test or repair and replacement programs as well.

Applications for this winter season began in September for deliverable fuel heated households and November for utility heated households.

“Mask Up” Westbrook - COVID-19 Outreach

Social Services continues to supply masks to those residents in need. Please call Social Services for pick up or if you or someone you know would like to donate masks.

Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program

The Connecticut Department of Agriculture provides low income seniors with checks that can be exchanged for eligible foods at farmers’ markets. Eligibility Guidelines: The individual is 60 years of age or older, OR is a disabled individual under the age of 60 living in housing facilities occupied primarily by *older* individuals where congregate nutrition services are provided. The 2020 (gross) income limits for a one and two-person household are: **Single person** = \$23,606 annually or \$1,968 monthly or **Two People** = \$31,894 annually or \$2,658 monthly. This program runs through October 31st.

Please contact Social Services at 860-399-3090 to apply for these programs or for general information.

Westbrook Fair Rent Commission

FAIR RENT INFORMATION & MEDIATION SERVICES

Census data shows that almost 20% of all Westbrook housing is rental.

The Westbrook Fair Rent Commission provides at no expense information and mediation service for Westbrook tenants and landlords. If a resolution cannot be obtained, with the exception of seasonal rentals, the commission, upon formal application by the tenant, will hold a hearing with both the tenant and landlord and determine, if appropriate, temporary or permanent rental adjustments under the factors the Fair Rent Commission can legally consider.

No one wants a hearing. The focus of the Westbrook Fair Rent Commission is to resolve the issue to the satisfaction of both the tenant and landlord and insure the

comfort, health and safety of Westbrook residents.

CONSIDERED FACTORS

- The amount of taxes and other expenses of the landlord
- Damages, other than ordinary wear and tear which you have caused to the apartment
- The health and safety conditions of your rental
- How much the landlord has raised your rent in the past
- How much of the rent increase will be used to improve your apartment and the building
 - Extra fees and charges are also covered

- The number of bathtubs or showers, toilets, kitchen sinks and bathroom sinks in your apartment
- The rents charged for similar apartments in the area
- The repairs needed to make your apartment livable
- Services (such as utilities, furniture, furnishings and equipment) supplied by the landlord
- The size and number of bedrooms in your apartment
- What utilities you have in your apartment and whether you or your landlord pays for them

continued on page 22

Fair Rent... continued from page 21

- Whether your apartment complies with the housing code and state statutes relating to health and safety
- Your income and whether there are other apartments you can afford.

INCLUDED PROPERTIES

Manufactured home complexes, trailer parks and town operated rentals are included.

FAIR RENT & RENT CONTROL

Fair Rent has nothing to do with Rent Control-which does not

exist in Connecticut. Fair Rent Commissions consider individual cases only.

LEGAL REPRESENTATION & APPEALS

Lawyers are not required; however, Commission decisions are appealable to the court system by either side Tenants or landlords may choose a spokesperson for the hearing.

RETALIATION

If the Commission determines, after a separate hearing, that a landlord has retaliated in any manner against a tenant because the tenant has complained to the commission, the commission may order the landlord to cease and desist from such conduct which is enforceable by the court if necessary.

Westbrook Public Library

A LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

Greetings,

First, let me say hello to those of you I have not had the opportunity to meet. Since I started as Library Director in July, the library has been working on several initiatives. The biggest event of the season was our limited reopening on August 19, 2020. We have continued to expand our services and create new routines. We have had browsing only sessions to welcome patrons back inside. We have started computer and seating use by appointment. We have continued our popular curbside service. We have added virtual features, like Mrs. Nyman's popular Story Hour on our Facebook page or Colin's "Book of the

Week" on both Instagram and Facebook.

Second, by the time you read this, it will likely be time to introduce you to our new Public Service Librarian. The application deadline passed on August 31 and we had an incredible pool of candidates, both in numbers and talent. The person you will get to meet will have been selected for their library experience, their education, and their proven work with teens and technology. They will have been a standout candidate in a very qualified group. Thank you to all who applied for the opportunity.

Third, I am very much looking forward to introducing you all to our new Technology Room upon its completion! Technology

services is what introduced me to a love of library service, and I cannot wait to work with you and our dedicated staff on all kinds of potential programming and creativity.

Thank you for your support and patience as we have seen many changes this past year. Finally, I personally want to acknowledge Lew Daniels for his endless dedication to the Westbrook Public Library. He has voluntarily offered his services in all aspects of the aforementioned changes, for which I am incredibly grateful. Thank you, Lew!

Sincerely,
Tim Kellogg, Library Director

How to Reach Your Elected Officials

STATE

Governor Ned Lamont

State Capitol
210 Capitol Ave, Hartford, CT 06106
800.406.1527

LT Governor Susan Bysiewicz

State Capitol
210 Capitol Ave, Hartford, CT 06106
860-524-7384

Secretary of the State

Denise Merrill

30 Trinity Street, Hartford, CT 06106
(860) 509-6000 Fax (860) 509-6209
<http://www.sots.state.ct.us/>

State Treasurer

Shawn Wooden

55 Elm Street, Hartford, CT 06106
860.702.3000
State.treasurer@ct.gov

Attorney General

William Tong

55 Elm Street, Hartford, CT 06106
860.808.5318 Fax 860.808.5387

Rep. 23rd District

Devin Carney

CT House Republican Office,
L.O.B. Room 4200, Hartford, CT 06106
860-240-8700, 800-842-1423 Toll Free
devin.carney@housegop.ct.gov

Senator 33rd District

Norman Needleman

Legislative Office Building, Room 3300
Hartford, CT 06106-1591
860.240.8600

Rep. 35th District

Jesse Maclachlan

CT House Republican Office
L.O.B. Room 4200, Hartford, CT 06106
860-240-8700, 800-842-1423 Toll Free
jesse.maclachlan@housegop.ct.gov

FEDERAL

Senator Richard Blumenthal

90 State House Square 10th Floor
Hartford, CT 06103
(860) 258-6940
Fax (860) 258-6958
702 Hart Senate Office
Washington, DC 20510
(202) 224-2823,
Fax (202)224-9673

Congressman Joe Courtney

101 Water Street Suite 301
Norwich, CT 06360
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Westbrook Energy Committee

Solar Array Virtual Net Metering Project Complete and Generating Credits



The 1 MW solar array project in Somers, CT is up and running and generating financial credits for 5 town facilities – our 3 schools, Mulvey Center and Library.

In the systems first 3 months of operation March-May 2020 the Town has mitigated energy costs close to \$10,000. The summer and early fall months will yield greater credits as the days are longer.

The Town and Board of Education entered into a 20-year Power Purchase Agreement that will mitigate energy costs up to \$200,000/year by purchasing renewable solar energy from solar developer - Madison Solar, LLC Somers, CT project.

The Energy Committee welcomes participation from residents and businesses at its monthly meetings the 3rd Wednesday of the month 4:30 pm at Town Hall. Volunteers are always welcome.

Stay Well and Be Safe.

Members of the Westbrook Energy Committee

Chris Ehlert – Chair	Bill Fish – Vice-Chair
Darlene Briggs	Jill Brainerd
Bill Fredrickson	Lesley Wysocki
Richard White	Gary Gavigan

REMINDER: If you should notice that a streetlight is not functioning properly please contact Department of Public Works' Colleen Topitzer at (860) 552-4496 or via email ctopitzer@westbrookct.us M-F 7 am to 3:30 pm and provide both the pole number and physical description of the location (nearest house numbers or landmark) where this issue exists.

December 7th / Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day / Pearl Harbor Bombed...

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Westbrook Garden Club



Fall is in the air and I hope all the garden lovers enjoyed a great season of plentiful flowers and vegetables. As we get ready to put our gardens to bed for the winter, remember that fall is an excellent time of year to plant perennials and shrubs. The warm days and cool nights provide a perfect climate for plants to establish a healthy root system.

On another note, by the time you read this, our fall mum sale will be over, and the members of the club would like to thank all the friends and family who supported us during COVID-19. Since we could not meet with you all on the town green this year, our sale was held as a pre-order event only. The monetary support provides us with funds to keep our town beautification projects going from our spring plantings, fall décor, and holiday greens.

Lastly, I would encourage you to visit our wonderful meadow project. This long-term enrichment of the Salt Marsh Meadow was begun in 2018 and so far, we will have planted close to 2000 new pollinator friendly plants! A big thank you to the hard work provided by our club members and to Kathy Connelly for her excellent design. Keep watching as new signage will be going up as well as some benches to sit and enjoy the birds, bees, and butterflies.



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2020 Vista Life Innovations Class of 2020



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On August 21, six students graduated from Vista Life Innovations - a nationally accredited post-secondary program that supports the personal success of individuals with disabilities. These graduates studied in Vista's residential transition program, Discover. In the Discover Program, students learn the skills necessary to live independently through experiential training in a community-based setting.

Graduation is a significant milestone that acknowledges the independence and success that students have worked hard to achieve while in the Discover Program. The graduates are planning to join Vista's long-term, community-based program,


Engage, to continue to develop themselves as they accomplish new goals.

This year's Commencement was a virtual livestream with live and prerecorded speeches. Hundreds of streaming viewers tuned in from nearly 15 different states to share in this impactful event.


With campuses in Madison and Westbrook, CT, Vista has been providing services and resources to assist individuals with disabilities achieve personal success for 30 years. Visit www.vistalifeinnovations.org.

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New Questions; Some Silver Linings by Morgan McMinn

The COVID-19 pandemic has turned our lives inside out. We went from the normalcy of work and school, attending events, going to gyms, restaurants and bars to a state of emergency, social distancing and new protocols. As we continue to grapple with the struggles that have come with the pandemic, it is important to reflect upon what we have learned to date. Uncertainty remains, but perhaps we are better prepared for what may lie ahead.

THE HEALTHCARE INDUSTRY RESPONDS TO CHALLENGING TIMES



We have been living amid constantly evolving information about just what COVID-19 is? Is there immunity from the virus? Will the virus mutate? How is the virus transmitted? “We are always

learning new information” notes Amanda Falcone, Public Relations Director for Middlesex Health. “As of today, there is still much that is unknown. There’s no clinical playbook - no established standards of care for this virus. Knowledge changes rapidly.”

COVID-19 has altered what “normal” health care entails. Insurance has, at least for an interim period, approved telehealth visits. Telehealth is an important option especially for those who may lack mobility, access to transportation or the time for typical health care appointments. Middlesex Health stresses the importance of keeping up with your medical care. “Putting off annual exams and important tests and procedures can have unintended long-term consequences,” states Falcone.

Organizations like Middlesex Health are working to find out more about COVID-19. Middlesex Health is a part of a national initiative, led by the Mayo Clinic, that is investigating the use of convalescent plasma. Middlesex Health is also part of a study on Remdesivir, which, according to Falcone is the only medicine so far to show even a moderate benefit with respect to treating COVID-19.

Early on the healthcare industry faced worldwide supply shortages with respect to items such as personal protective equipment and cleaning supplies. Middlesex Health quickly made adjustments in how care is provided (additional cleaning, masks, care areas segregated based on COVID-19 status, additional safety equipment, etc.)

“We are actually using our pandemic plan as we work,” states Falcone. “When things get better, we will take a close look at our emergency and pandemic plan and adjust accordingly so that we are even more prepared should we ever need to use them again. Over the past several months we’ve learned a lot. We are now more knowledgeable and more prepared as we move forward, and we recognize that we will be dealing with this virus for a long time to come. It will likely be a moving target for a while yet to come.”

A RETURN TO NATURE?

With families and individuals confined to their homes across the globe, our planet was able to take its own breath and get slightly healthier. Startling images show clear waters in the Venice canals and the India Gate War Memorial in New Delhi became more visible as air pollution decreased (above right).



Some studies indicate that, while pre-pandemic levels of daily emissions were rising steadily every year, COVID-19 restrictions brought numbers comparable to 2006, mainly due to a reduction in surface transportation, power and industry (cars, electricity, fossil fuel, etc).

Mr. Robert Klee, Lecturer at the Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies, notes that “clean air is important and this is a link to the pandemic being a respiratory pandemic - those who suffer from dirtier air and depressed or compromised health from dirty air are more susceptible to the likes of COVID-19. There are correlations with bad air quality and higher incidents.”



People are taking walks, running, hiking, biking, kayaking, etc. The pandemic “reconnected people in interesting ways,” observes Klee. “People locked in the house go on walks, hike on a trail, want to go out and experience nature.”

Cities like Bogota, New York, Paris and Berlin, along with local communities, have made new street spaces for safer individual mobility (walking, cycling etc.). Will this lead to more permanent change? “Part of the question as we restart our economy is what are we restarting it for and to? What is our goal?” And don’t forget climate change is still an existential threat and a huge crisis and we can’t forget about it for one moment.”

MENTAL HEALTH – RESILIENCE AMID UNCERTAINTY

COVID-19 has taken an emotional toll. “There is so much uncertainty. It’s unprecedented,” observes Nancy Randall, a psychologist at East Lyme Psychological Associates. “People are more isolated than they have been. People are stressed about going back to work. They are anxious about the reopening and not sure what it will look like. The anxiety is really the biggest thing. Not knowing what’s coming next.”

Is there a silver lining? “We adapt pretty well to things,” she says. Many are enjoying nature, adopting pets, finding time for relationships and hobbies. People connect via facebook groups or Zoom. They have found ways to make a difference, whether sewing face-masks or checking in on others. “People are resilient,” notes Randall. “We’ve found ways to adapt and try to find the positive in things. Things we learned we can take with us. That doesn’t have to go away.”



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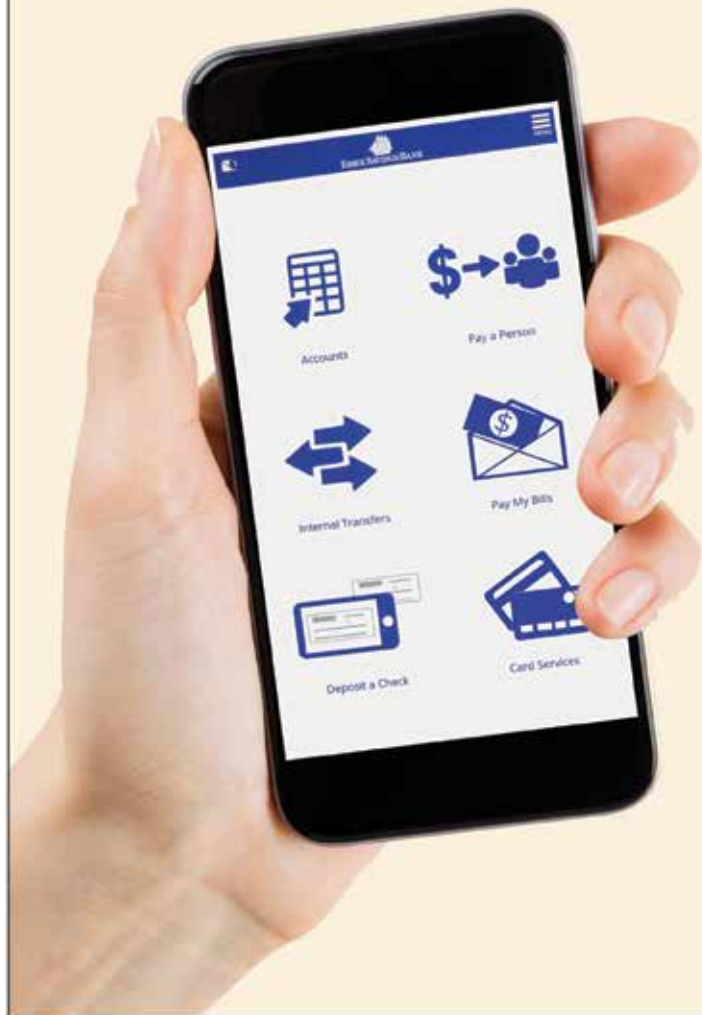


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