

THE NORTH STONINGTON QUARTERLY

SUMMER 2020

BOARD OF SELECTMEN

Perhaps the last 6 months have been the most tumultuous in a great many years. Though recently we have seen things like historic flooding and windstorms, a pandemic has not been seen in 100 years. This year one fairly unprecedented action took place, with the Board of Finance having to adopt the budget instead of it going to a vote. There's an oath all elected officials take when sworn in and it reads..."I do solemnly swear that I will support the constitution of the United States and the constitution of the State of Connecticut so long as I continue a citizen thereof, and that I will faithfully discharge, according to law, the duties of the office to the best of my ability so help me God". The Governor signed an order that this year's budget had to be passed by the budget-making authority in town, which is the Board of Finance. He did not give an option. It was not a request; it was an order.

In short, no board member took this decision lightly and it was discussed at length. We would like to thank all Board members, staff, and volunteers who contributed to the budget process as well as everyone who participated in our first "virtual" public hearing. The budget that was adopted listened to feedback and while no budget ever pleases everyone, this was a good compromise after months of hard work.

For those who wish to participate in any public meeting, it is now easier than ever by either joining on your computer or by phone. Simply go to the town website www.northstoningtonct.gov and look on the posted agenda of the board or commissions meeting you are interested in attending. A call-in number is provided and you will be able to participate as a member of the public. We are so thankful to our boards, commissions, and staff for flawlessly moving into this virtual world of meetings.

This year welcomed an appointment of a new Town Treasurer, long time Board of Finance member Mustapha Ratib. We also have two newly appointed committees working on town business in our School Repurposing Committee-charged with looking at alternative uses for the old Middle/High School, and our Emergency Services Operations Committee- looking at best practices and efficiencies of emergency services in town.

We'd like to take more time to talk about some of the last 6 months' accomplishments such as the new "welcome signs" in the village, the purchase and implementation of budgeted items like the replacement of our 20-year-old "over the rail mower", or installation of our new phone system at town hall...but the most important issue facing all of us today is COVID-19.

If there is one clear message about this virus at this time it is to urge everyone to wear a mask when 6 feet of distance cannot be kept. More guidance continues to come out even this week (at the time this is being written) stating this can indeed be lifesaving. If you are in a higher risk group, you should avoid public areas where distance can't be kept. Though we have done a good job to date containing this virus locally and in our State, all signs point to a resurgence if we aren't careful and wearing a mask is the best protection for you and for those you love.

Finally speaking of love, we must also acknowledge the Black Lives Matter movement which has become historically the largest social outcry for equality in our history. We cannot deny racism exists in this country and even in our own town. Today as your leadership we ask you to find compassion, understanding, and love during this time.

Indeed, we are in unprecedented times, but one thing that remains certain is North Stonington remains one of the most special places on earth. We hope during this time you have come to love and appreciate your families more and if you know anyone who needs help, please refer them to 211 to get the help needed, whether for physical, mental, or just food or shelter. Take care of one another and know that we as a community will endure together.

MIKE URGO, NITA KINCAID & BOB CARLSON

SELECTMEN@NORTHSTONINGTONCT.GOV



NORTH STONINGTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Before I write about the district's summer plans, I just want to say, "HOORAY!" that the 2019-2020 school year is over! I want to thank the entire North Stonington Public Schools community for everyone's efforts in making the very best of a most difficult situation. It will be a well-deserved summer vacation for everyone, especially our parents, who became essential to assisting our teachers in delivering instruction.

We now turn our attention on the summer with a focus of a successful opening of the 2020-2021 school year. What will be even more special is that we will be opening a "renovated as new" North Stonington Elementary School. I cannot wait for the open house as you will see for yourself that it is spectacular! Soon new furniture will arrive and our staff has already started to move a lot of the furniture from the temporary location back across the street.

We are excited that we will be reopening school for the new school year after being closed for nearly four months this spring. As you can imagine, under the circumstances, the district will take every precaution to insure our students are in a safe and healthy environment. A task force is in place comprised of school staff, Board of Education members, parents and health experts. The committee's charge is to develop a plan that will bring students back to school for instruction following all state and health department guidelines. More information will be forthcoming.

Please have a restful and safe summer!

PETER NERO, SUPERINTENDENT

CONSERVATION COMMISSION

We have completed an up-to-date North Stonington Trail Map, hard copies of which are available *free* at Wheeler Library, Chelsea-Groton Bank, Carl's Café and the Town Clerk's office; you may print out one from the town website as well. The map includes the state (Narragansett Blue Trail), all town and private conservation organization trails. Attempts have been made to connect trails by way of lesser traveled town roads as well as identifying bicycling and equestrian locations. We encourage you to "take a hike" this summer while exercising and enjoying nature at its best.

Clearing of downed trees and debris along our town trails is a constant cleanup task. Our volunteers have kept up as best we can and we encourage hikers to remove branches along the way and report more substantial trail blockage to us. A little-known fire trail crosses through Pachaug Forest, from the gate on Wyassup Lake Road through to the gate on Cossaduck Hill. Our Conservation Commission cleared several downed trees and built a small hiking bridge over a tributary to Yawbux Stream to make the trail passable.

This spring we researched and sent to the First Selectman our recommendations regarding the use of Gylcosol (Roundup) along state roads. The product has been in the news lately and although stable in the soil, given its history we recommend it not be used around lakes, streams, and other wetlands given its hazardous effects on all aquatic life. We add from a conservation perspective that the less chemicals we put on our lawns and gardens, the better it will be for our environment.

A cooperative effort with the North Stonington Citizens Land Alliance will soon allow hikers to travel all the way from our Wintechog Hill property, off Wrights Road, to Long Pond on Lantern Hill Rd. Not to be forgotten, but taking much more time than expected, will be a kayak/canoe trail from Boombridge Road to Donahue Park in Stonington. We await the completion of that bridge in the fall.

Don't forget the 8th annual 2021 Community Calendar highlighting the "Stone Walls of North Stonington". It's available at the Library, Shunock River Brewery and the Town Clerk's office.



WILLIAM RICKER, CHAIRMAN

WILLIAMRICKER@COMCAST.NET 860-535-2426

BOARD OF FINANCE

In the midst of the Covid 19 pandemic and subsequent Governor's Orders, the Board of Finance met consistently this past quarter via ZOOM video conferencing to prepare the fiscal year 2020-2021 Town budget.

Having reviewed all Boards, Commissions, and Departments requests, the Board of Finance members debated and questioned how best to meet the responsibility of bringing forth a budget to serve the Town during these trying times. A major consideration was the impact of the pandemic on the current economy and the ability of our Townspeople to sustain the circumstances for an uncertain period of time. With all that taken into consideration, the Board of Finance was set to minimize any tax impact that supported the 2020-2021 budget. Utilization of the Town's unassigned reserves was employed to satisfy an unexpected revenue shortfall and to provide a contribution to balance the budget. It's notable that the Town's "rainy day" fund, which has been strategically maintained in the past, has served its purpose in these trying times. Though the budget did require a modest tax increase, it was to satisfy debt redemption for the School Modernization Project and contractual obligations.

A summary of the past and new budget is illustrated here.

**TOWN OF NORTH STONINGTON
BUDGET FOR FISCAL YEAR ENDING JUNE 30 2021
SUMMARY OF BUDGETS**

	Actual	Approved	Proposed		
	2018/2019	2019/2020	2020/2021	Change	% Change from prior year
Govt Operating	\$ 4,755,348	\$ 5,008,099	\$ 5,108,644	\$ 100,545	2.01%
Debt	\$ 1,026,180	\$ 1,065,184	\$ 1,204,204	\$ 139,020	13.05%
Education	\$ 13,508,608	\$ 13,775,463	\$ 14,119,738	\$ 344,275	2.50%
Capital	\$ 635,580	\$ 427,826	\$ 320,175	\$ (107,651)	-25.16%
Totals	19,925,716	\$ 20,276,572	\$ 20,752,761	\$ 476,189	2.35%

FOOTNOTES

*** Multi Year Lease with Municipal Disclaimer**

The new budget demonstrates an increase over the previous budget by 2.35%. The new budget will be supported by a mill rate of 29.5. This is an increase of .5 mill over the current mill rate of 29.0.

For those who had participated, a public hearing via ZOOM was conducted on June 1, 2020. Due to the instructions on public gatherings by State Order, the process of having a Town Meeting followed by a budget referendum was precluded. Authority was given to the Board of Finance to adopt the fiscal 2020-2011 budget and levy the supporting tax rate.

In conclusion, appreciation is extended for the support of our Community during the events of the last few months.

DAN SPRING, CHAIRMAN

THAMES VALLEY COUNCIL FOR COMMUNITY ACTION, INC

Neighbors Helping Neighbors!

Now more than ever community support is so important and impactful! The Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) offers the support someone needs to remain living at home either with grocery shopping needs or phone reassurance. Contact us to hear how your help may improve the quality of life of an elderly or disabled person by volunteering around your schedule to help a neighbor in your community. Also please reach out to us if you or someone you know is disabled, elderly, and homebound and needs assistance with grocery shopping, medication pickup, or would like a friendly phone call. We are here to engage, enlighten, and inspire each other.

GEORGIA L JAMES, PROGRAM COORDINATOR

860-425-6608

gjames@tvcca.org

GINA KING, DIRECTOR

860-425-6617

gking@tvcca.org

BOARD OF EDUCATION

As we move into Summer, the Board of Education would like to take this time to step back and give a huge thank you to so many; first, to our teachers, administrators and Central office for working tirelessly to keep our schools up and running during this unprecedented time. They have continued to put our students first and we were one of the first districts in the region to get distance learning up and running. Thank you to Greg Pont and his IT staff for getting computers in the hands of students that needed them and for continuing to work through the technological challenges that come every day. We are in a position to move to a Chromebook environment with a much needed technology overhaul. This will allow us to be better equipped in the fall to handle whatever this new learning environment brings.

I also want to genuinely thank our families for taking on this difficult task with patience and understanding. You have brought the school, and often times your offices, into your homes and have done an excellent job of becoming teachers, listeners and Google classroom experts. It truly takes a village and we have one of the best. We appreciate everyone's support of the North Stonington School district, and we have received that support from so many, not just those with children in school.

Our new buildings are ready to open and take students back when it is determined safe to do so. It is really exciting to see this project come to a close. So much preparation, hard work, long meetings and dedication went into making this a success and we want to thank everyone that was part of this process. Now more than ever is a time of reflection, slowing down and appreciating all that life has to give. I am so fortunate to be a part of the Board of Education; we are continuing to work together to provide the very best education for our students in an environment where all feel safe to learn and grow individually. While we are still uncertain what the fall will bring, we will be sure to share what that will look like as we continue to learn more of the expectations moving forward. Thank you for your support and kindness. Have a wonderful summer!

CHRISTINE WAGNER, CHAIRMAN

wagnerc@northstonington.k12.ct.us

NORTH STONINGTON AGRICULTURAL FAIR

The summer of 2020 will certainly be one to remember and hopefully not one to repeat itself. As most of you know, the North Stonington Agricultural Fair made the difficult decision to cancel this year's fair. As unfortunate as it is, the Board of Directors felt that keeping our members, community, exhibitors and all who work to make the fair a success, safe from the current pandemic. As fairs across the nation have also been canceled, there is much more public awareness on how important the fair industry is. Not only does your local fair add to the economics of your community, it provides a venue for youth and adults to showcase anything from livestock, baked goods, handcrafts, produce, to personal skills, etc. Many individuals, businesses and entertainers have lost great revenue throughout the pandemic by not being able to showcase at the fairs. The North Stonington Fair is unique in that its annual proceeds benefit our local fire company and the Grange; therefore these two organizations will also have a lack of this additional revenue, along with those organizations that receive donations from volunteering time during the four days.

On a positive note, the Fair Committee will continue to make plans for the 2021 fair. With the economic loss from 2020, the necessary insurance premiums that still need to be paid, and the monthly recurring expenses that continue to come in, we are hoping that the 2021 fair will be a great success so that our town's tradition can continue to carry on for years to come.

Congratulations to the Wheeler High School Class of 2020 and best of luck to you in your future endeavors. We are proud to announce that the annual fair scholarship has been awarded to Rylin Fowler!! We wish Rylin the very best as he continues his education at Johnson and Wales studying business.



JODY WHIPPLE PINENEEDLHOMESTEAD@SBCGLOBAL.NET 860-599-8498

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

The past few months have been challenging for not only our residents, but local businesses as well. Since March, EDC has worked hard to support and promote North Stonington businesses. We have offered advertising to promote our local businesses throughout the region. Planning and Zoning has worked with us to allow more temporary signage, so that businesses that were open could be more visible to the public. EDC worked with local farmers and the Shunock River Brewery to offer locally grown and sourced products to our residents in one place, at the “Village Co-op”. We hope something will sprout out of the seed planted by this initiative.



A New Location for Red Onion Pizza

As businesses began to reopen, Planning and Zoning worked with us again to allow more outdoor dining opportunities for our restaurants. EDC has provided signage for mask use and sanitizer to retail and restaurant businesses. Additionally, we have worked with businesses trying to reopen, or adjust how they operate, by providing assistance and advocacy.

Our businesses continue to need our community support more than ever. We can all help by making a conscious effort to shop and eat local. We look forward to continuing with the responsible growth we have seen in town over the past 10 years. Keep an eye out for businesses planning to open in North Stonington in the near future.

BRETT MASTROIANNI, CHAIRMAN

KEEPING NORTH STONINGTON AFFORDABLE, INC.

Thank you to supporters who turned out for our fundraiser at Mango's Pizza and had 20% of their restaurant checks donated toward our 'Legacy of Generosity' campaign. That campaign honors the donation of land on which to build an affordable home for a working family. Subtracting land cost from the cost of a home makes affordability possible. We hope to add other donors of land to our 'Legacy of Generosity' roster. Please contact us if you have land to donate. We are a 501(c)(3) corporation, so your donation will be tax deductible.



Why is affordability such an issue today? Here are some astonishing facts:

- In 2000, 49% of the houses in North Stonington were valued under \$150,000. **Today only 4%.**
- The median (half above and half below) home price in North Stonington is **\$292,000.**
- The median increase in home price since 2000 is **82%.**
- The income needed to be able to afford (30% of gross pay) the median rent of \$1,417 in North Stonington is \$50,000-\$75,000. **The median income for renter households in North Stonington is \$34,730.00.**

These are just some of the facts that show why we need affordable work force housing in our town.

Go to the Partnership for Strong Communities website at www.PSCHOUSING.org and click on Housing Data Profiles to find out more.

MARY ANN RICKER, PRESIDENT

NORTH STONINGTON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

With the health issues the world experienced, the last three months of school brought many challenges! Our teachers needed to learn how to teach a new way, all over again, and our parents became teachers in a quick moment in time. Thanks to the staff's effort to quickly master how to perform distance learning and the daily support of all parents and guardians, our students met with success learning from home. We are so proud of our students for not giving up and for persevering each day.

The refurbished NSES is just about ready for our students. Furniture is being moved back, the teachers are already setting up their classrooms, and we are very excited about the coming year, back in our home! We hope, in the near future, we will be able to hold an Open House for citizens of North Stonington that will be safe for all!

Thank you to all who support our school including the NSPTO, the N.S. Education Foundation, Wheeler Library, and the citizens of North Stonington. We could not be successful without you. We are especially grateful for the efforts of the **NSPTO playground committee** in raising funds for new playgrounds. Sadly, the current playgrounds are in very poor condition and much of the equipment is not safe for children to play on. The new playground will be ADA compliant to allow for a fun, safe place for children of all abilities to play. For more information or to donate to the fundraiser, please visit the website at www.milltownmonitor.com/playground.html or find them on Facebook at NSESPlayground.



We wish all a restful, fun, and most importantly, a healthy summer. We ask all families to make reading together a part of their daily routine. There is no better way to maintain reading skills than by reading every day. Don't forget to practice your math facts and have fun with math, too! Happy Summer!

VERONICA WILKISON, PRINCIPAL

THE NSPTO PLAYGROUND

North Stonington Elementary students need your help, so they can have a playground when they return to school in the fall. After providing the school district with safe, contaminated-free facilities to educate our youth, there is no extra money to replace unsafe play structures in the school or town budgets.

Playgrounds provide the setting for social development, where students learn patience, compassion, and teamwork. Play structures develop physical and neurological skills simultaneously, while students with physical or learning differences have opportunities to take movement breaks and play alongside peers.

Servicing PreK-Kindergarten and 1st-6th grades, two age-appropriate and ADA-compliant playgrounds are required. The current PreK-Kindergarten playground is not developmentally appropriate. The grade school playground is over twenty years old and laced with rust and holes. As is, neither of the current playgrounds is insurable or usable. Replacement equipment must be durable to serve over 450 students and last for years to come. We urgently need your support today!

To donate online and see the donation tiers, please visit: milltownmonitor.com/playground.

Please send checks made out to NSPTO (with **"playground"** in the memo) to:
NSPTO Playground Subcommittee, 311 Norwich-Westerly Rd., North Stonington, CT 06359

PAIGE LINDA, PLAYGROUND SUBCOMMITTEE.MEMBER

TOWN CLERK'S OFFICE

These have been unprecedented times in dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic. The Town Clerk's Office has been operating with "business as usual" during this time in keeping up with statutory duties and assisting the public. Please do not ever hesitate to reach out with any questions or concerns.

As of the time of writing this submission, Connecticut will be holding both a Democratic and Republican Primary on August 11, 2020. The State Election is on November 3, 2020 to vote for Electors of President and Vice-President, Representative in Congress, State Senator, State Representative, and Registrars of Voters. Absentee ballots will be available for the primaries and election. Please contact me with any questions. Remember that every vote counts and every vote is important!

Dog licensing for the new dog licensing year began in June. There is normally a late fee for dogs licensed after June 30th. However, due to the Governor's Executive Order, the late fee has been waived for the month of July only. If you have not renewed your dog's license, please do so before August 1st to avoid paying a late fee.

The Town Clerk's Office is open on Monday through Friday from 8:00 AM until 4:00 PM, except on legal holidays. Please contact me at (860) 535-2877 ext. 121 and at townclerk@northstoningtonct.gov.

ANTOINETTE PANCARO, CMC, CCTC

TOWN CLERK

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

Greetings, fellow residents! I hope everyone is healthy and doing well. While everyone has been, and is still adjusting to life's changing new "normal", there is one constant that never changes.- the Hurricane Season. Unfortunately, Mother Nature doesn't really care about COVID-19, or what we're all presently going through. No rest for the weary!



The 2020 Hurricane Season prediction, according to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), forecasts a strong likelihood of an "above normal" hurricane season, which began on June 1st and continues until November 30th. Predicted are 13 to 19 named storms (winds 39 mph or higher), of which 6 to 10 could become hurricanes (winds of 74 mph, or higher), including 3 to 6 major hurricanes (category 3, 4, or 5; with winds of 111 mph or higher). The culprits are the absence of El Niño in the Atlantic that suppresses hurricane activity and warmer than average sea surface temperatures. Other factors are: reduced vertical wind shear, weaker tropical Atlantic trade winds and enhanced West African monsoons.

As Americans focus their attention on a safe and healthy reopening of our country, it is critically important to remember to make necessary preparations for our current hurricane season. Here are a few things to consider: Stay informed! Sign-up for CTALERT and monitor weather channels for updates. Prepare and think "What will I need to survive for 3 days??" Visit the Town website at northstoningtonct.gov to review the many important steps to consider when preparing for a hurricane.

Also, if you are instructed to evacuate, be prepared to LEAVE (pack a "Go Bag"). If you remain, stay indoors and go to a windowless room on the lowest level that is least likely to flood; do not take shelter in the attic.

Never drive through flooded streets; 6 inches of water can float a car. Do not wade through flooded areas that may be contaminated by dead animals, sewage, oil or debris. Stay away from downed power lines!

PREPARE NOW – STAY SAFE AND HEALTHY!!

GARY BARON

DIRECTOR

860-912-0004

TAX COLLECTOR

Tax bills will be mailed out at the end of June. These bills will include both the July 2020 and January 2021 installments of taxes. This will be the only bill you receive. You will not receive another bill for the January installment, so if you do not pay both installments in July, please keep your tax bill in a safe place and put a reminder in your calendar to pay your January tax installment. The last day to pay the July tax installment without interest being charged is August 3, 2020.

It is strongly encouraged that payments are made through the mail, or dropped off in the locked drop box at Town Hall. For your convenience, a self-addressed return envelope will be included this year for your payment. If you would like a receipt, please enclose a self-addressed stamped envelope.

You may also find out how much you owe and make payments online by going to www.northstoningtonct.gov/payonline. Service fees for on-line payments are as follows: E-check \$2.00, Visa Debit \$3.95, all other debit or credit transactions 2.5% of payment amount. Credit card payments will NOT be accepted over the phone.

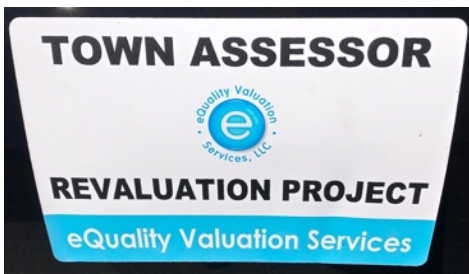
Payments may be made in the Tax Office at Town Hall by appointment only. Office hours for the Tax Collector will be 9:00 to 4:00, Monday through Friday. Please call or email prior to coming to Town Hall. All calls and emails will be returned as promptly as possible during the busy tax season.

KAREN JOYAL, TAX COLLECTOR 860-535-2877 EXT 20 taxcollector@northstoningtonct.gov

Town Hall Drop Box



ASSESSOR'S OFFICE



Revaluation: During these times when the key is to stay safe, the North Stonington Assessor's Office reminds everyone that the revaluation is still ongoing. At this time, no entry is being made to any home; only exterior inspections and photos are being done. The Town of North Stonington is relying on homeowners for information on the interior of their home. A data mailer will be sent to all homeowners requesting information on the interior. Please complete the form and return it in the postage paid envelope. If you have any questions, you can call the office at 860-535-2877 ext 23.

State of Connecticut Renter's Rebate Program: Renters who qualify for the program need to apply to the Assessor's Office before October 1st, 2020. The income-based program for renters who are 65 years old on January 1, 2020 or anyone with a Social Security disability, who has an income less than \$45,100 for a married couple or \$37,000 for a single person, may apply. The State of Connecticut will send a check based on your expenses and income to all renters that qualify.

For property owners who sell or junk their motor vehicle and do not use the plate on a replacement vehicle, you need to cancel the registration. Please send proof of sale to the Assessor's Office so a pro rate can be made. If you use the same plate on a replacement vehicle, the credit is automatic when you receive the tax bill on the replacement vehicle. You do not have to do anything.

DARRYL L. DEL GROSSO, CCMA II

ASSESSOR

860-535-2877 ext. 23 or 24

SCHOOL MODERNIZATION BUILDING COMMITTEE

We are so excited that the school modernization initiative is finally completed! With the exception of a couple of minor details that were delayed due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Elementary school is complete!

We are very much looking forward to our open house sometime late summer, prior to the beginning of the school year. The School Modernization Building Committee worked hard to keep this project on time and on budget and we are incredibly proud that we in fact built state of the art facilities at one of the lowest square footage prices the State has seen.

We will now begin the closeout process with the State and go through the normal audit procedures that follow any major state funded project. We hope to have the project completely closed-out prior to the end of 2020.

DR. PAMELA POTESMIRI, CHAIRWOMAN



Members of the School Modernization Building Committee at Work



It's time to get outside. We are all concerned about gathering in groups and socializing. Avalonia's organized hikes and explorations are on hold, but the trails are still there. Trail maps and descriptions are easy to find on our website at avalonialandconservancy.org. You can download the navigation tool "Explorer for ArcGIS" and search "Avalonia Online Map". Our most popular include: Reed-Mitchell, Northwest Corner Road (check to see if the trails have reopened after coyotes reared pups.); Donald Henne Memorial, Babcock Road- loop trails; Beaver meadow, through trail to Surrey lane; Erisman-Babcock- loops and through trail from Babcock Road to Reutemann Road; TriTown, Miller Road- miles of loop trails and through to Griswold.



Check the website for events later in the summer or activities such as virtual walks. Be aware of postponements, cancellations, and additions.

Do you live near an Avalonia property or visit one frequently? The land trust is looking for volunteers to keep trails clear and to report any problems or issues. If you can help, contact Pat Turner at jmt.pst@gmail.com

WHEELER HIGH SCHOOL/MIDDLE SCHOOL

Well, we made it through a difficult spring, but the Wheeler Lions and their families certainly persevered through it all! We are so grateful for the support we received while our students conquered the fourth quarter in a distance learning environment. With very little time to plan, the staff of Wheeler did an incredible job adapting and supporting our students for the last 13+ weeks and we couldn't be prouder of our Wheeler community.

On June 18th, we said goodbye, in style, to our 47 Wheeler graduates making up the Class of 2020! Our *Graduates on Parade* was an awesome, well-attended event and we are grateful to all who came out to support this outstanding group of men and women who are going on to pursue higher education, enter the workforce and/or enlist in the service. Thank you for the support you have given them along their journey in NoSto Public Schools. This summer, please encourage your middle school children to participate in our "Enjoy Reading, - Enjoy Your Summer" campaign. We also invite all of our Wheeler students to participate in our second annual NoSto Scavenger Hunt too! All info is available on our website! We look forward to being together as a community again soon. Enjoy your summer!

KRISTEN ST. GERMAIN, PRINCIPAL



NORTH STONINGTON COMMUNITY GRANGE #138

While North Stonington Community Grange #138 usually meets on the second and fourth Fridays at 8:00 pm, the Covid-19 situation has put us in standby as far as actually meeting is concerned. Several of our usual events have occurred though, as we did present Dictionaries to all of North Stonington's third-graders before the pandemic hit, and we did accept applications for and select a recipient of our Grange Scholarship...Congratulations to Nick Mendolia!

Our normal summer schedule would have a picnic on June 26th, and meetings on July 17th, August 14th, and August 28th, but these will depend on the recommendations of both the National Grange, and our state's guidelines at the time. The originally scheduled topics (based on this year's theme "Let me tell you 'bout...") will be changed, as we have missed several customary program topics. A Memorial Program will be one, and the Lecturer's contest entry will be another, but the topic dates are fluid at present.

You are welcome to join us at any time. Please contact Lecturer Sue Pianka at 860-599-4528 or Secretary Nancy Weissmuller at 860-535-2703 for the latest on meeting status.

SUE PIANKA, PROGRAM DIRECTOR

860-599-4528

NORTH STONINGTON MASK MAKERS

Imagine this....several women sitting at home, glued to their TVs, roaming their Facebook pages, listening and reading about Covid19, the virus which had invaded our world. It invaded our country, our cities and our town. Businesses and school closed. Information was changing daily, but the one thing that was constant was a need for Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for our medical personnel.

Conversation started between people in our little town, who had never met, and a group was formed. Most of us are crafters who had fabric stored for those projects we hadn't started just yet. Our group currently has 19 volunteers. Some sew; some cut fabric; some wash, dry and iron and some do deliveries. We could not do what we do without each and every one.

As we grew and the town heard about us, donations of fabric, cotton sheets, elastic, and thread started coming in. Cash donations are used towards purchasing those supplies along with sewing equipment such as scissors, needles and rotary blades.

All agreed that our goal was to supply and donate to medical personnel, hospitals, Fire Departments, EMTs, and of course our community. We have done our best to supply all requests and have also contributed masks to DAR, Navajo Nation, and our local schools. In addition, we have Mask Baskets at Shunock Brewery, Red Onion Pizza and two hair salons. To date, we have donated more than 3500 masks.

I did not know these wonderful women before our group formed but I feel that each one is a friend for life.

WE might be small but WE WILL be MIGHTY!

PAMELA RATHBUN

GROUP COORDINATOR



PAWCATUCK NEIGHBORHOOD CENTER

How can the Pawcatuck Neighborhood Center help you?



The Pawcatuck Neighborhood Center has joined the ranks of essential employees by keeping its food pantry up and running during the COVID19 pandemic. Food is available for curbside pick-up.

We are here to help between 11:00 and 3:00, Monday through Friday. Heating and utilities assistance are available by calling (860)599- 3285, ext. 103.

North Stonington residents should bring proof of identification and residence on their first visit, and will receive a PNC card for future visits. Residents seeking food delivery should contact the PNC at (860) 599- 3285, ext. 101 to schedule a home delivery.

The PNC thrift store, Unexpected Treasures, is currently accepting donations of clothing and small household items. It will re-open on July 7th, with hours from 9:00 to 3:00, Monday through Friday.

Persons over age 60 who need rides for shopping or medical appointments should call the PNC Transportation Program at 860-599-3285, ext. 108.

SUSAN SEDENSKY, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR <http://www.pawcatuckneighborhoodcenter.org>

HEWITT FARM

April arrived with the world facing a severe COVID-19 pandemic. Many people were confined to their homes. Schools and teachers quickly adapted to help students of all ages by continuing their studies at home. As the virus spread, folks in all types of jobs worked at home when possible, or they carefully went to work, keeping little contact with others.

During this time, Hewitt Farm was open daily and there was a notable increase in people using and enjoying this special place. As fishing season opened early mornings, fishermen often came to the dam area, mainly with children. The usual dog walkers come very often, some every day. We do ask that all dog owners make sure they can control their animals, preferably with a leash, so that every animal-lover can feel safe. Often visitors come to explore the many trails on the 104 acres at the farm. The pavilion, sitting across from the John Dean Gallup House, offers a spot to sit and enjoy a snack and drinks after a long hike. If you do come to the farm, don't miss seeing how the Community Garden is growing.



The pavilion, sitting across from the John Dean Gallup House, offers a spot to sit and enjoy a snack and drinks after a long hike. If you do come to the farm, don't miss seeing how the Community Garden is growing.

Hewitt Farm is open daily from dawn to dusk. If you ever wish to have an outside event at the farm, please go to 'Hewitt Farm' on the Town website to get an Event Application or call Nita Kincaid at 860-235-1565. The farm is free, easy to get to, right near the village and Holly Green. Park just inside the Hewitt Road entrance off Route 2 or at the parking area down Hewitt Road from Ryder Road. Download the Hewitt Farm Trail Map from the town website (www.northstoningtonct.gov) or pick one up at any of the trailheads.

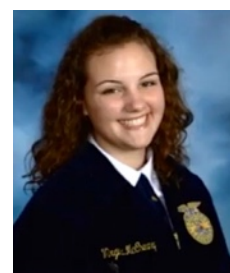
ED HARASIMOWITZ, CHAIRMAN

860-245-5305

NORTH STONINGTON GARDEN CLUB

This is usually the issue of the North Stonington Quarterly in which we report on our ever-popular Plant Sale, which this year, like so many of our local and regional activities, was cancelled.

The proceeds from our annual sale permit us to fund the plantings you see at the Village Green, the Grange, the Town Hall and Clock Garden, and in the Library urns. They also fund the Anna Coit Memorial Scholarship, and most years, a number of grants to community organizations for gardening-related projects. This year we will be unable to support our program of Community Grants, but we did offer the Anna Coit Memorial Scholarship. Virginia McChesney was selected to receive this year's scholarship. Virginia graduated from the 2020 class at Ledyard High School with honors in Agriscience and technology and was one of the top ten students in the senior class. She will be attending Huntington University in Indiana with a major in Agri-business management.



The recipients of our 2019 Community Grants program were the Pawcatuck Neighborhood Center, the Eastern Connecticut Community Gardens Association, the UConn Avery Point Children's Cognitive Garden, the Moriarty Environmental Sciences Magnet School and the Buckingham Memorial Association.

Follow us on Facebook or at our website www.nsgardenclub.org for updates on all these projects and to learn more about NSGC activities. For membership information contact us at info@nsgardenclub.org.

JANICE PARKER, COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE CHAIR

NORTH STONINGTON CEMETERY COMMISSION

Within our town's borders there are many historical cemeteries located on, or adjacent to, private properties. The Commission would like to thank those residents who have contributed their time and labor to aid in the preservation of these sites. We all appreciate your efforts!

Volunteers are welcomed in the efforts to preserve and protect the cemeteries within North Stonington. We can use people with landscaping, wall building and metal working skills, as well as general labor.

For Memorial Day, the Commission placed flags at our North Stonington veterans' graves. To ensure that all of our veterans are so honored, we need to know of recent burials within the town. Please feel free to notify Diane Preston or David Fede.

DIANE PRESTON, PRESIDENT 860-599-1832

DJDPRESTON16@GMAIL.COM

DAVID FEDE, TREASURER 860-535-0009



NORTH STONINGTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The Historical Society wants to record the personal impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. We hope you will share your reactions and experiences, both for our newsletter and for our files for future researchers. *Today's story is tomorrow's history.* Please email stories, poems, or photographs to Robin Rice, newsletter editor, at denishawnr@gmail.com.

We are sorry to have cancelled and rescheduled programs these past months, but our members' newsletter has been a must read.

For questions or membership information, phone 860-535-9448 or 860-599-3608. New members are welcome at any time. Like us on Facebook!

WILLIAM DOUGLASS, PRESIDENT

whdouglass@comcast.net



NORTH STONINGTON LAND ALLIANCE

1) Our North Stonington roads are made up of assets to protect. Please keep your emails or notes coming about your own road. Think of 1 or 2 road items that mean a lot to you, that are unique and need attention. Your personal observations are important first steps to help Land Alliance achieve our goal to promote the concept that NS roads have historical, environmental, and cultural assets to protect. Contact us.

2) There is a big difference between "taking a walk" and "going on a hike". Land Alliance has 2 preserves open. Fowler-Grindstone Preserve, on Fowler Road, is mostly for hiking along hilly, forested trails. It is a logging road and across Hetchel Swamp Brook. Samuel Cote Preserve on Clarks Falls Road is easier walking, with paths leading to Spalding Pond through a pine woods. We hope you will try both preserves.

MADELINE JEFFERY

landallianceinc@gmail.com

860-599-5517

A FEW UPCOMING EVENTS

In this Summer Quarterly we do not have our usual large event calendar, because very few folks are planning ahead. Given that COVID-19 is still in Connecticut and nearby states, it has been difficult for many people to return to a normal life. Nonetheless, here are a few items that may be of interest:

- ❖ In May, Governor Lamont signed an Executive Order allowing Democratic and Republican registered voters in Connecticut to vote in the **August 11th** primary elections, including doing so by voting absentee.
- ❖ The first day of school for North Stonington will be **August 26th**.
- ❖ With COVID-19 continuing to impact event planning, the NOSTO Fest planning committee has set a *tentative* date of Saturday, **September 19th**. We are very hopeful, and cautiously optimistic, that we will be able to celebrate all things North Stonington on Main Street for a 5th year in a row! With that said, we must also follow CDC Guidelines and the Governor's approach as to what can or can't be done, especially how many people can gather at an event such as ours. We will post updates on our NOSTO Fest Facebook page and our Town Website. For now, please do mark your "tentative" calendars and keep your fingers crossed!
- ❖ On the weekend of **September 26th**, the Wheeler Library hopes to have their much-enjoyed Town-wide Tag Sale.

Wishing everyone a safe and happy summer,

Nita Kincaid & Lisa Mazzella

ELLIE BANKER "GOLDEN NUGGETS OF WISDOM" SCHOLARSHIP FUND

Our town lost one of our finest on May 29th, with the passing of Ellie Banker. Ellie was a teacher at Wheeler High School for nearly 40 years. She was an active volunteer and served on the Hewitt Farm Committee, the Board of Education and the Historical Society. Mrs. Banker touched many lives and will live on in the hearts of all who knew her. A Memorial Scholarship has been set up in her name at Wheeler High School – the Ellie Banker "Golden Nuggets of Wisdom" Scholarship. Donations can be sent to:

North Stonington Board of Education

297 Norwich-Westerly Road

North Stonington, CT 06359

ATTN: Ellie Banker Golden Nuggets of Wisdom Scholarship

(Please make checks payable to NS Scholarship Fund)

Summer Fun for All Ages

~ Programs offered by the North Stonington Recreation Commission~

- ❖ **Summer Playground Kiddie Camp** Ages 4 to 12, a 7 week morning camp, June 22 to August 7th
- ❖ **Youth Soccer Academy** Co-ed ages 3 thru 12, Saturday mornings, 3 sessions, June 20th to August 1st
- ❖ **Youth Co-ed Basketball Clinics** 6th thru 12th graders, Tuesday Thursday mornings. 2 sessions, July 7th to August 6th
- ❖ **Youth Beach Volleyball Clinics** Co-ed grades 5 thru 12, Monday/Wednesday mornings, 2 sessions, July 6th-August 5th
- ❖ **Youth Archery Camp** Co-ed ages 7 thru 13, mornings the week of July 13th to July 17th
- ❖ **Youth Tennis Clinics** Co-ed ages 7 thru 17, Saturday mornings, 2 sessions, July 11 to August 15th
- ❖ **UKIS Youth Soccer Camp:** Co-ed ages 5 thru 12, 2 evening sessions, July 27th to July 31st
- ❖ **Adult Pickleball:** Monday/Thursday mornings 8:00 – 10:00 am & Wednesday evenings 5:00 -7:00 pm, July and August

Other Activities in the works are
Virtual Art Lessons, Adult Yoga, Youth & Adult Golf Lessons!
For more information and/or to register please visit our
recreation website www.northstoningtonrec.com

Looking for More Activities?

Wheeler Library

- ❖ Wheeler Library is currently providing curbside service, home delivery and limited opening hours. Please call or text us at 860-535-0383 or email wheelerlibrarystaff@gmail.com.
- ❖ We hope to have the **Town-wide Tag Sale** on the weekend of September 26th.
- ❖ The library has moved from Book Sales to a year round bookstore. **Please visit Wise Lion Books on the lower level** of the library and browse a wide variety of books.
- ❖ We welcome your donations of books in wonderful condition!

AMY KENNEDY

860-535-0383



**Town of North Stonington
40 Main Street
North Stonington, CT 06359**

**PRSRT STD
ECRWSS
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
EDDM-Retail**

**Local
Postal Customer
North Stonington, CT 06359**

