

# THE NORTH STONINGTON QUARTERLY

## WINTER 2020

### BOARD OF SELECTMEN

We hope everyone's holidays were very special, surrounded by friends and family as 2019 came to a close. It was a very busy year for North Stonington. We saw many new beginnings and some completions. First we started in March 2019 with our Middle/High School students and staff moving into the new building. The move took only two weeks and a great many people worked very hard to make the transition a smooth one. We budgeted for a couple of new capital items including a new ambulance replacing our 1998, as well as a new over-the-rail mower to replace our 1999 when it is delivered in March 2020. We also completed our new Hewitt Farm recreation pavilion that is a great spot for picnics and community events! Thanks to the Hewitt Farm and Recreation Committees for coming together and seeing this beautiful structure through to fruition. Finally, we are finishing our Center for Emergency Services project with the addition of the three-bay garage to hold our excess equipment, boat, and UTV. Thanks to the CES committee for seeing this project to completion!

Much work took place throughout town courtesy of our highway crew, including but not limited to paving of Rocky Hollow, Hollowell, & Milltown roads. Tree crews, including our own highway crew, have taken down over 400 trees over the past year, which improves safety and reduces the likelihood of power outages in town. The end of the year brought another bout with EEE mosquitoes and precautions were taken for the safety of residents. Thankfully no human cases were reported in our town.

Communication continued to be the theme this year as we worked a collaborative budget process in tandem with departments, staff, and our Boards of Education and Finance in order to put forth the best budget for the town. This year we also had a community conversation about the "greater village area", a walking audit of safety in the village, and a well-attended meeting about affordable housing in North Stonington. We also held a brainstorming initiative to talk about opening an animal shelter in North Stonington to replace the inadequate one closed earlier this year due to lack of compliance with State code requirements. We hope to open a new shelter in town in the near future!

We were very proud to announce the Town of North Stonington has received the prestigious Bronze status, certifying we are a "SustainableCT" community! A lot of work from many boards, commissions, volunteers, and staff went into this. Special thanks go to Volunteer Alexis Kahn who spearheaded the initiative, as well as Administration and Finance Officer Christine Dias and Planning Development and Zoning Officer Juliet Hodge.

Thanks to everyone who voted in the municipal elections in November. We had a great turnout at the polls. Special thanks to all who stepped up willing to serve and put their name on the ballot. We are currently recruiting members to a couple of new research committees to help guide future planning for the town. Please visit [www.northstoningtonct.gov](http://www.northstoningtonct.gov) for details and contact Town Clerk Antoinette Pancaro at [townclerk@northstoningtonct.gov](mailto:townclerk@northstoningtonct.gov) if you feel you can help.



As we enter 2020, we will be holding a Special Town Meeting, on January 6<sup>th</sup> at 7pm, to discuss the affordable housing proposal for Wintechog Hill and a referendum will take place on this topic on January 13<sup>th</sup> at Town Hall. Please join us to be informed and involved in this process. In this new year we are looking forward to some big projects: the solar initiative on Wintechog Hill Road, completion of solar on our school rooftops, and completion of our new Elementary School. Also all signs are pointing to Boombridge Road Bridge construction starting in the spring with the bids coming back well within budget.

We wish everyone a Happy New Year! Stay safe this winter.

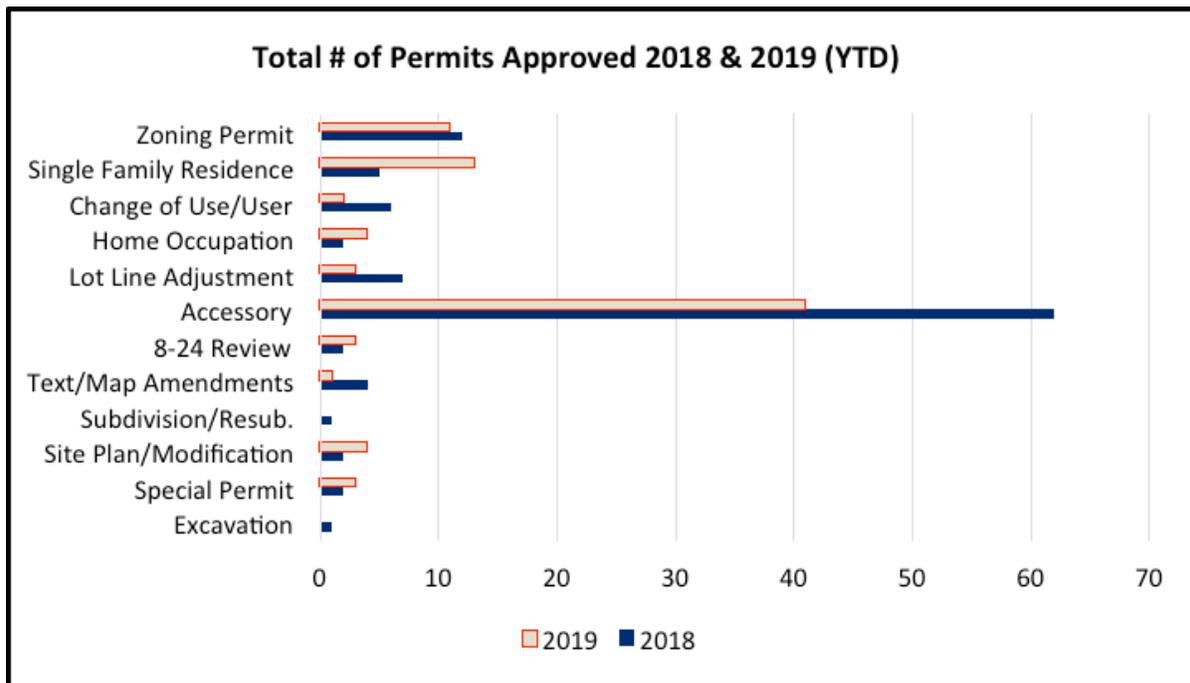
MIKE URGO, NITA KINCAID & BOB CARLSON      [SELECTMEN@NORTHSTONINGTONCT.GOV](mailto:SELECTMEN@NORTHSTONINGTONCT.GOV)

## LAND USE OFFICE

### Planning and Zoning

The PZC welcomes Ed Learned, Mark Leonard, and Robert Kappes and says goodbye, with many thanks, to Connie Berardi and long-time members Joe Siner and Ann Brown. In 2019, Staff reviewed 74 permits and the Commission 11, including Site Plans for a new Solar Farm, Gas Station, and Machine Shop/Repair facility. This month, the PZC will review the modification of 2 Site Plans to bring 2 of our local businesses into more conformity with the underlying Zone minimum acreage requirements and clear up enforcement matters.

Of particular note are the 12 new single-family houses approved for construction, up from 5 last year, and the 15 new homes that have been built and received their Certificate of Occupancy since January of 2018. This is a definite sign of growth. Staff continues to review and propose minor adjustments to the Zoning Regulations to clean up confusing or conflicting language, and better define terms used in the document.



### A Note about Zoning Enforcement

The role of the Zoning Enforcement Officer (ZEO) is often misunderstood, but essential to enhancing quality of life by helping to sustain safe, healthy living conditions for *all* residents and businesses in town. The purpose of **zoning** is also to protect property values, and to encourage the most appropriate use of land. The Planning & Zoning Commission, with guidance from the Town Plan of Conservation & Development and public input, creates regulations that are then enforced by the ZEO. How effectively a ZEO (and Building Official enforcing the Building Code) performs his/her duties can have a major impact on the property values and image of the community.

Most issues are brought to the attention of the ZEO by a concerned abutter, or through the property revaluation process, where unpermitted activity or structures are often discovered. One of the biggest challenges in North Stonington has been controlling blight, and preventing nuisance conditions caused by unpermitted uses – preferably before they happen. Studies have shown that areas with blight and deteriorated properties may eventually see an increase in the amount of crime and a significant *decrease* in property values (think Grand List and resale value). ZEOs are the first to step in making sure that these issues are managed in a responsible and effective way.

JULIET HODGE, PLANNING, DEVELOPMENT & ZONING OFFICIAL     [jhodge@northstoningtonct.gov](mailto:jhodge@northstoningtonct.gov)

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

Congratulations to Nicole Porter, Jen Strunk, Anthony Mazzella and William Mason who were elected to the EDC! We will have a full Commission for the first time in years and look forward to gaining momentum on our priority projects. With the help of Miranda Creative, we created a marketing brochure that highlights the advantages of locating a business in North Stonington. Two new businesses have opened near the Village that are already a big hit with residents! Stop by El Torillo next door to the Red Onion, for incredible Mexican food and be sure to visit the Shunock River Brewery, next to Town Hall, for a Craft beer.

The portion of the Commercial District near Holly Green welcomed 3 new businesses this year, including the Wellness Center and Alarming Ideas. All this is in addition to 4 Home Businesses, a Machine Shop/Repair Facility, a 5-acre Solar Farm, and 12 new single-family homes all approved for construction in 2019! To date this year (12/10), the town has approved projects worth just over \$11M in construction cost. Stay tuned for even more exciting new developments on the horizon.



JULIET HODGE, PLANNING, DEVELOPMENT & ZONING OFFICIAL     [jhodge@northstoningtonct.gov](mailto:jhodge@northstoningtonct.gov)

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## NORTH STONINGTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

The winter is always a very busy time of the year with many school events happening. Teachers and students will be working through the various curricula as well as preparing for the state testing in the spring. We have an active athletic schedule for boys and girls basketball for both middle and high school teams. As usual, the gymnasium will be quite busy just about every day of the week. If you are interested in attending a Wheeler home game, please check out our website where the schedule can be found.

The North Stonington Elementary School Drama Club is busy rehearsing for their next performance, *Alice in Wonderland*, which will be performed on March 27<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup>.

We are thrilled that the renovated-as-new elementary school will be completed in April. However, we will not move into that facility until the summer and it will be opened for the new school year. Summer school will be held in the new elementary school.

The 2020-2021 Board of Education (BOE) budget will be a focus in the winter months. Central Office staff will be busy working with the building administrators and department heads developing the Superintendent's budget. That budget will be presented to the BOE in January. The BOE will then work with the district administrators and department heads as they will go through every line item request. The BOE will make adjustments accordingly. Once approved, the BOE budget will be presented to the Board of Finance.

The weather always makes for difficult decisions in terms of delaying, canceling or dismissing students early from school. Last year, graduation was not affected by any snow dates. We are expecting the winter to be less cooperative this year as we have already canceled school 2 days. Families have received my annual letter addressing inclement weather. In addition to an automated message regarding school cancellations, delays, or early dismissals, this information is also posted on local television and radio stations.

Wishing everyone a happy and healthy school year!

PETER NERO, SUPERINTENDENT

## TOWN CLERK'S OFFICE

Happy 2020! It is hard to believe that it is the beginning of a new year. A Special Town Meeting is scheduled for January 6, 2020, with a referendum to follow on January 13, 2020. The question to be voted on is: "Shall the Town of North Stonington be authorized to negotiate the sale of the property located at 163 Wintechog Hill Road for the development of affordable housing?"

This year will be very busy in terms of elections and primaries. The date for the Presidential Primary in Connecticut is April 28, 2020. There is a very good possibility that there will be a primary on August 11, 2020. Finally, we will be voting for Electors of President and Vice-President, Representative in Congress, State Senator, State Representative, and Registrars of Voters on November 3, 2020. It is never too early to think about obtaining an absentee ballot for any of these elections and primaries. Please contact me with any questions. Remember that your vote is important and every vote counts!

As we begin this new year, don't forget to come to the Town Clerk's Office to purchase your 2020 sporting licenses. The 2020 Hunting and Trapping Guide and Migratory Bird Hunting Guide (August 2019-March 2020) are currently available. Sporting licenses can also be purchased online at [www.ct.gov/deep](http://www.ct.gov/deep).

The Town Clerk's Office is open Monday through Friday from 8:00 AM until 4:00 PM, except on legal holidays. Please call (860) 535-2877 Ext. 21 or e-mail [townclerk@northstoningtonct.gov](mailto:townclerk@northstoningtonct.gov).

ANTOINETTE PANCARO, CMC, CCTC

TOWN CLERK

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## BOARD OF EDUCATION

The Board of Education had a busy 2019. We had 2 board member changes recently. We said goodbye to Walt Mathwich, who has contributed many years to the BOE. Walt's expertise and wisdom will be missed. We are excited to have Stephanie Mastroianni join the board; her enthusiasm and new perspectives are a great addition.

As we enter 2020, we are underway with budget work and are excited for so many great things happening at our schools. The Middle School and High School is halfway through the first full year in their new building and the Elementary School building is taking shape. Soon both schools will be up and running. We want to thank the School Modernization Building Committee for their endless hours, hard work and commitment to making this project a success.

Wheeler is continuing to support a positive culture and climate. This is evident in Professional Development around that important topic. We have recently implemented the 'Say Something' campaign, which is part of the Sandy Hook Promise. Please check out our website for details on this amazing program.

North Stonington students continue to impress us. We are performance leaders in the State and enrollment is up at the Elementary School. Being a high performing school is no doubt making an impact.

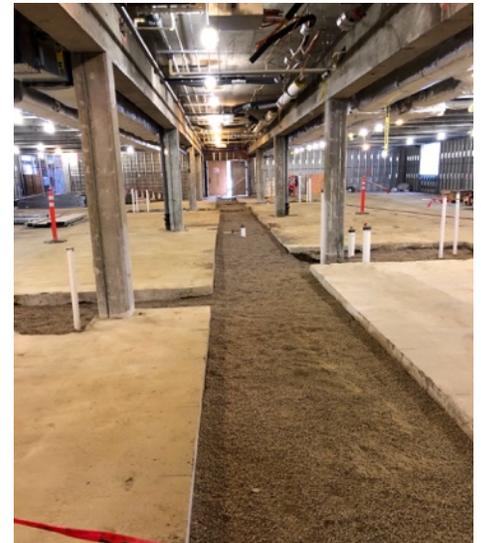
Wheeler athletes are into their winter season, and games are once again being played here at home. I invite you to come catch a game, it is a great way to support our kids and show your community spirit.

We enjoy hearing from our citizens at the BOE meetings. Our schedule is posted online - come see us in January to get all of the latest updates.

Have a safe and Happy 2020!

CHRISTINE WAGNER, CHAIRMAN

[wagnerc@northstonington.k12.ct.us](mailto:wagnerc@northstonington.k12.ct.us)



Elementary School Interior

## **NORTH STONINGTON VOLUNTEER FIRE COMPANY, INC.**

As of the writing of this article, the NSVFC is working on our 2020-2021 budget proposal.

The Fire Company has published repeated requests identifying the need for day-time volunteers with little improvement. This need affects every person in Town. Currently, volunteer emergency responders make up approximately 1% of our population. Of that, a majority work outside the community, leaving the available number significantly less. Of those remaining, some are retirees who have decades of service.

As populations have changed, the available free-time to train and respond has diminished in today's society. A new recruit is required to undergo almost six months of fire related training before they are permitted to be utilized as a firefighter.

After investigating other bedroom communities in our area who are experiencing the same problem, the Fire Company feels it reasonable to request funding for two per diem firefighters during the weekday hours from 6am-4pm.

As of January 1<sup>st</sup> 2020, the North Stonington volunteer Fire Company will be celebrating its 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary. The company has provided 75 years of dedicated service to the Town of North Stonington by not only responding to emergencies, but also building the first fire house from donations and fundraising, as well as purchases of the first fire trucks. NSVFC operated out of the company funded and owned building from 1946 until 2018 when the town funded and completed the new Center for Emergency Services (CES) building which houses both Fire and EMS. The old building is being leased to the town to be used as the recreation facility for \$1 a year. Similarly, the town leases the new CES building to NSVFC/NSAA for \$1 a year for the next 15 years.

NSVFC has come a long way in 75 years. None of this would be possible if we didn't have members in the past that had a vision of the future and understood the needs for fire and rescue protection for our town. The men and women laid the foundation for our future and what we are today.

On the top of this article you will see the NEW fire company patch that will be placed on all uniforms. This new patch was designed by our members and it is part of the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary commemoration.

As a rural community, we ask that you properly label your mail box, with your number on both sides. In an emergency, responders don't want to delay rendering aid because they can't find your house due to poor numbering. We also ask that the number be at least 2' off the ground so that snow will not cover the number. Please do not hesitate to visit us on our Face Book page, or the new Web page on the Town website, to see what's occurring in the fire service in our Town, and around us.

CHARLES STEINHART V, CHIEF

KYLE BERGEL, PRESIDENT

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## **HEWITT FARM**

Winter is a peaceful, quiet time at Hewitt Farm. The trails offer scenic views that are hidden during the summer months. While wandering through, visitors will notice that the Community Garden is now hibernating for the winter and the trees are bare, opening up a panoramic view of the property. The completed pavilion on the Green invites visitors to stop, sit and enjoy the scenery after walking the trails.

We plan to work on the 1750 Farmhouse this year. The Historical Society has received some interesting artifacts that are related to periods in the life of the farmhouse – perhaps some day in the future they will be on display.

Hewitt Farm is open daily, dawn to dusk. It's free, easy to get to, 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](http://www.northstoningtonct.gov)) or pick one up at any of the trailheads.

ED HARASIMOWITZ, CHAIRMAN

860-245-5305



## **WHEELER HIGH SCHOOL/MIDDLE SCHOOL**

Our Wheeler students are busy preparing for midterm exams taking place the week of January 16<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> and January 21<sup>st</sup>-23<sup>rd</sup>. These are all half days for our students.

On December 4<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup>, Wheeler celebrated our annual Give Back Day by hosting a shoe box drive for those less fortunate. Students and staff collected toiletry items, toys, clothes and other various gift items to create shoe box gifts. Overall, Wheeler donated over 165 filled shoe boxes to various shelters and community centers in the local area. Our Middle and High School Chorus and Band delivered outstanding holiday performances as usual, and our winter sports seasons are well underway. We are so excited to be back in our own home gym again. Thank you to Mrs. Turner for all of her efforts these past two years to relocate our teams. There is certainly no place like home though, and we hope to see many of you in our home gym this winter sports season! Thirteen of our fall athletes were named to ALL ECC teams and our Boys' Soccer and Girls' Cross Country teams both won their ECC Division Four titles!

Thank you to all of you who came out and supported our Wheeler Drama Department and attended one of our performances of A Christmas Carol. Hats off to everyone who played a role in such an outstanding production. Thank you for supporting our school!



KRISTEN ST. GERMAIN, PRINCIPAL

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## **NORTH STONINGTON AFFORDABLE HOUSING COMMITTEE**

At the new Wheeler Media Center, on the evening of October 30<sup>th</sup>, the Affordable Housing Committee hosted a conversation with Michael Santoro, Director at the CT Department of Housing. As promised, his wealth of knowledge answered some nagging questions and fostered great ideas for initiatives to support residents.

After a close vote at the beginning of October, it was encouraging to see the community get together for this conversation and bring all ideas and perspectives to the table. The momentum carried through to our November meeting, where many residents showed up ready to collaborate on the best way to support North Stonington. We are excited to get to work as we welcome new members, Connie Phelps-Berardi and Brian Rathbun, to the Committee.

MARGARET LEONARD, CHAIRMAN

## TAX COLLECTOR

As a friendly reminder, the second half installment of tax bills are due in January. The last day to pay without interest is February 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2020. If you are paying by mail and 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](http://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 are NOT accepted over the phone.

Supplemental motor vehicle tax bills for vehicles registered between October 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2018 and July 31<sup>st</sup>, 2019 were due in full by January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2020. If you purchased a vehicle and transferred license plates from the old car to the new, credit for the payment on the old car is shown on this tax bill. You **MUST** pay the second half payment on the old vehicle to earn the credit. Please **DO NOT** disregard the second half payment on the old vehicle. If you obtained new license plates or have questions on your bill, please contact the assessor at 860-535-2877 ext 24.

**Failure to receive a tax bill does not invalidate the tax or interest. It is the taxpayer's responsibility to call the Tax Office if you did not receive a bill or to go online for your payment amount.**

Beginning Monday, December 30<sup>th</sup> updated Tax Collection hours are Monday-Friday 10:00am - 4:00pm. A drop box is also available in the office between the hours of 8:00am-4:00pm where payments can be left and processed the next business day.

The Tax Office will be closed February 17<sup>th</sup> – 21<sup>st</sup>; please plan accordingly.

KAREN JOYAL, TAX COLLECTOR 860-535-2877 EXT 20 [taxcollector@northstoningtonct.gov](mailto:taxcollector@northstoningtonct.gov)

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## NORTH STONINGTON COMMUNITY GRANGE #138

When North Stonington Community Grange #138 meets (on 2<sup>nd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> Fridays), we discuss and act upon, not only our Grange needs, but also the needs of our community. We also have an informational program. **All are welcome** to come and have some fun with us, and your input as to our community needs would be greatly appreciated.

Our theme this year follows the song “Let Me Tell You ‘Bout”... If you missed our fall schedule, October 12<sup>th</sup> we met the candidates for town elections. On October 25<sup>th</sup>, we held our annual Halloween party with lots of fun for all. In November we learned about “the flowers and the trees”, and held our annual Christmas party on Dec. 13<sup>th</sup>. We also had fun caroling around town to our homebound members on Dec. 20<sup>th</sup>.

Winter is a bit slower but, on Jan 10<sup>th</sup>, we will have a program on “the moon up above” (snow date Jan 24<sup>th</sup>), and February 14<sup>th</sup> will be “a thing called love” (snow date Feb 28<sup>th</sup>). March returns to two meetings a month, with the 13<sup>th</sup> being a great day for you to come see what we are all about, with our “Ritual Program”, and the 27<sup>th</sup> will be (we hope!) our award-winning program “It Happened in the USA”.



Come have some fun with us! **We look forward to meeting you.**

SUE PIANKA, PROGRAM DIRECTOR

860-599-4528

## EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

I'm very happy to say that we have escaped the brunt of an active hurricane season this year. No active storms are in our near forecast. We just never really know what our weather will be, that's affected by our increasingly active weather patterns. It appears that predicting our weather...well, may just be becoming more unpredictable.

Winter is here, and this new season brings its own set of issues that we all should be prepared to meet. Our biggest threat will be caused by periods of snow, blizzards, freezing rain, winds and bitter cold weather. This includes power outages, my friends. I think (hope) that we all know the drill: please have on hand supplies to sustain you and your family for at least three days - water, food, alternative heat source, illumination, communication plans, needed medication, a medical kit, pet food, etc.; and please don't forget to check on your neighbors, or anyone else that might need assistance; bring your pets inside.

On December 10<sup>th</sup>, First Selectman Urgo, Town IT Officer Russell and myself attended an annual "Emergency Management Director" drill held in Colchester, to address increasing concerns from long-term power outages, caused by cyber and physical security threats. Compromise of our communication systems and energy grids appear to be an ever increasing threat to our welfare, and that can have devastating impact.

I recently gave a briefing to Cub Scout Troop 71 regarding emergency preparedness. I think it got them thinking about "what if" scenarios. "Be Prepared" is a great motto to live by, every day.

Also, PLEASE register for "CTALERT," so that important recorded emergency messages can reach you; it's free and easy to do. Stay Safe.



GARY BARON                      DIRECTOR                      860-912-0004

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## NORTH STONINGTON LAND ALLIANCE

### Please Send A Note About Your Road

Thank you, keep your emails and road notes coming! Your input is already helping. Road name by road name, let us know what is important to you, along your road, that would be missed tremendously if removed, changed, or lost forever. Whether of a large or small, new or old item, we will add your comments/photos to our growing Heritage Portfolio for North Stonington.

We walk; we hike; we bicycle. We see North Stonington through our car windows. There are many environmental and historical icons, both large and small, in every part of town that we see every day that deserve a recognition, an attention and a protection. The Village is our hub, of course, and it is fed and nurtured by and from all of the outlying parts of town that feed into it with their own special history and excitement. This Portfolio is soon to become a collection of North Stonington's finest, most and least noticed highlights ever.

MADELINE JEFFERY [landallianceinc@gmail.com](mailto:landallianceinc@gmail.com) or Mail: NS Land Alliance, Inc., P.O. Box 327, NS, CT 06359

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## THAMES VALLEY COUNCIL FOR COMMUNITY ACTION, INC.

**Neighbors Helping Neighbors!** Volunteers can offer the support someone needs to remain living at home. Contact us to hear how a little help may improve the quality of life of an elderly or disabled person through the **Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP)**.

RSVP Programs currently need volunteers ages 55 and older to help visit, shop, or deliver meals on wheels for someone living independently. One hour of kindness can make a big difference in someone's life. For more information contact **Georgia James, Program Coordinator** (860-425-6608 or [gjames@tvcca.org](mailto:gjames@tvcca.org)).

## BOARD OF FINANCE

During this past quarter, the Board of Finance welcomed 2 new members, Dan Smith and Ann Aiken (Alternate). For those who have left the Board, we express appreciation for their contributions.

Most importantly, the Board received the final audit report for fiscal year 2018-2019 from the Town's auditing service. It was noted that the auditing team applauded the execution of the budget for fiscal year 2018-2019. There were no findings and the fiscal profile of the Town has maintained a trajectory that demonstrates effective management. Relative to the investments made by the Town to improve the facilities for public safety and education, the Town has a commitment to a debt position commensurate to these projects. The debt is well below the statute limitations for the Town, with historically low rates and favorable terms. Through a disciplined approach to the Town's fiscal responsibilities, the goals outlined in the Town's Plan of Conservation and Development are being realized.

We invite the public to the BOF meetings that are held Wednesday evenings at 7:00 pm at the New Town Hall. Please check the posted calendar at the Town website ([northstoningtonct.gov](http://northstoningtonct.gov)) for meeting dates.

DAN SPRING, CHAIRMAN

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## NORTH STONINGTON AGRICULTURAL FAIR

Although winter is upon us, the members of the North Stonington Fair Committee are hard at work preparing for our 2020 event. Our monthly meetings will resume on January 14<sup>th</sup>, 7pm at the Emergency Services Building, and we look forward to seeing all the new residents and non-residents who have shown interest in lending a hand and/or ideas to ensure that this great town tradition continues.

The officers, directors and members would like to extend their sincere gratitude and best wishes to Nancy Weismuller, who has retired from the committee after 50 +/- years of dedication to the fair. Nancy's endless hours and knowledge will surely be missed.

We hope you have enjoyed the holiday season and will have a healthy winter.... Mark your calendars for July 9<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup>, 2020! See you at the fair!



JODY WHIPPLE      PINENEEDLHOMESTEAD@SBCGLOBAL.NET

860-599-8498

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## ASSESSOR'S OFFICE

Starting February 1<sup>st</sup>, 2020 applications for the Elderly Homeowners Program will be taken again. Residents who are 65 years of age or married couples, one of which is at least 65 years of age on January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2020, may be eligible. The program is income limited; a single person who had a total income, including Social Security, of less than \$37,000 or a married couple with an income of less than \$45,100 may apply. Also, anyone who has a disability rating of 100% from Social Security and is income qualified may apply. Veterans who are income qualified can apply for an additional amount to their veteran's exemption. The amount of income that a veteran can earn is the same as for the Homeowners Program.

The Town of North Stonington is in the beginning stage of the **2020 revaluation**. It is hard to believe that 5 years have passed since the last time a revaluation of the town has taken place. The company that is doing the revaluation is eQuality Data from Waterbury, Connecticut. All revaluation personnel will have town issued identification. Please make sure that the person you are talking to has shown you his or her identification badge. As we progress on this project, information will be posted in the Town's web site, [www.northstoningtonct.gov](http://www.northstoningtonct.gov). I will be posting the location within the town where the inspections are taking place, as well as additional information.

DARRYL L. DEL GROSSO, CCMA II

ASSESSOR

860-535-2877 ext. 23 or 24

## WHEELER LIBRARY

This month, we introduce our new “Library of Things”, a collection of non-traditional items available for borrowing. From puzzles to board games to cornhole, pickleball, a ukulele and food dehydrator, we think you'll love these new additions to your library. More details and lending periods are available at [wheelerlibrary.org](http://wheelerlibrary.org) and at the library. February brings a Google-created program for kids ages 8-14. Game Changers teaches kids how to use computer science to create games, solve problems, and engage with topics they care about.

After a very successful November Book Sale, the Friends are gathering books in great condition, along with DVDs, CDs, and puzzles, for their next sale. Categories that sell well include recent bestsellers, trade paperbacks, kids’ books, and non-fiction. All proceeds benefit the library.

Our regular children’s programs resume the week of January 7<sup>th</sup> – Story Time on Tuesdays at 10:30; Kids’ Yoga Wednesdays at 10:30; and Lunch Bunch on Wednesdays at 11:30.

For other library events, see the calendar in this issue, and check our website at [wheelerlibrary.org](http://wheelerlibrary.org) as we are always adding more.

AMY KENNEDY

860-535-0383



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## NORTH STONINGTON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

This year is going so quickly and we are proud to say that the North Stonington Elementary School students have been busy learning in all areas. We are also getting excited about moving back to our renovated- as-new elementary school next year.

On December 10<sup>th</sup>, the 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Chorus & 2<sup>nd</sup> Year 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Band Holiday Concert was held. The students performed a concert for the school in the morning and an evening concert for the families. It was a day of song and cheer to start the holiday season.

We ended 2019 with two special events. Our PBIS celebration of Movie and Popcorn was held on Dec. 19<sup>th</sup> to recognize all students for their positive behavior throughout the year. We are proud to say that our students daily demonstrate the expectations of being respectful, responsible, honest, and safe. On the 20<sup>th</sup>, our annual Holiday Sing-A-Long was held with each grade level singing special songs to put us in the holiday spirit.

During this winter season, we encourage the development of reading with our students every day. Holidays and the cold months ahead are special times to share the love of reading. It will make such a difference when you cuddle up to read a book, no matter what age.

The N.S. Elementary School Drama Club will present *Alice in Wonderland, Jr.* on March 27<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup>. Please plan to attend.

On behalf of the faculty and staff, I would like to thank the community for the support you give to our students and school. We wish each North Stonington family the very best in 2020!

VERONICA WILKISON, PRINCIPAL

## **NORTH STONINGTON GARDEN CLUB**

Members of the North Stonington Garden Club were undaunted by a bit of snow, and showed up in force to make evergreen wreaths for public buildings and monuments, churches and other locations throughout North Stonington. A group of talented members decorated and distributed over 30 wreaths for all to enjoy during the holiday season.

Interested in learning more about the North Stonington Garden Club? The Club offers fun and fascinating programs at their monthly meetings. Why not join us in February as we kick off our 2020 gardening season with an informal program consisting of a 'pot luck' lunch and members sharing gardening tips and tricks they've learned over the years. Or perhaps you'd be interested in the March meeting featuring "the World of Peonies", or the April meeting about "Butterflies and their Gardens". Non-members are always welcome to come as a guest. Just visit our web site ([nsgardenclub.org](http://nsgardenclub.org)) to check out all the upcoming programs being offered this year! Lots of fun in store!



In addition to our monthly meetings, club members participate in garden visits, hikes and workshops. There's something for everyone. If you wish to learn more, or would like to join us for a meeting, please contact us at [info@nsgardenclub.org](mailto:info@nsgardenclub.org). Happy 2020 to all!

ELLEN SPRING                      CORRESPONDING SECRETARY

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## **NORTH STONINGTON LIONS CLUB**

The Lions Club traditionally greets the end of the fall season and the arrival of winter by lending a helping hand to the Pawcatuck Neighborhood Center for their annual holiday food distribution effort. This year will be no different. Each year, the PNC provides disadvantaged individuals and whole families with complete holiday meal packages-traditional meals for Thanksgiving, Christmas, and other familiar year-end celebrations. The Lions help the PNC with financial donations which go directly to food purchases. Additionally, the Lions donate service time to help package and distribute the food. For those lacking transportation, we deploy teams of Lions to make home deliveries of food packages to residents of Pawcatuck and Westerly.

Throughout the balance of the year, the PNC maintains a regular facility and work force which assures continuous food security for a substantial number of Pawcatuck area residents, including a number of children. We would encourage our North Stonington neighbors to reach out to the less-fortunate around us by making a donation for this purpose directly to the PNC or indirectly to the Lions.

JIM NESTOR, CLUB PRESIDENT    860-535-9966    P.O. BOX 100, NORTH STONINGTON, CT 06359

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## **NORTH STONINGTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

The Historical Society headquarters is the 18<sup>th</sup> century Stephen Main Homestead, located in the center of the village. The A. Morgan Stewart Memorial Library, housed in the homestead, is a great resource for your genealogical searches. It is open Tuesdays from 2-4 pm or by appointment. For questions or membership, phone 860-535-9448 or 599-3608 or go to [nostonhistoricalsociety.homestead.com](http://nostonhistoricalsociety.homestead.com). New members are welcome at any time.



The Society sponsors events and talks throughout the year and publishes an informative and enjoyable newsletter. On Sunday, February 9<sup>th</sup> Pianist Aymeric Dupré la Tour and Soprano Nora Paunescu will perform "When Love Rules the Globe" at 4 pm and 6:30 pm at the homestead. Tickets will be available in advance.

WILLIAM DOUGLASS, PRESIDENT                      [whdouglass@comcast.net](mailto:whdouglass@comcast.net)

## **NORTH STONINGTON EDUCATION FOUNDATION**

The North Stonington Education Foundation (NSEF) had two events this fall promoting our connection to the community of North Stonington. Our flagship event, the Celebration of Excellence, Dinner & Dance Gala, was held on Friday, October 25<sup>th</sup>, at Lake of Isles. We celebrated the year and recognized this year's Wheeler High School: Distinguished Alumni honoree, Ms. Wanda Breidinger (Wheeler High School, Class of 1977). It was a beautiful night celebrating Wheeler graduates and the NSEF. We received encouraging feedback from attendees that promise to make next year's event bigger and better.

In November we invited all Wheeler administrators, teachers and paraprofessionals to Buon Appetito for an afternoon conversation about our organization. It was great to see our dedicated educators and talk about our grant process and our shared goals for educating the children and community of North Stonington.

Coming up on January 24<sup>th</sup>, we will have our popular Trivia Contest at the Pawcatuck VFW. This event always sells out, so get your team together and sign up early. Let this be an early plug for someone to take down the reigning co-champs, the Wingnuts and the Italian Stallions.

We look forward to seeing you out in the community and at future events in 2020!

CHRISTOPHER P. ANDERSON 860-608-4549 [cpa@andersontriallawyers.com](mailto:cpa@andersontriallawyers.com)



**Wanda Breidinger receiving  
award from Bing Bartick**

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## **CONSERVATION COMMISSION**

For a post holiday gift, be sure to get the new 2020 Community Calendar at the library, Town Clerk's office, or Shunock Brewery/Café!

Black bears have been frequenting several homes in town this fall. We share this information in an attempt to mitigate potential damage these food-loving critters could do. Whereas they are seen most frequently in the Farmington, Avon, Simsbury communities, their presence now in our area is increasing

First and foremost, DON'T feed them. Bears return to environments where they have been able to get a free meal. Bird feeders, pet food left outside, and unsecured garbage containers are the most obvious domestic food sources. They rarely disturb composted material unless meat products are present

Keep dogs leashed, protect your animals, make noise when hiking, bring a whistle, hike with 2 or more people. Be BIG and DOMINANT. Speak assertively and calmly, whistle. Do NOT run, but back away slowly while facing the bear. Don't play dead, that's for Grizzly bears. The most threatening behavior to a bear is to get close to their cubs. If encountered, move away quickly with all the above assertive behaviors. Unless habituated, bears will run from you rather than aggress toward you.

WILLIAM RICKER, CHAIRMAN

[WILLIAMRICKER@COMCAST.NET](mailto:WILLIAMRICKER@COMCAST.NET) 860-535-2426

## BOY SCOUT TROOP 71

Welcome in the winter months for Boy Scout Troop 71! The Scouts had a fabulous Thanksgiving Feast in November. Thanksgiving as a scout family is amazing; the boys prepare the menu and prepare all the food over an open flame in the great outdoors. Did you find your way to the Community Tree Lighting? Thank a Scout for placing out luminaries and helping to light the way.

January will bring a ski and camp adventure to Otis Ridge, MA; a great time for those just learning to ski, and to those tackling the black diamonds. February brings the Klondike Derby in Pawcatuck, CT. Get those sleds ready and hope for snow! Also, February 9<sup>th</sup> is Scout Sunday.

The Scouts are always interested in Town service projects. If there is a NoSto service need, contact Troop 71 to see if they can be of assistance. For

more information on what Scouting has to offer, please contact Scout Master Doug Spracklin at [sprack1@comcast.net](mailto:sprack1@comcast.net)

KIYA LAMPHERE

TROOP 71 COMMITTEE MEMBER



THANKSGIVING!

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## KEEPING NORTH STONINGTON AFFORDABLE, INC.

KNSA thanks all of the generous donors of our Legacy of Generosity Fund Raising Campaign to resolve issues related to the gift of land on which to build a home, affordable to a working family. As a non-profit 501(c)(3) corporation, all gifts are tax deductible. One generous donor included a plea for more information about KNSA. As others may also want to know, our mission is as follows: to ensure that the people of North Stonington, and those wishing to live here, can find housing within their budgets. By using available private and public funding, we will provide affordable housing options for first-time homebuyers, seniors, and those who otherwise cannot afford to live in North Stonington. We will do so in a manner which enhances our community while retaining the rural character of our town.

KNSA will work with experienced non-profit contractors who will use their expertise to secure funding and architects who will design homes that fit well in rural settings. KNSA's board of directors includes local people with local solutions.

We hope each and every resident will be supportive of this endeavor and do their part, no matter how small.

MARY ANN RICKER, PRESIDENT





Photo by Bruce Fellman

The weather outside may be frightful, but a winter hike in North Stonington can be delightful. Since its founding in 1968, Avalonia has established 15 preserves in town to protect sensitive areas for wildlife. All are always open to the public, and nine of them have trails for you to explore and enjoy. Trail maps and directions can be found on our website, which features information about the organization and the 4,000 acres of critical habitat we preserve in perpetuity in Southeastern Connecticut.

To encourage you to get outside, we're offering three special hikes.

- \*From 2-3pm on Monday, January 20<sup>th</sup>, Kelly Allen leads kids in Avalonia's TriTown Forest Preserve, in search of winter wildlife.
- \*From 6-9pm, on Saturday, February 8<sup>th</sup>, Kelly guides hardy adult hikers on a rugged, TriTown excursion illuminated by the nearly full Snow Moon.
- \*On Wednesday, March 25<sup>th</sup>, from 6:30-8pm, naturalist Bruce Fellman offers a family-friendly exploration of the woods and vernal pools of the Babcock Ridge Preserve.

To register and for detailed information on each adventure, visit our website at [www.avalonia.org](http://www.avalonia.org). Join us; if you can help: contact Pat Turner at [jmt.pst@gmail.com](mailto:jmt.pst@gmail.com).

## Looking for More Activities?

### NORTH STONINGTON RECREATION COMMISSION

**Welcome to winter and a variety of activities to keep you active and happy!**

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| •Winter Youth Basketball (PK thru 4 <sup>th</sup> Grade) | Saturday mornings January/February                                   |
| •Yoga 18+  | Wednesday evenings starting January 8 thru February 26 <sup>th</sup> |
| •First Aid / CPR certification courses                   | January 10 <sup>th</sup> and February 16 <sup>th</sup>               |
| •Chess For Beginners                                     | January/February on Tuesday evenings                                 |
| •Futsal (Indoor Soccer)                                  | Starting Sunday January 26 <sup>th</sup>                             |
| •Art Expressions   | Saturday mornings beginning January 25 <sup>th</sup>                 |
| •Babysitting 101   | 3 Tuesdays after-school beginning February 4 <sup>th</sup>           |
| •Winter Paint Night For Kids                             | February 7 <sup>th</sup>   |

In mid- January we anticipate accepting registrations for our "Summer Playground" youth summer camps at our Recreation website [www.northstoningtonrec.com](http://www.northstoningtonrec.com)

TOM FABIAN

NORTH STONINGTON RECREATION DIRECTOR

# WINTER EVENTS

## JANUARY

4	SATURDAY	10:30 am	Wheeler Library	Teen Writing Group	Page 10
6	MONDAY	7 pm	Wheeler High School	Special Town Meeting	Page 1
8	WEDNESDAY	7 pm	Wheeler Library	Screening of Mark Starr's Lobstering Documentary	Page 10
13	MONDAY	6 am – 8 pm	New Town Hall	Referendum on Affordable Housing Proposal	Page 1
14	TUESDAY	6:30 pm	Wheeler Library	Book Discussion: <i>An Unnecessary Woman</i>	Page 10
20	MONDAY	2-3 pm	TriTown Forest Preserve	Guided Hike for Kids: A Search for Winter Wildlife	Page 14
24	FRIDAY	6 pm	Pawcatuck VFW	NSEF Trivia Event	Page 12

## FEBRUARY

1	SATURDAY	10:30 am	Wheeler Library	Teen Writing Group	Page 10
8	SATURDAY	6:00-9:00 pm	TriTown Forest Preserve	Guided Hike for Adults	Page 14
9	SUNDAY	4:00 & 6:30 pm	NS Historical Society	Soprano, Nora Paunescu & Pianist Aymeric Dupré: "When Love Rules the Globe"	Page 11
18	TUESDAY	6:30 pm	Wheeler Library	Book Discussion: <i>The Lemon Orchard</i>	Page 10
22	SATURDAY	10:30 am	Wheeler Library	Game Changers Program #1	Page 10
29	SATURDAY	10:30 am	Wheeler Library	Game Changers Program #2	Page 10

## MARCH

2	MONDAY	Library Hours	Wheeler Library	Seuss Day:-Come and Get Your Free Dr. Suess Book	Page 10
7	SATURDAY	10:30 am	Wheeler Library	Teen Writing Group	Page 10
7	SATURDAY	10:30 am	Wheeler Library	Game Changers Program #3	Page 10
9	MONDAY	6:00-9:00 pm	Wheeler Library	Book Sale Preview Night - \$	Page 10
10-14	TUES-SAT	Library Hours	Wheeler Library	Friends of Wheeler Book Sale	Page 10
11	WEDNESDAY	7 pm	Wheeler Library	Dr. Julie Snow: The Local Impact of Climate Change	Page 10
17	TUESDAY	6:30 pm	Wheeler Library	Book Discussion: Title TBD	Page 10
25	WEDNESDAY	6:30 -8 pm	Babcock Ridge Preserve	Guided Hike with Naturalist Bruce Fellman	Page 14

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

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



As we enter 2020, it is exciting to think about all the many positive things that go on in our special town. For example, over 30 folks regularly contribute to the Quarterly. They do so because they value the importance of informing townspeople about what is being accomplished, what still needs to be done and how we can work together. It makes a difference!

Special thanks go to the Middle/High School print shop that makes it possible for us to produce the NSQ.

We wish everyone a very happy, healthy 2020,  
Nita Kincaid and Lisa Mazzella, NSQ Editors