

# THE NORTH STONINGTON QUARTERLY

## SPRING 2021

### BOARD OF SELECTMEN

As the weather starts to turn so do the tides of COVID-19, or so we hope. As we passed the one year mark of living with this virus, many indicators are starting to point in the right direction. Vaccines are being administered as quickly as we receive them. At the time of writing this, we are seeing slight increases in cases and we attribute this to people letting their guard down a bit. We are not in the clear yet, so please continue to wear your masks and practice distancing. We are not immediately immune after getting the vaccine. The good news is it does seem that the end is in site and, with our continued perseverance, a more “normal” summer should be in the cards, if all goes well!

As is traditionally the case this time of year, we are fully engaged in the budget process. The Boards of Finance, Education, and Selectmen have worked diligently, putting forth a responsible budget for your consideration. To date many difficult decisions have been made in an effort to minimize a tax impact to everyone. We would like to invite everybody to our virtual town hearing in April to share your feedback on the budget. You will be able to attend via zoom or by phone. In addition, you may attend a public meeting of the boards anytime you are available. Public participation is key to the creation of fiscally balanced budgets that meet the needs of our community.

Much work and planning continues in this new year. A comprehensive analysis of the John Dean Gallup house on Hewitt Farm was completed. This historic asset that belongs to the town is being discussed currently to see what future use would best serve the community. We received a fully funded grant to perform this analysis and are now likely to apply for another grant to help with the repairs needed to be sure the property is preserved and maintained for generations to come.

Boombbridge Bridge is OPEN! After 13 years we are so happy to report the bridge is functional, beautiful and will serve the public far into the future. We hope to have a public celebration at the bridge once the pandemic is in the rearview mirror. Thanks to everyone who helped bring this project to completion!

Work continues on finding tenancy for The North Stonington Education Center located at 298 Norwich Westerly Road. We have listed the property on the MLS through a local realtor and we have recently appointed a subcommittee charged with reaching out to local educational institutions to help market the property. The public listing for the property can be found here - [www.nostoeducenterspace.is4lease.com](http://www.nostoeducenterspace.is4lease.com). If you are connected with any educational facility interested in rental of the space, please connect them with the town, so we can help see if they would be a fit.



November is an election year for many of our municipal elections. We need good people who would consider serving to step up. A list of the available offices up for election can be found at [www.northstoningtonct.gov](http://www.northstoningtonct.gov) on the revolving section of the homepage. Should you have interest in serving, please reach out to the Town Clerk at [townclerk@northstoningtonct.gov](mailto:townclerk@northstoningtonct.gov) and she can help you navigate the path to getting on the ballot.

The start of 2021 has been a moment of reflection for many of us. Over 500,000 Americans have fallen to COVID-19. A horrific attack on our nation's capital began the year leaving us feeling ashamed, fearful, and vulnerable as a nation. Many have lost their livelihood. So many have lost loved ones and could not mourn as they normally would, due to restrictions. Yet through it all we remain resolute. Let's continue to be that shining light that the world needs during these difficult times. North Stonington is indeed full of warmth and kindness and thankfully leaning upon each other for support we will get through this together, though we will be forever changed. If you need help please reach out to someone. 211 is there if you need it. Together we will get through.

MIKE URGO, NITA KINCAID & BOB CARLSON

[SELECTMEN@NORTHSTONINGTONCT.GOV](mailto:SELECTMEN@NORTHSTONINGTONCT.GOV)

## **NORTH STONINGTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

It was in the middle of last March that all of our worlds changed and just about everything came to an abrupt halt! After school closed by the Governor's Executive Order last spring and after much deliberation, we opened the 2020-2021 school year in the hybrid model. With the COVID-19 data trending in the right direction in our community recently, we moved to a full in-person schedule with students attending school four-days per week at the end of February. Our students will have the opportunity of attending school five-days per week at the end of March. We will continue for any family that chooses to remain fully virtual, they will be able to continue in that model. In addition, any student who wants to remain in the hybrid model can as well. In short, based on a student or families comfort level, you can choose to be full-in, hybrid or virtual.

It is great that we are finally seeing light at the end of a long tunnel. There is a different feeling in our buildings that has been missing since last March. It's a feeling of excitement! Students are thrilled to be back with all their friends and not just those in their end of the alphabet and our teachers are just as happy as they are. With that stated we are looking forward to the possibility of the Governor lifting some of the restrictions for crowds and having our traditional graduation on the Wheeler Library lawn on June 11<sup>th</sup>.

The end of the school year also brings the busiest time for the Board of Education (BOE) and Central Office. A focus is on the budgetary process as the BOE has passed its budget and is in the hands of the Board of Finance prior to going to the town. A quote used in the Superintendent's and BOE's budget comes from President Lyndon Johnson, "We believe, that is, you and I, that education is not an expense. We believe it is an investment". We are thankful to the town's residents for their continued support of our schools and we are all proud of our district's academic success. Wheeler is now a School of Choice and will have students from Voluntown and Preston attending Wheeler next fall on a tuition basis.

PETER NERO, SUPERINTENDENT

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## **ROTARY OF THE STONINGTONS**

Rotary is a network of neighbors, friends, leaders and problem-solvers working together to create lasting change locally and across the globe. We work together to provide community service, protect the environment, support education, fight disease, and advance world understanding and peace. Our club currently meets online Friday mornings for presentations, fellowship and project planning. Recent projects include distribution of face masks to local schools and first responders, and meal preparation at the New London Community Meal Center. We will be receiving another allotment of face masks for distribution in the coming weeks and encourage you to contact us if you know of an organization in need of masks.



On April 17<sup>th</sup>, we are holding our first ever Disc Golf Fundraiser at Chains for Chikumbuso, a members-only disc golf course in North Stonington. Funds raised will support the Simply Smiles Children's Village on the Cheyenne River Sioux Indian Reservation in South Dakota. We are also soliciting applications for our annual college scholarships to reward high school students who fulfill Rotary's theme of "Service Above Self". Application forms and additional information are available from the Wheeler Guidance Office. Application deadline is April 23<sup>rd</sup>.

We are anxious to resume our weekly in-person breakfast meetings as soon as we can do so safely, and are actively seeking new members to join our club. If you would like to join a weekly Zoom meeting or speak to someone about membership, contact our membership chairperson at [carolu.rotary@gmail.com](mailto:carolu.rotary@gmail.com) or our president at [sabrinabuehler@gmail.com](mailto:sabrinabuehler@gmail.com). Visit our Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/havingfuninservice/>.

## BOARD OF FINANCE

During the past quarter, the Board of Finance has been presented with budget submissions for fiscal year 2021-2022 by the various entities of the Town. Review of these submissions will continue until the Board of Finance has developed a draft budget that will be presented to the Town's people via a Public Hearing. Consideration is given to maintaining the services of the Town, its contractual obligations, or debt management, and strategic initiatives. Importantly, the budget is to be developed within the confines of the Town's resources, essentially a balanced budget.

In part, the positive revaluation conducted during 2020 will be assessed relative to the Town's Grand List and its impact on revenue.

The Board of Finance has also reviewed and defined a number of policies relevant to the responsibilities of the Board. As they are approved, the policies will be posted on the Town's website.

As always, the public is invited to attend the Board of Finance meetings with the meeting schedules posted on the Town's website with accompanying agendas.

DAN SPRING, CHAIRMAN

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## *The Budget Process*

Our fiscal year begins on July 1st. Since late fall of 2020, the Town Boards, Commissions, Committees and Departments have provided input about expected revenues and expenses to be included in the upcoming 2021/2022 Budget. Boards of Finance, Selectmen and Education have now reviewed these submissions meticulously. At this time there is still more to be done.

All involved are looking forward to bring the results to the town in the following manner:

- ✓ A **Public Hearing**, led by the Board of Finance, will present the budget contents. This is an important step, because it allows taxpayers to gain understanding of what is in the budget and to ask questions of those who had prepared it.
- ✓ Following the public input, any necessary changes can be made before the Annual Town Meeting. Next the **Annual Meeting** will be held. All residents are encouraged to attend. The final budget will be presented and will subsequently be voted upon at a referendum. The date for the budget has not yet been set, but will hopefully be in May.
- ✓ Not less than 7 days and not more than 14 days after the town meeting, the **Referendum** to vote on the budget will be held.

The Town has a goal to complete all the above events prior to the end of June, in order to set the mill rate and send out tax bills on time. The dates, times and locations for the above three steps are not yet finalized, but they will soon be publicized for the Townspeople.

## ASSESSOR'S OFFICE

### Elderly & Disabled Homeowners, Plus Veterans

Due to the continuing Covid-19 pandemic, the Governor of the State of Connecticut has suspended the reapplication process for the Elderly & Disabled Homeowners Program and the additional Veterans Program. If you are currently on the program, you do not need to do anything and your benefit will be automatically applied to your tax bill.

### Homeowners Not on the Program

If you are at least 65 years old on January 1, 2021 and your income was less than \$37,600 for a single person or \$45,800 for a married couple you need to contact the Assessor's Office before May 15, 2021. We will be able to give you additional information regarding the program. The phone number is 860-535-2877 x 124.

**A reminder:** If you sell or trade your motor vehicle and cancel your registration you must show the paperwork to get credit on your taxes. The DMV does not inform the Assessor's Office of any changes you make. Only if you move the registration to your new vehicle, the credit is automatically applied to your new vehicle. You must pay the taxes on the old vehicle to receive the credit on the new vehicle. Otherwise you do not need to show us any documentation.

Hoping everyone stays safe.

DARRYL L. DEL GROSSO, CCMA II, ASSESSOR 860-535-2877 ext. 23 or 24

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## PAWCATUCK NEIGHBORHOOD CENTER

**The Pawcatuck Neighborhood Center bus provides free, door-to-door rides  
for North Stonington residents who are age 55 and over.**



North Stonington residents who are age 55+ are invited to travel on the PNC's bus for medical, shopping and banking appointments. This is a door-to-door service, which is offered at no cost. The bus can also be used to travel to vaccine sites and the PNC food pantry. There is no financial requirement. Only 1 or 2 passengers ride on the bus at one time, in order to maintain a safe, social distance. The handicap-accessible bus is sanitized in between passengers. If you are age 55 or over and would like to take advantage of this free service, call (860) 599-3285, ext. 108 to schedule your ride.

SUSAN SEDENSKY, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

<http://www.pawcatuckneighborhoodcenter.org>

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## THAMES VALLEY COUNCIL FOR COMMUNITY ACTION, INC.

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. If you are 55 or over, 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.

We are here to engage, enlighten, and inspire each other.

### For more information contact:

GEORGIA L JAMES, PROGRAM COORDINATOR 860-425-6608 [gjames@tvcca.org](mailto:gjames@tvcca.org)

GINA KING, DIRECTOR 860-425-6617 [gking@tvcca.org](mailto:gking@tvcca.org)



## LAND USE AND BUILDING DEPARTMENT

North Stonington continues to thrive despite the Pandemic! This fiscal year, as of March 1<sup>st</sup>, we have processed 75 Land Use Permits and 273 Building Permits. Included in these totals are 6 new houses and 2 accessory apartments. For new Commercial Projects: the approved new Wedding Event Facility on the former Crider farm is well underway and construction of the new 40,000sf warehouse on the Quinlan Enterprise, LLC campus is scheduled to begin shortly. Two new large-scale solar projects are currently under review by the CT Siting Council for properties off of Boom Bridge Rd and Providence New London Tpke. While not always popular, these projects generate much needed fee-revenue for the Land Use Department. The Tin Peddler and Little Man's Bakery are open for business! Remember to Shop Local to help these businesses succeed.



So far, this fiscal year has outperformed last year with our 4 busiest months still remaining!

	Square Feet	Construction Cost	Total Building Fees	Total Land Use Fees
<b>YTD/FYE 2021</b>	317,389	\$20,684,484.95	\$183,413.48	\$9,263.00
<b>FYE 2020</b>	142,164	\$9,004,960.07	\$72,165.66	\$13,250.00

The Planning and Zoning Commission is currently reviewing a proposed Text Amendment to allow certain recreational uses in the Highway Commercial Zone including a Luxury RV Park. The Commission is also starting to evaluate whether changes to the Agricultural Regulations pertaining to Accessory Uses are needed, and considering updating criteria to allow year-round use of existing homes in the SUOA under very specific circumstances.

Many inquiries have been received about available properties in the Economic Development District and discussions about extending water and sewer utilities into this district continue between private investors/developers. Stay tuned for news about renovations to the former Randall's Ordinary Site and other new residential and commercial developments in the early planning stages.

## ZONING

As you start planning your spring and summer projects remember that all new structures, pools, additions, new home business ventures, and new agricultural activity, like the keeping of animals or putting up a farm stand, all require permits. Call or stop by the Town Hall and we would be happy to help you create your plot plan and get copies of the documents needed for the permit approval process. Call 860-535-2877 and press 4 for the Land Use Department or dial x 127 or email me at [jhodge@northstoningtonct.gov](mailto:jhodge@northstoningtonct.gov) to get started.

JULIET HODGE PLANNING, DEVELOPMENT & ZONING OFFICIAL

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## NORTH STONINGTON CEMETERY COMMISSION

This spring we plan to begin the cleanup and restoration of one of our historic cemeteries, Hale #70, the Brown-Randall Cemetery. We will post the progress made in the next issue of the North Stonington Quarterly.

As always, we thank the residents who are instrumental in maintaining the cemeteries on or adjacent to their private properties. Also, we encourage anyone who may choose to volunteer in this endeavor. Please feel free to contact Diane Preston, email [djdpreston16@gmail.com](mailto:djdpreston16@gmail.com) or text 8609612580 or home phone (leave old fashioned voice message!) 860-599-1832. You may also contact David Fede at 860-535-0009.

DIANE PRESTON, PRESIDENT

DAVID FEDE, TREASURER

## NORTH STONINGTON GARDEN CLUB

Normally at this time of year, our article would be all about our Plant Sale, which typically would be held Saturday, May 8, 2021. This year, though we are committed to offering you something that approximates our usual sale while also complying with COVID-19 public health guidance, our decisions about venue, format, and other considerations cannot be finalized before this NSQ issue goes to press. For updates, check our website [www.nsgardenclub.org](http://www.nsgardenclub.org) or follow us on Facebook. We will do our very best to keep you fully informed. Feel free to send specific questions to us by email at [info@nsgardenclub.org](mailto:info@nsgardenclub.org).

We encourage you to share in our active support of the Pollinator Pathway Program. As a town, North Stonington plans to become a part of this nationwide initiative to conserve, protect, and promote habitats for native pollinators. Our goal is to provide adequate contiguous habitat for the species that pollinate our commercial and home gardens, and so support our food supply. Public and private gardens can participate in this effort. The Garden Club, together with the Town and other local organizations, will participate by sharing information, seeds, and seedlings.



JANICE PARKER

NSGC COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE



**AVALONIA LAND CONSERVANCY** The land trust is glad to see the town's people enjoying the nine preserves in town that have trails. You can access the maps and details on our website [www.Avalonia.org](http://www.Avalonia.org). New brighter, easier to use trail maps are about to be installed on the site as well as a new descriptive guide. You can download the navigation tool Explorer for ArcGIS and search Avalonia Online to find properties and to guide you. Spring in the woods is amazing. Birds sing almost constantly, wildflowers appear and the new light green leaves come out. Enjoy.

Do you live near an Avalonia property or visit one frequently? The land trust's North Stonington Town Committee is always 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](mailto:jmt.pst@gmail.com).

## NORTH STONINGTON LIONS CLUB

With the arrival of spring, the NS Lions are engaged in the planning of the annual Memorial Day Remembrance in the center of the town. As we did last year in acknowledgement of the pandemic, we are planning to forego the traditional parade and formal gathering in front of the old school. Instead we plan to honor our servicemen and women with a more modest showing of wreaths and flags along the parade route. Our intent is to leave some visible reminders in place on Memorial Day in recognition of and in gratitude to those who make the personal sacrifices, which protect us as a nation. We trust that in the spring of 2022 we will be able to resume our traditional parade and ceremonies.

JIM NESTOR, CLUB PRESIDENT

860-850-4645

POBOX 100, NORTH STONINGTON, CT 06359

## TAX COLLECTOR

We anticipate tax bills will be mailed out at the end of June pending budget approval. These bills will include both the July and January installment of taxes. This will be the **ONLY** bill you receive. You will **NOT** receive another bill for the January installment. 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.

Please be reminded that failure to receive a tax bill does not invalidate the tax, interest, liens, and collection fees per Connecticut General Statutes 12-130 and 12-146. It is the taxpayer's responsibility to call the tax office if you did not receive a bill.

Tax Collection office hours are Monday - Friday 9:00 AM to 2:00 PM. A secure drop box is also available outside of Town Hall where payments can be left. Late payments are determined by official U.S. postmark. Payments postmarked or dropped off before 4pm on the due date do not accrue interest. Connecticut General Statutes do not allow us to go by the check date – postmark only!

The on-line tax website is full of helpful information on [http://www.northstoningtonct.gov/payonline\\_](http://www.northstoningtonct.gov/payonline_) Payments can be made, which will include a service fee; search for payment amounts due or reprint a bill(s). There is also an option to view and print payment history that can be used for IRS tax purposes.

All past due Motor Vehicle and Personal Property accounts from Grand List 2005 to 2018 will be placed with a collection agency as prescribed by state statute regarding proceeding with collection enforcement measures. Once placed with the agency, payments can no longer be accepted in the tax office and must be made with the outside agency.

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

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## TOWN CLERK'S OFFICE

As I am writing this article, there is definitely a sense of optimism in the air with more people getting their COVID vaccinations, with winter behind us, and with Spring warmth welcoming us back outdoors! With that said, Fishing Season has started early this year (March 4) due to Governor Lamont's Executive Order 10B. Come to the office to get your fishing license or any other sporting license that you need, as well as the regulation guides. Sporting licenses can also be purchased online at [www.ct.gov/deep](http://www.ct.gov/deep).



The Spring season also brings an increase in marriage licenses. With the Governor expanding gathering capacities, it is anticipated that there will be an increase in weddings. If you plan on being married in North Stonington, a marriage license must be obtained from the Town Clerk's Office. Please call the office with any questions.

As an important reminder, dog licensing for the new dog licensing year will begin on June 1st. A Rabies Clinic is being held in June, at which time the office will also be providing dog licenses for dogs belonging to North Stonington residents. Stay tuned for further details!

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](mailto:townclerk@northstoningtonct.gov).

ANTOINETTE PANCARO, CMC, CCTC

TOWN CLERK

## **NORTH STONINGTON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**

I am so happy to be writing my first update for the North Stonington Quarterly! My name is Rob Cillino and I have been appointed Principal of North Stonington Elementary School, replacing Ronnie Wilkison who retired in December. I live in Westerly and have been in education for the past 20 years in Waterford. I have really been enjoying meeting the students, staff, and families of this amazing school and community, and could not feel any more welcomed by this wonderful town.

As many of you know, we have moved from a hybrid model to a full-in model four days a week in late February. This has been a very smooth transition thanks to the staff of the school and the families as well. It has been great to see so many students back in person and the teachers really enjoy having almost all of their learners back in front of them. It truly is the best way to educate, especially our younger students, and it just feels like a little more the way things used to be before all this craziness started a year ago. At the end of **the month** we will be adding Wednesdays as well, so we will be back full time. I'd really like to thank the parents, staff, and the Board of Education for staying committed to getting and keeping our students in school. We look forward to a bright spring!

ROBERT CILLINO, PRINCIPAL

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## **NORTH STONINGTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

The Society's programs are still in hiatus because of the COVID threat, and sadly that includes the usual access to our genealogical library. If you have a request, contact Gladys Chase via email at [gchase1@comcast.net](mailto:gchase1@comcast.net).



We remain busy with plans and with preserving the record of North Stonington. The Society has been working with the Town as they access the Gallup House at Hewitt Farm, its history, its current condition, restoration needs and future use for the town.

A current project is recording the stories of how our families came to this town, whether in the 1700s, 1900s, or recently— from where? Why? Our recent newsletter featured our first story. If you don't feel you are a writer, we can work with you. Contact Robin Rice at [denishawnr@gmail.com](mailto:denishawnr@gmail.com). You may also contact Robin for membership, including a subscription to the newsletter.

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## **EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT**

Greetings, everyone! I hope everybody is doing well during this difficult COVID pandemic. Hang in there - things will get better!

Let's talk hurricane season! We all know it's on our doorstep, as something else we have to worry about. But, it's inevitably coming, in spite of COVID. So, everyone needs to stay prepared. Forecasters are predicting a 25% probability of a well-above normal hurricane season, that could net as many as 14-17 tropical storms, 9-11 hurricanes, and 4-5 major hurricanes.

Many of the predictions rely upon the developments of "La Nina" in the Pacific Ocean (surface water temperature). "La Nina" can contribute to an increase in Atlantic hurricane activity by weakening the wind shear over the Caribbean Sea and tropical Atlantic Basin, which enables storms to develop and intensify. Our hurricane season runs from June 1 through November 30 (though NOAA may move-up the official date to May in 2022, due to global warming).

So, stay tuned and please stay prepared for any emergency event that may confront us. Stay healthy and well. Keep your chins up. Think positive!

GARY BARON, DIRECTOR

860-912-0004



## NORTH STONINGTON BOARD OF EDUCATION

We are excited to be welcoming Spring and hopeful to be leaving the Pandemic of 2020 behind us. Our students are returning to school full time at the end of March and parents and students are equally excited to be getting our kids back in. It was a huge, collaborative effort of the community, teachers, administrators, IT department and Central Office to make our return a success. I want to give a special Thank You to our nursing staff; this has been a monumental year and they worked overtime on planning and working to keep our students and faculty safe. We are so fortunate to have the best of the best in our nurses; we truly could not have done this without them.

The BOE has presented our budget for the upcoming year to the BOF and we are excited to be able to share it with the community at the town hearing. We really need to hear your voice and welcome your input. We have had so many successes, both buildings are now complete, we are a School of Choice for surrounding districts, the PTO has built a beautiful new playground and we have welcomed a new Principal at the Elementary School. I may be biased, but the schools in North Stonington really are one of our biggest assets and we should all be so proud of the work that is being done there.

We are looking forward to Spring sports as things begin to look a little more normal, as we look to next fall. Don't forget to VOTE when the budget referendum comes up; every vote makes a difference. Have a great Spring!

CHRISTINE WAGNER, CHAIRMAN      [wagnerc@northstonington.k12.ct.us](mailto:wagnerc@northstonington.k12.ct.us)

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## CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Holding ZOOM monthly meetings is terrible when we're trying to get things done, but every 4<sup>th</sup> Thursday at 6 pm we're plodding forward. Join in and let us know what conservation issues you're interested in.

Our two-year effort to create an access point along the Pawcatuck River for a kayak and canoe trail "put-in" may be close to being realized. Now that Boombridge Road bridge is completed, efforts to secure space along the down river side for entrance to the river is close. We have been working with Westerly and Stonington to create a 4.5-mile-long "Tri-Town Trail" along this beautiful resource.

Midwinter work to create a Historic Hiking Trail is also close to completion. Although this does not entail cutting brush and clearing pathways, it will be a 2.5-mile hike from Town Hall, down Main Street, up through Hewitt Farm trails and back Wyassup Road to the beginning. Historic homes, churches, cemeteries, trails including the bi-centennial trail will be featured. Did you know a great granddaughter of one of the first settlers on the Mayflower, John Alden, has a memorial in our Old Plains Cemetery?

We have contacted over 14 property owners identified in the 2013 Plan of Conservation and Development that have property worthy of adding to our greenway corridors. Information from the state as to how to protect their land was included.

Our 2021 calendar sold out and the theme for the 2022 calendar is farmers and their animals. We hope to feature over a dozen farms that grace our community, so stay tuned.

With spring comes a migration of salamanders, frogs and turtles to mate and lay eggs. Please drive carefully.

WILLIAM RICKER, CHAIRMAN

[WILLIAMRICKER@COMCAST.NET](mailto:WILLIAMRICKER@COMCAST.NET)

860-535-2426



## KEEPING NORTH STONINGTON AFFORDABLE, INC.

Good news for the citizens of North Stonington! Lifting the deed restriction on the property at 119 Clark Falls Rd. has taken a step forward. The town is asking the state attorney general to remove the educational deed restriction on this property and deed it to KNSA for use as affordable housing with preservation restrictions. The case is pending in the court. We are looking forward to a favorable decision so that this architecturally significant historic property can be rehabilitated and again serve the town as affordable housing, as it has so well in the past as a school.



April is introducing the Monthly Sunday Supper Meal Box: “Food is at the heart of the Home”. Orders for the Meal Boxes will bring healthy, locally-sourced food into your home, profits from which will help bring healthy, affordable homes to our town. The kit contains all the ingredients for 4 and an easy to follow recipe card with instructions for preparation. Themed boxes are April, “The Spring Fling”; for May, “Marvelous Mothers”; and June, “Fabulous Fathers”. Look for the menus and other themed months on our facebook page and at [knsainc.org](http://knsainc.org).

MARY ANN RICKER, PRESIDENT

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## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

EDC has been continuing to work hard to provide assistance to North Stonington businesses. We are currently working on having a collaborative round table with town businesses to understand their current needs and how we can work together to foster more growth and local business awareness. During this process we will also update the North Stonington business directory and the services they offer.

Spring is here and, with restrictions on businesses and events being eased, we look forward to residents exploring some of our new businesses that have opened during the pandemic and revisiting the businesses they have missed. There is a lot to be excited about as we have continued attracting new businesses in town that complement and contribute to our quality of life. The Land Use office had been busy with applications and we can't wait for more new businesses that are ready to sprout! Happy Spring!

BRETT MASTROIANNI, CHAIRMAN

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## NORTH STONINGTON CITIZENS LAND ALLIANCE

### Land Alliance Spring Notes

It is almost time to be off with the coats, scarves, and wooly hats, out the door and into the sunshine.

There is so much to look forward to - a time to look around our own home and land as well as North Stonington's roadsides, preserves, and pathways and find a way to give fresh protection and care to all the important things around us.

This is a good time to walk two of Alliance's preserves. Try Samuel Cote Preserve on Clarks Falls Road, 31 acres of mostly level paths through pine trees and along Spalding Pond. Bring a sandwich and thermos of coffee to enjoy at Betty's Bench along the pond embankment. Try Fowler-Grindstone Preserve with two entrances along Fowler Road. It is a forested 81-acre preserve that shows off the confluence of Hetchel Swamp Brook and Pendleton Hill Brook.

**Look for Land Alliance's large blue and white Earth Day banner that will be flying on the front lawn of Wheeler Library on Earth Day, April 22<sup>nd</sup>.** It is a special day in our celebration and love for our planet Earth.

MADELINE JEFFERY

LANDALLIANCEINC@GMAIL.COM

860-599-5517

## NORTH STONINGTON COMMUNITY GRANGE #138

The North Stonington Community Grange meets on 2<sup>nd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> Fridays, with some exceptions. We discuss and act upon not only our Grange needs, but also the needs of our community. Covid-19 has changed those meetings. Our hall is large, so we have plenty of room to socially distance, and with an accumulation of business to discuss, and Covid-19 slowing down, we started meeting again in February. That program was “Hold Hands Firmly, Hearts Gently” and we learned about heart health. Our first March program was a Ritual night, reviewing the Grange positions. Next meeting our program will be “100 years ago”, a review of the Roaring 20’s.

Our upcoming schedule on April 9<sup>th</sup> is titled “Days of Yore” – bring something old and talk about it; Apr. 23<sup>rd</sup> is titled “Surprise”; May 14<sup>th</sup>, “Smile for No Reason” – celebration time; May 28<sup>th</sup> is our “Memorial Program” and we will be honoring past Grangers and our servicemen; June 11<sup>th</sup> is titled “Congratulate Yourself” and is our election of officers and a short program; and June 25<sup>th</sup> is “Share a Sunset” – our annual picnic.

**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. We look forward to meeting you. We will still wear masks and maintain social distancing, and hope you do the same when you go out. We urge you to get vaccinated just as soon as you are able to.

SUE PIANKA, PROGRAM DIRECTOR

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On Friday, February 12<sup>th</sup>, LedgeLight Health District sponsored a clinic at the NS Education Center to vaccinate individuals 65 years and over!

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## NORTH STONINGTON PARENT TEACHER ORGANIZATION

Happy Spring from the North Stonington PTO! It’s hard to believe it’s been over a year since we’ve been able to be IN the schools as volunteers. We have seen an increase in the number of attendees at our meetings and are thankful to all who “Zoom in” to keep informed about our ongoing efforts to build our organization and contribute to our schools despite the obstacles that the pandemic has put before us. We truly appreciate your support!



Speaking of support, April is nomination month for us, with elections being held in May. Our current officers are at the end of their two-year terms and several committees are still in need of chairs. If you’ve ever thought about wanting to get more involved, now is the time! For more information, please message us on our FaceBook page or email us at [board@northstoningtonpto.com](mailto:board@northstoningtonpto.com). We are hopeful that there will be fewer restrictions in the 2021-2022 school-year, which means more activities for which we will need volunteers! Stay healthy Lions!

NORTH STONINGTON PTO BOARD



## WHEELER LIBRARY

Wheeler Library is now opening additional hours: Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday from 10am to 4pm; Wednesday 10am to 6pm; and Saturday 10am to 1pm. No appointment is needed to visit. Curbside pickup and home delivery are also available.

Getting ready to garden? Seeds from our Seed Lending Library may be requested online at <https://www.wheelerlibrary.org/seed-lending-library/>.. are adding new seeds to our collection of native and pollinator mixes.

We continue to create new Storywalks for you to enjoy reading and the outdoors. Laminated pages from a children's book are framed and installed along Main Street. Begin by the clock across from Town Hall. The library has also added a collection of children's Playaways, new Grab and Go themed bags of books and activities, and continues to purchase the latest books and DVDs for all interests and ages.



Wheeler Library's Spring Seedling Sale of tomato and herb plants is in full swing. Order online at <https://wheeler-library-ct.square.site/> and we will have your locally and lovingly grown plants ready in mid-May. All proceeds benefit the library.

Through a grant from the State of Connecticut, we have purchased mobile bookcases for the upstairs. All of the fiction and non-fiction titles for adults are now in one place and we think you'll find it a great spot to browse, relax and enjoy the beautiful space and curated collections.

AMY KENNEDY

860-535-0383

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## NORTH STONINGTON AGRICULTURAL FAIR



Plans for the North Stonington Fair to open their gates on July 8<sup>th</sup> are well underway. The Fair Committee resumed monthly meetings in March and discussed, in length, new procedures that would be put in place, obstacles that we may face and the excitement from the general public in being able to, once again, enjoy this annual town event. There is still the uncertainty as to what the Governor's orders will be in July and the fair will follow all guidelines from the state, as well as the local health department, in order to ensure the safety and well-being of all.

With that being said, we are planning work parties, seeking volunteers to assist in several areas, encouraging ideas from our townspeople and looking for sponsorship for our events. Having not been able to operate in 2020 was a major financial burden as there were still many bills to be paid, insurance being a major one. If you or a business is interested in

sponsorship, we encourage you to seek out a fair board member or officer; you can locate them on our website at [www.northstoningtonfair.org](http://www.northstoningtonfair.org). We have great hopes of being able to include a majority of the events that the fair previously held, from stage shows, animal pulls and motorized pulls, to livestock shows, arts and crafts, baking contests, children's contests, queen contests and more.

**Mark your calendars for July 8<sup>th</sup> – 11<sup>th</sup>!!!** Monthly meetings are held the 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday of each month at the Grange Hall, 7pm, located on the fairgrounds. Social distancing and masks are required. We welcome you and would love to hear your ideas. Our 1<sup>st</sup> work party is scheduled for May 8<sup>th</sup> at 9am on the fairgrounds.

JODY WHIPPLE

PINENEEDLHOMESTEAD@SBCGLOBAL.NET 860-599-8498



## HEWITT FARM

This fall the Hewitt Farm Committee, Town Planner Juliet Hodge and Board of Selectmen received a \$20,000 grant from the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO). The grant was to identify both the condition of the John Dean Gallup House and the Carriage House, as well as to determine the feasibility of use for the two buildings.

Lothrop Associates LLP Architects was chosen to work on both condition and feasibility. Both buildings have been considered in good condition, though there are lists of items that could be improved. It is, however, important for us to first determine the feasibility of how the two buildings would best be used. At the beginning of December, a group of 18 residents were interested in sharing their thoughts and learning more about the 1732 historical structure. In that one hour session there were many ideas about uses put forth by the attendees.



One of the “Best Rooms”  
in the Gallup house

In February, Lothrop shared a draft report of all the work they have done, which is very useful. We have forwarded this to SHPO for their assessment and possible next steps concerning further support.

Hewitt Farm is open daily from dawn to dusk. A pandemic, still of concern, combined with very brisk February weather did not seem to bother folks of all ages who visited this winter. The open space, clean air and many trails are indeed popular! It's 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](http://www.northstoningtonct.gov)) or pick one up at any of the trailheads.

ED HARASIMOWITZ, CHAIRMAN

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## BOY SCOUTS TROOP 71

Happy Spring from Troop 71!! As the warm weather approaches we are thankful that our outdoor, socially distanced meetings will not also be a lesson in cold weather survival!

The boys have held both outdoor and zoom meetings to keep everyone engaged. It has been successful since, despite the pandemic, the boys have been very productive. They have been working on wilderness survival by building their own shelters, have practiced hands-on first aid skills in a challenge event, and continue to participate in sorting bottles and cans to earn money for camp or scouting needs. On March 14<sup>th</sup>, a ceremony was held and we celebrated six Webelos crossing over into Boy Scouts. Following their ceremony, we held a Court of Honor, where our current Boy Scouts were recognized for rank advancements and merit badges earned.

Summer Camp at JN Webster is on!! The camp has been busy putting protocols and safety measures in place for the boys to return. This is very exciting, as camp engages the scouts in many activities as well as promoting independence.

Lastly, we would like to congratulate the Boy Scouts' newest Eagle Scout, Jake Neddeau.

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



## NORTH STONINGTON EDUCATION FOUNDATION

One year ago this month I sat with my family at our kitchen table and explained that we would shelter-in-place for two weeks to do our part to “flatten the curve”. Now, a year later, there seems to be a slight flicker of light at the end of the tunnel. I hope that life as we knew it reappears and we can learn from our experiences over the past year, and appreciate things in a whole new light.



Our popular Trivia Contest was held via ZOOM in February. It turned out to be a fun and entertaining way to spend a Friday night in quarantine. The winning team was the “Stable Geniuses” and in second place “Stuck in Middle School”. Thank you all for participating and supporting our organization.

This spring we will host two new events in Town. On April 24<sup>th</sup>, we will have our first annual NSEF Disc Golf Scramble at the Chikumbuso Disc Golf Course, 350B Cossaduck Hill Road. Teams will be made up of 3-6 players, at a cost of \$15/player. Face masks will be required. On May 22<sup>nd</sup> we will have a Family Drive-in Movie at the Grange. The cost will be \$20/vehicle and there will be Covid-friendly snacks available for purchase.

Finally, on May 29<sup>th</sup> we will hold our annual 5k road race. Unfortunately, due to the uncertain nature of Covid at this point, we are planning to hold the race virtually. Details to follow, but make sure to mark the date on your calendars.

As I have said many times before, we are lucky to live in such a small, supportive community. Stay safe, North Stonington.

CHRISTOPHER P. ANDERSON 860-608-4549

[cpa@andersontriallawyers.com](mailto:cpa@andersontriallawyers.com)

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## WHEELER HIGH SCHOOL/MIDDLE SCHOOL

It has been so nice to have our students back in full these past few weeks at Wheeler. This last year has certainly been challenging, but our Wheeler staff, students and families rose and met that challenge! We continue to practice social distancing and we are seeing more students return to school each day. We are at about 85% capacity right now and we are hopeful, with the latest news, that we will be able to host many of our end-of-the-year events in typical Wheeler fashion.

Wheeler inducted its newest members into the National Honor Society and we are wrapping up our high school winter sport programs. Spring sports are underway and look to return to a more normal feel, with spectators being permitted at games! In the upcoming weeks, middle school and high school students will take their annual standardized tests – SAT, SBAC, NGSS and AP to name a few. Now more than ever, our school will use this data to begin supporting students who may need the academic support. We worked very hard at Wheeler to maintain our curriculum through the pandemic. We streamed live EVERY day and many of our staff are reporting that they are aligned to where they typically are this time in the school year. Hats off to our seniors who have been nothing but understanding of the impact this has had on their senior year. We look forward to celebrating them these last few months of school!



KRISTEN ST. GERMAIN, PRINCIPAL

## SPRING HAPPENINGS

- ★ Saturday, April 3<sup>rd</sup> at 1:00pm: 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Easter Bunny Parade. Find route information on the North Stonington Recreation Facebook page.
- ★ Saturday, April 17<sup>th</sup>: The Rotary of the Stoningtons are holding their first-ever Disc Golf Fundraiser at Chains for Chikumbuso. For more information contact their membership chairperson at [carolu.rotary@gmail.com](mailto:carolu.rotary@gmail.com).
- ★ Week of April 19<sup>th</sup>: The NSPTO has brought their Spring tradition back this year. They will be hosting their annual Basket Raffle. More information to follow.
- ★ Saturday, April 24. 12-4:00pm: The North Stonington Education Foundation will have their first annual NSEF Disc Golf Scramble at the Chikumbuso Disc Golf Course. For more info and to register, go to [www.nsedfoundation.org](http://www.nsedfoundation.org).
- ★ Saturday, May 22<sup>nd</sup>: NSEF will host a Family Drive-In Movie at the Grange. Gates open at 6:00. Movie will start around 7:00. The cost will be \$20/vehicle and there will be Covid-19 friendly snacks available for purchase."
- ★ Saturday, May 29<sup>th</sup> NSEF Annual 5K Road Race: Due to the uncertain nature of Covid-19, the race will be held virtually. Details to follow.

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### NORTH STONINGTON RECREATION COMMISSION

Needless to say, the past year has been a difficult one for everyone and North Stonington Recreation is no exception. Many programs and activities had to be canceled, postponed, or modified due to the COVID-19 restrictions put in place by the Governor's executive orders. Although there is still much uncertainty going forward, we are optimistic that 2021 will be much better for recreational activities.

The Recreation Commission will be coordinating another Easter Bunny Parade through town on Saturday April 3<sup>rd</sup>. The parade route, with times, will be posted on our Facebook page.

There are currently several programs and activities in progress: 3 Dance classes, 2 Mountain Biking clinics, and several free Virtual Art classes. A Saturday morning Youth Tennis clinic is scheduled to start on April 10<sup>th</sup> and there are several Golf Lessons being offered in April, May, and June. It is anticipated that there will be several other offerings such as a Lady Lions Conditioning Program for girls, a First Aid & CPR class, a Babysitting class, as well as Youth Soccer and Basketball clinics. Visit our website at [www.northstoningtonrec.com](http://www.northstoningtonrec.com) for specific details about our recreation programs.



We encourage the public to get outside and take advantage of our wonderful Rocky Hollow Recreation Area where there is a pavilion to rent, a playground area for young kids, a grass field for kicking a soccer ball around, and a walking track that circles the facility. Also, there are basketball, beach volleyball, tennis, and pickleball courts available.

Don't forget to register for the popular Summer Playground Morning Camp, which will run for 7 weeks, beginning June 21<sup>st</sup> and ending August 6<sup>th</sup>. Periodically check the Recreation Facebook page for fun socially-distant challenges.

The Recreation Commission meets the first Thursday of every month and is always interested in offering new programs and activities to the community. Please forward any suggestions to the Recreation Director, Thomas Fabian, via phone 860-535-2162 or email [nsrecplay@northstoningtonct.gov](mailto:nsrecplay@northstoningtonct.gov).

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

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

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

**SPECIAL TOWN MEETING  
MONDAY, APRIL 5<sup>TH</sup> AT 6 PM  
WHEELER SCHOOL GYMNASIUM  
297 NORWICH WESTERLY ROAD**

On April 5<sup>th</sup> at 6pm a hybrid Special Town Meeting will take place. We ask for your patience, as this will be the first of its kind. Public will be encouraged to attend remotely via zoom by using the following link...

[https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_VLADRun4TIWBEycSVv\\_sgg](https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_VLADRun4TIWBEycSVv_sgg)

**Anyone attending remotely must pre-register no later than noon on April 5<sup>th</sup> so we can verify your voter eligibility.** We are asking anyone with the capability to attend remotely to do so. Each person wishing to vote must register and attend on their own electronic device, as we will be doing an electronic poll of virtual attendees on each of the questions and only one vote will be allowed per device. Remote attendees must log in using zoom.com or the zoom app on a smart device. You will be unable to "call" using zoom to attend this meeting.

For those who are unable or uncomfortable attending remotely, we will also have in-person attendance available following CDC and LedgeLight Health District guidelines. The meeting will take place at the Wheeler School Gymnasium at 297 Norwich Westerly Road, North Stonington CT 06359. A copy of the call for the Town Meeting and registration link for this meeting can be found at [www.northstoningtonct.gov](http://www.northstoningtonct.gov) on the calendar.