

# THE NORTH STONINGTON QUARTERLY

FALL 2021

## BOARD OF SELECTMEN



It is with great pleasure that your NEW Board of Selectmen begin to serve the Town of North Stonington. Our goal is to fulfill our promise of increased transparency, giving our citizens more opportunities to voice their ideas and for your town leaders to be better listeners. But actions speak louder than words. Some of our early accomplishments are as follows. Changes in the BOS Meeting Agenda allowing agenda item comments to be made while the item is being discussed by the board. A return to the Municipal Meetings schedule posted in The Day Newspaper on Sundays. Fewer “special meetings” at times that are less convenient for our citizens to attend. The formation of a Community Conversation Committee. This committee will help us set up a series of these conversations over the next couple of years as needed.

Speaking of a Community Conversation, our 1<sup>st</sup> conversation has been scheduled for Saturday, January 8<sup>th</sup> to address two issues currently in front of the Town. What do we do with the old middle/high school building? How should we spend the approximately \$1.2 million dollars that remains in our American Rescue Funds account? Both issues have been discussed in the past, but not to the level that is brought forth by a Community Conversation. Our new committee will be supplying additional information over the next few weeks.

The Board of Selectmen want to take this time to wish all the citizens of North Stonington a happy, safe, and healthy holiday season. We look forward to an exciting new year as we try to keep North Stonington, the Town we all love, while making it the best it can be.

BOB CARLSON, NICOLE PORTER, BRETT MASTROIANNI      [SELECTMEN@NORTHSTONINGTONCT.GOV](mailto:SELECTMEN@NORTHSTONINGTONCT.GOV)

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## NORTH STONINGTON EDUCATION FOUNDATION

The North Stonington Education Foundation will bring back its annual fundraising gala on the evening of February 5, 2022 at Lake of Isles (Covid permitting/final decision will be in early January/please check website). We hope to turn it up a notch this year with music from the band Sugar. Roberta McCarthy will be inducted as a Distinguished Alumni at the event.

The Foundation will also be hosting the annual Trivia Event, virtually, on March 4, 2022. Teams of 6-8 people can register to participate on Zoom. Team members do not need to be in the same location. More information will be on our website in mid-January. The Foundation would like to thank the North Stonington Community for the wonderful support you have given over the years. especially during these difficult times.

BERNARD “BING” BARTICK      [BBESAIL@AOL.COM](mailto:BBESAIL@AOL.COM)

## WHEELER HIGH SCHOOL/MIDDLE SCHOOL

'Tis the season! It was a month of giving at Wheeler! Our Wheeler Advisory program collected over \$300 in spare change to donate to our NoSto Food Pantry, along with over 400 food items! The Wheeler Music Department hosted two holiday concerts, LIVE AND IN PERSON! These are our first live performances since 2019! Our winter sports season has begun and for all in house events we are using EVENT BRITE to register participants so we can better track who is inside should we have to contact trace. Thank you for your patience in using this program but it is allowing us to stay open and in business! Our teachers are busy preparing our students for their first academic midterm assessments in January. We are excited about this initiative as it truly provides us the feedback we need to measure our students' growth in our academic expectations. We continue to work hard with our students to remind them of appropriate behavior and to assess their social and emotional needs during this difficult time and we are grateful for the community connections that help us better provide for all Wheeler students along the way. Happy Holidays to all!



KRISTEN ST. GERMAIN, PRINCIPAL

WHEELER HIGH SCHOOL/ WHEELER MIDDLE SCHOOL

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## KEEPING NORTH STONINGTON AFFORDABLE, INC.

A new law dealing with zoning has passed in the state legislature. Ct. House Bill 6107 mandates that local zoning boards rewrite their minimum lot sizes and other regulations that restrict housing development. Residents that have existing homes find that their housing value has risen and the demand for their house is high. This feels good. However, given these high home values, their grown children cannot afford home ownership or rent and must find homes elsewhere, disrupting families and community. Movement into town is restricted to those who have the income to afford the high prices, limiting diversity and the vitality it brings. Our new schools suffer from limited enrollment.

What's good about reducing lot sizes?

- Protects the environment: Building homes closer together reduces our consumption of resources and the climate risks of urban sprawl and deforestation. As more homes are built on large lot sizes, it forces the town to expand into more forestland and farmland. We have lost 13.3 acres a day over the last 25 years to sprawl in Ct.
- Creates housing options: Diverse lot sizes allow builders to meet the needs of seniors, young people and families while enriching a town's appearance.
- Reduces housing costs: Smaller lot sizes mean more affordable options for owning or renting.

We need to support zoning change in North Stonington!!!!

MARY ANN RICKER    PRESIDENT

## WHEELER LIBRARY



Beginning January 13th and continuing each Thursday from 10-1, a representative from the Pawcatuck Neighborhood Center (PNC) will be at the library to provide information and assistance with social service questions that include inquiries regarding utilities, housing and heating assistance, SNAP benefits, the PNC's food pantry, senior center, meals on wheels, community garden and volunteer opportunities. The Senior Center offers community meals, holiday parties, trips, exercise, art and writing classes. Stop by or make an appointment.

Wheeler Library will hold a *Craft Supply Swap* Tuesday, January 18th - Saturday, January 22nd during library hours. We will collect supplies between January 10th and January 18th. Please direct questions to Carol Denick at [caroldenick@gmail.com](mailto:caroldenick@gmail.com).

Visit us during our new hours starting January 2, 2022. We have extended our hours to 5pm (10-5) Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday, while continuing Wednesdays from 10-6 and Saturdays 10-1. Visit us in person to access our new additions to both adult and children's collections or try our new easy to use online system. If you are not already on our email list, please sign up so you don't miss news and upcoming programs and events.

We are always adding something new to our offerings. We look forward to seeing you soon.

AMY KENNEDY, DIRECTOR      860-535-0383

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## NORTH STONINGTON RECREATION COMMISSION

The North Stonington Recreation Commission would like to remind everyone of the following winter programs being offered:

- **Indoor Youth Tennis Clinics:** Co-ed ages 7 thru 17 on Saturday mornings (January 8th to February 12th) at the Mystic Indoor Sports complex.
- **Dance:** Three (3) ongoing dance programs after-school on Tuesdays & Thursdays
- **Spirit Moves Yoga & Pilates:** For adults only, Yoga on Wednesday evenings starting January 12th and Pilates on Thursday mornings starting January 13th (both 7 weeks)
- **Kids Valentines Family Paint Night:** Saturday February 5th (6:00pm to 7:30pm)
- **NoSto Family Skate Nights:** Sunday January 16th & Sunday February 27th (5:30 – 7:30pm)

If you have any ideas for programs or activities that you might be interested in coordinating or instructing, please feel free to contact North Stonington Recreation via email: [nsrecplay@northstoningtonct.gov](mailto:nsrecplay@northstoningtonct.gov) or telephone 860.535.2162. For more information and/or to register please visit our recreation website [www.northstoningtonrec.com](http://www.northstoningtonrec.com)

THOMAS FABIAN

NORTH STONINGTON RECREATION DIRECTOR



# NORTH STONINGTON CITIZENS LAND ALLIANCE

## A Small Land Alliance Essay

We are so lucky to live in North Stonington. It is our place of familiarity and closeness in this time of both earthly and human unevenness. This is the time to hug our favorite tree.

This is the time to kiss the earth, to notice the sky's breadth and width, to take in a woodland's quietness, to walk a hilly path. We are so lucky to live in North Stonington.

It is our place to take care of. We attend to our gardens and yards and fields, we care for our children and our animals, and we work for the natural world around us with great hope.

MADELINE JEFFERY      PO BOX 327      LANDALLIANCEINC@GMAIL.COM      1-860-599-5517

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## CONSERVATION COMMISSION

It was a long time in the planning stages but the “Quad-Town Kayak & Canoe Trail” opened last October with 31 paddlers and 10 additional supportive towns people attending the opening. Dignitaries from Stonington, Westerly, Hopkinton and our own Mike Urgo and Bob Carlson attended with considerable press coverage in The Sun and The Day. If you enjoy a paddle and haven’t done this stretch, it’s beautiful. You’d think you were in the wilderness of Maine.

Our new initiative for young and older folks alike is a series of bike trails both on our less travelled roads and through the woods and forests. Not motorized, but road, hybrid off-road and mountain bike trails. We need more activities for our young people and are looking for an area on our town owned property for some frisbee golf stanchions; maybe 4-5 to start.

With the Historic Hiking Trail through town center and around through Hewitt Farm completed, we have taken school groups studying history down Main Street. All our trail maps are available on the town’s web site and hard copies at the library and town hall.

For a decade we have produced a Community Calendar. There are a few left at the library, brewery, or town hall. The 2022 calendar highlights a dozen local farms, their animals or produce and their owners.

BILL RICKER, CHAIRMAN



# NORTH STONINGTON AGRICULTURAL FAIR

Merry Christmas!! As we move in to 2022, the fair committee will resume meetings in January and we encourage anyone with interest to attend our meetings and share your ideas, knowledge, etc.

The committee meets on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday of each month at the Grange Hall (7pm). Distributions from the profits made in 2021 have been made to the Grange, Fire Company, Ambulance, Boy Scouts, Fire Police, Church Youth Group, and Lions Club.



These organizations/groups play a vital role in making the Fair a success. Throughout the spring there will be several upgrades and maintenance projects done on the grounds.

We wish each of you a Happy & Healthy New Year.... Mark your calendars for July 14, 15, 16 & 17, 2022!! We hope to see you there!

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

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## EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

Hello, everyone! I hope you are all doing well.

Well, hurricane season was “officially” over on 30 November. Once again, North Stonington got very lucky and averted direct storm impacts. But, the weather across the country, increasingly grows more unpredictable, as you’ve seen.

Weather forecasts, in general, are estimated to be somewhat “less” severe in intensity, but greater in the number of occurrences. Remember, that even a tropical or wind event can cause us serious problems. Everyone should always stay prepared, for whatever weather event is thrown our way; winter is officially here. Please stay prepared!

COVID is still upon us, with an alarming rapid increase. From everything I’m briefed on and researching, I would encourage everyone to get their vaccines and a booster. It’s the best alternative we have, right now. Don’t let your guard down.

I’ve been attending webinar briefings and zoom meetings from Eversource and from the Michigan State law enforcement agencies and school superintendents, regarding the recent school shootings. I’m confident that our local public services and school staff are well prepared, in the unfortunate event that we have an occurrence here.

I would like to tell everyone, that North Stonington’s town and first responders remain committed, 24/7, to ensuring that issues in our community are dealt with, as expeditiously as possible. All members of North Stonington’s team are personally dedicated to our town residents. We’re here for you.

Stay safe, everyone. Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays!!

GARY BARON      DIRECTOR EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT      24/7      CELL: 860-912-0004

## LAND USE DEVELOPMENT

Hello North Stonington. It is my privilege to help serve you and our neighbors as North Stonington's new Planning, Development and Zoning Official. Since starting my work here at Town Hall in early September it has been a wonderful beginning.

Are you ready to jump in and help envision what tomorrow brings? North Stonington's Plan of Conservation and Development is nearing ten years old and must be updated. The Planning and Zoning Commission will begin planning the POCD plan update over the next months. Town wide engagement, through surveys, neighborhood and community conversations, and the like will be key elements of building a focused, visionary plan. Our efforts will define our Town's roadmap for the next ten years and everyone's voice is welcome at the table.

Starting in the late spring and summer of 2022, the Planning and Zoning Commission invites you and the entire Town to participate in charting the course for our community. Look for the conversation to begin this winter and spring.

Read the 2013 Plan of Conservation and Development online at: <https://www.northstoningtonct.gov/land-use-department>.

Permitting has remained brisk within the land use department. Projects big and small continue moving forward and permit approval continues at a quick pace. Building activity remains stable with year-over-year permit numbers remaining.

Large scale Solar Projects impacted Building Permit revenue and total construction costs last year. Three permits issued last year for two major solar installations skewed the revenue numbers greatly. The two arrays equaled \$14.7 million in construction costs and \$140,000 in permit fees. Thus, the year over year total permit fees are projected to drop significantly. Permit dollar values have reduced the total number of permits being approved as remains robust.

	Square Feet	Construction Cost	Total Building Fees	Total Land Use Fees
FY 22 YTD	162,777.00	\$4,234,671.85	\$40,716.20	\$7,190.00
FY 21 Total – No Solar	464,025.00	\$14,681,625.58	\$126,778.22	\$15,903.00
FY 21 - Large Solar Permits		\$15,168,873.30	\$140,096.26	

NATHAN REICHERT

PLANNING, DEVELOPMENT AND ZONING OFFICIAL  
860-535-2877 EXT 127



**AVALONIA LAND CONSERVANCY.**



- Sound Finances
- Ethical Conduct
- Responsible Governance
- Lasting Stewardship

Winter is a great time to hike in the woods and enjoy the preserves, with longer views and maybe some bright snow. The newest preserve, Sheets Forest Preserve, is 87 beautiful acres on Puttker Road. A trail system will be established soon, but there are other trails that you can find on the website [Avalonia.org](http://Avalonia.org). There you can find trail descriptions and maps and more. Check out the activities Hide & Seek for families. This member driven organization is interested in you. Membership information is on the website or contact Pat Turner [jmt.pst@gmail.com](mailto:jmt.pst@gmail.com). Looking to participate in a work party?

CONTACT PAT TURNER OR TOBY GLAZA

[TBLAZA@AVALONIALC.ORG](mailto:TBLAZA@AVALONIALC.ORG)

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## **NORTH STONINGTON LIONS CLUB**

The North Stonington Lions have had a busy fall. In October we participated in the town wide yard sale, selling treasures donated by our members. We were also able to sell some beautiful Delilahs grown by the Morrone's that survived the rough growing season that forced us to cancel our popular Delilah Day event this year. It was a successful day with many happy customers. In November we hosted a pancake breakfast which was enjoyed by many North Stonington residents. It was so nice to see so many familiar faces chatting and enjoying breakfast together. Thank you to all those who supported both our fundraisers.

We are so glad to be able to gather once again for our monthly dinner meetings. At our November meeting, we invited our Resident State Trooper Jason McCarthy to do a presentation on Identity Theft and Scams. We were amazed by all the ways people are taken advantage of financially and we left that night with many great tips and valuable information.

The Lions continue to support the Pawcatuck Neighborhood Center by helping at the food pantry distributing and delivering Thanksgiving and Christmas meals to families in need. Our members also volunteer at the New London Community Meals serving meals once a month as well as supporting our many Lions charities.

We are always looking for new members and would be happy to have more North Stonington residents attend a dinner meeting and see what we are all about. If you are interested in supporting some organizations in our community and others, as well as making new friends, please contact Terry Byassee at 860-535-4380. We would love to have you join us.

In closing, we would like to wish our fellow residents a Very Happy Holiday season and a Happy and Healthy New Year. We look forward to hosting a couple of dinners soon to get some of you out and beat those winter blues. We will keep you posted!

TERRY BYASSEE, PRESIDENT

860-535-4380



## NORTH STONINGTON GARDEN CLUB

The Monarch Butterfly Conservation Project has completed its three-year goals, but the Garden Club will continue to educate its members and the community about the importance of protecting and nurturing pollinators, encouraging them to provide plants for the monarchs as well as other pollinators on their individual properties. Because of increased awareness and interest from this three-year project, we are continuing to broaden our scope in 2022 by providing habitats through the North Stonington Pollinator Pathway Initiative.



Our goal is to expand interest by encouraging residents to participate in the Pollinator Pathway Initiative even if their properties lie beyond or are contiguous to the properties designated for the pathway. We are also encouraging the planting of native plants in the town's public areas to facilitate the breeding and nurturing of our indigenous pollinators. Areas of interest include a Children's Garden at Wheeler Library, a pollinator friendly garden at the Congregational Church, a garden at the Village Green, the town parking lot, and lastly, at the newly FGCCT award-winning Monarch friendly garden at the fairgrounds.

Residents, if you are interested, please feel free to contact us at [www.nsgardenclub.org](http://www.nsgardenclub.org)

MARY ANN BUCKLEY

COMMUNITY EDUCATION

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## ASSESSOR'S OFFICE

Wishing everyone a Very Happy New Year.

The Assessor's Office is in the process of completing the 2022 Grand List. Real Estate permits are being processed, automobiles are being priced, and personal property accounts are being updated.

Property owners who wish to appeal their assessments can, beginning on February 1<sup>st</sup> 2022, file with the Board of Assessment Appeals an application for an appointment to be heard. All applications must be received by the Board of Assessment Appeals before February 20<sup>th</sup>. Depending on the number of appeals which will govern the time and date, an appointment will be sent to everyone who wishes to be heard by the Board. Appointments will begin in March 2022.

The Connecticut Homeowners Program has released the income guidelines for 2022. To qualify, you or your spouse, must be 65 years old on January 1, 2022 or receiving social security disability and have a maximum income for a married couple of \$46,400 and for a single person \$38,100. The program begins on February 1, 2022. Income is defined as social security, pensions, interest, dividends, and any gaming winnings. A copy of the IRS forms and a copy of the Social Security Statement(s) are required.

Lastly, if you have sold, junked, and/or traded an automobile, please submit the proof to the Assessor's Office. Submit proof to [Assessor@NORTHSTONINGTONCT.GOV](mailto:Assessor@NORTHSTONINGTONCT.GOV).

DARRYL L. DEL GROSSO, ASSESSOR  
CECILE MCGRATH, ASSESSOR'S ASSISTANT

PHONE NUMBER 860 535 2877 X 123  
PHONE NUMBER 860 535 2877 X 124



# NORTH STONINGTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The Historical Society has been acting quietly while all of our public presentations have been on hold these many months. Look for updates. The new parking area up the hill behind the dye house is ready for use. The Morgan A Steward Genealogical Library, housed in the Stephen Main Homestead, is now open on Tuesdays from 2 – 4 PM. If you have any questions, contact Gladys Chase, 860-599-03608.



Have you unearthed an old article or story that you would like to share? Our newsletter editor Robin Rice would love to hear from you at [denishawnr@gmail.com](mailto:denishawnr@gmail.com). We welcome all of you. If you are interested in membership or if you would like a sample newsletter, contact us.



The Society is looking for current or new members to help with and/or to be the editor of our NSHS newsletter, which consists of eight issues published from September to June each year. Those interested may contact Robin Rice or Tobias Goodman.

ROBIN RICE    [DENISHAWN@GMAIL.COM](mailto:DENISHAWN@GMAIL.COM)

TOBIAS GOODMAN    [69NOYWK@GMAIL.COM](mailto:69NOYWK@GMAIL.COM)

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## THE NORTH STONINGTON BOARD OF EDUCATION

I am hoping the holidays have been a time of rest and relaxation and an opportunity to reconnect with loved ones and friends. While the COVID fight is ongoing, the BOE and school district continues to evaluate our processes to address the illness while keeping as many students in school as possible. We have implemented the Screen to Stay program and will be putting the Test to Stay program in place effective January 3. A special thank you to our nurses who have put in endless hours developing guidelines and contact tracing when needed.

The Board of Education has been focusing on our Superintendent search in the last few months. We have gained a lot of insight of what the community is looking for in this important leader from surveys and various focus groups. We are planning to approve our leadership profile in the upcoming weeks and will discuss this in our January BOE meeting. The BOE is changing our meeting schedule and we will be meeting the 2nd Wednesday of each month for our regular business meeting and will be changing our second meeting of the month into a workshop.

We will be having a lot of staff changes in the new year. To name a few...Sue Costa has recently announced her retirement. She has made such an impact on our Special Education program and has changed the lives of so many students with her compassion and focus on learning models for all students. Roberta McCarthy is retiring at the end of the year; she has been a staple in our district and we will be forever grateful for all of her hard work and dedication to the North Stonington School district. Mr. Nero will also be retiring at the end of the year and in his 10 years he has been a part of so many milestones for our district. With all of this change also comes opportunity and we are always looking for ways to re-evaluate and address staffing needs with student success and budget being our top priority. Budget work is ongoing and will be starting the work on the next budget soon after the first of the year. As always, we welcome your participation and input at our meetings. Have a safe and happy 2022!

CHRISTINE WAGNER

BOARD OF EDUCATION CHAIR

## TAX COLLECTOR

As a reminder the second half installment of tax bills are due in January. The last day to pay without interest is February 1, 2022. 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, 2020, and August 31, 2021, are in the mail. Said taxes will be due in full on January 1, 2022. 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.

Please note the Tax Collector now maintains the following hours at the New Town Hall: Monday- Friday, 8:00 A.M. to 1:00 P.M.

DONNA L. SPELMAN    860-535-2877 EXT. 120    [TAXCOLLECTOR@NORTHSTONINGTONCT.GOV](mailto:TAXCOLLECTOR@NORTHSTONINGTONCT.GOV)

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## NORTH STONINGTON CEMETERY COMMISSION

On November 21, 2021, Preservation Connecticut, Rediscovering History, and our Commission, held a tour of the Brown-Randall Cemetery to showcase the restoration efforts so far attempted. Approximately thirty people from all over Connecticut took part. Our deepest thanks to Michael Carroll's group for their hard work! The job is not done, and we will pick it up next Spring.

Identifying signs have been placed at many of our cemeteries, especially those where veterans are interred. This has been the work of David Fede, whose idea has been brought to fruition through his diligence.

We continue to be indebted to those individuals who, on a volunteer basis, care for the many burial grounds around town. To the prior lists, I would like to add the name of Mr. Lou Steinbrecher, who has maintained the Hewitt Cemetery for over ten years! Our deepest gratitude to Mr. Steinbrecher, and all who continue to do this sacred duty.



The Commission does not hold regularly scheduled meetings, but we notify the Town prior to any which become necessary. The Town then posts such meetings for public awareness.

We wish all a wonderful Holiday Season!

DIANE PRESTON    860-599-1832/860-961-2580

## TOWN CLERK'S OFFICE

Happy New Year 2022! We made it through 2021 adapting to our lives while continuing to deal with the COVID-19 pandemic. The Town Clerk's Office still continues to operate with "business as usual" while also keeping in mind the safety of everyone coming to the office. The use of the Town Hall drop box, the election official ballot drop box, and the Tax Office window will continue to be available for the safety and convenience of the public.

- ◆ Birth, marriage, and death certificates are filed in the office. If you plan on being married in North Stonington, a marriage license must be obtained from the Town Clerk's Office.
- ◆ The recording and indexing of land records are an important part of the Town Clerk's job. If you need to access the land records, you may come to the office or go to the Town website [www.northstoningtonct.gov](http://www.northstoningtonct.gov) -- on the homepage look for "Quick Access" and then click on "Town Land Records."
- ◆ The Town Clerk issues hunting, fishing, and trapping licenses, which can also be purchased online at [www.ct.gov/deep/hunting](http://www.ct.gov/deep/hunting). Dog licenses are issued in the office and dog license renewals occur during the month of June.
- ◆ The office handles absentee ballots for all elections, primaries, and referendums. This year State and Federal offices will be on the November 8, 2022 election ballot. Please contact the office with any questions regarding absentee ballots and elections.

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. 121 or e-mail [townclerk@northstoningtonct.gov](mailto:townclerk@northstoningtonct.gov).

ANTOINETTE PANCARO, MMC, MCTC, CCMO

TOWN CLERK

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## PAWCATUCK NEIGHBORHOOD CENTER



A Pawcatuck Neighborhood Center representative will be at the Wheeler Library every Thursday from 10:00 to 1:00, beginning January 13<sup>th</sup>. Stop by to learn about its services: Volunteer opportunities, assistance with utilities and heating bills, transportation, meals on wheels, food assistance, SNAP benefits, keeping babies warm and well with diapers and formula and the PNC Pet Shoppe.

North Stonington residents, over age 54 are eligible to receive free, door-to-door transportation to the PNC to attend exercise, art and writing classes, shop the thrift store, eat a delicious lunch, use the food pantry or volunteer in one of our programs.

If you are unable to stop by the library, but are interested in learning about ways that you can become part of the Neighborhood Center, contact Susan Sedensky, Executive Director at [susan@thepnc.org](mailto:susan@thepnc.org) or call (860) 599 – 3285, ext. 101.

SUSAN SEDENSKY, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



## BOARD OF FINANCE

On behalf of the newly elected Board of Finance I'd like to say thank you for bringing together what I hope will be a great team! At our first meeting we elected the following officers: Paul Simonds – Chair, Mike Anderson - Vice-Chair, Amy Friend - Secretary (Alternate). The other contributors on the board are Dan Smith, Sarah Nelson, Gary Annino, Carl Johnston and Winona Berdine (Alternate).

We are immediately commencing our work toward building a budget that will satisfy our needs from an operational and capital perspective but will do so in a fiscally responsible manner. Departments are being asked to prepare their proposed budgets and will present early in the 1st quarter of 2022. We look forward to hearing what the various town departments will need to operate safely and bring value to North Stonington.

The public is invited to the Board of Finance meetings which are held on Wednesday evenings at 7:00 pm. Please check the calendar dates for these meetings on the Town's website <https://www.northstoningtonct.gov/board-finance>. As we continue functioning in the pandemic environment, the Board of Finance meetings are anticipated to be available in a hybrid format but also for viewing on YouTube.

PAUL SIMONDS      CHAIRMAN BOARD OF FINANCE

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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, 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., but we have managed to give out Dictionaries to 3<sup>rd</sup> graders again, help families with Thanksgiving meals, and adopt Christmas families. We are meeting, observing Covid-safe rules. Santa did manage to come this year, after our program reminding us that “Yes, Virginia, there is a Santa Claus...he'll be here 10 times 10,000 years!”

Winter is always a bit slower, and we do have programs scheduled. Jan 14<sup>th</sup> is “Surprise”, hosted by the Agriculture Committee; Feb 11 is “Valentines”, hosted by Nancy Weissmuller; March returns to two meetings a month, with the 11<sup>th</sup> being a great day for you to come see what we are all about, with our “Ritual Program”, and the 25<sup>th</sup> will be (we hope!) our award-winning Lecturer's contest entry!

**You are welcome to join us at any time.** With Covid in mind, for the latest on meeting status please contact Lecturer Sue Pianka at 860-599-4528 or Secretary Nancy Weissmuller at 860-535-2703.

We look forward to meeting you when you are comfortable. Meanwhile, wear your masks, limit your gatherings, maintain your distance when you do go out, and get a vaccination and/or booster just as soon as you are able.

The Grange has one additional concern: While we often allow others to use the Grange building and property, those wanting to use the buildings or property must request permission, and insurance is required. Some of the buildings need permission from the N.S. Agricultural Fair. Please contact Fair President Mike Riley or Grange President Robert should you wish to hold a function at the property here.

SUE PIANKA, PROGRAM DIRECTOR



## BOY SCOUTS TROOP 71

Happy Holidays from Troop 71! Thank you to those who donated to the annual Scouting for Food drive! We collected over 1,000 items for the Pawcatuck Neighborhood Center. The troop had their annual Thanksgiving Feast on the farm, and it did not disappoint! Delicious food was cooked by the Scouts over campfires in the woods!

We had a wonderful turnout and could not do it without the support of all the volunteers. At the feast, the troop said farewell to Scoutmaster Doug Spracklin, and welcomed our new Scoutmaster Ramsey Allen to the troop. We will miss Doug's leadership and guidance, and hope he enjoys some well-deserved time off. We are all excited to see what 2022 will bring to Troop 71! In the new year, there will be a skiing/snowboarding campout in Northern New England. In January we are also looking forward to the Eagle Scout Court of Honor for Jake Neddeau and Magnus Smith. Troop 71 spends a lot of time planning fun, exciting outings such as camping, hiking, and geocaching.



For more information on what Scouting has to offer, please reach out to Ramsey Allen at [mmpadi3d@gmail.com](mailto:mmpadi3d@gmail.com).

JENN RICHTER      COMMITTEE MEMBER

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## NORTH STONINGTON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Season's Greetings to all our North Stonington Families! It's hard to believe we are already in our second trimester and that the holidays are right around the corner! As we continue with our 21-22 school year, we still are faced with the challenges of COVID, but we are feeling like brighter days are ahead. Since our last Quarterly we now have an approved vaccine for your students! This should really help to not only protect our children but to also shield them from the need to miss school due to quarantine. We've also had a new Screen and Stay option put in place thanks to our Board of Education. With this program, close contacts within school, besides the cafeteria, are allowed to be screened at home each morning and come to school if no symptoms. This is great news! It is not perfect, but it is going to help as we adapt to keep living with this virus as part of our daily lives.

Our school has had some wonderful things going on these past couple months. Our PTO organized a fundraiser and many families and residents from North Stonington participated. We were able to have our first chorus concert in 2 years! It was a small group, but it was so nice to see the students showing off their talents with family member able to participate in-person. Our district also took part in Pajama Day for Connecticut Children's Foundation for children with cancer. This was a statewide initiative and our district raised over \$600 to donate! Thank you, North Stonington, for your continued support of our schools! We wish everyone a wonderful holiday and great New Year!

ROBERT CILLINI      PRINCIPAL

## NORTH STONINGTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

The New Year begins the budgetary season. Since September, Central Administration has busy been working to develop the fiscal year 2022-2023 budget. Our Business Manager, Mrs. Deb Martin, has been formulating anticipated expenditures and evaluating historical data and contracts in regard to personnel and our vendors. Of course, when building a budget, it is always difficult to predict the exact costs of doing business when you are predicting out sometimes a year or more into the future. The Superintendent's budget will be presented to the Board of Education in January. Once presented, a series of budget hearings will be scheduled as the BOE will deliberate over it as they have the final authority in approving the budget. Once approved, it becomes the Board of Education budget which will be presented to the Board of Finance.

The winter, while always challenging in terms of weather, is also very busy with activity at our schools from early mornings through the evenings. The elementary and middle/high schools are busy rehearsing with their respective drama clubs and will have their productions in early spring. The gymnasium will have its usual activity with boys' and girls' middle/high school basketball.

Wishing everyone a happy and healthy New Year!

PETER NERO      SUPERINTENDANT

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## NORTH STONINGTON PARENT TEACHER ORGANIZATION



Well, a chill is in the air, but we feel fortunate to be entering the season with so many heartwarming experiences! The two standouts had to be participating in the Halloween Light Parade and bringing back our Fall Fest.

We had so much fun seeing teachers, staff, students, and families along the route at the Halloween Light Parade. Our "Lego Lion" was meant to be symbolic of the fact that the PTO is "built" on volunteers.

Speaking of volunteers, our Fall Fest was a fantastic night for all who attended! Thank you to all who helped make the night a memorable one! Special thanks to the parents who volunteered for the very first time! Wheeler teachers and students ROCKED it with their concessions, games, crafts, and face-

painting. Parks and Recreation brought back a tradition with their Egg Hunt. Families decorated cars for Trunk or Treat. Brett and Stephanie Mastroianni provided hayrides. Jake's Restaurant donated to help fund the event. The town donated use of their light tower. The group effort was monumental, and we are so appreciative! AND... we collected over 350 non-perishable food items for our Food Pantry with the "Fall Fest Fill the Flatbed"!

Watch school emails (and our Facebook page) for more information about meetings, plans, and upcoming events. Warm wishes to all for a happy, healthy, holiday season!

DAWN GORALEWICZ, PRESIDENT      PRESIDENT@NORTHSTONINGTONPTO.COM



# HEWITT FARM

The Hewitt Farm with its open space continues to draw folks. The clean air and the many trails are very popular, and we are very glad to see visitors of all ages!

We continue to work with Lothrop Associates on the John Dean Gallup House. Two SHPO grants have been awarded, documentation is being prepared for a third opportunity which has a matching grant \$20,000/\$20,000.

The fence at the house has been restored by Bill Ricker, Dick Seager and Ed Harasimowitz and significantly improves the curb appeal of the house. The committee is hopeful to find a suitable use and/or tenant. In addition, the Selectmen suggested we pursue removal of the cabin at the Route 2 parking area.

Hewitt Farm is open daily from dawn to dusk. 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 the parking area trailheads.

ED HARASIMOWITZ    CHAIRMAN    860-245-5305



**Town of North Stonington  
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North Stonington, CT 06359**

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**\*HAPPY 2022 FROM NITA KINCAID, LISA MAZZELLA AND NSQ\***

## **JOIN US FOR A COMMUNITY CONVERSATION**

**Saturday, January 8, 2022**

Participants may choose to register for a single session or for both sessions.  
Light refreshments and lunch will be served.

**SESSION ONE TOPIC:** 298 Norwich-Westerly/NS Education Center, 9am. Registration: 8:45

**SESSION TWO TOPIC:** American Rescue Plan Act Funds, 12pm. Registration: 11:45

### **HOW TO REGISTER**

Online at [northstoningtoncommunityconversations.com](https://northstoningtoncommunityconversations.com)

By phone at 401-263-8586

Or visit the Town Hall for in-person registrations

**There will be optional building tours from 8:00-8:45 am.**

For more information, please visit our website at  
[northstoningtoncommunityconversations.com](https://northstoningtoncommunityconversations.com).