

# THE NORTH STONINGTON QUARTERLY

## 10<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY EDITION - FALL 2023

### BOARD OF SELECTMEN



On November 7<sup>th</sup> cities and towns across Connecticut will be going to the polls to elect their municipal leaders. In some towns, this could mean close contests. That will not be the case in North Stonington. The three Selectmen in our town are running unopposed. I hope the reason for that is because you think we are doing a good job, and not that no one else wants to run for our positions. Since we took office in 2021, we have tried our best to be available when needed and become good at listening to the taxpayers. We have always had the town's best interest at heart while never pushing individual agendas.

Knowing that we will not have to campaign allows the Board to concentrate on continuing to work on the initiatives that we started as well as positioning the Town for the future. One area that we believe needs improvement is the identification of possible grant opportunities. When we can use grant money rather than tax money from our residents, we can do wonderful things while not negatively affecting our annual budget. Most recently we were able to finish the resurfacing of three roads in Kingswood and a parking lot at our elementary school; all because of a STEAP Grant. We recently applied for a new STEAP Grant which would allow the Town to put a new roof on the Education Center's two-story wing and install irrigation on the schools' sports fields.

Thank you to all those that came to the Community Conversation held on September 9<sup>th</sup>. This was held to get input from our residents for our Plan of Conservation and Development as well as to listen to suggestions for the repurposing of the property where we recently demolished the old middle school. The Selectmen believe that Community Conversation format is a wonderful way to engage with Town residents. We hope to have more of these in the future when important issues arise.



BOB CARLSON, NICOLE PORTER, BRETT MASTROIANNI    [selectmen@northstoningtonct.gov](mailto:selectmen@northstoningtonct.gov)

## ASSESSOR'S OFFICE

**Personal Property Declarations** will be mailed out in early October 2023, and the form must be returned before November 1<sup>st</sup>. Applications for exemptions on farm buildings and farm machinery must also be filed before the deadline or you will lose the exemption.

If you need help, the office will assist you in completing the forms. Remember there is a 25% penalty for failure to file so it is very important to return your personal property declaration.

If you have closed your business and received a personal property declaration, you must complete the section regarding the closure of your business. If you do not, we will assume that you are in business.

**Farm and Forestry Exemptions:** Applications for new farm and forestry land must be completed between September 1<sup>st</sup> and October 31<sup>st</sup>, 2023. The Assessor's Office has the necessary paperwork. Forestry applications must be completed by a Connecticut forester.

**Active-Duty Members of the Military**, here on military orders, must complete the Soldiers and Sailors Application to receive an exemption on their motor vehicles. Residents of Connecticut in the military also qualify for an exemption on their motor vehicle as well as a veteran's exemption. You must file with the Assessor's Office.

DARRYL L. DEL GROSSO, CCMA II ASSESSOR

860-535-2877 ext. 23 or 24

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## BOARD OF FINANCE

Hello North Stonington Taxpayers.

Summer has come to a close, school is back in session, and your Board of Finance is ready to begin with a full meeting schedule to manage the finances of the town. We'll start with working with the Board of Selectmen to understand the budgetary impacts of the newly created, but not yet vetted, 5, 10, 20-year capital purchase wish list.

The goal of this initiative is to determine what responsible, annual funding would look like to support capital equipment purchases. Funding capital at a "fixed" amount will eliminate having peaks and valleys in funding which creates uncertainty to the wallet of the taxpayer.

We expect the capital portion of the budget to be in-place prior to working on our operational portion. Hope to see you at upcoming sessions to assist in the process.

I'd like to thank you all for allowing me to serve on the Board of Finance over the last six years. It's been an educational experience for me and an opportunity to make many new friends committed to service of the town.

PAUL SIMONDS     CHAIRMAN

## EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

2023 Hurricane Season is Here! Our collective focus is now on the inevitable hurricane season, which runs from June 1<sup>st</sup> through the end of November. Last year's hurricane season was like no other. It produced 30 named storms (the most on record); 12 direct strikes, and smashed the previous record of 9 strikes, during 1916. The 2023 hurricane season as forecasted by weather sources, will result in 16-20 named storms, including 7-10 hurricanes. Of the storms predicted to reach hurricane strength, 3-5 are projected to become major hurricanes (category 3 or higher). Storms that have maximum sustained winds of 111 mph or greater. This year's hurricane season is projected to be "above normal."

Stay informed; Visit our Town website at [northstoningtonct.gov](http://northstoningtonct.gov) for important preparedness information; Sign up for "CT Alert," a Connecticut communication database that automatically keeps you advised of emergency alerts, by text, email, cell phone and landline (it's free and easy!) **To register go to [www.portal.ct.gov/ctalert](http://www.portal.ct.gov/ctalert).**

PREPARE NOW!! Remember...it wasn't raining when Noah built the Arc!! Thank you and stay safe!

GARY BARON      EMERGENCY SERVICES DIRECTOR

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## TOWN CLERK

Happy 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary to the North Stonington Quarterly!

This year is flying by so quickly and the Municipal Election will soon be upon us. We will elect our Town officials and Board and Commission members on November 7<sup>th</sup>, 2023.

If you need an absentee ballot application, please check the Town website, come to the office, or contact the Town Clerk. You can also apply directly for an absentee ballot through the Connecticut Online Absentee Ballot Request Portal: <https://oabr-sots.ct.gov/>. Absentee ballots are available beginning on October 6<sup>th</sup>, up until the day before the election. Absentee ballots can be returned by mail, dropped off in the Official Ballot Drop Box, or brought in person to the Town Clerk's Office during normal business hours.



There will be in-person voting on November 7<sup>th</sup> at the North Stonington Education Center (the old Wheeler Middle-High School), 298 Norwich-Westerly Road from 6:00am until 8:00pm.

If you have any questions regarding absentee ballots or the election, please do not hesitate to contact the Town Clerk. Remember that every vote counts, and every vote is important!

The Town Clerk's Office is open Monday through Friday from 8:00am until 4:00pm, except on legal holidays.

Please call 535-2877 Ext. 121 or e-mail [townclerk@northstoningtonct.gov](mailto:townclerk@northstoningtonct.gov).

ANTOINETTE PANCARO, MMC, MCTC, CCMO

TOWN CLERK

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

The North Stonington Economic Development Commission (EDC) is busy planning the vision for economic development in North Stonington for the next 10 years. With input from community meetings which have been taking place, and advice from Juliet Hodge (who is spearheading the efforts to update the Town's Plan of Conservation and Development), the Commission is confident in providing a vision of what is possible in our community. North Stonington only has about 5.5% of its land zoned for commercial use. Couple that with the community's desire to retain the Town's rural character and it makes commercial development challenging. As a result, the Commission is looking for ways to assist present businesses through beautification efforts, and further development of the Route 2 corridor and the Exit 93 truck stop area.

Our business tri-fold planning is in the final stages, and will provide information about the businesses, restaurants, and attractions our Town has to offer. One of our newest members, Peggy Merck, has taken on this project and has done a wonderful job.

If anyone has any additional ideas about commercial development in North Stonington or wants to assist in shaping commercial development in our Town for the next 10 years, we encourage you to come to a meeting. This is possible in person or virtually on the first Monday of each month at 6:30 pm in the Media Center.

CHRISTOPHER P. ANDERSON

[canderson@northstoningtonct.gov](mailto:canderson@northstoningtonct.gov)



### KEEPING NORTH STONINGTON AFFORDABLE

KNSA is currently raising money to preserve the 1840 one room schoolhouse on Clarks Falls Road. Following a 3-year legal process to get the deed restriction of 1854 changed, this historic property was given (quit claimed) to KNSA in August 2021, by the town. That restriction stated that the property could only be used for educational purposes. As the town centralized its schools in 1957 and closed the one room schools, the need for the building ceased. The restriction on the deed remained until the State Attorney General ruled that KNSA, which was granted a 501(c)(3) charitable status by the IRS, would fulfill the charitable intent of the deed by rehabilitating the school for affordable housing. This ruling further states that, "Any net proceeds received from the sale and use of the property shall be used by the Plaintiff (the town) for educational purposes".



When KNSA was awarded the winning bid in 2018, a grant was ready to be submitted for the school's rehabilitation and new use. The septic and well had been sited and approved. Unfortunately, discovery of the deed restriction prevented the sale, and the grant could not be submitted.

Since 2021, KNSA has maintained the exterior, gutted and cleaned the interior, and searched and submitted other grants. Until we obtain funding for rehabilitation, we seek to preserve the building by replacing the sill and resetting the foundation stones. You can help preserve this historic structure by your contributions which can be made online at [www.knsainc.org](http://www.knsainc.org) or by mail: KNSA, 421A Wyassup Road.

MARY ANN RICKER

PRESIDENT



## WOOD-PAWCATUCK WILD AND SCENIC RIVERS STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL

In August, large mats of water chestnuts were discovered in Spalding Pond. This highly invasive aquatic plant was imported to the USA as an ornamental water-garden plant and has since escaped to our native watercourses. Water chestnuts form dense floating mats that can severely impact a pond's native plants and animals. One seed, if left unchecked, can result in almost 4 million plants three years later!



To prevent further damage to the pond, Wild and Scenic Rivers' members and friends spent over 30 hours removing the plants that had germinated this year. Hilaire and Kathie Cote were very supportive of our efforts and gave us permission to launch our kayaks from their property. Removing the plants involved hand-pulling the floating rosettes into our kayaks and wearing long gloves to protect us from the seed's sharp spines. Altogether we filled three small dump trucks with plants which we then composted off-site. Because seeds can remain viable in the sediment for up to 12 years, harvesting newly germinated plants every June and July will be an ongoing project for our group.

Water chestnuts thrive in quiet shallow watercourses where lily pads grow. A few plants were found in Clarks Falls Pond (USGS: Burch Pond) and removed; none were seen in Wyassup Lake, Green Falls Pond or Hewitt Farm waters. If you think you might have water chestnuts in your watercourse, please let us know. For more water chestnut information see: [extension.psu.edu/focus-on-aquatic-invasive-species-european-water-chestnut](http://extension.psu.edu/focus-on-aquatic-invasive-species-european-water-chestnut).

For more information about North Stonington's Wild and Scenic Rivers see: [wpwildrivers.org](http://wpwildrivers.org).

ELAINE CALDARONE [ecaldarone@yahoo.com](mailto:ecaldarone@yahoo.com)    MADELINE JEFFERY [mjeffery211@gmail.com](mailto:mjeffery211@gmail.com)

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## CONSERVATION COMMISSION

The Conservation Recreation chapter of the 2023 Plan of Conservation Development is completed. What a year-long task! The town wide bike trail map continues to be planned for bikers to travel several routes: their length, elevation, and level of difficulty.

We learned recently by talking to folks about our trail maps that they were unaware of our brochures. All the state, municipal and private land organization trails are identified in a brochure available on-line in the North Stonington official website and are also available as hard copy at the Town Hall and Library. The Historic Hiking Trail map through the center of town and the Kayak/Canoe Trail map along the Pawcatuck River are also available.

As you hike the trails and paddle the river, we ask you to be good stewards and bring out any trash seen along the way and report any downed trees impeding the trails. Conservation easements (CE) have taken a turn this summer with activity on one site not allowed in the deed. Landowners who wish to conserve all or a part of their property in its natural state may place that property in a CE to be protected by your wishes in perpetuity. The town is entrusted, through regular monitoring, to assuring its forever protection. Contact us to learn more.

BILL RICKER                      CHAIRMAN                      [williamricker@comcast.net](mailto:williamricker@comcast.net)



North Stonington Historical Society's October Open House is scheduled for Saturday, October 14<sup>th</sup>, 2023, 11:00am to 2:00pm. It will feature a beautiful collection of antique pottery and crocks, and you can learn how to create a Caprilands Method Wreath Base.

Outside in the Shed (dress accordingly) there will be an on-going workshop where Laurie Pepin, a long-time past employee of Caprilands Herb Farm, will be teaching how to make a wreath base in the Caprilands method. This method will help with all upcoming holiday wreath-making allowing greater control and using less materials than most methods of wreath-making. Hay and wire will be provided, and guests can take their bases home to complete decorating.

The Historical Society's Gardens and Dye House will also be open to visitors.

The North Stonington Historical Society is a non-profit 501 c-3 educational organization incorporated under the laws of the State of Connecticut. It works to promote awareness and understanding of the sociological, economic, political, cultural, and natural history of the area known as the Town of North Stonington. It encourages identification and responsible stewardship of historical sites and structures including houses, cemeteries, old roads and stone walls. It provides advice to Town government, organizations and individuals interested in historic preservation. It helped the Affordable Housing Committee in its acquisition of an old schoolhouse and helped the Town to gain recognition and maintain the recently acquired Gallup House.

PAT TURNER

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## BOY SCOUTS TROOP 71



Troop 71 is back in action for the new scouting year! We had a wonderful summer earning many merit badges at June Norcross Webster Scout Camp in Ashford, CT. Some of the Scouts also attended a High Adventure trip to Adventure Bound in Maine. They participated in whitewater rafting, rock climbing, and attended a local fair. Troop 71 recently completed a successful planning weekend. Scouts created the calendar for the upcoming scouting year, working off of a yearlong canoeing theme! They worked diligently to plan campouts, learn new skills, and serve the community. The next big event that the scouts are participating in, is MassJam in October. From October 7-9, thousands of Scouts and Venturers from Massachusetts and surrounding states will descend on Cape Cod for three days of Scouting fun, exhibits, challenging activities, competitions, entertainment, and fellowship. Weekly troop meetings are held at the Scout House on the corner of Rocky Hollow and Rt 2 Thursdays from 7:00-8:30pm.

If you are interested in Scouting, or know someone who is, please email Ramsey Allen at: [mmpadi3d@gmail.com](mailto:mmpadi3d@gmail.com)

JENN RICHTER      COMMITTEE MEMBER

## NORTH STONINGTON GARDEN CLUB

In memory of member Anna Coit, the NSGC offers a \$1,000 annual Scholarship to a high school senior pursuing a higher education in agriculture, conservation, environmental studies, horticulture, landscape design/architecture, plant science or a related field. Applicants must reside in towns from which the club draws its membership, and the application is on the Garden Club's website - [www.nsgardenclub.org/scholarship/](http://www.nsgardenclub.org/scholarship/).

Alaina Antcliff was announced as our 2023 winner of NSGC's Scholarship Award. As a student at Ledyard High School, Alaina pursued courses in the Agri-Science and Technology Program. She volunteered and served as a counselor at the Denison Pequotsepos Nature Center in Mystic and the Burton Trail. She has been active in the Future Farmers of America and plans to pursue her education at New River Community College.



### Community Education - Pollinator Pathway Project:

The Club will continue to support its Town's Pollinator Pathway Project to increase resident involvement. The Committee will provide materials/workshops at Wheeler Library for the Children's Pollinator Garden. We assist the Pollinator Gardens on Club-maintained parcels, at NS Historical Society's Stephen Main Homestead and the Congregational Church.

### Ways & Means Project:

Plant Sale: This annual event features perennial plants from our members' gardens plus annuals, shrubs, vegetables, and garden-related items and is our main source of revenue. Funds are used for community projects and educational programs. All Active and Contributing members are required to participate and contribute plants.

### Membership:

Prospective members must attend 3 meetings and/or activities within 12 months to gain membership. Members are encouraged to invite visitors to learn more about the Club. [Join Us.](#)

MARILYN MACKAY

COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE MEMBER

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## NORTH STONINGTON EDUCATION FOUNDATION



The North Stonington Education Foundation is excited to start a new year of giving. We do this to enhance education in the school system and our community by giving out major and micro grants. In the 2022/2023 fundraising year, \$11,040 was awarded for educational activities in North Stonington. A grant reception was held on September 14<sup>th</sup> to celebrate last year's recipients. Please make sure to check the NSEF website at [www.nsedfoundation.org](http://www.nsedfoundation.org) for information on how you or your community group can apply for a grant to help fund educational projects. To learn more about the types of grants that were funded last year, check out our NSEF 2023 Grant Recipient video that can be found on our Facebook page @North Stonington Education Foundation.

The Foundation would like to welcome our newest board member, Steve Weicksel. We are happy that he has joined us and look forward to his contributions. If you are interested in becoming a board member, please contact Marc Tardiff at [marctard1@yahoo.com](mailto:marctard1@yahoo.com) for more information.

LAURA STEFANSKI

BOARD MEMBER



## GIVING CLOSET

The Giving Closet has had some amazing changes these past few months! We are now located in room 131, 298 Norwich-Westerly Rd, and have a new entrance!

### A few things that are new:

- Please DO NOT enter thru the front of the building. There are students and staff in this building we do not want to interrupt. We are now accessible by entering the red door on the side of the building.
- Please use the parking lot on rte. 2, by the new daycare. The door circled is the one you will enter thru. There will be a makeshift sign on the door until we get one made.
- There is NO access to a bathroom, but we do have a water fountain accessible.



### Looking ahead:

- If you have made donations to, or are a friend of mine or Rebecca Schilke's, please continue to contact us to donate. If you are new to donating to our Giving Closet, please reach out to Robin Mickelson Piel via Facebook messenger. We are working hard to streamline how we accept our donations to lessen the workload on our volunteers and to make it easier for you. If you can bring your donations during our hours of operation, that would be most helpful.
- We are working on getting our night and weekend hours coordinated.

Thank you to all involved in making the Giving Closet a huge success. With your help, we have gifted over 7,000 items since December! More exciting news coming soon! Have a healthy and happy fall!

SARAH VAILLANCOURT, ROBIN PIELA, REBECCA SCHILKE

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## BETTER TOGETHER CT INC. FARM & SANCTUARY

At Better Together CT Inc. we aim to address the root cause of suicide and opioid epidemic in Combat Veterans, First Responders, and the community at large. (Note: We are already providing free Wellness Services to Veterans)

September is Suicide Awareness Month. If you or a family member needs help, there is hope. 988 is the Suicide Crisis LIFELINE number you can call at any time. They are available 24 hours.

The Junction @ Better Together Country Farm Store gift shop will be open with new weekend hours through the holidays. The store is run by our volunteers. Proceeds from sales benefit programs and operations at Better Together.

Thank you to our volunteers & supporters! Without your generosity with your time and financial support it would not be possible to help as many people as we have. We are truly "Better Together"!

DR STEFANA PECHER      DIRECTOR      CAROLYN HOWELL      SECRETARY



## NORTH STONINGTON LIONS CLUB



Happy Fall Everyone! And Happy 10th Anniversary to the North Stonington Quarterly. Thank you for your hard work and dedication to keeping our North Stonington residents informed of the town's organizations and activities.

The North Stonington Lions took most of the summer off with the exception of volunteering to prepare and serve meals at The New London Community Meals program. We will resume our monthly meetings in September and look forward to planning fundraisers to support various charities and disasters throughout our country and the world.

Our first event of the year will be our annual Dahlia Day and Tag Sale. We hope you will join us on Saturday October 7<sup>th</sup> at the home of Jane and Steve Morrone, on 68 Chester Maine Road. The event is from 11:00am to 3:00pm. Come and see and photograph the beautiful dahlias, explore our tag sale items, and enjoy lunch and baked goods from our food trailer.

We also hope to see you at the NSPTO Fall Festival on Friday October 27<sup>th</sup> where we will be serving hamburgers and hotdogs.

I would like to express our appreciation to all our residents who have dropped off clothes at our clothing shed. Your donations have been shared throughout our area with those in need. If you are interested in joining the North Stonington Lions Club, please contact me.

TERRY BYASSEE, PRESIDENT    twbyassee@ gmail.com 860-535-4380

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## PAWCATUCK NEIGHBORHOOD CENTER

Holiday Events and More at the PNC

The Pawcatuck Neighborhood Center will be distributing holiday turkey meals on November 20<sup>th</sup>–22<sup>nd</sup> and December 18<sup>th</sup>–22<sup>nd</sup>. Volunteers are needed to pack the boxes on Saturdays, November 18<sup>th</sup> and December 16<sup>th</sup>. Children over age 10 with parents are welcome to help. This is a wonderful opportunity to see the full scale of the PNC Food pantry. Last year 1,920 people used the food pantry, which is open to North Stonington residents on Monday through Friday, from 9:00am to 3:30pm.

Calling all Downton Abbey Fans to the Caramoor Mansion for a Yuletide inspired concert in a majestic music room, a tour of 15 authentic period rooms from Europe festooned for the holidays, and a splendid Afternoon Holiday Tea in a Venetian-style mansion. Bus departs for New York on December 13<sup>th</sup> - \$142.00 per person.

Senior lunches are available at the PNC at 11:30am on Mondays and Tuesdays, with a Speaker Series at noon on Thursday. A community breakfast is offered on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Friday of each month at 8:30 to 10:00am. No cost for North Stonington residents. Exercise classes are available for \$25.00 per quarter. Try your first class for free.

Contact [susan@thepnc.org](mailto:susan@thepnc.org) or call (860) 599-3285 ext.101

For more information or go to [www.pawcatuckneighborhoodcenter.org](http://www.pawcatuckneighborhoodcenter.org).

SUSAN SEDENSKY                      EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

## **NORTH STONINGTON AFFORDABLE HOUSING COMMITTEE**

The North Stonington Affordable Housing Committee (NSAHC) is appointed by our Board of Selectmen. We have been tracking the proceedings in Hartford that may have an effect on our town. In 1989, CT General Statute 8-30g was instituted in an attempt to increase affordable housing, by setting a goal that each municipality have 10% of their housing stock “qualified” affordable. This has been difficult for our town to achieve, and one size certainly does not fit all. Recently the state, in trying to determine the best approach to affordable housing, formed a Majority Leaders Affordable Housing Roundtable to examine the need and propose solutions to meet the need. Your AHC is following and will keep you updated.

Meanwhile, we are still promoting CHFA and USDA loans, as these loans count as qualified affordable housing for our Town without a deed restriction. Earlier this year we hosted an event to help explain the programs. If you missed it, the programs help 1st time homebuyers, or those who have not owned a home in 3 years), to possibly buy a home. Income limits vary, from 1 to 2 people - up to \$119,500; 3 or more people up to \$137,420; the ceiling price is \$481,175 according to the website. There are special rates for emergency personnel, teachers, disabled, etc.

It's worth checking out the website [www.CHFA.org](http://www.CHFA.org). The USDA site is a little more difficult to navigate but offers 0% down for qualified buyers, plus much more. Go to [www.USDA.org](http://www.USDA.org).

We have also been working to identify properties that meets the needs that of the town while maintaining the feel of our community. We welcome any input. Feel free to join us at one of our meetings or contact a member of the committee with your thoughts.

Look for updates from your North Stonington Affordable Housing Committee, on the Town website and The Quarterly. We could use a few more members, if interested, contact one of the members or the Selectmen's Office. Wishing you all a fun and safe Fall.

WILL MASON           CHAIRMAN

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## **NORTH STONINGTON COMMUNITY GRANGE #138**

In general, the North Stonington Community Grange #138 meets on the 2<sup>nd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> Fridays each month. We discuss and act upon our Grange needs, and the needs of our community. The summer finished our “Games” series of meetings with the men hosting “Battleship”.

For our new year, we have a 2-year theme based on American History. Our first September meeting was canceled due to member Covid issues. The September 22<sup>nd</sup> meeting was a combined program on Spanish exploration and the early Virginia settlements. October 14<sup>th</sup> is the “Beaver Wars”, and October 27<sup>th</sup> will be our Halloween party.

On November 11<sup>th</sup>, the program will be “Plymouth – Expansion and the Pequot War” and December 8<sup>th</sup>, will be our Christmas program. We hope to be able to carol around town to our shut-in members on December 15<sup>th</sup>.

We look forward to meeting you when you are comfortable visiting. Covid is coming back so please take appropriate measures when you do go out.

Don't forget to VOTE and have a Happy Thanksgiving and a Merry Christmas.

SUE PIANKA PROGRAM   DIRECTOR

## NORTH STONINGTON AGRICULTURAL FAIR

Thank you to all who supported the 2023 North Stonington Fair. From patrons, vendors, exhibitors, volunteers, entertainers etc... you all contributed to making the fair another very successful event. Although we were unable to open the gates on Sunday due to the heavy rain, we still fared well. Congratulations to all of our contestants and exhibitors. Our fair will be represented at the State Fair Association level with winners from the baking and quilt department.

The Fair Committee continues to meet each month and plans are already underway for 2024. We encourage you to attend a meeting and share ideas and/or feedback. Meetings are held at 7pm on the 2nd Tuesday of the month at the Grange Hall. We hope to see you there. Be sure to Like us on Facebook and Follow us on Instagram.

JODY WHIPPLE      pineneedlehomestead@sbcglobal.net      860-599-8498

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## NORTH STONINGTON HALLOWEEN LIGHT PARADE

Our annual event is coming up soon! Join us for the “Frights & Lights” block party on October 21<sup>st</sup>, beginning at 5:00pm along Main Street. I can’t believe how much this event has grown since 2020 and I intend for it to be as enjoyable for adults as it is for kids. Socialize with friends and enjoy food, music, and lots of Halloween ambiance. Costumes are welcome!

At 6:30pm, the light parade begins! I am always blown away by the incredible entries. We will visit the Meadow Wood/Kingswood neighborhood before traveling to Main Street. We are planning on having a trunk or treat for children post-parade.

We are still accepting vendors and parade participants and would love more North Stonington businesses to be involved. Last year exceeded our expectations and this year the anticipation is even higher. Join us! Email NSLightParade@gmail.com for more information. Firm deadline of 10/16. More details, including the exact parade route, a Main Street map and parking information will be available on the event Instagram & Facebook accounts - @NSLightParade. Please follow along! As always, I thank our town officials for their support and NS residents for your enthusiasm!

JEN STRUNK      EVENT ORGANIZER

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## NORTH STONINGTON RECREATION DEPARTMENT

### FALL 2023 RECREATION PROGRAMS:

- **NoSto Fall Soccer:** Co-ed youth league for ages 7 thru 14 (Sept thru November)
- **Kids Fall Soccer Academy:** Sunday mornings (8X) starts Sept 10th (for ages 3 thru 6)
- **Dance 2023/2024:** starts Tuesday Sept 19th (for ages 3 thru 13) and runs through the school year.
- **Yoga/ Pilates:** three offerings starting Sept 12th, 13th, 14th and runs for 7 weeks.
- **Youth Tennis:** Sunday morning sessions Sept 24<sup>th</sup> to October 29th
- **Adult Tennis:** Monday/ Wednesday evening sessions (6 lessons) starting week of Sept 18<sup>th</sup>.

Visit northstoningtonrec.com for specific details.

## WHEELER HIGH SCHOOL/MIDDLE SCHOOL

Although we are off to a later start this school year, it has truly been a great start to the 2023-2024 school year! Our students continue to explore community opportunities such as General Dynamic's Boat Program where they can experience hands-on apprenticeship programs. Our Materials Processing, wood shop elective class is back for our HS students! We continue to welcome more 12 Voluntown and Preston students joining the Class of 2027 and other classes at Wheeler! This brings our tuition student enrollment to 23 students to date! We look forward to this ongoing collaboration with both towns and hope to remain a *School of Choice* for their students.

Wheeler continues to be recognized for its outstanding achievement in US News and World Report and our middle and high school students outranked many of our surrounding districts in ELA, Math and Science! Our MS and HS Fall Sports programs are underway, and students are beginning to sign up for extra-curricular clubs and opportunities. Our fall sports programs include our HS football co-op with Griswold, and HS/MS boy's and girls' soccer, HS girls' volleyball and HS/MS boys' and girls' cross country. We are looking forward to a great school year and welcome our community to take part in the many activities happening after school.



KRISTEN ST. GERMAIN     PRINCIPAL

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## LABOR OF LOVE TO SAVE HISTORY



This beautiful piece of work resides at the North Stonington Education Center. The plaque reads, "Over the years, so many of us sat around the "NURSERY RHYME" fireplace in the original elementary school building.

This beautiful replica of the fireplace was designed and built in 2023 by Brian Rathbun (WHS '71) with original tiles saved from demolition by Linda Congdon Costanza (WHS '66), Sal Costanza and Brian Rathbun."

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## NORTH STONINGTON SCHOOL FOOD PANTRY

The North Stonington School Food Pantry provides for NS school students and their families, throughout the entire year, and is located in the North Stonington Education Center. Donations of non-perishable food can be made at any time and are appreciated.

If you are in need of food, please call 860-460-1675 to arrange for a food delivery or pick up.

LINDA COSTANZA     FOOD PANTRY COORDINATOR



## NORTH STONINGTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

As smiling students returned to classrooms this fall, they were greeted by excited and eager staff members, ready for a joyful and rewarding year of teaching and learning. Feeling safe, valued, and a sense of belonging is a natural outcome at our extraordinary schools, and we continue to imbed that goal throughout all academic and extracurricular experiences. For additional reassurance, and due to a generous donation, we rolled out an anonymous alert system for students and families to report issues about safety and wellness. We are enthusiastic to continue our discovery and implementation of innovative instructional practices, striving to stay up to date on how students learn best. Our elementary school is using a new reading program that promises even better results. Many teachers are exploring AI tools and strategies that will accelerate student learning and promote responsible use of ever-changing technologies.

A leader in education, North Stonington Public Schools recently became a candidate for district accreditation through the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC). We are the first school district in Connecticut to do so! Our administration and faculty are gaining national recognition, with Principal Kristen St. Germain representing Connecticut in Washington D.C. in October, joining principals of the year from 49 other states, and Jane Servidio, fourth-grade teacher, presenting at the National Science Teachers Association Convention on Invention Education. Also, one of our paraprofessionals, Wendy Arruda, is a published author of “Silly Sounding Sentences: ABC Phonics Fun!”, and several copies can be found throughout the elementary school. There is much to be proud of in our schools! Our community collaborations continue to thrive, with generous support from Fire, Ambulance (donation of school supplies), Giving Closet, Food Pantry, PTO, North Stonington Education Foundation, Recreation Department, Board of Selectmen, and Board of Finance. We are grateful for grants benefiting our schools and town. Together, we will build a bright future for North Stonington.

I invite our community to Coffee Chats to connect and share ideas. These are held on the fourth Tuesday of the month and take place 8-9 AM, at the Education Center (298 Norwich-Westerly Road), across from the schools. So far, we have scheduled the following dates: September 26<sup>th</sup>, October 24<sup>th</sup>, November 28<sup>th</sup>. I hope to have many productive and celebratory conversations! Of course, you can always schedule an appointment by contacting Irma Wilhelm, Executive Assistant to the Superintendent, at (860) 535-2800.



*This image was generated by openart.ai using the prompt “Draw a black and white picture of students walking in the front door of a school while being greeted by teachers.”*

TROY C. HOPKINS

SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

hopkinst@northstonington.k12.ct.us

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## HEWITT FARM

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

The Artisan Farm Market is now being held on route 2 at the recently demolished school site. The Hewitt Farm pavilion can be reserved for a private function on-line through the Recreation Department’s web site. Hewitt Farm is open daily from dawn to dusk. It’s free, easy to get to, and 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. Be sure to download the Hewitt Farm Trail Map from the town website ([www.northstoningtonct.gov](http://www.northstoningtonct.gov)) before your visit.

ED HARASIMOWITZ

CHAIRMAN

## BOARD OF EDUCATION

‘Welcome back to school’ has been the theme over the last few weeks. We are excited to have everyone back and school is running smoothly. A big thank you to our administrators and teachers for putting in the extra work to make sure we got off to a good start. Fall sports are underway and we love seeing the community come out to support our athletes.

The Board of Education has recently applied for funding through the State STEAP grant to install irrigation on our fields and we have recently completed a study on the condition of our fields. We have been meeting quarterly with the BOF and BOS and recently met to discuss a capital plan. We are putting together a capital list to give to the BOS by the end of September. Our agenda format has been updated and the 2nd meeting of each month will have a presentation from different departments and areas of interest throughout the year. We record these meetings and if you are interested in a specific topic, it is a great way to get that information. We are looking forward to the possibility of becoming the first district in CT with district wide accreditation through NEASC and Mr. Hopkins and his staff have been hard at work to putting together the necessary requirements to be considered in the next review period.

There is much to be proud of; our students are thriving under our amazing teaching staff and administrators. Thank you to our community for continuing to support our schools; it truly ‘takes a village’ and we have one of the best.

CHRISTINE WAGNER      CHAIRMAN

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## NORTH STONINGTON PARENT TEACHER ORGANIZATION

The PTO is excited for the new school year! We start the new year with a new Board: Dawn Goralewicz (VP), Danielle Steele (Secretary) and Christopher Books (Treasurer) are settling into their new roles, already planning out the year.

Before the school year started, we were able to stock the lounges at both the Elementary and Middle/High schools. Both lounges were stocked solely on community donations. What a great community we live in, and what a welcome back for our school staff! We had an amazing turnout of volunteers to help paint the blacktop at the Elementary school. In just 3 hours, a mural of the USA map was brought to life for the kids to enjoy on their first day. We can’t thank our volunteers enough; without them we wouldn’t be able to get anything done.

As we look forward, we’ve started planning our Fall Fest, Free Family Fun Nights, and various fundraisers. Join us at our meetings, every 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of the month, from 6pm to 7pm in the Elementary school cafeteria. Follow us on Facebook @nostopto and contact us at board@northstoningtonpto.com. We welcome all our families back to school!

MISSY DECESARIS, PRESIDENT      president@northstoningtonpto.com

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## TAX COLLECTOR

Thank you to everyone who paid their taxes. It is not a pleasant task, but it is a necessity in our lovely State of Connecticut. As the button in my office says, “Don’t be mad at me. I have to pay taxes, too”. I also reside in a small rural community that has no commercial property, so I truly understand.

If you were able to provide documentation to the Assessor’s Office and receive an adjustment on any bill that you already paid, I will be working on refunds to you in the very near future. Please be sure to sign and send it back as soon as possible.

I would like to remind everyone that the second installment of your tax bill will be due in January. You will have until February 1<sup>st</sup>, 2024, to pay without interest. As always, I am in the office Monday thru Thursday from 8:30 to 3:30 to help you in any way that I can. Have a lovely fall everyone.

ZAYNE R. RING, CCMC      TAX COLLECTOR      860-535-2877 X 120

## NORTH STONINGTON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

While summer break was nice, it is so wonderful to have our students back in school this year! We are excited about the busy and productive year ahead of us. We have come into this year having been accepted to be an applicant for District NEASC Accreditation. To complete this process will take a few years and will help us align our work here with the work already done at Wheeler. If successful, we will be the first district in the state to achieve this accreditation.

We also have some other exciting changes for this year. We are implementing a new reading program, “Into Reading”, which focuses on utilizing the strategies of the Science of Reading. Through the collaboration of our town and our Board of Education, our school has a newly paved blacktop for our students to enjoy. We even had some parent/student volunteers who painted a huge map of the USA on it for us. Our Board of Education also purchased some new playground equipment for the school. To ensure we can make the most of these great additions, our school has added a morning recess each day to allow for extra movement and exercise. We are looking forward to an exciting and successful year!



ROBERT CILLINO PRINCIPAL

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## WHEELER LIBRARY



We’ve had a very successful summer of programs at Wheeler Library! Thank you to all who participated by reading, exploring, and creating with us. Thank you also to the many great instructors and volunteers who allowed us to offer quality classes & activities with our community.

### And now...

From scarecrows to gingerbread, Wheeler Library has something to keep everyone creating, learning, and celebrating from October through December.

We hope you can join us for “The Next Chapter, a cocktail party, silent auction, and social gathering fundraiser in support of Wheeler Library’s Renovation Project on November 4<sup>th</sup>. Tickets to

this most anticipated event are for sale on our website. More upcoming library activities include Storytime, Kid’s Yoga, College Planning, Creepy Creations, and a Halloween-themed “Nailed It” challenge. Join us for Cookbook Club, monthly book discussions, and knitting groups. Create a scarecrow for our Scarecrow Walk, a gingerbread house or painted palette for our cheerful Holiday.

Open House, and more! Visit [wheelerlibrary.org](http://wheelerlibrary.org) for more information, to register for programs, and to purchase tickets or become a sponsor to “The Next Chapter” fundraiser on Nov. 4th. Sign up for our e-news list & keep up to date on all that Wheeler Library has to offer!

AMY KENNEDY DIRECTOR

## WINTER EVENTS!!!

### October

5th	Thursday	6pm	Wheeler Library	Cookbook Club - Registration required.
7th	Saturday	11:00am - 3:00pm	68 Chester Maine Road	Dahlia Day and Tag Sale.
10th	Tuesday	6:00pm	Wheeler Library	College Majors & Careers Workshop
11th	Wednesday	6:30pm	Wheeler Library	Hands-on Genealogy Workshop: "Dig Up Your Ancestors"
14th	Saturday	11:00am - 2:00pm	Stephen Main Homestead	Wreathmaking
17th	Tuesday	4:00-5:00pm	Wheeler Library	Creepy Creations - Halloween decor. Tweens - adults.
21st	Saturday	5:00pm	Wheeler Library	Scarecrow Walk on library lawn.
21st	Saturday	5:00pm	Main Street	Block Party and Frights and Lights Parade.
24th	Tuesday	4:00pm	Wheeler Library	Book Discussion - This is Happiness
24th	Tuesday	4:00-5:00pm	Wheeler Library	Nailed it! Halloween edition - Ages 8 and up
25th	Wednesday	6:00-8:00pm	Wheeler Library	Open Mic Halloween theme
27th	Friday	6:00-8:00pm	Elementary School	NSPTO Fall Festival
Multiple	Wednesdays	10:00am	Wheeler Library	Story Time - Call or check the website for session dates.
Multiple	Thursdays	10:30am	Wheeler Library	Kid's Yoga - Call or check the website for session dates

### November

2nd	Thursday	6:00pm	Wheeler Library	Cookbook Club - Registration required
4th	Saturday	9:00am-2:00pm	Congregational Church	Annual Christmas Bazaar
4th	Saturday	6:00am-9:00pm	Wheeler Library	"The Next Chapter" fundraising & social event - check website for ticket & sponsorship information.
<b>7th</b>	<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>6:00am-8:00pm</b>	<b>NS Education Center</b>	<b>MUNICIPAL ELECTION</b>
14th	Saturday	TBD	Stephen Main Homestead	Salute to our veterans
28th	Tuesday	4:00pm	Wheeler Library	Book Discussion - The Book of Hope
Multiple	Wednesdays	10:00am	Wheeler Library	Story Time - Call or check the website for session dates.
Multiple	Thursdays	10:30am	Wheeler Library	Kid's Yoga - Call or check the website for session dates

### December

3rd	Sunday	4:30-6:00pm	Wheeler Library	Open House with Art Show Opening
3rd	Sunday	6:15-6:45pm	Wheeler Library	Town Tree Lighting and Carol Sing
7th	Thursday	6:00pm	Wheeler Library	Cookbook Club - Registration required.
18th	Monday	6-8:00pm	Wheeler Library	Open Mic, Holiday theme.
Multiple	Wednesdays	10:00am	Wheeler Library	Story Time - Call or check the website for session dates.
Multiple	Thursdays	10:30am	Wheeler Library	Kid's Yoga - Call or check the website for session dates
To Be Announced				Holiday Light Parade



## ROTARY OF THE STONINGTONS

We are a small but mighty club that fulfills the Rotary International mission to alleviate poverty and improve health, education, and the environment. We contribute annually to both global and local organizations aimed at bettering the lives of people and their communities.

We are accepting grant applications from nonprofits!

Our fundraisers, like the annual Fishers Island Golf Tournament allow the Rotary Club of the Stoningtons to provide grants to nonprofits whose activities support Rotary's areas of focus which include: –

- Fighting disease
- Supporting education
- Promoting peace
- Providing clean water, sanitation, and hygiene
- Saving mothers and children
- Growing local economies
- Protecting the environment

We hope that through our support, your project can impact our community and the world around us. Grant amounts are typically between \$100 and \$1,000 and will be awarded in December 2023. Please email the completed form by November 10, 2023, to [mv06378@gmail.com](mailto:mv06378@gmail.com)

OR mail the completed form by November 10, 2023, to The Rotary Club of the Stoningtons PO Box 304 Stonington, CT 06378 Thank you for making a difference in our world.

Find out more about becoming a member of the Rotary of the Stoningtons! We are a breakfast club, regularly meet every Friday at 7am at the North Stonington Senior Center, where the members are very relaxed, and enjoy excellent fellowship. We invite speakers from the community to present on their mission and resources.

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## NORTH STONINGTON CITIZENS LAND ALLIANCE

NSQ is a uniquely organic North Stonington creation; homegrown. In every sense of the word; and 10 years old. Land Alliance, itself, began 36 years ago and is also homegrown. Over the years it has created and experienced its own brand of land advocacy, land conservation, town participation, complete with all kinds of necessary events, programs, meetings: on and on. Presently it is most often found behind the scenes, reviewing its past as it simultaneously takes on fresh options.

The Citizens Land Alliance took part in the 2013 POCD and has followed the 2023 POCD with great interest. It is apparent that stone walls and farms continue to shine as the town's highest conservation items, and both deserve praise. The Alliance adds its own addendum, which is to congratulate the individuals, families, groups, our town and our state for their own more expansive and inclusive land and water conservation efforts and successes in North Stonington as well.

Happy 10th NSQ Anniversary Nita and Lisa, and Congratulations!

MADELINE JEFFERY      [landallianceinc@gmail.com](mailto:landallianceinc@gmail.com)

State of Connecticut  
Official Ballot



North Stonington, Connecticut

Municipal  
Election

November 7, 2023

District  
1

TURN BALLOT OVER AND VOTE BOTH SIDES

Be sure to read instructions to vote.

OFFICE → PARTY →	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
	First Selectman Vote for One	Selectman Vote for Up to Two		Town Treasurer Vote for One	Board of Finance Vote for One	Board of Education Vote for Up to Two	Board of Assessment Appeals Vote for One	Economic Development Commission Full Term Vote for Up to Two	Economic Development Commission To Fill Vacancy for Two Years Vote for One		
DEMOCRATIC PARTY	1A <input type="radio"/>	2A <input type="radio"/> Nicole Porter	3A <input type="radio"/>	4A <input type="radio"/> Mustapha Ratib	5A <input type="radio"/> Michael L. Anderson	6A <input type="radio"/> Stephanie Mastroianni	7A <input type="radio"/> Bryan Burdick	8A <input type="radio"/> Salvatore Costanza	9A <input type="radio"/> Mariah Pfiffner	10A <input type="radio"/> Peggy Merck	11A <input type="radio"/> Connie Berardi
REPUBLICAN PARTY	1B <input type="radio"/> Bob Carlson	2B <input type="radio"/> Brett L. Mastroianni	3B <input type="radio"/>	4B <input type="radio"/> Shawn P. Murphy	5B <input type="radio"/> Louis W. Gingerella	6B <input type="radio"/> Judith Main	7B <input type="radio"/> Alexander Karpinski	8B <input type="radio"/> John A. Gaccione, Jr.	9B <input type="radio"/> Will Mason	10B <input type="radio"/> Emily Lewis	11B <input type="radio"/> Rachel White
WRITE-IN VOTES	1C <input type="radio"/>	2C <input type="radio"/>	3C <input type="radio"/>	4C <input type="radio"/>	5C <input type="radio"/>	6C <input type="radio"/>	7C <input type="radio"/>	8C <input type="radio"/>	9C <input type="radio"/>	10C <input type="radio"/>	11C <input type="radio"/>

State of Connecticut  
Official Ballot



North Stonington, Connecticut

Municipal  
Election

November 7, 2023

District  
1

TURN BALLOT OVER AND VOTE BOTH SIDES

Be sure to read instructions to vote.

	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22
<div> <div>OFFICE</div> <div> <div>PARTY</div> <div> </div> </div> </div>	<div> <div>12A</div> <div> <div>Economic Development Commission Alternate</div> <div>Vote for One</div> </div> </div>	<div> <div>13A</div> <div> <div>Planning and Zoning Commission Full Term</div> <div>Vote for One</div> </div> </div>	<div> <div>14A</div> <div> <div>Planning and Zoning Commission To Fill Vacancy for Two Years</div> <div>Vote for One</div> </div> </div>	<div> <div>15A</div> <div> <div>Planning and Zoning Commission Alternate</div> <div>Vote for Up to Three</div> </div> </div>	<div> <div>16A</div> <div> <div>Planning and Zoning Commission Alternate</div> <div>Vote for Up to Three</div> </div> </div>	<div> <div>17A</div> <div> <div>Planning and Zoning Commission</div> <div>Vote for Up to Three</div> </div> </div>	<div> <div>18A</div> <div> <div>Zoning Board of Appeals</div> <div>Vote for Up to Two</div> </div> </div>	<div> <div>19A</div> <div> <div>Zoning Board of Appeals</div> <div>Vote for Up to Two</div> </div> </div>	<div> <div>20A</div> <div> <div>Zoning Board of Appeals Alternate</div> <div>Vote for Up to Three</div> </div> </div>	<div> <div>21A</div> <div> <div>Zoning Board of Appeals Alternate</div> <div>Vote for Up to Three</div> </div> </div>	<div> <div>22A</div> <div> <div>Zoning Board of Appeals</div> <div>Vote for Up to Three</div> </div> </div>
DEMOCRATIC PARTY	<div> <div>12A</div> <div> <div>Toula Balestracci</div> </div> </div>	<div> <div>13A</div> <div> <div>Ben Buehler</div> </div> </div>	<div> <div>14A</div> <div> </div> </div>	<div> <div>15A</div> <div> <div>Elizabeth Kirmmse</div> </div> </div>	<div> <div>16A</div> <div> <div>Toula Balestracci</div> </div> </div>	<div> <div>17A</div> <div> </div> </div>	<div> <div>18A</div> <div> <div>Paul Simeone</div> </div> </div>	<div> <div>19A</div> <div> <div>Connie Berardi</div> </div> </div>	<div> <div>20A</div> <div> <div>Toula Balestracci</div> </div> </div>	<div> <div>21A</div> <div> <div>Anthony Mazzella</div> </div> </div>	<div> <div>22A</div> <div> <div>Winona Berdine</div> </div> </div>
REPUBLICAN PARTY	<div> <div>12B</div> <div> </div> </div>	<div> <div>13B</div> <div> <div>John A. Gaccione, Jr.</div> </div> </div>	<div> <div>14B</div> <div> </div> </div>	<div> <div>15B</div> <div> <div>Joseph Cherenzia</div> </div> </div>	<div> <div>16B</div> <div> <div>Todd M. Krysiwicz</div> </div> </div>	<div> <div>17B</div> <div> <div>Mark Perkins, Jr.</div> </div> </div>	<div> <div>18B</div> <div> <div>Daniel J. Smith</div> </div> </div>	<div> <div>19B</div> <div> </div> </div>	<div> <div>20B</div> <div> <div>Will Mason</div> </div> </div>	<div> <div>21B</div> <div> <div>Amy Friend</div> </div> </div>	<div> <div>22B</div> <div> <div>Judith Main</div> </div> </div>
WRITE-IN VOTES	<div> <div>12C</div> <div> </div> </div>	<div> <div>13C</div> <div> </div> </div>	<div> <div>14C</div> <div> </div> </div>	<div> <div>15C</div> <div> </div> </div>	<div> <div>16C</div> <div> </div> </div>	<div> <div>17C</div> <div> </div> </div>	<div> <div>18C</div> <div> </div> </div>	<div> <div>19C</div> <div> </div> </div>	<div> <div>20C</div> <div> </div> </div>	<div> <div>21C</div> <div> </div> </div>	<div> <div>22C</div> <div> </div> </div>

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

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

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

**Election time is right around the corner for our Municipal Elections.**

When: November 7, 2023

Where: Education Center - 298 Norwich-Westerly Road

Time: 6:00am - 8:00pm

If you are new to Town you can register to vote at the Dept. of Motor Vehicles,  
online or at our office in the Town Hall from 8:00am-4:00pm.

**Make your VOTE count!**

Looking forward to seeing you all soon.  
Connie Berardi and Emily Lewis, Registrars

**\*In The Spotlight\***

On Friday, September 22nd, at Connecticut's Animal Control Conference, our very own  
Kasha Deshefy was named Animal Control Officer of the year!!  
North Stonington is blessed to have such a dedicated, compassionate ACO serving our town.  
Congratulations, Kasha!