

THE NORTH STONINGTON QUARTERLY

SPRING 2017

BOARD OF SELECTMEN

To fund or not to fund! That is the question small towns across Connecticut, and particularly North Stonington, want answered in order to complete the development of the annual budget. While the Governor and the Legislature work out each town's allotment of intergovernmental revenue (such as Educational Cost Sharing and State Aid for Town Roads), the Selectmen are evaluating the spectrum of Town services, as well as activities to support the implementation of the Plan of Conservation and Development, needed for the coming year. The Board of Finance has the responsibility to recommend a budget to the taxpayers (and the method of financing it – such as taxes) but the Selectmen must work with the Board of Finance to advise how Town services will be affected with any proposed budget.

Meetings will be held in April to review budget recommendations and proposals, so if you would like to weigh in on Town priorities, please plan to attend. If you would like to be involved in helping to develop those budgets or to help carry out the Town's mission, consider participating on a town board or commission. To find out more information, contact the Town Clerk or First Selectman's office at Town Hall.

March's late winter snowfall reminds us that traffic conditions can change rapidly in Town. The Board reminds motorists to please watch out for pedestrians and to drive defensively.

SELECTMEN

860-535-2877 EXT 10

SELECTMEN@NORTHSTONINGTONCT.GOV

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

North Stonington welcomes Faria Beede, the gauge and vehicle technology manufacturer that has been in business for more than 50 years in Montville. The new owner, Fred Merrit, plans to begin the move to 75 Frontage Rd. this spring. The move is good news for the town and the region, as the company will retain its 200 employees, many of whom live in New London.



The role of Economic Development Coordinator has been filled by our former Planner, Juliet Hodge. She can be reached at the Town Hall in the Planning and Zoning Office Monday-Friday, 8am-4pm or by email at jhodge@northstoningtonct.gov. By combining the Planner and Zoning Official and Economic Development Coordinator positions, we hope to provide a more streamlined process for existing businesses looking to expand and for prospective businesses considering North Stonington. The EDC hopes that in her new expanded role, Ms. Hodge will facilitate greater coordination and collaboration between all the boards and commissions with respect to the Town's development goals.

Please join us at our monthly Economic Development Commission meetings that are held the 3rd Thursday of the month at 5:15pm in the Town offices at the Holly Green Plaza.

BRETT MASTROIANNI, CHAIRMAN

NORTH STONINGTON AGRICULTURAL FAIR

Happy Spring! The Fair will be here soon so mark your calendars for July 13-16th. Watch for some new entertainment this year, including Dirty Deeds (an AC/DC Tribute Band), and if you love the sound of motors, be sure to check out the ATV Pull. The website will be updated soon with a full schedule of events: visit www.northstoningtonfair.com and don't forget to like us on Facebook!

Due to the snowstorm in March, our annual pot-luck dinner was postponed until April 11th, 6pm at the North Stonington Fire House. The regular meeting will follow dinner. All fair workers, committee members and those interested in joining the Fair Committee, are welcome. Bring a dish and your ideas/comments! We are always welcoming new members.

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



TOWN CLERK'S OFFICE

Happy Spring from the Town Clerk's Office! Opening Day of Fishing Season is Saturday, April 8, 2017. Licenses and Permits to hunt, trap and fish are available online, or in most town clerks' offices, at some sporting goods stores and DEEP offices. To buy licenses online, or for a listing of places that sell licenses, go to: www.ct.gov/deep/hunting. Fishing and trapping licenses are still issued free to residents 65 and older who meet hunter education requirements, but these licenses must now be renewed annually.

Dog License renewals will be sent out the last week of May, for June 1st registrations. Please make sure rabies vaccines are current and please contact the office if you no longer have the dog! The Annual Rabies Clinic will be held on June 3rd, between the hours of 10:00am and noon at the New Town Hall.

NORMA J. HOLLIDAY, TOWN CLERK

NORTH STONINGTON ANIMAL CONTROL

Happy Spring Everyone!!! I hope everyone fared well this winter and you are looking forward to the warmer weather.

Just a quick reminder, with the nice weather coming, the wildlife will be coming out to warm up, stretch their legs and look for food. With that said, the potential of some unwanted confrontations with our pets and the wild animals becomes greater and precautions should be made to try and avoid them. We recommend looking around your outside area before letting your pets out. Also, please check to make sure your pet is current on its rabies vaccine. The State has strict guidelines concerning rabies; if your pet were to have any scuffles with wildlife, or even had a wound of unknown origin and your pet was not current on its rabies vaccine, it would have to be placed under quarantine (and none of us want that for your furry family member!).

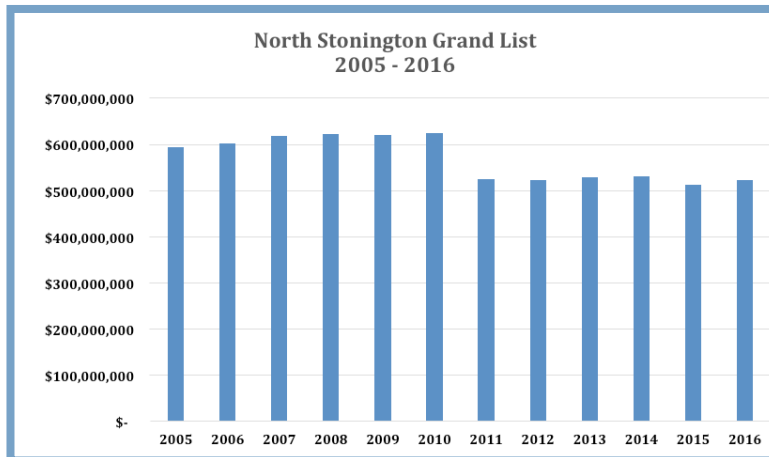
We are planning a rabies clinic on June 3rd from 10-12pm at the New Town Hall. Also, because June is Dog License Month, we will be issuing dog licenses at that time as well. We will be posting fliers, with more information on the event, as it gets closer to the date.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding Animal Control in our town, please don't hesitate to call 860-287-2197. Thank you.

KARCHER DESHEFY ANIMAL CONTROL OFFICER

TOWN GOVERNMENT STRUCTURE COMMITTEE

The Board of Selectmen (BOS) appointed a six-member non-partisan committee seven months ago, to study and recommend alternative forms of town governance and/or management and the benefits each would provide. After extensive research interviewing several town managers, reviewing State statutes, surveying our staff and volunteers, and gathering a variety of governing structures throughout the northeast, we presented our recommendations to the BOS on March 6th. The complete report is available at www.northstoningtonct.gov/Pages/TGSCFull.pdf.



We recognized that our town meeting form of government has many benefits. We also realized that our town's ability to move forward into the future depended on executing the 2013 Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD). Indeed, it is critical for the town to be run as efficiently and frugally as possible, but **it is equally important to grow our economy** to alleviate the tax burden on residents. This chart of our Grand List, the primary source of town revenue, shows the list has not grown in over a decade.

To carry the town's progress forward, we have recommended modifying our current structure by developing a triad of elected and appointed leadership, with the First Selectman in the leadership role, supported by the addition of a trained Administration and Finance Officer and the recently hired Planning, Development and Zoning Officer, Juliet Hodge.

The return of Juliet Hodge, who played a pivotal leading role in the development of our 2013 POCD, provides a knowledgeable, experienced person in the role of Planning, Development and Zoning Officer. Her position combines two vacant jobs: the Planning & Zoning/Land Use Officer and the part-time Economic Development Coordinator.

The committee's recommendation of the addition of a trained Administration & Finance Officer, as a member of the three-person management team (the triad), would provide focus on handling and improving management of day-to-day operations, as well as add further support for the execution of the POCD.

The First Selectman's role as the leader, coordinator and overseer of our town governance remains very important, but the committee recognizes that this office is open to change with every 2-year election cycle. With a triad in place, North Stonington would have increased stability, capacity and continuity to ensure improved day-to-day operations and accelerated goal accomplishments for future growth.

PAUL SIMONDS (CHAIRMAN), NITA KINCAID, ANNE NELSON, BILL RICKER, DAN SMITH, DAN SPRING

AVALONIA

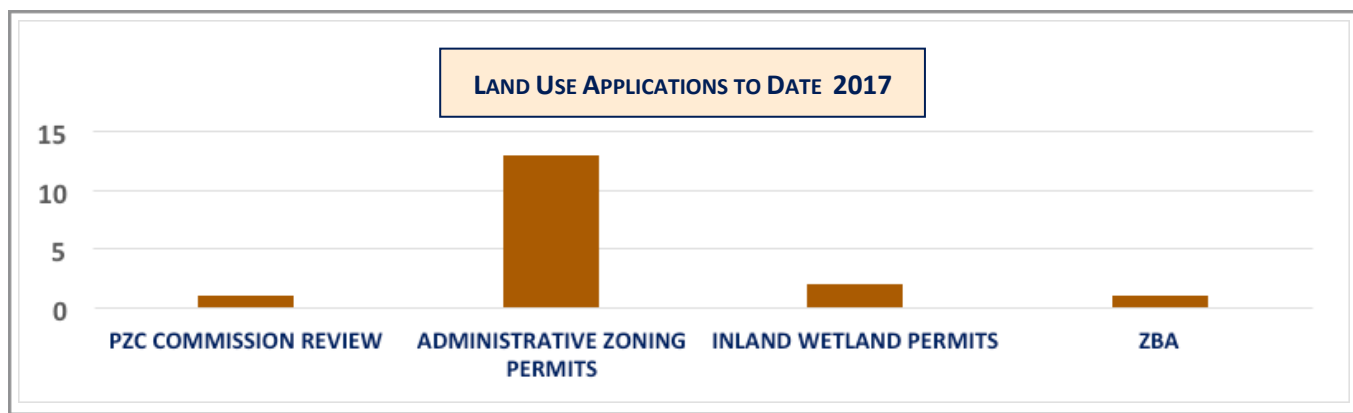
The many Avalonia preserves in North Stonington are a very large part of this Southeastern Connecticut land trust. Our newest preserve, the Benedict Benson Preserve, on Swantown Hill Road, is a gem of woodlands, streams and ledge, and known as a true gem by birders. Its formal dedication will be on April 22 at 10am, followed by a guided hike on the new trail.

Join a guided walk on Saturday, June 3rd at 10am; CT Trails Day at the Benedict Benson Preserve on Swantown Hill Road. There are 6 other parcels in North Stonington with trails, and you can download trail maps on the newly rebuilt website WWW.AVALONIALANDCONSERVANCY.ORG. You'll also find information on membership and the interactive activity, Hide & Seek Scavenger Hunt.

PLANNING AND ZONING OFFICIAL/ LAND USE OFFICE

The Planning and Zoning Commission welcomes Juliet Hodge back to North Stonington. Ms. Hodge was the Town Planner and Zoning Official from 2008-2014, and will now fill the newly created position of Planning, Development and Zoning Official. This position combines the roles of the Senior Planning and Zoning Official and the Economic Development Coordinator. Ms. Hodge will maintain regular office hours at the Town Hall. We look forward to working with Juliet and the other Town Board and Commission members in renewing efforts to implement the goals of the 2013 Plan of Conservation and Development which incorporates the goals and actions of the 2012 Economic Development Action Plan, 2012 Housing Plan and 2013 Plan of Conservation and Recreation Lands.

To date this year there have been 17 Land-Use Applications submitted, including the Site Plan for the proposed renovations and additions to the Elementary, Middle and High School properties. The Commission must act on the site plan application by April 14th.



LOU STEINBRECHER

PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION CHAIRMAN

EMERGENCY SERVICES BUILDING COMMITTEE

In early to mid-January final Specification and Drawings were completed to reflect the re-engineered cost containment designs. These designs were modifications formulated to bring the final construction costs in line with the town-approved \$6.3 Million budget.

With all approvals in place since late January, the bidding process has been initiated with a publicly advertised Request for Proposal from qualified contracting entities. Opening of the bid proposals will be March 22nd, 2017 and has been advertised on the Town Website.

Status Reporting for Planning, Construction Compliance and Budgetary (cost to complete) is now under the supervision of CREC of Hartford, which is a company that specializes in Project Management and 'Clerk of the Works' Construction services. The Project Manager will be Mr. Michael Faenza, in the employ of CREC. Mr. Faenza, an engineer with the CREC company, has been affiliated with several successful projects in the area including the Police Building in Ledyard.

If the Bids are returned in line with the Budget, residents should be witnessing construction activity in the late Spring of this year.

PAUL KOWACK PE COMMITTEE MEMBER

Pkowack30@comcast.net

860-235-6771

NORTH STONINGTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

The end of the school year also brings the busiest time for the district. A focus will be the budgetary process as once the Board of Education (BOE) passes its budget, it will then be presented to the Board of Finance prior to going to the Town. A quote used in the Superintendent's and BOE's budget comes from President Lyndon Johnson, *"We believe, that is, you and I, that education is not an expense. We believe it is an investment"*.

You have heard me state over the last few years that the State of Connecticut passed legislation in 2012, which required districts to institute some very ambitious education initiatives. I wrote previously about the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC) and Connecticut Core Standards (CCS). We are grateful for the Town's investment in North Stonington Public Schools. In a recently released accountability report, released by the Governor, we received excellent news! There are 116 schools in CT that were considered "Schools of Distinction" and, of 65 Elementary Schools in CT, North Stonington Elementary School was one of them. Of all the high schools in CT, only five were found to be a School of Distinction and Wheeler High School was one of them. Again, we are grateful to the town for its investment in education.

PETER NERO, SUPERINTENDENT

NORTH STONINGTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

SAVE HISTORIC "GREENE GABLES", STUDIO AND ART SCHOOL OF FRED STEWART GREENE AND RUTH PENFIELD'S LITTLE RED HORSE NURSERY SCHOOL

What Is "Greene Gables"?

Greene Gables remains the only surviving studio of North Stonington's famous son, Fred Stewart Greene. Born here, he was the significant regional artist who lived, painted and photographed at Greene Gables after 1910. Later the building was also the location of southeastern Connecticut's first Montessori school. Many in North Stonington will remember Ruth Penfield who founded and administered the Little Red Horse Nursery School for 40 years.

What Is The Threat?

The value of Greene Gables is that it is an important future economic and cultural resource. Soon the voters of North Stonington will decide whether Greene Gables will be saved or demolished.

What Can We Do?

Come to the Town Meeting. The North Stonington Historical Society will present a practical plan including funding to save "Greene Gables" for the benefit of the Town and to save the taxpayers' money.



Family in a new Overland at Greene Gables

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The Historical Society invites you to join us at the Stephen Maine Homestead, 1 Wyassup Rd.
for our free April events:

- ◆Sunday, April 1st at 2 PM ~ **Liberty & The Flintlock**. See many examples of muskets actually used in the American Revolution and in the War of 1812. Learn how they worked and how they were employed.
- ◆Sunday, April 30th at 2 PM ~ **The Civil War Songbook**. Dot Reiser and the Cabin Fever Bluegrass Band will present a concert of authentic, spirited, and familiar Civil War music.

NORTH STONINGTON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

North Stonington Elementary School continues to provide enrichment opportunities for our students. On March 2nd, the sixth annual Family Science Night was held with the theme, “Exploring the Rainforest”. Hundreds of students and their families had fun with science that evening! The entire school community is so grateful to Jen Raggon for organizing and planning this annual event.

On March 24th and 25th, the North Stonington Elementary School Drama Club danced and sang their way through an amazing production of *Beauty and the Beast, Jr.* We are so proud of our talented students and thank our producer and director, Mrs. Gonzalez, as well as Mrs. Thompson, Mrs. Schacht, and Mr. Noonan for their support!

On April 5th, kindergarten registration will take place from 1:30 – 3:00 and again at 5:00 – 7:00pm. Please call the school (860-535-2805) for more information if you have a child who will turn 5 years old on or before January 1, 2018.

We invite the community to join us for the many upcoming spring events!

- * Our K - 2 students will present “I’m Glad I’m Me” and “The Barnyard Moosical” on April 12th at 5:45 pm.
- * Students in grades 3 - 5 will present “Let’s Pass It On”, “On Safari,” and “Broadway Beat” on May 18th beginning at 5:45pm.
- * North Stonington Elementary School Art Show will take place on May 11th from 6:00 - 7:30pm in the Multipurpose Room.
- * North Stonington Elementary School Band Concert is May 23rd at 6:30pm.
- * The North Stonington Elementary School Fifth Grade Chorus presents their concert on June 1st at 6:30pm.

We hope you can join us for these events and thank you for your continued support of our students and school.

VERONICA WILKISON, PRINCIPAL

NORTH STONINGTON GARDEN CLUB

Expect even bigger perennials than usual at our **Annual Plant Sale, May 13th** from 9 am to 1 pm! With the mild winter, the perennials that our members dig from their gardens will have a longer growth season. The Plant Sale will be held at the North Stonington Elementary School and always has thousands of local plants. There will be many floral gifts for Mother’s Day: hanging baskets of annuals, attractive planted containers and club-made tufa troughs with miniature gardens. Also for sale will be lots of annual plants, a collection of herbs and a variety of vegetables, including Heirloom tomatoes and hot, hot peppers that are club-grown.

A Master Gardener will be on site to answer all your gardening questions and to test your soil if you bring ½ cup of dry soil. There is also a rummage sale of garden-related items. Plenty of parking. It’s ‘Rain or Shine’ and don’t forget to bring your own wagon!

This event is the club’s annual fundraiser and the proceeds support our many community activities. If you need more information about the Plant Sale or are interested in learning more about joining our very active, hands-on club, visit our website: www.nsgardenclub.org.



NITA KINCAID, MEMBERSHIP CO-CHAIR

860-235-1565

windstonenita@sbcglobal.net

WHEELER LIBRARY

Climate change is the focus of programs and exhibits in March and April at the library. Come in and visit the interactive Conservation Quest and other displays. On Wednesday, April 12th at 7pm, the Friends host a program on supporting and benefitting from solar, even if you can't use it on your property.

Our Fifth Annual Country Market returns the weekend of May 20th. Along with beautiful Persian rugs for sale, we'll have local meats, organically-grown heirloom tomato plants and so much more at this community event celebrating the bounty of North Stonington. Proceeds benefit the library.

Check out the library's Seed Lending Project, with drawers of flower and vegetable seeds available, along with monthly programs and helpful advice. Our program, on April 5th at 7pm, gets us into the garden with information from Bill Paradis on how to plan succession plantings, how to know when to transplant, start seeds outdoors, and get working in the soil. Come early - the seed lending library will open at 6:30. It's also open during all library hours.

For children, story times, special events, and yoga classes continue. Stop by or give us a call to find out the current schedule and offerings.

On May 7th Wheeler Library is partnering with the Savoy Bookshop and the Connecticut Humane Society to bring author Tom Ryan to Wheeler Library, in support of his new book, *Will's Red Coat*. That event is free, but requires a ticket.

Our Town-wide Tag Sale will be held on Saturday, June 3rd. Registration forms are at the Library. Check the library's website for more information: www.wheelerlibrary.org.

AMY KENNEDY

860-535-0383



ASSESSOR'S OFFICE

Elderly Homeowners Program: Final reminder for all homeowners who are 65 years old as of December 31st 2016: you may apply for the Elderly Homeowners Program if your total income in calendar year 2016 was less than \$42,900 for a married couple or \$35,200 for a single person. Applications are available in the Assessor's Office. You have until May 15th to apply.

Elderly Renters: It is now time to apply for your state benefit as a renter. The Assessor's Office has the applications; the income limits and age requirement are the same as those described for elderly homeowners. You have until September 30th to apply. Please provide your 2016 electric bills, heating bills, rent receipts, and proof of your total income for the year.

Veterans: You must have your DD214 on file with the Town Clerk before October 1st to receive your benefit. Disability ratings letter must be on file with the assessor, as well as Social Security disability award letters in order to receive a benefit.

Blind Benefit: To receive this benefit, you must have proof on file regarding your vision (20/200 or less).

Reminder: If you sell a motor vehicle and DO NOT use the same registration plate, you must bring proof of the sold vehicle to the Assessor's Office in order to get credit for the sale on your tax bill. The DMV does not inform the Assessor's Office when you sell your car. Please return the old registration to DMV and provide proof that the old motor vehicle was sold. If you transfer the registration to your new car, and the title information is the same on the new motor vehicle, credit is automatic.

DARRYL L. DEL GROSSO

860-535-2877, ext. 23 or 24

BOARD OF FINANCE

The Board of Finance is currently in the middle of budget season for the 2017/2018 budget. This is proving to be a difficult year with the steep cuts that are proposed to the Town's revenue by the State of Connecticut. During the budget season the Board of Finance meets on a weekly basis on Wednesday evenings at 7:30 pm at the New Town Hall, with the exception of the second Tuesday of the month when meetings are held at the Wheeler High Media Center. All are encouraged to attend.

TIM MAIN, CHAIRMAN

PAWCATUCK NEIGHBORHOOD CENTER

The Pawcatuck Neighborhood Center's **Weekender Backpack Food Program for Children** has been serving North Stonington since December 2005. The program provides nutritious food, which helps prevent young children from being "food insecure" over the weekend. Each Friday all year, participating families can pick up a half or full gallon of milk, bread, peanut butter and jelly, fresh fruit and other easy-to-open and prepare food items for their children. Worry about the availability of food, or "food insecurity" has a life-long adverse impact on the health and development of the children in our community. If your child is eligible for the federal Free & Reduced Lunch program, they can register to participate in the Weekender Backpack Food Program for Children. Please contact Abby for more information: 860-599-3285 x23 or abby@thepnc.org.



Senior Transportation: Do you know a senior citizen who stays home because he or she doesn't have transportation? Are you a senior that no longer drives, but misses getting out of the house for social activities or shopping? Did you know that the Pawcatuck Neighborhood Center provides transportation services for seniors? Transportation is provided on one of two wheelchair-lift buses, a 12-passenger van, or by car for medical appointments. Trips can include banking, grocery shopping, pharmacy, PNC congregate meals, social events and other destinations, including to the Robert A. Granato Senior Center at the Pawcatuck Neighborhood Center.

This service is provided by paid certified drivers and is funded by grants and the generous donations of people in the community. The Pawcatuck Neighborhood Center Senior Transportation Program serves registered Senior residents of North Stonington, Pawcatuck, Stonington, Old Mystic, and Mystic (Stonington side) in CT, and Westerly, RI. Please call for details: Barbara at 860-599-3285 x15 or email barbara@thepnc.org.

NORTH STONINGTON PARENT TEACHER ORGANIZATION

It is hard to believe that another school year is ending but, as it approaches, we reflect on an amazing year of funding. Because of the support of local businesses and of course our fabulous families, we were again able to surpass our fundraising goals and for this we are grateful. So many projects and programs, that otherwise would not have been supported, could take place at all the schools and were a benefit to countless students.

We are already working towards next year's goals and are busy planning activities for the 2017 - 2018 school year. It cannot be said enough:-a huge thank you to our volunteers that have made all these efforts possible. To our volunteers, we say "You have made our school environment a brighter place!" Please feel free to join us at our meetings on the first Thursday of the month, starting at 6:00 pm, in the Elementary School Library or contact emily.lewis41@gmail.com to become involved.

EMILY LEWIS, PRESIDENT

SCHOOL MODERNIZATION BUILDING COMMITTEE

Greetings friends. Much continues to happen as we prepare to break ground on the School Modernization initiative in June-July 2017. In our last quarterly article, we detailed the positive changes to the project including the “campus” design which has proven to work much more effectively with our school grounds. An aerial view of the design can be seen here.

Members of our construction and architectural team, along with Superintendent Nero and Chairman Mike Urgo, spent the day in Hartford on March 8th, 2017 reviewing the plans with the State. We remain on schedule and are extremely thankful to the entire team working so hard on this project to keep us on track. It is a very aggressive timeline and all parties involved are putting in long hours to make sure we meet the deadlines necessary to break ground once we receive funding notification from the State (which should happen in June/July).



We recently met with the Board of Education to discuss utilization of solar energy to help power the schools. We are currently investigating the options available to us as a municipality. The committee continues to look at construction options that are in line with the town’s Plan of Conservation and Development and look forward to completion of the design documents over the next two months.

For more detailed information on the plans and committee updates, please visit www.northstoningtonct.gov and click on the School Modernization Building Committee link. We are posting regular updates to keep the public informed of our progress. Additionally the committee meets most Monday evenings at 7:00pm and you can email us anytime at nsschoolmodernization@gmail.com

MIKE URGO, CHAIRMAN

NORTH STONINGTON EDUCATION FOUNDATION

The Foundation’s Annual Road Race, Fitness Walk, and Children’s Race will take place at the North Stonington Grange Fairgrounds on Saturday, May 27, 2017. Registration forms will be available in the main office of Wheeler High School and at the Central School Office beginning April 1, 2017. For further information, please contact Marc Tardiff at tardiffm@northstonington.k12.ct.us. This event is a major fundraiser for the NSEF. To date, the Foundation has donated \$150,000 for educational purposes in North Stonington.

Congratulations to the Italian Stallions who won the Foundation’s Trivia Contest for the fourth year in a row. Second place went to the Tequila Mockingbirds and the Eggheads came in third.

Michelle Melinosky and Mustapha Ratib were recently elected as Board members. Congratulations!

BERNARD “BING” BARTICK

860-389-0264

BBesail@aol.com

HEWITT FARM

Determining The Future Of Green Gables

The Hewitt Farm Committee has worked with the Selectmen to develop information on the condition and considerations that influence future plans for Greene Gables, a building on the property that has been empty since 1997. When the town purchased the Hewitt Farm from Mystic Seaport in 2008, the building was unusable and has continued to deteriorate. At a Town Meeting in December 2010 voters approved "Uses, Rules and Regulations", which described how the property would be maintained and used. The question of Greene Gable's poor condition was discussed at that meeting and it was suggested that no money be expended until more facts were available.



Greene Gables is located on the Rte. 2 side of the Hewitt Farm, near the Community Garden area. From 1911 to 1923, the building was associated with local artist and photographer Fred Stewart Greene and much later became Mrs. Penfield's Little Red Horse Nursery School (1950s to mid-1990). In 2012 the North Stonington Historical Society notified the town that Greene Gables should be preserved because of its historical significance.

Both the Selectmen and the committee have reviewed the options currently available and the status of the structure, including the presence of hazardous materials. It has been decided that it is time to share these facts and bring the question of 'demolish or save' to a Town Meeting. We anticipate that a meeting will be scheduled and publicized in April. The Hewitt Farm Committee hopes that residents will attend to hear the issues and to participate in the decision about Greene Gables future.

Join us for a CT Trails Day Walk at Hewitt Farm on Sunday, June 4th from 1:00 - 2:00 pm. We'll meet at the parking lot near the Rte. 2 entrance and then view some of the special projects accomplished by the Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts and North Stonington Garden Club. Visitors may then continue their walk on any of the eight trails that exist on this 104 acre property.

NITA KINCAID, CO-CHAIR 860-535-1416

DICK COOPER, CO-CHAIR 860-535-0528

NORTH STONINGTON SENIOR CENTER

The Senior Center, located behind Holly Green, has many offerings. We serve lunches on the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th Wednesdays of the month, and monthly breakfasts at various restaurants (call for reservations); Mystery Lunches are also held. An RN is here on the first Wednesday of the month at noon to take blood pressure. Teresa Pensis, Director and Agent for the Elderly, also provides assistance with food, fuel and rides.

Day trips are being planned for Deerfield, Massachusetts; Federal Hill, Providence, Rhode Island; and a lighthouse cruise of Narragansett Bay. Please call Teresa at 860-535-8188 for additional information!

The Golden Agers meet at the Center on the first Wednesday of each month at 12:30pm. We are offering a Pearl Farnum Scholarship to a North Stonington resident or a descendent of a North Stonington Golden Ager Organization member. Pearl Farnum was an original Golden Ager member. After her death in 1999 at the age of 102, her family established the scholarship fund in her memory.

Scholarship applications are available at the Senior Center, Wheeler High School and Wheeler Library. These should be submitted by May 1st. The age of an applicant is not a factor. The applicant should be seeking a post-secondary education in a health related field and have financial need. Call Corinne Bacchiocchi for more information: 860-599-1396.

WHEELER HIGH SCHOOL/MIDDLE SCHOOL

We are proud to announce Wheeler's success on the State Department of Education's Accountability Index. We continue to work hard in the areas of college and career readiness to prepare all of our students with the 21st Century Skills they will need to be successful when they leave our school. Our high school has also been labeled a *School of Distinction* and remains in the top 10% of the highest performing public schools in Connecticut. We are so proud of our students and staff for the hard work that they put in each day.



We are busy preparing a Community Conversation for our Wheeler community that will take place in May. This conversation will center around the results of our drug/alcohol/mental health survey. We will continue to work hard to educate our students and families about the impact these issues are having on our community. As we celebrate our successes, we also want to thank all of our community members who participated in our Career Fair last month. We look forward to establishing long lasting connections with our local businesses and, as we mold our own career center, we are excited about the opportunities that it will provide for our students at Wheeler.

KRISTEN ST. GERMAIN, PRINCIPAL

NORTH STONINGTON COMMUNITY GRANGE #138

The Grange organization meets on the second and fourth Fridays at 8:00 pm with certain exceptions. Each meeting we discuss the events we will be participating in, the needs of our community, the needs of our grounds and upkeep, and then we have a program. Often we have guest speakers in varying interests as well as committee programs.

Winter is our slower season, meeting once monthly. In January, the Agriculture Committee presented a PowerPoint program on "Bomb sniffing spinach" (you just never know what you'll learn about!); in February we held our Talent and "A Number" runoffs for state competition; and in March we re-visited our Grange traditions for those new among us.

ALL are welcome to come. Our upcoming schedule has our Lecturer's state program contest entry on April 14; we will honor our long-term members and our Community Citizen on April 28; a presentation on Social Security and Medicare by Chris Cleland, from American Senior Benefits, on May 12; and a Memorial program on May 26. June 9 is Election of Officers, with our annual picnic on June 23 with food, fun and games for all at 6:30. Come catch up on town news, visit with your neighbors, learn something new, and enjoy a little music and fun!

SUE PIANKA, PROGRAM DIRECTOR

860-599-4528

BOARD OF EDUCATION

At this time of year the Board of Education is typically involved in developing our budget for approval by the Board of Finance. We are also looking forward to our school spring activities and, ultimately, our “Grand Finale” Graduation.

As I write this article, I am looking out of my window at a BLIZZARD; so much for school spring activities starting on time. Our Drama Club coordinators are nervous about missed rehearsals, due to the weather, for upcoming plays and our coaches wonder if their teams will ever get outside. The budget outlook doesn't seem much brighter.

There has been a “blizzard” of information about possible cuts coming down from Hartford over the last few months. I have been monitoring what other BOE chairs have said on the subject and I have to say that I agree with most of them. I want our Board to budget on what we know and not “what ifs”. I feel that the Governor will get push back on his proposals to cut to the levels he has stated. I don't want to be accused of having my head in the sand, but I don't want to be in panic mode either. This will be an entire Board decision and I am giving only my opinion at this time. Let's hope the things look brighter soon.

BOB CARLSON, CHAIRMAN

carlsonb@northstonington.k12.ct.us

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY/GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEMS DEPARTMENT

My name is Jim Russell, the IT/GIS Manager in North Stonington. I started in the town in April of 2016. Over my time here so far, I have started projects to further the town's IT infrastructure. I have also begun the process of doing a complete redesign of our town's website. The new website will be more responsive and easier to use for our town employees and town residents. This is a major upgrade and will hopefully be up and running in the middle of May this year. We are currently in the design phase of the redesign and I am looking forward to our new website going live.

JIM RUSSELL

IT/GIS MANAGER

NORTH STONINGTON AFFORDABLE HOUSING COMMITTEE

The Community Development Block Grant has closed, expending the \$400,000 awarded the Town of North Stonington. This money was Federal Housing and Urban Development funds funneled through the CT Department of Housing. The final reporting of the expenditures is impressive in the number of households helped to maintain and upgrade their homes. A total of 16 owner occupied homes were upgraded; 8 were female headed households and 7 of the 16 were elderly. Sixteen homes were brought to the energy star rating and 5 had lead abated in their homes. Income levels of those helped ranged from two at 30% annual area median income (\$25,000), five at 30%-50% AMI (\$25,000-\$41,000) and nine at 50%-80% AMI (\$42,000-\$63,000). Area contractors were awarded \$319,000; pumping economic vitality into our area.

It may be possible for the Town to apply again for this grant if the community shows the need. If you believe you are eligible to receive an interest free loan for rehabilitation of your home, contact Juliet Hodge, Old Town Hall, 40 Main Street, to learn of the income guidelines and fill out a letter of intent.

The Affordable Housing Committee has openings. We meet the fourth Thursday of the month at 6:30pm at the High School Media Center. Please join us and look for our display at Chelsea Groton Bank in North Stonington that has information for first time homebuyers.



MARY ANN RICKER, CHAIRMAN

marykricker@comcast.net

CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Your commissioners have been reviewing and implementing our Plan of Conservation and Development which provides a foundation for our conservation goals and strategies. We have completed new trails for hiking on our town-owned open space properties. For three years, we have been identifying, measuring, and photographing many species of trees of significant size to warrant being a "Notable Tree" in North Stonington. We have been torn up by briars, muddled by wet lands, treated for Lyme Disease, and have walked some beautiful woodlands and back yards.

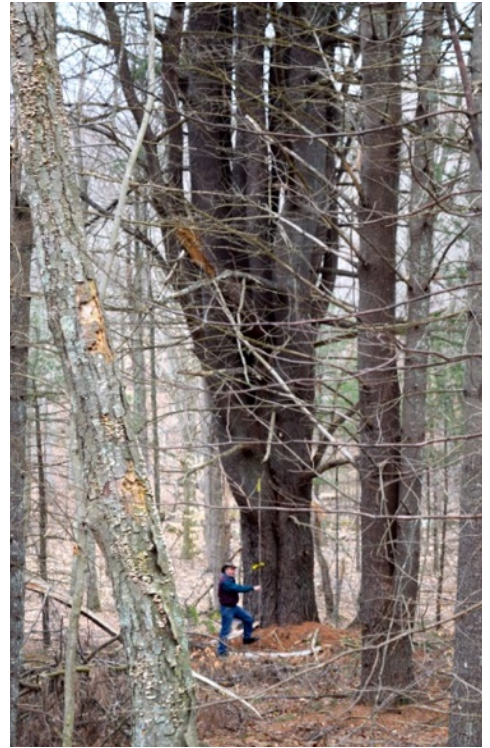
We don't pretend to have identified them all. There are over three times the tree species we have found out there. The challenge, however, is now established. Check the list located on our display in the library during April. See if you have another species not listed or a bigger size than we have found. They're there. Birches, willows and evergreens, for example, are in short supply.

While at the library, see why trees are of such importance to our climate and our environment: shade, soil erosion, wildlife habitat, temperature mitigation, furniture, fuel, and most importantly, oxygen to name but a few.

Although not quite a Connecticut State champion, a white cedar right here in Belle Cedar Swamp is within 6' of being the largest of its species being 68' tall. We have a white oak that is the 4th largest and a black oak that appears to be the 6th largest in the state. You can find our listings shortly on line at "Notable trees in Connecticut". If you have interest in conservation and some time to get involved on behalf of your town, please contact us (860-535-2426).

BILL RICKER, CHAIRMAN

WILLIAMRICKER@COMCAST.NET



NORTH STONINGTON LIONS CLUB

Celebrating 50 Years ~ March 1967-2017

Currently, our annual Town Solicitation is well underway. Your generous donations help us help others globally, as well as in our very own community. If you would like to send a donation to the club, you can mail it to North Stonington Lions Club, P.O. Box 100, North Stonington, CT 06359.

We are also collecting eyeglasses of all types throughout the year. You can drop your eyeglasses off at the collection boxes in the Chelsea Groton Bank or Wheeler Library. Last year, we collected over 300 pairs of glasses which have gone to those in need.

Stay tuned for a few fundraisers happening within the next few months. Events will be posted on our Facebook page and advertised through other media avenues. Additionally, we have begun planning the 51st annual Memorial Day Parade, which is scheduled for May 29th, 10:00 AM.

Our club meets the 4th Wednesday of the month, with the exception of November and December. If you are interested in becoming a Lion, please come and see what we are all about.

Contact us at Northstoningtonlions@gmail.com or denise.murphy@comcast.net. Thank you for your Support!

DENISE MURPHY, CLUB PRESIDENT

860-625-7363

SPRING EVENTS



April

1	SATURDAY	2 pm	NS Historical Society S. Main Homestead	Liberty & The Flintlock, Originals from the American Revolution	Page 5
3	MONDAY	7 pm	Wheeler Library	George Fellner: History of the Goodspeed Opera House	Page 7
5	WEDNESDAY	7 pm	Wheeler Library	Seed Lending Program Bill Paradis: Garden Planting	Page 7
12	WEDNESDAY	7 pm	Wheeler Library	Solar for the rest of us	Page 7
16	SUNDAY	6 am	Jonathan Edwards Winery	Easter Sunrise Service with NS Congregational Church	
22	SATURDAY	10 am	Benedict Benson Preserve Swantown Hill Rd.	Avalonia Formal dedication, followed by a guided hike	Page 3
30	SUNDAY	2 pm	NS Historical Society S. Main Homestead	Dot Reiser & the Cabin Fever Bluegrass Band: Civil War Songs	Page 5

May

3	WEDNESDAY	7 pm	Wheeler Library	Seed Lending Program	Page 7
7	SUNDAY	2 pm	Wheeler Library	Author Tom Ryan on his new book: <i>Will's Red Coat</i>	Page 7
10	WEDNESDAY	7 pm	Wheeler Library	Cut the Cord: a program on alternatives to cable	Page 7
11	THURSDAY	6-7:30 pm	NS Elementary School	NS Elementary School Art Show	Page 6
13	SATURDAY	9 am-1 pm	NS Elementary School	NS Garden Club Annual Plant Sale	Page 6
20	SATURDAY	9 am-2 pm	Wheeler Library	Country Market Day	Page 7
21	SUNDAY	10 am-1 pm	Wheeler Library	Rug Bazaar	Page 7
27	SATURDAY	8:30 am	NS Grange Fairgrounds	NSEF Annual Road Race	Page 9
29	MONDAY	10 am	NS Village	Annual Memorial Day Parade	Page 13

SPRING EVENTS



June

3	SATURDAY	8 am	Wheeler Library	Town-wide Tag Sale	Page 7
3	SATURDAY	10 am-12 pm	Town Hall	Rabies Clinic	Page 2
3	SATURDAY	10 am	End of Wyassup Lake Rd,	CT Trails Day: NS Citizens Land Alliance Walk in Pachaug Forest	Page 3
3	SATURDAY	10 am-12:30 pm	Swantown Hill Rd.	CT Trails Day: Avalonia Walk at Benedict Benson Preserve	Page 3
4	SUNDAY	1-2 pm	NS Hewitt Farm Rte 2 Entrance	CT Trails Day: Walking tour of special projects at the farm	Page 10
4	SUNDAY	4:30 PM	Wheeler Library	NS Historical Society presents Inauguration Concert of restored George P. Aster/London Piano	Page 5
16	FRIDAY	7 pm	NS Congregational Church	Bicycle Clinic for Youth by Riders of Bike & Build	
27	TUESDAY	6:30 pm	Wheeler Library	Family Bubble Program	Page 7
29	THURSDAY	6:30 pm	Wheeler Library	Family Science Program	Page 7



**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**



Final thoughts . . .

It's the time of year when the town budget for fiscal year 2017/2018 is being developed.

Our town will be affected by many of the financial decisions still to be made in Hartford. If you want to learn more about the budget before it's time to vote, sign up for "News & Announcements" on the town website: www.northstoningtonct.gov.

This will notify you of informative meetings,
as well as the budget referendum date when it is set.

We hope you will vote when the time comes.

Many thanks to our North Stonington Quarterly contributors and a special thanks to teacher Noel Devine and the students at the Wheeler High print shop.

These are all the folks who make it possible to produce the NSQ.

Nita Kincaid & Lisa Mazzella, NSQ Editors