



## COVENTRY COMMUNITY UPDATE:

May 2020

...a periodic update of news and events around town.

### MANAGER'S MONTHLY MEMO:

In spite of the traumatic changes brought on by COVID-19, the Town is working on other long-term issues, too. You will soon receive our spring newsletter to keep you in the loop, or you can read it [online](#).

COVID-19 has changed the way we are doing business, requiring a balance of public service and safe practices. I am proud of how our Town team and volunteers have responded. We have moved many meetings to the Zoom world and the public can watch just by clicking on a link on the agenda. It is much simpler than you may think. We are figuring out all the temporary rules required by the Governor's Executive Orders, which have prevented the normal Annual Town Meeting and budget vote. The newsletter describes the temporary process under which the Town Council will set a proposed budget, which will have online presentations and the ability to share feedback via email at [budgetcomments@coventryct.org](mailto:budgetcomments@coventryct.org), and possibly other means still being looked into. After consideration of the comments, the Council will finalize the budget in early June to get tax bills out on the normal schedule. The Council's goal is no overall tax increase.

The Council adopted an interest rate reduction for non-escrowed property taxes, which will lower the interest rate of .25% per month (3%/yr.) for 90 days to allow partial payment without the normal interest rates.

Please watch for news as we hopefully soon start shifting toward a recovery phase. You can sign up for [automatic alerts](#) regarding COVID-19 to stay informed. Please support our local businesses by buying gift cards, enjoying take-out or curbside pickup. They have been here for our community and we need to be here for them now.

We are waiting on any summer camp and other recreation issues as long as we can and working on developing safe practices. We know for many that summer camp is an important factor in child care and enrichment.

Key summer 2020 projects (some have had minor COVID delays):

- CGS parking lot replacement
- Folly Lane Bridge replacement
- Northfield subdivision drainage/road replacement
- Underground fiber: school-to-school project
- Community connectivity sidewalk on Main: Hemlock Point Road west to the vicinity of Winterberry
- Projects at CHS/middle school including HVAC updates, wall strengthening, asbestos removal, fire door upgrades
- Cumberland Farms has shut down all construction projects due to COVID. They will start back up when they feel it is safe for the workers.
- The microgrid project is still moving forward

(see newsletter for additional projects)

### UPCOMING TOWN MEETINGS:

**(Note: Town facilities are closed to the public due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Check the [Agenda Center](#) on the Town website for details about observing some meetings via the**

[Zoom](#) application. Town Council meetings can also be viewed live on Charter/Spectrum Channel 191 or via [YouTube](#). Comments for the Audience of Citizens portion of Town Council meetings can be emailed to [audience@coventryct.org](mailto:audience@coventryct.org).

- Mon, 5/4: Town Council meeting, 7:30 PM
- Mon, 5/11: Planning & Zoning Commission, 7 PM
- Thurs, 5/14: WPCA: 6 PM
- Thurs, 5/14: Board of Education, 7:30 PM
- Mon, 5/18: Town Council meeting, 7:30 PM
- Tues, 5/26: Planning & Zoning Commission, 7 PM
- Weds, 5/27: Inland Wetlands Agency, 7 PM
- Thurs, 5/28: Board of Education, 7:30 PM

For a complete monthly calendar of other Board & Commission events, click [here](#).

#### **HOLIDAYS:**

**Monday, 5/25: Memorial Day.** Town offices closed. Trash collection on [holiday](#) schedule.

#### **COMING EVENTS:**

**(Note: Many monthly and annual events are canceled due to the COVID-19 pandemic, including the Annual Town Meeting, the Budget Referendum, the Rabies Clinic, the Memorial Day Parade, and CoventryFest. The Police/Fire softball game originally scheduled for this month has been postponed until September 12<sup>th</sup>.)**

Weds 5/13: **Mobile Foodshare**, 10-10:30 AM, First Congregational Church, 1171 Main Street. An outdoor food distribution service for persons of low income. Text FOODSHARE to 85511 to receive the mobile schedule and cancellations directly on your phone. More [info](#).

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**FOOD BANK SEEKING DONATIONS:** The [Coventry Human Services Department](#) is seeking donations of non-perishable food to help residents in need. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the need is greater than ever. Items that are always appreciated include: canned tuna, peanut butter, jelly, macaroni & cheese, kid snacks, pasta and pasta sauce, canned veggies, cereal, and juice. Items can be dropped in the bin at the side vestibule at town hall. [Online donations](#) can also now be accepted.

#### **REGISTRATION FOR SUMMER RECREATION PROGRAMS IS POSTPONED:**

COVID-19 Update: Summer Registration is POSTPONED (Swim Level Testing & Summer Enrichment Programs remain open for registration). A new date will be announced as soon as is practical. Town Parks remain open, however playgrounds/park structures and basketball courts are CLOSED. Please continue to abide by CDC recommendations for social distancing at all times while at Town Parks (6-feet apart). Check the Parks & Recreation [web page](#) for updates.

**WANT TO CHANGE YOUR TIPPER BARREL SIZE?** In response to citizens' requests, we are offering the opportunity to exchange your tipper barrels at the reduced fee of \$25. If you would like to swap, contact the Tax Office at 860-742-4066 **before May 13, 2020** at 860-742-4066. **The swap order must be requested through the Tax Office and paid to All American Waste by May 13, 2020 in order to receive this reduced price.** The swap will occur the last two weeks of June in conjunction with the billing cycle for the new fiscal year. Consider upsizing your recycle barrel. There is no increase in your annual bill for a larger recycle barrel. Citizens

are reminded that the tipper barrels are owned by All American Waste, the Town's contracted hauler. The barrels must stay with the property to which they have been assigned. Each barrel is identified with a serial number for a specific property address. If you sell your house and /or move, **please do not take the barrels with you.** Your annual payment pays for the disposal/recycle service only.

**GET COUNTED IN THE 2020 CENSUS:** Coventry has accepted a challenge from the Town of Tolland to see who counts more. To win, we need to have more of our citizens complete the Census information by June 1 than Tolland. Benefits of winning: 1) No Census worker will come to your house, 2) Our Public Safety folks will get pizza, and 3) Bragging rights that we count more than Tolland. You all got the Census information mailed to your homes over a month ago. It only takes a few minutes to complete it. Complete the census [here](#).

**HOMEOWNER'S TAX RELIEF PROGRAM SUSPENDED:** Due to unforeseen issues with the COVID-19 virus and its impact on day-to-day business, the State of Connecticut Office of Policy and Management has issued guidance to Assessors that this year's filing for the tax relief program will be suspended. This means if you are currently receiving the benefit and received a letter from the Assessor's office telling you to re-file for the 2019 Grand List, you should not. If you already filed the paperwork, we will use the income you provided. If you have not yet filed, we will use the 2017-year income to calculate the new benefit. Everyone who received a benefit for last year's Grand List and still owns their property will get a benefit. Most benefits will not change. Taxpayers who wish to remain on the Local Tax program with the option where the Town gives you 50% of the State benefit without having to reimburse the Town will not have to do anything. If for some reason you would like to change the Local Tax program to the option which matches the State benefit and is filed as a lien against the property, you should call the Assessing Office at 860-742-4067 prior to May 15, 2020.

**COVENTRY SCHOLARSHIP FOUNDATION SEEKING DONATIONS:** Scholarship donor forms have been mailed to Coventry residents. Donors are reminded to return pledge forms by May 8<sup>th</sup> in order for donations to be used for this year's graduates. If anyone did not receive a form or has lost it, donations can be sent to Coventry Scholarship Foundation, 78 Ripley Hill Rd, Coventry, CT 06238 or [online](#). Due to the current situation, the Phonathon did not take place this spring. The Foundation is hoping that residents who usually get phone calls will continue to support scholarships for the Class of 2020. Any contribution is greatly appreciated.

**RELIEF FOR HOMEOWNERS EXPERIENCING CRUMBLING CONCRETE FOUNDATIONS:** Funds are available for reimbursement of testing expenses for households that may be affected by crumbling concrete foundations. More information about the crumbling concrete issue, including a link to financial assistance for repairs, can be found in the [Spotlight](#) column on the home page of the Town website.

*To list your event in this bulletin, contact Laura Stone at [LStone@coventryct.org](mailto:LStone@coventryct.org) by the 15<sup>th</sup> of the previous month.*