



Town of Avon Newsletter

ISSUE XLVIII

January 2016

New Day For the Avon Village Center

The Avon Planning and Zoning Commission, on October 20, 2015, acted to approve a revised Master Plan for approximately 97 acres of privately owned property in the Avon Village Center Zone. The property, owned by The Ensign Bickford Realty Co., is being purchased by the Carpionato Group of Providence, Rhode Island. The property involves several parcels of land located approximately between Route 44 (West Main Street), Route 10 (Simsbury Road), Fisher Driver and Climax Road.

The original plan adopted by the Commission in 2012 provided for a variety of uses including retail, residential and office in a village setting. The residential component of the development included over 400 residential units. The 2012 approved plan also called for provision of park and open space land as well as retaining the focus on the arts in buildings already located on the property. The intent of the 2012 plan was to create a new village center for Avon.

In July 2015, the property owner as applicant and the Carpionato Group as the potential developer presented a series of plans for the Commission's consideration at a series of public hearings. The Commission deliberated and made a detailed decision which will preserve much of the intent of the 2012 plan. The Commission was aware of the fact that the original zoning of this property was industrial or industrial park. Many of these uses would not be the ideal development for a village center today. The recent decision preserves the residential component of the approved plan. The shift in the proposed development does allow for more retail which will be designed and constructed in such a way as to promote walkability and sustainability in the center. When built out, it will also provide for a unique shopping environment on a scale which is compatible with an active, accessible small town center.

It is important to note the Farmington Valley Greenway/East Coast Greenway that currently provides for pedestrian, jogger, and bicycle access directly through the new center will be enhanced, made safer and will be a key focus of the detailed planning that will begin for this property in early 2016. The developer will be returning with detailed plans for the entire area on a parcel by parcel basis to determine the area specific detailed development plans in the near future.

The Avon Village Center plan will provide a significant increase in development activity to the Town center area. It is felt that this development activity will benefit the entire Town center as it will attract a larger number of shoppers to the general area. It should be known that the existing historic and natural resources, including Nod Brook and its associated wetland areas will be carefully protected while the development will allow members of the public to appreciate and experience the area for both shopping, arts and recreational activities in the near future.

FREE TAX SERVICE

Free tax help is available at the Avon Library. The library's AARP tax aide service is a free program designed to help people complete basic tax returns. Volunteers are IRS trained and certified every year. On Wednesday afternoons, one hour appointments are available at 12:30 p.m., 1:30 p.m., 2:30 p.m. and 3:30 p.m. from February 3, 2016 thru April 13, 2016. On Saturday mornings, first come, first served ONLY (no appointments taken) beginning at 10:15 a.m. and running until 1:15 p.m. from January 30, 2016 thru April 9, 2016. For more information call (860) 673-9712, Ext. 4.



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Avon Police Department 2015 Citizen Survey

The Avon Police Department 2015 Citizen Survey was conducted during the months of November and December 2015. As in years past, this survey was conducted online using a web-based survey tool. Questions for the 2015 survey were generated from previous surveys completed by both the Avon Police Department and other law enforcement agencies. Advertisement of this survey was conducted through various means, including a

half-page ad in the free community newspaper, via direct web link using the Town of Avon subscriber's email list, and on the Department's webpage. The goals of the survey were:

- ◆ To measure levels of citizen concerns for safety
- ◆ To measure levels of police performance
- ◆ To measure public confidence in the Department
- ◆ To provide an opportunity for public comment on police employee performance

There were a total of 82 respondents who participated in the survey. This is a slight improvement from the 2013 survey which yielded 74 respondents. This sample size represents approximately 0.5% of the community. This response was lower than the Department had hoped for; however, the responses received contained valuable information for the Department. Prior surveys conducted through online assessment and direct mailing have yielded similar response rates. Of the respondents that participated, 51% were female and 49% male. Twenty percent of respondents were under the age of 46, fifty one percent of respondents were between the age of 46-65, and twenty nine percent of respondents were 66 years of age or older. 91% of respondents were residents of Avon, 37% of respondents were property owners in Avon, 4% of respondents did not reside in town, and 1% of respondents were business owners in Avon.

Responses to the Avon Police Department 2015 survey were favorable overall. Much of the survey focused on citizen satisfaction regarding the timeliness of answering calls and responding to calls, response of the call, and overall professionalism shown by department employees. The responses to these questions were overwhelmingly favorable; very few respondents were dissatisfied. A larger sample size would help to further validate these results. Two notable areas for future improvement are increased traffic enforcement and more public information/social media. These are areas that were frequently mentioned in the comments section of the survey.

The favorable responses from this survey will allow the good work of the Department employees to be recognized. This survey also gives an opportunity for unfavorable responses to be explored and strategies implemented to help improve citizen satisfaction in the future. The results of this survey will be made available for the staff and public to review.

Annual Town Report & Calendar

Residents are reminded that a limited number of the Town's Annual Report and Calendar are available for pickup in the Town Manager's Office at Town Hall, or at the Avon Free Public Library, Senior Center and Landfill. Please come get one while they last!

Christmas Tree Pick Up



The Public Works Department began picking up Christmas trees on Monday, January 4, 2016. There is no established schedule with this pick up. Multiple passes will be made throughout the town until all trees have been picked up. Last day for pick up will be January 29th.



FY 2016/2017 Budget Process

The process is well underway to prepare the FY 2016/2017 budget that takes effect on July 1, 2016. All town departments have submitted their capital and operating budgets, and Town Council will review the Town Manager's proposed budget at a workshop scheduled for February 6th. Residents who are interested in participating in the process are encouraged to attend the following meetings, during which details of the budget will be discussed:

Town Council Budget Workshop: The workshop will be held on Saturday, February 6th in the Selectmen's Chamber at Town Hall beginning at 8:00 a.m. and ending in the early afternoon. The complete budget calendar is available on line at: www.avonct.gov.

Board of Finance Meetings: The public hearing on the budget will be held on Monday, April 11th at 7:00 p.m. at the Avon Senior Center. Residents wishing to provide the Board of Finance with input about the budget are welcomed to attend.

News from Social Services

CT Energy Assistance Program: The State of Connecticut can help households pay for primary heating bills (i.e. oil, propane, electric, and gas). To be eligible, household income must be less than 150% of the federal poverty income guidelines and the applicant must meet a certain limit for assets. If you have never applied and/or are interested in receiving more information on this program, please visit our website, under the Social Services link ("Energy Assistance & Renters Rebate"), or call our office at (860) 409-4346 to see if you may qualify and to schedule an appointment.

Operation Fuel: Provides one-time assistance with heating bills for those households who may be slightly over income/asset limits for other government programs. More information is available through Gifts of Love at (860) 676-2323.

Avon Library Receives \$15,000 In Grants

Avon Free Public Library was the recipient of three recent grants, totaling more than \$15,000! The Association of Library Services for Children awarded Avon Library a \$7,500 Curiosity Creates grant, sponsored by Disney, to expand our Open Art Studio for children. The library also received \$5,553 from the National Endowment for the Humanities to assess and improve the preservation practices in place in the Marian Hunter History Room. On the local level, the Avon Education Foundation awarded the library \$3,300 to provide cardholders access to LyndaLibrary, a collection of thousands of self-paced online courses. Visit the library's website at www.avonctlibrary.info for more details on the children's art studio, the local history room, LyndaLibrary, or any of their other exciting programs.

AVON FREE PUBLIC LIBRARY EVENTS

- ◆ The library is open on Sundays again (1:00-5:00 PM through April) and that means a return of the Friends of the Library's Sundays at Three music series! Upcoming performers include pianist Paul Bisaccia on January 24, The Ross Novgrad Jazz Trio on February 7 and winner of the 2015 Connecticut Young Piano Competition Joon Yoon on February 21. Check out the entire schedule at <http://www.avonctlibrary.info/PDFS/2016ConcertsFlyer.pdf>.
- ◆ Join us for a Valentine's Family Dance on Saturday, February 13 at 3:00 PM in the Avon Library Community Room. All ages are welcome. Wear your party clothes and your dancing shoes!



Avon Chamber of Commerce News

Many things are happening at the Avon Chamber of Commerce that we are excited to share with the greater Avon community.

The Chamber's ongoing LocalFirst program encourages residents to patronize the abundance of local retailers, restaurants and professionals when choosing where to shop, dine or locate a service. One of the ways this is done is

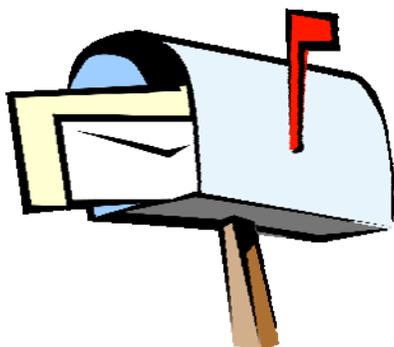


by offering a **Local First Key Card**, free to every resident, which can be used at many of their member businesses for extra discounts. For a list of participating businesses or to locate a local business, please visit www.avonchamber.com/member_rewards.asp. Remember - a significant amount of the money you spend at local businesses stays in the community and is reinvested in support of our schools, police and fire departments, civic organizations, as well as other area businesses.

Are you considering starting a business or just looking to reinvent yourself? In February, the Chamber's Women's Networking Group – A.W.E. **Avon Women Entrepreneurs** - is launching their **Sharing Wisdom Series - Business Mentoring Program**. Join seasoned, female entrepreneurs and professionals as they share their expertise and insights with you. The first topic is *Do What You Love - Love What You Do, How to Reinvent Yourself*. As of this publication, the first class is tentatively scheduled to be

held on Tuesday, February 9, 5:30-7:00 PM, at the Avon Free Public Library. For up-to-the-minute information on this and future classes, please visit www.avonchamber.com or <http://www.avonclibrary.info>. Lastly, the Chamber recently celebrated 50 years of facilitating the growth and success of area businesses through advocacy, education and marketing initiatives. As a legacy of this milestone, the Chamber is pleased to announce a new collaboration with **Junior Achievement of Southwest New England**. Attracting and retaining young professionals has become a primary concern for businesses throughout the state. The goal of this alliance is to provide a greater knowledge of the business community to Avon students by expanding their access to local businesses. With an anticipated launch at the beginning of the 2016-2017 school year, the Chamber is in the process of creating a framework of programs designed to help foster a better understanding by students of the careers and business opportunities available to them and the skills necessary in order to succeed in today's work world. This effort marks the first time the two organizations have worked together in order to address this critical need by developing ways to both inspire young talent at an early stage and ultimately encourage them to remain in the state after graduation.

The Avon Chamber of Commerce, with approximately 350 members, is a vibrant, innovative, and active not-for-profit business/economic development organization that achieves its goals without use of local, state or federal funding. If your business is interested in learning more about or becoming part of the Chamber, please visit www.avonchamber.com or call (860) 675-4832, Ext. 1.



The Public Works Department would like to remind residents that, in accordance with Town Policy, the Town of Avon is responsible for mailbox damage **only** if a plow makes contact with a mailbox. **For a complete description of the Town's Policy, please log onto www.avonct.gov.**

IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS REGARDING INFORMATION PRINTED IN THIS NEWSLETTER, CALL THE TOWN MANAGER'S OFFICE, AVON TOWN HALL, AT (860) 409-4300.



Real Estate & Supplemental Motor Vehicle Tax

The second installment of the real estate taxes and supplemental motor vehicle taxes, which came due January 1, 2016, must be paid by February 1st to avoid State mandated interest charges. The Revenue Office is open Monday to Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Town Offices will be closed January 18th in observance of Martin Luther King, Jr. Day.

Payments can also be made online. Go to www.avonct.gov and click the green button, "Pay Taxes Online" in the middle of the home page. Any questions? Please call the Collector of Revenue Office at (860) 409-4306. Thank You!

Ice Dams—Causes & Prevention

Though we don't have much snow, winter is here which means snow is on its way so please make sure your house is prepared so you don't end up going through spring making repair after repair. This article will inform you on how to prevent ice dams and what to do if you get one.

What is an ice dam? An ice dam develops when there is snow on a roof and there is some differential heating of the roof. Usually the heat is coming from inside and it melts the snow and the liquid runs down the roof toward the eaves where there is no longer enough heat; the water then refreezes. This leads to icicles coming off your roof which—though they look really cool—can cause a lot of damage. How does it happen? There are two ways for the snow to melt. The first way is through heat loss from the house. The second way is by letting heavy snow pile up on your roof. The Eskimos knew that snow is not a terrible insulator. If you pile up two feet of snow, you have more insulation than by code for a wall. The snow closer to the roof is going to be closer to the inside temperature because of the snow's insulation. The only way to counteract this is to have more insulation in the attic. Icicles can cause all sorts of problems. Once the icicles form from the melting and refreezing, they can block water from dripping off the roof. The draining water hits the ice dam, backs up under the roof shingles, finds cracks and openings in the roofing, and eventually manifests itself as an interior water leak. Last winter, which we know was particularly bad, we saw many people who needed to have their entire drywall ceiling replaced on the second floor or needed their electrical system repaired. These types of repairs can cost a significant amount of money.

How can you prevent this from happening? The most important thing is to prevent warm air leakage from inside the house getting into the roof system. Before it is too late and winter is fully upon us, you should get your roof checked to see if there are air leaks. The Eversource Energy Efficiency program could help you with that. Or if you go outside and look at your roof, when it has frost on it, take a picture and look where there might be strange lines where there is no frost. Something is causing the frost to melt and that's an indication of where the snow will melt. A second thing you can do is to get more insulation in the attic. This is pretty easy if you have a flat attic and more difficult if you have a cathedral ceiling. A third strategy, not of equal value, is proper roof venting. It will allow enough outside air traveling up the underside of a roof deck so the temperature of either side of the roof assembly will be what the outside temperature is and you won't have melting unless it is a warm day. This will make your problems worse, however, if you haven't already blocked air leakage and checked for proper insulation.

How can you fix the problem if you already have it? Commonly known fixes include metal roofing and heater strips. Metal roofing is installed at the bottom two or three feet of a roof near the eaves with the idea that the snow will slide off, however oftentimes it does not. Heater strips turn on when the temperature gets below a certain degree, which melts the snow on the roof. These are short term solutions but will not fix the problem.

In conclusion, make sure your home doesn't have air leaks and you have proper insulation, and keep an eye on your roof throughout the winter months.

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IMPORTANT DATES

Town Council Budget Workshop
Saturday, February 6, 2016
Town Hall - Selectmen's Chamber
8:00 a.m.

FY 2016/2017
Annual Budget Hearing
Monday, April 11, 2016
Avon Senior Center
7:00 p.m.