



Town of Avon Newsletter

ISSUE XLII

January 2014

FY 2014/2015 Budget Process

The process is well underway to prepare the FY 2014/2015 budget that takes effect on July 1, 2014. 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 8th. 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 8th 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.town.avon.ct.us.

Board of Finance Meetings: The public hearing on the budget will be held on Monday, April 7th 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.

Solar System Request for Proposals at Town and BOE Sites

As recommended by the Avon Clean Energy Commission and authorized by the Avon Town Council, the Town of Avon and Avon Board of Education are currently engaged in a RFP process to solicit proposals from solar developers for possible solar system installations on Town and/or School facilities. If a viable project emerges from the RFP process, there would be no out-of-pocket expense to the Town. The solar developer would provide and install the system at their expense and derive revenue through two sources: the sale of the electricity generated by the system to the Town and the sale of the ZRECs (Zero Emission Renewable Energy Credits) to the utilities. The Town benefits in several ways: the cost of the electricity generated by the system will be lower than if purchased from CL&P; using solar energy (a renewable energy source) will assist the Town in achieving its clean energy goals adopted in the Avon Comprehensive Energy Plan and under the Clean Energy Communities Program; and the schools will be able to utilize software to educate students about the clean power produced locally.



Town Receives \$10,000 Bright Ideas Grant

On December 4, 2013, Town Manager Brandon Robertson and Avon Clean Energy Commission Chair Bernie Zahren attended an event at the State Capitol recognizing Avon as one of 35 communities to have earned a Bright Ideas Grant under the Clean Energy Communities (CEC) Program (which Avon joined in June 2013). Participation in the CEC Program requires that the Town commit to a non-binding, 2018 deadline to reduce municipal building energy consumption by 20% and to purchase or produce 20% of its energy from renewable sources, i.e. solar, geothermal, etc. As a CEC participant, Avon qualified for its first \$10,000 grant based on points earned by residents, businesses, and municipal facilities for energy related improvements and participation in energy related programs. As additional points are earned, the Town may qualify for additional grants. The initial \$10,000 grant was used to offset the cost of a more efficient HVAC system at Town Hall.

Inside this issue:

New Year, New Look at Fisher Farm on Tillotson Road	2
Real Estate & Supplemental Motor Vehicle Tax	3
News from Social Services	3
From the Avon Volunteer Fire Department	4
Avon Senior Center Events	4
FEMA Flood Mapping-Does it Affect You?	5



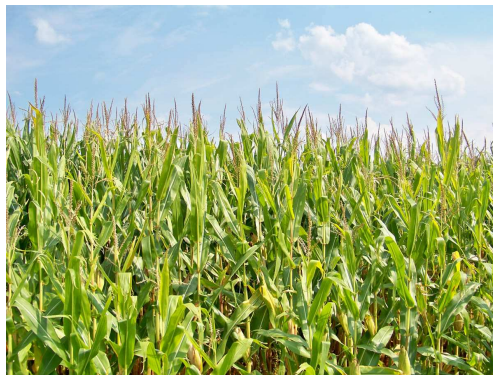
New Year, New Look at Fisher Farm on Tillotson Road

Although you won't be able to tell for a while (thanks to Mother Nature), as of January 1, 2014, there are two new farmers working the Town owned parcels on both sides of Tillotson Road and north of Old Farms Road behind Fisher Meadows. These farmers were selected through separate RFP processes conducted over the past year and the Town is excited to partner with both as they carry on the rich tradition of agriculture on those properties in Avon. Here is a snapshot of both farmers, where the parcels they will be farming are located, what they plan to do produce, and what their additional responsibilities to the Town are.

Who: Rodger and Isabelle Phillips, operating as Sub Edge Farm (the original property name under Theodate Pope) and living in the farmhouse owned by the Town of Farmington (across the Town line on Tillotson). The Phillips farming experience includes Grow Hartford, the Urban Oaks Organic Farm of New Britain, and the Community Farm of Simsbury.

Where: 47 acres of open space and farmland in Avon located to the west of Tillotson Road as well as an additional 25 acres (approx.) of farmland in Farmington.

What: Organic farming operation growing vegetables, small fruit, flowers and herbs as well as other cover crops; a diverse selection of heritage breed poultry, cattle, and other farm animals; Community Supported Agriculture shares; sales at farmers' markets and to local restaurants; and farm tours, workshops, and presentations. In addition, the Phillips will mow roadsides abutting their parcels and maintain trails located on the property. In lieu of payment, the Phillips will be providing fresh produce to local food pantries and the public schools.



Who: Dan Logue of Logue Farms, Inc. in Woodbury, CT. A fourth generation family farm specializing in dairy products, but also offering pick-your-own pumpkins on weekends in October with free hayrides to the fields as well as a corn maze and other family friendly fall activities (in Woodbury). Mr. Logue formerly farmed the property in Avon from 1999-2001.

Where: 127 acres of open space and farmland located to the north of Old Farms Road and to the east of Tillotson Road.

What: Conventional corn and hay to be used to supply his family's dairy farm operations in Woodbury. In addition, Mr. Logue will mow roadsides abutting the parcels in his care and maintain open space buffers between existing tree lines and his farming operations. The three-year lease fee Mr. Logue will be paying to the Town equates to approximately \$25,000 and will be deposited to the Fisher Meadows Special Revenue Fund, with the proceeds to be reinvested into the Fisher Meadows Recreation Area.

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, 2014, must be paid by February 3rd 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 on January 20th in observance of Martin Luther King, Jr. Day.

Payments can also be made online. Go to www.town.avon.ct.us and click the blue button, "View or Pay Your Bill Online" on the bottom left of the home page. Any questions? Please call the Revenue Office at (860) 409-4306. Thank you.

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.

Prescription Drug Discount Card Program: The Town of Avon has been partnering with the Connecticut Conference of Municipalities (CCM) and ProAct, Inc., enabling Avon residents who lack coverage to save an estimated 20% on brand name drugs and up to 70% on generic prescription purchases, as well as to receive vision, LASIK, and hearing product and services discounts! Discounts cards are available for print at www.ctrxdiscoutcard.com.

Pasta Dinner to Benefit Fuel Bank: The Memorial United Methodist Church at 867 West Avon Road is having its annual pasta dinner! Pasta with homemade sauce, salad, bread and homemade desserts will be served. The event will be held on Friday, January 24th from 5:30 p.m. to 7:00 p.m., donations at the door, and all proceeds benefit the Avon and Farmington Fuel Banks!

Annual "Give Kids a Smile Day": The ADA's annual event will be held on Friday, February 7th from noon to 5:00 p.m., at the office of Dr. Graham and Dr. Orr, at the Avon Wellness Center Dental Associates, 100 Simsbury Road. FREE dental care is provided to children under 18 years of age, who qualify; appointments are required! Please call (860) 606-0066 to see if your child qualifies and to make an appointment. More information is available on the Town of Avon's Social Services webpage at www.town.avon.ct.us.

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!



The Public Works Department would like to advise 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.town.avon.ct.us.**



From the Avon Volunteer Fire Department

Snow Removal Reminder - As the snow piles up, please make sure to dig out any and all fire hydrants near your home or office. It is imperative that firefighters be able to access the hydrants quickly when needed.

Citizens Fire Academy - Have you ever wondered what an Avon Volunteer Firefighter does? Would you like to find out? Join the Avon Citizens Fire Academy and see for yourself in a fun-filled environment. Students in the Citizens Fire Academy learn how to put on firefighter's gear, use a fire hose, and rescue a victim during a mock automobile accident.

The Citizens Fire Academy meets on Thursdays from 6:30-9:00 p.m. Classes begin April 3, 2014, and run through May 22, 2014. The mock automobile accident takes place during a special Saturday morning class which also includes the involvement of other emergency services such as Life Star helicopter, AMR ambulance and Rescue 2, a paramedic unit from UCONN Health Center (unless on medical calls).

Among the many topics to be covered in 2014 are fire behavior, hazardous materials, training of firefighters, tours of all 4 firehouses, fire prevention, hoses and water flow, and the history of the AVFD.

Application deadline: March 21, 2014. To request an application for the 2014 Citizens Fire Academy, please call the AVFD headquarters on Darling Drive at (860) 677-2644 or download one at www.avonvfd.org.

Avon Senior Center Events

Friday, February 14, 2014 at 11:00 a.m. - "Love Your Neighbor" Day

This event is a collaboration between Avon and Canton Senior Centers. Come celebrate good fortune and good neighbors with friends at the Canton Community Center. The Canton Community Nursery School will visit with songs and Valentines, and a delicious meal of Panera soup, bread, and salad will be served. Please sign up and pay \$3.00 before February 6, 2014.

Friday, March 21, 2014 at 12:00 p.m. - "Spring Fling"

Join the Avon Senior Center and Canton Senior Services as we enjoy this special event together. We will celebrate the coming of warmer weather by having a Spring Fling. A delicious meal will be served by Cherry Brook Health Care Center. Please sign up and pay \$3.00 before March 13, 2014.

For more information on these upcoming events and other scheduled programs, call the Avon Senior Center at (860) 675-4355.



SAVE THE DATE!

A Special Community Event—A Conversation with the Lacks Family • Friday, March 14, 2014 at 7:00 p.m.

Join us for an evening of conversation with two members of the Lacks family to honor Henrietta's legacy – her life, death and immortal contribution to modern medical research. The event will be moderated by Dr. Robbin Smith, of Central Connecticut State University. A reception for the Lacks family and book signing of The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks will be held immediately following the discussion. *This event will be held at the Avon Senior Center to accommodate a large audience.*



FEMA Flood Mapping—Does it Affect You?

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) is the national agency responsible for identifying flood hazard zones across the United States. Prior to 2008, flood zones were shown on maps called Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs). Flood zones were (ideally) delineated on FIRMs as a result of flood studies and augmented with local experience; however, flood studies are often time consuming and expensive to perform, so there are many areas in which flood zones were delineated as “approximate,” taking topography and (hopefully) local experience into account.

The printed FIRMs were difficult to work with when trying to determine if a property or building was inside a flood zone, or Special Flood Hazard Area (SFHA). To make such a determination using the old FIRMs, one had to get a copy of the map panel covering the area in question, and using an engineer’s scale, measure several points from known references to triangulate to the point of interest. This also meant that the point of interest had to be available on a scalable map. Accordingly, these kinds of reviews were often not performed and properties were ignored relative to flood risk.

With the proliferation of digital mapping technology, FEMA decided to “digitize” their FIRM maps so that they may be more accessible. The project, which has been underway for several years, resulted in development of digital mapping layers for Hartford County which were delivered to Avon in 2008. FEMA believed that the digital FIRM (DFIRM) products were identical to the hardcopy FIRMs for our area since they did not perform any additional technical studies here that would have caused revisions to the mapping. We know from experience that there were areas in which the digitizing resulted in erroneous shifting of the SFHA lines. We in Engineering discovered these errors and communicated them to FEMA, resulting in map revisions. FEMA, lending institutions, and insurance companies now have digital mapping programs that allow them to quickly and easily compare properties with the FEMA DFIRM data to determine those properties that are within or very close to SFHAs. They use this information in many cases to require flood insurance.

The Town of Avon utilizes an electronic mapping program known as a Geographic Information System (GIS) to manage utilities, produce maps, and assist residents with a wide variety of spatial needs. Among the layers of interest are property lines, roads, buildings, storm and sanitary sewers, and a host of other information. One important layer that we have is digital scans of topographic maps that were produced as part of a town-wide mapping project in 1984. These maps are 30 years old, so they do not include development in Town that has occurred since that time. We are able to bring in the FEMA digital data as an overlay to the Town’s mapping layers. Accordingly we can help determine properties that are within SFHAs, and those that should not be due to elevation information in 1984. For older homes and businesses, this has proven to be a valuable capability.

Many residents in Avon have received notice that their homes are within the 1% chance of flood SFHA (aka the 100 year flood zone). As a result, these residents are being required by their lending institutions to purchase flood insurance – often at a cost of several thousands of dollars per year. In many cases, these homes are elevationally above the 1% chance of flood SFHA! FEMA has provided a mechanism for property owners to demonstrate that their properties should not require the insurance through an application process known as a Letter of Map Amendment (LOMA) request. The Avon Engineering Department has assisted dozens of residents with completing LOMA applications and successfully securing relief from flood insurance. FEMA provides instructions and the forms to complete a LOMA on their web site. The process involves providing some basic property information including a copy of the most recent deed, a copy of the Avon Assessor’s map panel, and a certified elevation of the lowest adjacent grade (LAG) where the building of interest meets the earthen grade. The LAG must be determined by a registered professional land surveyor. Residents interested to learn more about the process are invited to contact the Avon Engineering office at 860.409.4322.



Web sites of interest include: <http://www.fema.gov>

http://Hazards.fema.gov/FEMAportal/WPS/portal/NFHLWMShttp://www.town.avon.ct.us/Public_Documents/index—
The Town of Avon home page. Click on the GIS WEBSITE graphic to enter the Town’s internet GIS mapping site.

ISSUE XLII
January 2014

Avon Town Council
Town of Avon
60 West Main Street
Avon, CT 06001

Phone: (860) 409-4300
Fax: (860) 409-4368
www.town.avon.ct.us



PRST STD
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
AVON, CT
PERMIT No. 14

RURAL PATRON
OR
BOXHOLDER
AVON, CT—06001



IMPORTANT DATES

Town Council Budget Workshop
Saturday, February 8, 2014
Town Hall - Selectmen's Chamber
8:00 a.m.

FY 2014/2015
Budget Public Hearing
Monday, April 7, 2014
Avon Senior Center
7:00 p.m.