

Town of Stonington

Quarterly Newsletter



Summer 2023

There have been many positive happenings in Town thanks to the dedicated work of many of our Town staff, elected officials, volunteers and our extensive nonprofit and business community. We continue to welcome feedback on further potential enhancements and ideas. We are also always happy to set-up a time to connect in-person or on a call to discuss any existing projects, new ideas or areas of concern.

Thank you Stonington.

Dear Stonington Residents,

We are grateful for all the time and effort put forth by so many people working to improve our community. So many positive aspects of our community are thanks to the efforts of our staff at Town Hall, Human Services, the Transfer Station, Public Works, the Police Department, and Stonington Schools, as well as the work done by hundreds of volunteers who give their time and knowledge to our Boards and Commissions, as well as our local nonprofits. Together, we have all been able to make so many positive contributions within the community.



Below you can find just a handful of these positive moments, along with a few updates we thought you may be interested in.



Community partners came together in May for a Mental Health Roundtable to raise awareness, advocate for change and engage in meaningful dialogue on how we can continue to improve as a community and a State on mental health issues. We heard about issues ranging from isolation and loneliness to caregiver burnout to the impacts of social media. Further efforts are underway to move forward suggestions raised for both short- and longer-term actions within the community.

With over 300 people in attendance, the Stonington Veterans Monument was dedicated on June 14. The monument honors Veterans from World War I and on who have called the Town of Stonington home. Visitors at the site can utilize a technology with their smart device that brings them to the dedicated website. The website allows visitors to view or search a list of over 6,000 Veteran names, watch interviews with local Veterans & learn about the artwork and history of the project. It also allows for names of Veterans to continue to be added over the years. To learn more visit www.stoningtonveteransmonument.org.



Construction began on the Route 1 Sidewalk project linking the high school with downtown Pawcatuck in July of 2023. The \$1.38 million project was made possible due \$600,000 in Urban Act Funds with an additional \$700,000 contributed by Stonington tax payers. The project is due to be completed this Fall. This local-state funding partnership made this project possible, and we look forward to celebrating this community project once the sidewalks are completed. As part of our ongoing community connectivity and complete streets efforts, we continue to explore areas of the town where further investments are needed and are working to create a proactive, planning tool to guide future efforts.

At the end of June, the First Selectman had the honor of swearing-in three new officers, and the Board welcomed the three new officers to the Stonington team. Later that day, the Police Department held a small event to recognize the efforts of a number of different officers during specific events in our community and the upcoming retirement of another dedicated officer. The recurring theme throughout was that of family, compassion and dedication to service.



Over the Summer there were a number of wonderful community events that Town officials had the pleasure of participating in. Including, a few pictured below. 1- Town and School officials came together to celebrate 2023 Stonington High School graduates. 2- A dedication ceremony for the Venture Smith Freedom Site at Barn Island. The site sign is about a half-mile from the southeast parking area, located off of Stewart Road. Thank you to CT DEEP and all who made this possible. 3- The community celebrated Stonington Little League's 70th Anniversary. 4- The community also came out to celebrate Stonington Ambulance



Our Solid Waste Department launched yet another new, sustainability initiative aimed at further reducing our waste stream with the plastic film recycling program. After taking input from a resident, the team did additional research and was able to then implement this new pilot program. Since its inception in May, 2,650 lbs. of film recycling have been collected and recycled. Residents can bring their plastic film (i.e. bread bags, produce bags, dry cleaning bags) to Town Hall or the Transfer Station to get recycled. We have also purchased three sets of trash & recycling containers made available through the CT Nip Surcharge and Disbursement fund. In a collaboration between the Solid Waste and

Public Works departments, the two-bin recycling receptacles have been placed at the playground at the Town Docks, the tennis court at Spellman Park and at Donahue Park. And finally, the composting program continues to be successful with over 166 tons of food waste diverted from our trash!



A second in-person meeting was held with the CT DOT, Town and Borough officials and staff, along with our Police and Fire partners regarding the Alpha Ave Viaduct. The DOT emphasized the importance of local partnerships and after hearing concerns about the project, came back to the Town with a new option to not permanently close Town roads. The expected lifespan for the replaced bridge would be 75 years and could ensure future generations have lower costs for bridge maintenance and repair. A draft preliminary design ready for public input should be ready in the summer of 2024, with final preliminary designs completed that Fall. A semi-final design

should be done by 2025, with design completion in late summer of 2026. Construction would start in spring of 2027.

Stonington was one of 15 municipalities awarded funding by the Department of Economic and Community Development to help remediate and redevelop vacant and blighted brownfield properties across the state. The Board of Selectmen supported an effort to put forward an application of \$200,000 to conduct assessment activities at the former 5.5-acre industrial site at 21 Pawcatuck Ave to potentially enable residential use. Redevelopment ideas were presented by the developer to Planning and Zoning in early July. Work remains ongoing, and we will keep residents updated on progress with this important redevelopment opportunity.





The community came together to celebrate our local fishing fleet, fishing families and those who were lost during the 70th anniversary of the Blessing of the Fleet. There were events Thursday thru Sunday, and included boat tours, educational talks, a community run and the Blessing itself.



A recent meeting to discuss how we can continue to effectively reach as many citizens as possible for emergency notifications occurred with our new Emergency Operations Manager, Captain Schneider and emergency management team including representatives from our Police Department, IT and First Selectman’s Office. The Stonington Alerts systems allows us to keep you informed with important information such as emergencies, weather related events, major detours, resources and more. As a reminder, ***if we can’t reach you, we can’t alert you!*** Please take a moment to sign up for Stonington Alerts at www.stonington-ct.gov/home/pages/stonington-alerts

After securing over \$1.9 million to address a long-standing public safety concern, the Stonington team worked to finalize all the grant requirements, including an environmental review that was approved. In August, another milestone for the water loop project was completed with a RFQ for engineering and design work underway. The goal to have an engineering firm on board to start the design work by Fall looks to be on track, with construction on the loop hopefully starting in the Summer of 2024.



The community came together again to mark International Overdose Awareness Day. Over the course of the event, one clear message came through- it will take all of us, moving together, if we are going to make a difference. We heard from speakers about the devastating impacts of addiction, as well as the hope and potential for preventing future tragedy. The work being done by so many different individuals and groups was inspiring. Working together, we know we can make a positive difference. If you, or someone you know, is struggling, please know your community is here for you. To learn more about resources or support available, please reach out to our team at Human Services or Ledge Light

Health District. We also thank all the Fire Houses who agreed to partner with the Town in putting up Narcan Kits, and our frontline responders who work to help people in our community.

Thank you, Stonington,

*Deborah Downie
Selectwoman*

*Danielle Chesebrough
First Selectman*

*June Strunk
Selectwoman*