

Town of Stonington

Monthly Newsletter



Photo: BurkhalterPhotos.com

April 2022

Thanks are due again to Morgan Browning, a Stonington High School student, for her continued collaboration on the monthly newsletter- and to all the staff and volunteers for their update submissions! We continue to welcome feedback on further potential enhancements and ideas.

-Getting to Know Us-

A look at the people behind our Departments and Boards.

By Morgan Browning

Shellfish Commission Chair, Donald Murphy



Town of Stonington Shellfish Commission

Donald Murphy is the Chair of the Shellfish Commission. He was born in New London and brought up near to the ocean. He was asked in 1983 to join the Shellfish Commission because there was a vacancy. He thought it was a good opportunity. I asked Don how he likes to spend his free time, he said that he is now retired so he has a flexible schedule, which allows him to invest time into different activities. He enjoys gardening, working around the house, going out on his boat, and volunteering with the soup kitchen and food pantry. One thing that he did not think people would know about him is that he tracked icebergs for a living. He was an Oceanographer and worked for the International Ice Patrol that is run by the Coast Guard. This patrol was created after the sinking of the Titanic. He spent 28 years tracking icebergs in the Atlantic. He also has engaged with Stonington High School students, visiting to teach students in Oceanography about the Shellfish Commission.



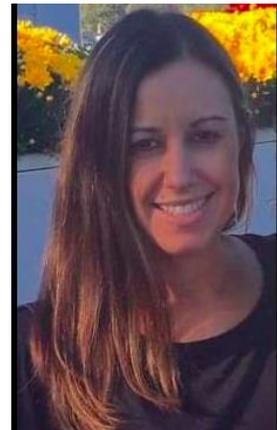
Learning more about the Shellfish Commission



Donald Murphy, Chair of the Shellfish Commission says his favorite thing he does with the Shellfish commission is transplant clams and oysters into sea beds. They plant them to make them available for recreational shellfishing areas. There are few spots in town designated as recreational areas, so they are used heavily. The Shellfish Commission buys shellfish from commercial organizations and organizes two days a year to go out and restock the shellfishing areas. Once in May and once in September. It is a large volunteer activity that takes about half a day. Several boats go out and help assist in scattering the shellfish around the beds.

Director of Human Services, Leanne Theodore

Leanne Theodore is our Director of the Human Services Department. Leanne has been a Stonington resident all of her life. She said that she always had an interest in social work. After she graduated with a bachelor's degree in the field of social work she began working as the Human Services Director's Administrative Assistant from 2003-2006. She then moved up to the Youth & Family Services Administrator, spending nine years with this position until 2015 when she became Director of the Human Services Department. When she is not working she loves to be outside and active. She enjoys hiking, boating, taking care of her three cats, and spending time with her four-year-old niece. At the end of every interview, I love to ask "What is one thing people might not know about you?" She replied that she loves classic muscle cars. She has a 1977 Corvette and would love to master the skill of driving stick shift.



Learning more about the Human Services Department



Leanne says she wishes that more people knew that they do not need to wait until they are going through a crisis to see what the Department provides. She is hoping that more people in our town are aware of all the different kinds of work the Human Service Department does. The taxpayers' money funds the majority of these programs and

Town Department Updates

Assessment Department

The Department of Assessment would like to remind all residents that the **Homeowners-Totally Disabled Program** ends on May 13, 2022. If you are on the program and this is your year to refile or if you are new to the program, please make sure you contact the office prior to that date. The deadline to submit applications for the **Additional Veteran's Program** is September 30, 2022. Please contact the Department of Assessment at 860-535-5098 or assessor@stonington-ct.gov for more information or to schedule an appointment.

Income and Expense statements were mailed out to all owners of primarily commercial rental property in April. The forms are due by June 1, 2022. Any owner who fails to file the form, or who files late, shall be subject to a one-year penalty assessment equal to ten percent of the net assessed value of the property per CGS 12-63c. Property owners who need an extension must request it in writing no later than May 1, 2022.

Revaluation 2022: Representatives of Vision Government Solutions will be working around town doing inspections of properties that have sold during the last year and properties that have open building permits. This process requires the interior and exterior inspection of your property including exterior measurements. All personnel information will also be posted on the town website and will also be on file with the police department. If you wish to confirm the identity of any of the revaluation personnel, please contact the Assessor's Office during town hall business hours 8:30am to 4:00pm. All property owners and tenants are asked to cooperate with data collectors to ensure that accurate information is used in the revaluation process.

Planning Department

Zoning Regulations Comprehensive Update

A request for proposals was advertised in early autumn. Proposals were received and ranked by a Selection Panel who then chose a firm to lead this project; a contract is currently being finalized. This is expected to be a two-year process, so please stay engaged on this exciting journey.

Development and Zoning Regulation Proposals

Recent land use approvals include the following:

- Special Permit application for reuse of the former Sailor Ed's restaurant with an additional retail use at 29 Old Stonington Rd.
- Site Plan application for the 123-unit Harbor Heights II apartment building as part of the Perkins Farm development off Jerry Browne Rd

The Department and the town's various land use boards are currently reviewing several development applications including the following:

- Special Permit application for 100 unit mixed-income residential development proposed for 111 South Broad St, Pawcatuck. Planning and Zoning Commission Public Hearing scheduled for 5/17/22.
- Special Permit application for a proposed gas station and convenience store at 54 South Broad St., Pawcatuck. Planning and Zoning Commission Public Hearing scheduled for 5/17/22.

Affordable Housing Plan

Using a grant from the CT Department of Housing, the town has developed a final draft of an Affordable Housing Plan for the community. As per State Statutes, the town is required to prepare and adopt such a plan every 5 years. A public hearing for this plan was held on April 5. The Planning and Zoning Commission is currently modifying the plan after hearing public comment. The final plan will be voted on by the Commission in the coming week(s).

Request for Proposals – Former Stillmanville Mill Brownfield Assessment Grant

The Town applied in Round 13 and was granted \$139,000 to fund the Brownfield Assessment of the Former Stillmanville Mill Property at 75 Stillman Avenue. Due to the lien the town holds on

the property, the town is allowed to access the privately held property for this purpose. According to the State's guidelines for this grant, a request for proposals was advertised to a pre-qualified group of bidders who hold a specific license to perform this type of environmental assessment. Consultant proposals were received in February and were reviewed by a panel. Interviews were held and a firm was chosen. Weston and Sampson has been awarded the contract. This is an important step in understanding the extent of the contamination on the property so that it may have a better chance of being revitalized in the future.

Public Works

Pavement Management

Maintaining the public roads and drainage system is a major concern of the Department of Public Works. Roads are a vital resource. The Department of Public Works initiates construction activity of our pavement reconstruction and maintenance program in the spring of every year. The Road Paving Program is dedicated to repairing various roads surface, sidewalks and drainage infrastructure. Paving is based on an objective cost benefit analysis that takes the road condition, classification and treatment into consideration. Maintenance of the roadways is completed in combination of both DPW team and external contractors.

This past month we completed the drainage repair and full pavement replacement of Stafford Street and Village Farm Road in Mystic. We are currently working on the repair of the drainage infrastructure on Clara Drive with a goal to pave before summer. Our full paving schedule for this season will be posted on the Stonington DPW website by the end of May.

Parks Maintenance

In November 2021, DPW created a level space and installed electrical conduit for the Holiday Tree at the Town Dock. Last month we re-graded the site, added top soil, and seeded. Soon the residents will be able to enjoy a large level area for activities, events and this year's tree.

DPW Parks and Recreation in-house team completed all the clearing needed for the 9-hole golf disc course at Spellman Park.

Solid Waste



Photograph courtesy Joshua Coles

'Is the spring coming?' he said. 'What is it like?' ... 'It is the sun shining on the rain and the rain falling on the sunshine...' - Frances Hodgson Burnett, The Secret Garden

Hello Spring!! It's finally that time of the year where the cold and snow are behind us! The birds are chirping, flowers are blooming, and summer is not so far away. It's time to put away the winter décor, open up the windows, and let the beauty of Spring flood in. **To help you get prepared, we put together a list of the benefits of being a Stonington resident and a Transfer Station customer!**

Pink bags! This is a good time of year to become familiar with them. As everyone does a little spring cleaning, those clothes, towels, bed sheets etc. that you are no longer using can be put in a pink bag and placed curbside on your regularly scheduled trash pickup day. The program is sponsored by Simple Recycling, a for profit recycler that is committed to offering residents the simplest and easy way to keep usable materials from the waste stream, saving the Town money. The top-quality materials will be resold to local thrift outlets, mid-grade is exported to international markets and unusable items are processed for raw materials. If you would prefer to directly donate items to a local charity, there are many local options, including a Goodwill container at the Transfer Station (no pink bag required) or contact the COMO or PNC to learn

about their Thrift Shops. You may pick up pink bags at the Town Hall, Transfer Station, or call the Solid Waste Dept at (860) 535-5099 to have bags left during your next scheduled curbside pick up.

Doing yard work? We have a drop off area for leaf compost at the Transfer Station. You may use and leave paper bags full of leaves but you must empty plastic bags and dispose of the bag. Please no plastics in the leaf mulch! The brush pile at the Transfer Station is for branches, trees, lawn clippings, etc. Residential brush accompanied by the home owner can be disposed of at no charge. This material is run through the tub grinder and turned into mulch. **Compost and mulch are available on a self-serve basis free of charge to Stonington residents** for gardening and lawn applications. An Attendant may also load your truck or trailer for you. That service will not be available during the lunch hour or half hour prior to closing. Supply is subject to availability.

Tackling the garage? The Stonington Transfer Station accepts household paint. All products must be in a labeled and sealed container. We accept up to 6 gallons per day of Latex and Oil Based paints and stains. Cans of paint that are dried up or empty can be thrown into the demo or scrap metal bins. Please NO Marine or Automotive paints, driveway or roofing sealants, or paint cleaning products. These are considered Household Hazardous Waste. The April Hazardous Waste event had a great turn out! There are still seven more events sponsored by SCRRA for our area. Check the Town website, Solid Waste Department, for locations and dates.

Here is a list of what is accepted at no additional charge for Stonington residents:

Household Trash in Yellow Bags

Household recyclables – cannot be bagged, items must not be soiled, cardboard should be flattened and Styrofoam is not accepted. Styrofoam can be disposed of in the Demo can

Metal Disposal – All types of scrap metal

Batteries & Cell Phones – All types, Lithium batteries can be given to the Gate Attendant

Electronic items – TV's, radios, CD players, computers, printers, etc.

Mattresses and Box Springs – The Town participates in a mattress recycling program. Limit 4 total items per day. Residents only, no businesses. Call the Solid Waste Department to confirm

room in the can. The item must be in acceptable condition to be eligible for recycling. No wet, very soiled, bug infested or moldy items will be accepted

Tires – Utility, car or pickup truck. Can be on rim.

Grill Propane Tanks – Do not need to be empty. Advise Gate Attendant upon arrival

Motor oil, oil filters and antifreeze

Household Cooking Oil – Residential only, no businesses

Freon, fluorescent and mercury vapor lights - Residents only, no businesses. Standard incandescent bulbs/LED/Spotlights can go into a yellow bag or general debris for disposal

Books – Book Bins on site. No wet, moldy or contaminated items please!

Clothing – Goodwill boxes on site. Items must be bagged.

Brush, leaves, organic yard debris

We also maintain the “**ReUse Shed**” for items you may no longer need BUT are too good to dispose of. Please follow the posted guidelines. NO fabrics of any kind (including upholstered furniture, pillows, stuffed toys, dog beds, etc), NO cleaning products, NO large appliances, air conditioners, or dehumidifiers.

The Stonington Transfer Station is an exceptionally run facility by a knowledgeable staff. Open weekdays (closed Wednesday) 9AM – 3PM. Saturdays 8AM – 3PM and Sundays 8AM – 1PM.

Proper waste management practices are an essential part of clean, sustainable communities. Help Stonington do its part in creating a *Sustainable CT* and utilize all the benefits our Transfer Station has to offer. We look forward to serving you!

School Department Updates

District Office Updated

Stonington Public Schools Welcomes Alisha Stripling as Director of Finance and Tim Smith as Assistant Superintendent. The Board of Education unanimously approved their contracts at a April 28, 2022 Special Board of Education Meeting. The Stonington Public Schools community

welcomes Ms. Stripling and Mr. Smith to our District Office administrative team starting the 2022-2023 school year.

Board and Commission Updates

Architectural Design Review Board

1. ADRB 2203 – Review of building colors for an 8000sf agricultural building with associated improvements. Property located on Taugwonk Rd. Applicant – Seacoast Mushrooms,LLC. **Action: colors approved**

2. ADRB 2205 – Review of Planning and Zoning Commission Application PZ2211SUP – Special Use Permit application for a new 3,500SF convenience store and gas station with associated improvements. Property located at 54 South Broad St., Pawcatuck. Assessor’s Map 14, Block 2, Lot 6. Zone LS-5. Applicant / Owner - Jannat, LLC. **Action: Applicant was asked to return with a landscape architect, readable landscape plan, and a rendering showing the streetscape.**

3. ADRB 2207 – Review of Planning and Zoning Commission Application PZ2212SUP - Special Use Permit application for building modifications to existing commercial Building aka The Odd Fellows Hall. Property located at 11 Cottrell St., Mystic., Assessor’s Map 182, Block 4, Lot 4. Zone DB-5. Applicant / Owner – Whaler’s Inn RE, LLC. **Action: Approved**

4. ADRB 2208 – Review of Planning and Zoning Commission Application PZ2201SUP&CAM – Special Use Permit and Coastal Area Management Applications for the renovation and demolition of a portion of an existing restaurant building and construction of a new one-story retail and accessory storage building. Property located at 29 Old Stonington Rd., Mystic. Assessor’s Map 153, Block 1, Lot 4. Zone GC-60. Applicant / Owner – Secchiarolli, LLC. **Action: Approved**

Beautification Committee

The Beautification Committee continues to seek volunteers to help with projects, weeding, watering and town cleanups. Interested? Email stoningtonbeautification@stonington-ct.gov

Climate Change Task Force

Each month the CCTF will share one 'Do you Know' facts. This series will highlight town actions and/or present a different idea each month that can be adopted by residents and businesses alike. To learn more or get involved please contact us or attend a CCTF meeting!

Lawns – Do You Know...

Do you know that lawns are the largest irrigated crop in the continental U.S., taking up more space than even corn or wheat? And guess what, maintaining these lawns takes an enormous toll on our environment...

Lawns are water hogs...according to the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), in the U.S. alone, every day, an average of nine billion gallons goes into landscape irrigation, which is more than enough water for everyone in the world to drink for two days...this equates to two-thirds of the amount used to irrigate all total agricultural crops in the entire country!

Lawns use a lot of chemicals (fertilizers, pesticides, herbicides), and, according to the EPA, 40-60% of this ends up in surface and groundwater, contaminating them with excess nutrients. These excess nutrients lead to algal blooms, low dissolved oxygen, and impaired ecological health in our rivers, lakes, ponds, and coastal waters.

Lawns need maintenance. It is estimated that the average American spends about 70 hours a year maintaining their lawn, which usually involves mowers, weed whackers, edgers, and leaf blowers that mostly burn fossil fuels and emit CO₂.

If you are responsible for a lawn (in your home or business), consider whether any of the following actions work for you:

- Cut back on lawn area by expanding the natural landscape with vegetable and flower gardens, shrubs, native/pollinator plants, clover, ornamental grasses, groundcovers, or meadow

- Replace your chemical fertilizers with slow-release natural products
 - Trade in your gas-powered mowers etc for a manual or electric equivalent to curtail emissions
 - Let grass clippings sit on the lawn after mowing to fertilize and moisten soil
 - Water in the morning, mow in early evening, and only use sharp blades with high settings (a taller lawn shades roots and hold soil moisture)
 - If planting a new lawn, choose an eco-friendly seed and try all of the above
- One of the best efforts we can make for climate resiliency is to reduce the size of our lawns!

Commission on Aging

The Commission would like to be sure people know about this **Free Family Caregiver Program — Lunch included!** Saturday, May 14th from 9:30 to 3:00 at the Pawcatuck Neighborhood Center. Medical, legal and mental health professionals will discuss:

- Medical issues common to the elderly
- Home modifications that allow the elderly to “age in place”
- Nutrition
- Loneliness/Isolation— (Learn how both the caregiver and loved one can deal with loneliness)
- Transitions— (choosing between home, skilled nursing facility or assisted living facility)
- Legal matters (wills, living wills, conservatorship, power of attorney, etc.)
- Financial Issues (Medicare, Medicaid, Veterans’ benefits, long term/life insurance)

SPACE IS LIMITED SO REGISTER TODAY! Three ways to register:

1. Register on-line at: www.MysticGeriatricsInstitute.com
2. Register by calling the PNC at (860) 599—3285, ext. 101
3. Register by emailing— executivedirector@thepnc.org

Economic Development Commission

- The EDC is an energetic, committed team of 12 volunteers striving to grow the tax base while preserving the residential character of the Town as described by the Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD).

- We are an advisory body, and make recommendations to our key partners the Board of Selectmen, Department of Planning, and the Planning & Zoning Commission.
- The EDC focuses on initiatives that support economic growth. A table of our initiatives and progress is included on all Regular Meeting Agendas and Minutes available on the EDC page of the [Town website](#).
- See the EDC's [Stonington 1649](#) website for our latest news, and [subscribe](#) to alerts for EDC Agendas and Minutes as they are posted on the Town website.

Stonington Housing Authority

A volunteer with the Stonington Housing Authority started teaching a chair exercise class for seniors. In April, the class was held bi-weekly for 30-minute sessions in the onsite Community Building. The residents enjoyed the exercise class and the volunteer was able to commit to teaching the class weekly beginning in May.

The Rain Garden at the Edythe K. Richmond Homes is now on the Pollinator Pathway. In 2019 the Eastern Connecticut Conservation District designed and helped with the installation of the rain garden. Since then, the residents and staff of the Stonington Housing Authority have maintained the garden. We received the Pollinator Pathway sign in January and proudly display it at the Sisk Drive entrance.

The Stonington Housing Authority received 55 apartment applications since February, which shows a high level of interest in affordable housing in our community.

Recreations Commission

NEW DISC GOLF COURSE IN SPELLMAN PARK



**FAR FLUNG
DISC GOLF**
AT SPELLMAN PARK

COME AND SEE WHAT ALL OF THE
EXCITEMENT IS ABOUT! FREE AND OPEN TO
THE PUBLIC!

The final touches are being put in place on the newly constructed *9-hole Disc Golf Course* in Spellman Park. Watch for *Grand Opening* events and dates coming later in June/July! A huge

thanks go out to our sponsors: Far Flung Enterprises (Title); First Financial Advisor Services, Mystic Knotwork, The Valenti Family of Dealerships; Ear Nose & Throat Associates of SECT (Founding); Pawcatuck Roofing; Beer'd Brewing Co; SHS Class of 1998; Stonington Prevention Council; SHS Class of 1995; The Moody Family; Chelsea Groton Bank; Gales Ferry Medical Group (Legacy) and the numerous seasonal sponsors that contributed the funds needed to make this project a reality. Please reach out to us at discgolf@stonington-ct.gov to learn more about how you, or your organization, can help us reach our goal!

NEW TENNIS & PICKLE BALL COURTS!

Our courts in Spellman Park located behind Stonington High School have certainly served the Town and area residents well for over 40 years! Plans are to replace the existing [6] courts and add [2] pickle ball courts. Long term plans for the project will also include an upgrade on the lights allowing for evening play through those hot summer evenings. Contact Stonington Human Services for additional information (860) 535-5015.



STONINGTON HIGH SCHOOL TENNIS COURT REPLACEMENT
STONINGTON, CT
August 6, 2024

THE SCALE: 1" = 30'0"

KAESTLE BOOS
ASSOCIATES, INC

Thank you for reading our update and we are looking forward to another productive month. Thank you, Stonington!