



NEWS FROM TOWN HALL

April 2025

LETTER FROM FIRST SELECTMAN DIONNA CARLSON

Dear Members of the New Canaan Community,

As we welcome the month of April and the onset of spring, the annual budget process draws to a close. The Town Council has completed its review of both the Town and Board of Education budgets for the upcoming fiscal year. After thoughtful deliberation, the Council approved an increase of 3.47% to the General Fund Budget and a 4.24% increase in the amount to be raised by taxation. This ensures we can continue providing essential services while investing in the future of our community. The Board of Finance will set the mill rate for property taxes at its meeting in June, and we will keep you informed as we move forward.

Spring brings with it an exciting season of community activities! In partnership with the Chamber of Commerce and Planet New Canaan, we are promoting Clean Your Mile from April 21st to April 27th. This initiative is a fantastic opportunity for residents to come together and help clean up our beautiful town. Whether you join with your neighbors, a community group, or your team, let's make New Canaan sparkle this spring. The Board of Selectmen will be participating on Earth Day, April 22nd, by cleaning an area around Town Hall.

Another beloved New Canaan tradition is the 34th Annual George Cogswell Memorial Fishing Derby on April 26th. A heartfelt thank you to the Police Benevolent Association, Highway Department, and Parks and Recreation Department for their continued support in making this event a possible each year. You can register and find more details [here](#).

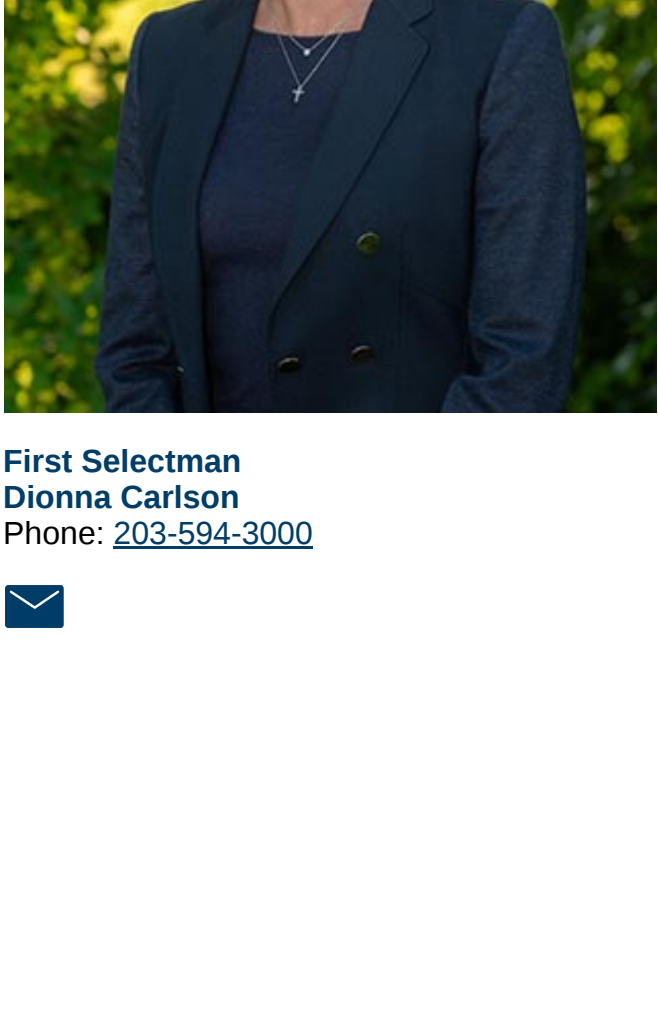
Looking ahead, we are also beginning plans to celebrate the 250th Anniversary of the founding of the United States, which will take place between Flag Day (June 14, 2025) and Veterans Day (November 11, 2025). Two Lights for Tomorrow is the nationwide kickoff of the celebrations, and we encourage everyone to participate by placing two lights in your windows on the evening of April 18th to honor the 17th-anniversary ride of Paul Revere (See below for more information).

Finally, it's not too early to prepare for summer! Be sure to purchase your passes for the Benko Pool, Mead Park Pickleball and Tennis, and Kiwanis Beach [here](#).

Wishing you all a wonderful spring!

Best,

Dionna Carlson
First Selectman



First Selectman
Dionna Carlson
Phone: 203-594-3000

TOWN COUNCIL APPROVES 2025 - 2026 BUDGET OF \$181 MILLION - AN INCREASE OF 3.47% OVER CURRENT FISCAL YEAR

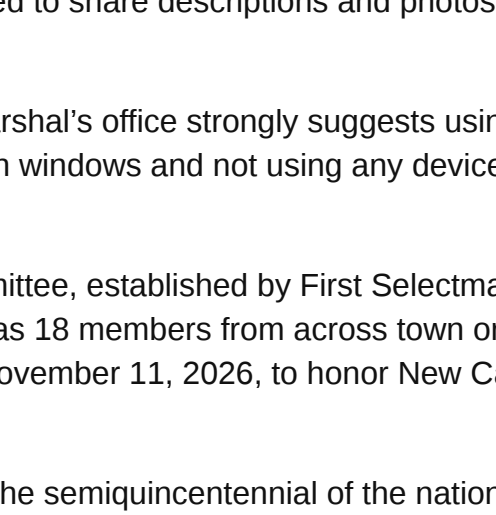
FINANCE
The Town Council on April 3rd, 2025 approved a Town of New Canaan Total Expenditure Budget of \$181.00 million for fiscal year 2025-26, representing an increase of 3.47% over the current fiscal year.

The Total Expenditure Budget includes Board of Education operating expenses of \$95.38 million (up 4.36%) and Board of Education transfers to the Health Internal Service Fund expenses of \$18.41 million (up 3.77%) for a combined Board of Education expense budget of \$113.79 (up 4.26%). In addition to these expenses, the budget includes \$5.25 million of other Board of Education expenses paid by the Town. Town department operational expenses were approved at \$34.93 million (up 3.25%). Other budget items include a combined Town and Board of Education debt service of \$18.38 million (down 2.80%) and tax-funded capital projects of \$0.47 million (up 22.94%).

To fund this budget, the amount to be raised from taxation is \$168.79 (up 4.24%).
"As with last year, the Town continues to address the challenges of acute inflationary pressure and ever-increasing costs for items such as labor, energy, materials and healthcare," Town Council Chairman Michael Mauro said. "Nevertheless, Town Council dedicated volunteer members worked with the leadership teams from the Town's departments in scrutinizing the operating and capital budgets to ensure that the standard of excellence expected by town residents will continue to be provided at the best value possible. It is imperative for residents to know that Town Council carefully considered input from all community stakeholders, including all those who sent us emails and spoke at our public sessions. The hallmark of a vibrant and strong community is measured by its robust citizenry engagement. Town Council listened carefully and responded by passing a budget that continues to provide the resources for our public schools to remain best in class, for our first responders to maintain their vital efficacy in keeping us safe, for fortifying the beauty of our parks and the soundness of our infrastructure, for bolstering critical social services, and for enabling the library's ascent as a rising local and regional star."

The Town Council's budget takes into account the Town Assessor's reported 2024 Grand List increase of 0.98% to \$8,840 million from the 2023 Grand List of \$8,80 million. This Grand List combined with an estimated \$5 million fund balance drawdown will result in projected increase of the mill rate from the current 16.144 to an estimated 16.767 (up 3.86%). The final mill rate, which determines property taxes, is to be set by the Board of Finance by June 10th, 2025.

RESIDENCES AND BUSINESSES TO DISPLAY "TWO LIGHTS" APRIL 18 AND 19



As a kick-off to the nationwide commemoration of the 250th anniversary of the founding of the United States in 1776, New Canaan residents, business owners, government and cultural organization leaders are invited to display two lights in windows on April 18 and 19, 2025. The lights will symbolize Paul Revere's famous Midnight Ride of April 18 and 19, 1775 before the start of the American Revolutionary War.

Displaying two lights, known across the country as [Two Lights for Tomorrow](#), is supported by the America 250 CT Commission and the New Canaan 250th Planning Committee.

New Canaan participants are encouraged to share descriptions and photos of their lights with #TwoLightsForTomorrow.

For the Two Lights displays, the Fire Marshal's office strongly suggests using electric light bulbs or flameless, battery-operated candles or flashlights in windows and not using any device with a burning flame.

Local Committee

The New Canaan 250th Planning Committee, established by First Selectman Dionna Carlson and chaired by Administrative Officer Tucker Murphy, has 15 members from across town organizations. The group is planning a series of local events from June 14 to November 11, 2025, to honor New Canaan's history, community spirit and contributions to America's story.

Local organizations are invited to mark the semicentennial of the nation's founding by hosting activities that showcase New Canaan's rich heritage, civic pride and patriotic spirit. Opportunities include exhibits, historical reenactments, lectures, walking tours of local landmarks, participating in the Fourth of July Parade, showcasing art inspired by American history, and organizing town-wide celebrations. Visit [CT250.org](#) for more details on themes and opportunities.

All events will be included in a New Canaan 250th calendar on [newcanaan.info](#), and participants will have access to the official New Canaan 250th logo for marketing. For more information or to get involved, email [Tucker.Murphy@newcanaanct.gov](#) by May 1st, 2025, or call 203-594-3002 to discuss your ideas.

COMMITTEE STARTS WORK ON KIWANIS PARK MASTER PLAN



Kiwanis Park, as seen from under a pavilion, with swimming pond, at left, and playground.

A new Kiwanis Park Master Plan Subcommittee of the Parks and Recreation Commission held its first meeting on March 27 and is scheduled to hold public meetings on the second Thursday of each month at 9:00 a.m. in Town Hall. The next meeting will be April 10.

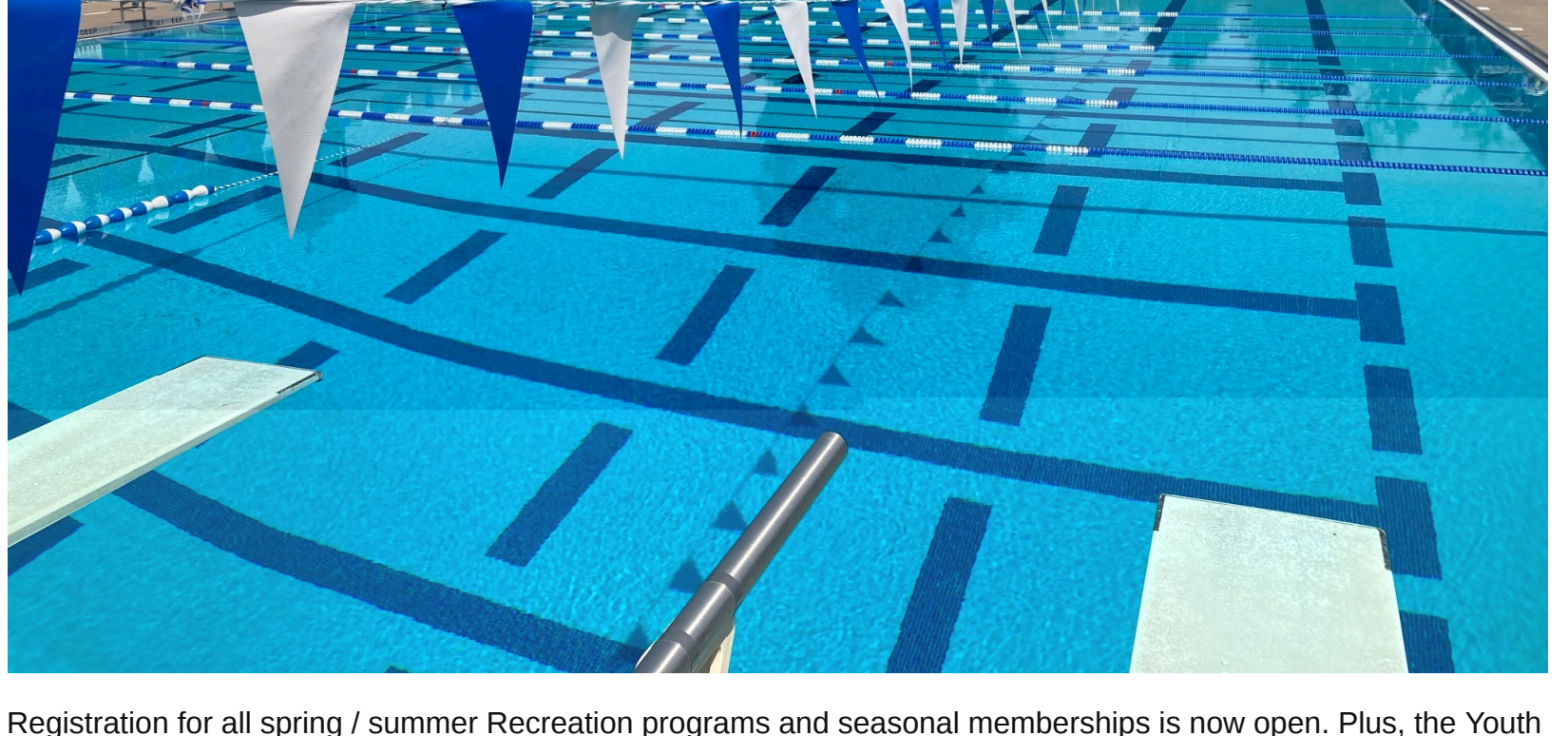
Kiwanis Park is at 77 Old Norwalk Road and features a beach alongside a swimming pond, playground, walking trails, pavilion with restrooms, a deck with picnic tables, and more. The Town has utilization agreements with the Girl Scouts, YMCA, Exchange Club, and the Community Pre-school, and residents are developing a community garden.

Attending the first meeting were Parks and Recreation commissioners, representatives of organizations that utilize the park, and neighbors.

The objective of the subcommittee is to develop a Master Plan over a period of months, according to Parks and Recreation Commissioner and Subcommittee Chairman Keith Richey. The formation of the subcommittee is not in response to any demand for change, Richey said. However, he added that Town leaders have expressed a desire to have a master plan to consider when various proposals for capital improvements to the park are presented to Town bodies.

For more information about Kiwanis Park or to purchase a seasonal membership pass for the beach and swimming, visit [newcanaanct.mynyc.com](#) and click on Facilities.

SOUTH AVENUE RE-LEAF PROJECT UNDERWAY



Orange-capped stakes are lined up along the South Avenue sidewalk in front of Save Middle School to indicate where new trees will be planted. The yellow flags are for other purposes.

In partnership with the New Canaan Beautification League, the Department of Public Works will be purchasing and planting approximately 150 trees for the "South Avenue Re-Leaf Project."

Initially envisioned in 1998, after the Bond Administration commissioned an Urban Tree Inventory along South Avenue the first phase of a re-forestation plan was enacted. In this phase, trees were planted along South Avenue from Cherry Street to Bank Street (Rt. 106).

Since that time, trees along South Avenue have diminished in number due to natural die-off and removals. Several years ago, the New Canaan Beautification League presented the idea of re-planting the lost trees from the first phase and implementing the envisioned second phase of planting from Bank Street to Surrey Road.

The Town was able to set aside newly received American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds for the project. After several years of planning and discussion with the CTDOT, the trees have been purchased and will be installed by DPW staff beginning the week of April 7, 2025, weather permitting.

"Kudos to Betty Bliss, Jill Ernst, Faith Korchhoff and the entire New Canaan Beautification League, as well as our Town Warden Bob Horan and Keith Simpson Associates for developing and implementing the plan," said Public Works Director Tiger Mann. "Their hard work and dedication allowed this project to take shape and come to fruition. We would not have been able to do it without their help and guidance."

To see the plans and planting list, visit the Department of Public Works Town Hall webpage by clicking [here](#). For further information, contact the Department of Public Works at 203-594-3054 or [Tiger.Mann@newcanaanct.gov](#)

REGISTRATIONS AND MEMBERSHIPS NOW OPEN FOR SPRING / SUMMER RECREATION PROGRAMS



Registration for all spring / summer Recreation programs and seasonal memberships is now open. Plus, the Youth Soccer League and Adult Softball League begin play later this month—registration is still open.

Secure your seasonal membership passes for these popular activities:

- **Mead Park Pickleball** – Sharpen your skills with instruction, join competitive leagues, or reserve a court for a casual match.
- **Mead Park Tennis** – Take lessons from the pros or book a court to enjoy the game at your own pace.
- **Steve Benko Pool** – Perfect for individuals, families, and nannies. Pool membership also includes access to Kiwanis Park beach.
- **Kiwanis Beach** – Relax in the sun, go for a swim, and let the kids enjoy the on-site playground.

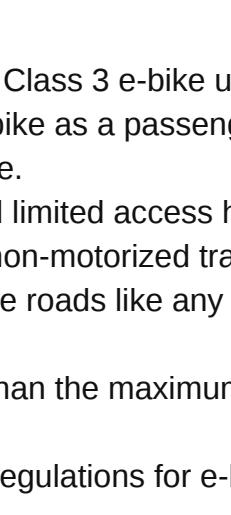
Outdoor swim lessons are back. The YMCA and the Recreation Department are once again partnering to offer lessons at Steve Benko Pool, beginning in June.

Join the excitement of the **Wavemy Gator Aquatics Program**, featuring Swim Team, Dive Team and Water Polo — running from mid-June through the end of July.

The Recreation Summer Camp for children entering grades K-5 continues to grow in popularity and is sold out. This town favorite is packed with exciting field trips, themed events, and full access to Steve Benko Pool. Join our waitlist as we are always looking for ways to expand.

Discover all of the offerings and register today at [newcanaanct.mynyc.com](#). Connect in person at the Recreation Department office inside Wavemy House. You can also call at 203-594-3000 to join the fun!

Scan the QR code for Memberships.



E-BIKES BRING HEIGHTENED RISKS TO ROADWAYS



As the weather gets warmer, there are an increased number of electric motor-driven bicycles on the roads. New Canaan Police remind the public to be mindful about roadway safety.

The new mode of e-bike transportation creates a heightened risk of accidents and personal injury, as the e-bike operators — often teenagers — and the drivers of other vehicles on the road are not accustomed to one another.

For pedestrians, the risk of severe injury is 25% when struck by a vehicle moving at 16 mph, according to AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety. The risk rises to 50% when the vehicle is traveling at 23 mph. E-bikes are engineered to travel at speeds up to 28 mph.

Police report that there have been local complaints about juveniles on e-bikes speeding, being reckless and nearly colliding with automobiles. Young, inexperienced operators of motorized bicycles often find themselves at higher speeds in complex traffic among distracted drivers. Life-threatening injuries have been reported across the country.

Parents' Role

New Canaan Police is strongly reminding the community of the responsibility of parents of children who are operating e-bikes and e-scooters. Parents are to make sure their children understand the risks, the laws and the rules of the road to prevent injury to themselves, pedestrians and other motorists.

Enforcement action will be taken seriously regardless of age. Violators of motor vehicle laws pertaining to bicycles, e-bikes and e-scooters may receive a ticket with a fine of \$117.

State of Connecticut Regulations

Electric bikes may not have a motor with more than 750 watts, and they must be equipped with brakes that cease motor function when the brake is applied. The state classifies electric bikes in three categories:

- Class 1 are pedal-assist only, and the motor stops when you reach 20 mph.
- Class 2 provide electric power whether or not the rider is pedaling. The power stops when the speed reaches 20 mph.
- Class 3 continue providing electrical power up to 28 mph.

Connecticut General Statutes 14-206a-d cover the operation of bicycles, electric bicycles and electric foot scooters.

Rules of the Road

A person under 16 years of age may not operate a Class 3 e-bike upon any street, highway, or bike or pedestrian path. Persons under age 16 may ride a Class 3 e-bike as a passenger only.

- Helmets are required for everyone on any e-bike.
- Electric bikes are prohibited from sidewalks and limited access highways.
- E-bikes are not allowed on paths designed for non-motorized traffic.
- Electric bicycles shall follow all of the rules of the roads like any motor vehicle, including yielding the right-of-way to pedestrians in a crosswalk.
- If the maximum speed of the roadway is more than the maximum speed of the cycle, the cycle must be operated in the right-hand lane or on a usable shoulder.
- Each city, town, and borough may create local regulations for e-bikes as long as these are not inconsistent with the state's ordinance.

UPCOMING TOWN EVENTS

2025 Clean Your Mile April 21 – April 27

New Canaan's annual spring Clean Your Mile program is scheduled for Monday April 21 through Sunday April 27. Clean Your Mile effort has three key components:

1. New Canaan families picking up roadside trash in neighborhoods;
2. Community groups scouring public spaces including parks and schools;
3. Merchants cleaning up sidewalks, storage areas and parking spaces in the downtown village district.

Upon completion of neighborhood clean-up, volunteers are asked to notify the Highway Department of the locations of bags to be picked up by the Town. Call 203-594-3704. Volunteers are asked to secure the bags and place them on grassy shoulder and not on the roadways.

Garbage bags and a limited supply of grabbers for loan are available for pick up at the Public Works or Inland Wetlands departments in Town Hall. Dumpsters will be located in the Elm Street train station commuter lot Friday - Sunday. Remember to work safe when cleaning roadside.

Clean Your Mile 2025 is co-sponsored by Town of New Canaan, New Canaan Chamber of Commerce and Planet New Canaan.

Fishing Derby April 26

The 34th Annual George Cogswell Memorial New Canaan Fishing Derby is set for Saturday April 26 at Mill Pond. Anglers aged 15 and younger are invited to participate; those under 12 must be accompanied by an adult. The event is FREE of charge.

Prizes will be awarded for 1st Fish Caught and Largest Fish Caught. Mill Pond will be stocked with trout prior to the event, and bait will be provided.

In-person registration 8:00 a.m. or use this QR Code here. First fishing line in the water will be at 8:30.

The annual event is sponsored by the Town of New Canaan Highway Department with support from Recreation, Police and Fire departments.

Prescription Drug TakeBack Day April 26

New Canaan community members may dispose of unused prescription drugs at Town Hall, 77 Main Street, on Prescription Drug TakeBack Day, Saturday April 26 from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Removing unneeded medications from homes can help prevent medication misuse and overdoses.

New Canaan Police Department is partnering with New Canaan Cares to conduct this local event, which is part of a national program of the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration. If April 26 is not convenient, there is a medication disposal drop-box available to residents at all times in the lobby of the Police Station.

Safe Walk – Roll To School May 2

South Elementary School and Save Middle School are set to celebrate Walk to School Day on Friday May 10, during morning walk-to-school hours.

The event will be supported by the Community Emergency Response Team (CERT), Department of Public Works Highway and Parks staff, teachers, and New Canaan Police. Teams will be stationed at various locations to monitor and guide children on their way to school.

Walk to School Day is part of New Canaan's broader effort to embrace the Safe Routes to School program, which aims to make walking and biking to school safer and more accessible for children, thereby encouraging a healthy and active lifestyle.

For families residing outside of typical walking distances, designated drop-off areas will be available to allow all students the opportunity to participate. Specific areas regarding these locations and walking times for different grades will be communicated by the respective schools as the event date approaches.

Parents and students are encouraged to plan their routes in advance and ensure that children are familiar with pedestrian safety rules.

For more information, visit [safeschoolinfo.org](#).

Document Shred Day May 17

Shred Day New Canaan May 17 from 8:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. at the Transfer Station, 394 Main Street.

Shred Day is a service of the Town of New Canaan where people can bring their sensitive documents to be securely shredded to prevent identity theft and fraud by ensuring confidential information is destroyed.

Prohibited items: 3-ring binders, metal clips, computer media, and plastic covers.

PLEASE FORWARD THIS NEWSLETTER TO OTHERS WHO WOULD BE INTERESTED!

