



Connecting Fairfield

News from First Selectman Bill Gerber

Photo: First Selectman Bill Gerber and members of the Town's Finance Department reviewing the Public Works Department proposed budget ahead of hearings starting in late February.

A Personal Note

Dear Fairfielders,

It's January, so our schedules at Independence Hall are filled with budget work and group meetings to review expenses and financial projections. I believe in rigorous financial oversight and long-term planning as the foundation for successful Town government, so these meetings are critically important to me and to the department heads who are preparing and analyzing projected costs for the fiscal year that begins in July, 2024.

We also are continuing to fight UI's proposed plan to build 100 monopolies throughout Town. I will be meeting with Governor Lamont, United Illuminating, Department of Transportation (DOT), and the State Delegation next week to discuss the project and its impact on Fairfield's religious, cultural and historic treasures, beloved neighborhoods, and parts of the Town's business district.

This e-newsletter also includes an update on approvals for the remediation of Penfield Pavilion.

For those of you in Town who were concerned by December's SantaCon event, an open Town meeting will be held on January 23, 2024, at 7 to 9 p.m. in the auditorium at Fairfield Warde High School, 755 Melville Avenue. A panel of Town officials will be present to listen to your thoughts, experiences, and suggestions, and I invite you to attend.

We've begun to experience our first real wintry weather with snow and ice storms, creating a large job for our Department of Public Works (DPW) employees. The plow drivers are out in the middle of the night removing snow and applying sand and treated salt to keep us all safe. The department's employees have asked me to thank all of you who have showed patience and cooperation as they deal with severe weather. It's very much appreciated by DPW staff members.

I want to hear from you! Please email your thoughts and concerns to me at **firstselectman@fairfieldct.org**. We're better together!

Bill Gerber
First Selectman

Primary Issues

Penfield Pavilion

At the January 10th meeting of the BOS, we voted to approve \$1,429,950 in additional spending to begin construction on Penfield Pavilion to address the Notice of Violation (NOV) issued by FEMA. That decision was subsequently reviewed by the Board of Finance (BOF) and approved. The next step is review by the RTM at their next scheduled meeting on January 29. If approved by the RTM, the scheduled work can begin. The approved work will include removing the existing grade beam as required by the FEMA NOV and replacing it with helical piles.

The financial approval by the BOS, the BOF and the RTM secures a plan to be complete by February, 2025.

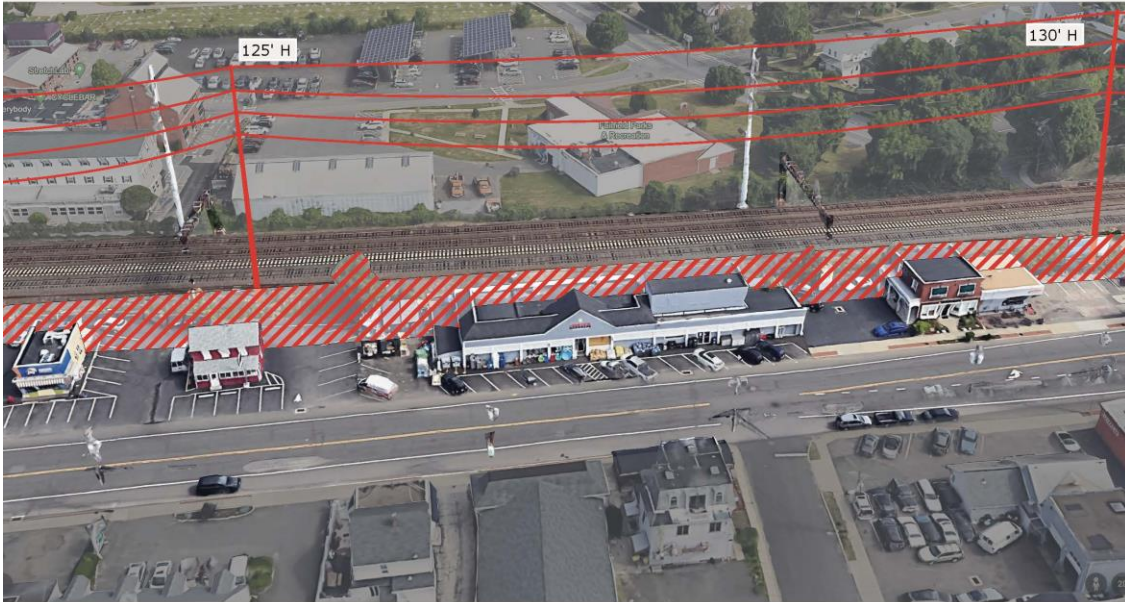
UI Monopoles

Last week's e-newsletter [A Deeper Dive](#) addressed the United Illuminating plan to install monopoles ranging from 125 to 145 feet in height at a distance up to 40 feet from where the current electrical lines exist along the train tracks. In that newsletter, I shared photos modeling the potential impact of those monopoles in Southport. Please see additional photos below that demonstrate the potential impact on Post Road and Kings Highway.

As a reminder, my letter and the briefs from the Town's attorney have both been submitted to the Siting Council. The link to [A Deeper Dive](#) will take you to those documents where you

can review them. In addition, a lobbyist has now been retained to engage the state's legislators in fighting this proposal. I view retaining a lobbyist as an imperative in battling this threat to our town.

COMMERCIAL AREA ALONG POST ROAD, FAIRFIELD



* OVERLAY ON EXISTING AERIAL VIEW SHOWING APPROXIMATE LOCATION OF PROPOSED U.I. POLES, VEGETATION REMOVAL AND EASEMENT PER U.I. SUBMISSION

RESIDENTIAL AREA ALONG KING'S HWY AND ARDMORE ST., FAIRFIELD



* OVERLAY ON EXISTING AERIAL VIEW SHOWING APPROX. LOCATION OF PROPOSED POLES AND VEGETATION REMOVAL PER U.I. SUBMISSION

SantaCon: Community Conversation Scheduled

Many Fairfielders have voiced their concerns about the size of the SantaCon student gathering in December, the environmental impact to our fragile coastal ecosystem, and safety. Join First Selectman Bill Gerber, RTM Deputy Moderator Margaret Horton, and representatives from the Town's Police, Fire and Health Departments for a Community Conversation on **Tuesday, January 23 at 7 p.m. in the Auditorium at Fairfield Warde High School, 755 Melville Avenue.** Please note the change in venue, to accommodate filming by Fair TV.

If you're not able to attend in person, you can [watch the meeting live here](#). The Community Conversation will also air on Cablevision's Channel 79 and Frontier Cable's Channel 6010. The meeting recording link will be posted shortly after the meeting [here](#).

You can also send comments before or after the meeting to firstselectman@fairfieldct.org with "SantaCon" in the subject line. Hope to see you on Tuesday!

You Should Know

Town of Fairfield's Fraud Alert

Town Clerk Betsy Browne reminds residents about the Town of Fairfield's Fraud Alert to notify property owners of new transactions regarding their property. This is a new free tool to help property owners protect one of their most valuable assets.

With Fraud Alert you can sign up to receive alerts whenever a document such as a mortgage is recorded under your name. Documents can be viewed [online here](#). This is an easy way for homeowners to have peace of mind, especially with an increase in scams recently. [You can sign up here](#).

Reminder to Keep Sidewalks Clear of Snow

Per the Town ordinance, Fairfield property owners are responsible for removing snow and ice from the sidewalk along their property line within 24 hours after the storm and keeping the sidewalk clear of snow and ice. Heavily used sidewalks near schools and public buildings, and the commercial areas are particularly important. Property owners may be fined and/or charged the cost of removal if the property owners do not comply. Please remember to shovel around fire hydrants.

Property Taxes are Due

3rd quarter Real Estate taxes, 2nd installment Motor Vehicle and Personal Property taxes, and Supplemental Motor Vehicle taxes become due on January 1, 2024 and **the last day to pay timely is Thursday, February 1, 2024**. On February 2, 2024 statutory interest accrues at an initial rate of 3%. Per state statute interest accrues at 1.5% per month from the original due date of January 1, 2024. This is a reminder that taxes are due whether or not you have received notice in the mail.

You may look up or pay your tax bill [online here](#).

Board of Assessment Appeals Process

This is a reminder that the deadline to appeal your taxes is by End-of-Business on Tuesday, February 20. Applications are available on the website from the Tax Assessor. You can access the application [here](#).

One Book, One Town

The 2024 selection for *One Book One Town* is *Warrior Girl Unearthed*, by Angeline Boulley. Copies are available to borrow in print or digitally from Fairfield's libraries, or to purchase at the Fairfield University Bookstore on Post Road. The middle grade selection is *We Still Belong*, by Christine Daya. For younger readers, the selection is *Berry Song*, by Michaela Goade. Angeline Boulley will appear in person on Tuesday, March 5 at 7 p.m. at Fairfield University's Quick Center for the Arts. Let's all read together!



Town Boards and Commissions

Fairfield is blessed with a highly talented pool of residents eager to volunteer their time and talent for the betterment of our community. If you think your skills might benefit the Town, you can learn more about the process of serving on a Town Board or Commission and apply [here](#). Regarding the opening on the Water Pollution Control Authority (WPCA), the Town is seeking a resident with a technical or engineering background. If that's you, we'd love to hear from you!

Board of Selectmen Meetings

Our next regular Board of Selectmen meeting will be held on Wednesday, January 31 at 4 p.m. Meetings are held in Independence Hall and open to public, and you can attend either in person or on Webex. You can also read minutes of previous meetings [here](#).

Make the Connection

This week: Meet two of the people in the First Selectman's Office: **Senior Advisor David Becker**, and **Community Relations Coordinator Paula Tommins**.



David Becker, a familiar face to many in Town government, is once again serving the community he loves, this time as Senior Advisor to the First Selectman, providing strategic guidance in various areas including policy development, budgeting, and operations. A lifelong Fairfield resident with experience spanning both the private and public sector, David served in elected office with two terms on the RTM, including time as Republican majority leader, and a six-year term on the Board of Finance. As a founder of several businesses in real estate investment, information technology, logistics, and other fields, David's professional expertise has focused on improving operational and technological efficiencies to keep costs in line while maintaining a high level of service. His experience will be a tremendous asset. David lives in the Southport section of our Town with his wife and two daughters.



Paula Tommins serves as the Constituent Relations Coordinator in the First Selectman's office, a liaison between Fairfield residents and the First Selectman, and a conduit for information about the Town. In this role, Paula is the first point of contact for researching and responding to resident concerns that come in to us by email, through the website, and by phone. Paula worked for many years in relationship management for GE Capital as well as in the banking and media industries, and has also done extensive volunteer work with many of the non-profits in our area. Paula and her husband Bill have lived in Fairfield for 28 years and raised their two daughters, Madeleine and Mia, here. In her free time, you can find Paula playing tennis or pickleball, or relaxing at the beach.



The Fairfield Police Department formally recognized the recent promotions of the following personnel in a ceremony held on Tuesday, January 16:

- ~Deputy Chief Edward Weihe
- ~Captain Felix Esposito
- ~Captain Hector Irizarry

Additionally, the Department celebrated the official promotions of the following personnel:

- ~Sergeant Daniel Vanderheyden to Lieutenant
- ~Sergeant James Wiltsie to Lieutenant
- ~Officer Thomas Gorton to Sergeant
- ~Officer Donald Matejek to Sergeant
- ~Officer Virgil Procaccini to Detective

I extend my warmest congratulations to each of them on their advancements within the Police Department. The Town of Fairfield is grateful for your service to our community!



The Harbor Management Commission honored Kim Taylor, former Chair, and Jac Herschler, former Vice-Chair, at its January 16, 2024 meeting for their outstanding years of service on the Commission. They each received a plaque with a gorgeous backdrop of Southport Harbor which was photographed by Geoff Steadman, consultant to the HMC.

(You can see a photo of Southport Harbor by Geoff Steadman below!)

The plaques read: “In most grateful appreciation of your outstanding and principled leadership and public service as a member and Chair (or Vice Chair) of the Harbor Management Commission, and your tireless efforts to uphold and advance the Southport Harbor Management Plan to guide the beneficial use and conservation of our beautiful and historic harbor.”

Thank you for your service!

[Eyes on Fairfield](#)

Help us celebrate the unique beauty of life in Fairfield by sharing your photos with your community. We’ve received so many beautiful photos of our Town—keep them coming! Submit your photos at 300 dpi to firstselectman@fairfieldct.org. We live in such a special Town. Share with us the sites and sights you love.



Photo credit: Geoff Steadman,
Consultant to the Harbor Management Commission
Aerial view of Southport Harbor

We're Better Together!

WHY YOU'RE RECEIVING THIS EMAIL:

As a resident, business owner, student, or individual interested in news about the Town of Fairfield, your name appears on an email list that belongs to the Town database. You might have requested to be on this list or added your name to another Town communication in the past.

This email arrives in your inbox every other Friday and is official news from Fairfield's First Selectman and the Town of Fairfield. If this email was forwarded to you and you want to receive official emails from your First Selectman, [click here](#). You can also unsubscribe from any newsletter you don't want to receive. Go to the bottom of the email and click unsubscribe.

