

# Connecting Fairfield

News from First Selectman Bill Gerber

Photo: The Conservation Department, acting on behalf of the Town of Fairfield Conservation Commission/Inland Wetlands Agency, has announced the official launch of the Town's new Adopt-A-Street Program. From left to right, Conservation Commission Chairman Lukas Thomas, Conservation Director Tim Bishop, and First Selectman Bill Gerber. More information on the program can be found farther down in the newsletter.

A Personal Note about SantaCon and Sham Jam

Dear Fairfielders,

On January 23, we held a **SantaCon Community Conversation** as a step forward in resolving residents' frustrations with beach parties heavily attended by college students. More than 100 residents attended the meeting to share suggestions, frustrations, and ideas with a panel that included the Town's Police, Fire, and Health Departments as well as Fairfield University and the Lantern Point Association. Since that time, discussions have continued with Town Departments, the University and landlords.

The objectives set by the stakeholders in those discussions include minimizing the impact on the environment due to trash generated by these events, and reducing the problems caused by public intoxication. We are resolved as a community to stop the post-party environmental damage to the beach and the Sound, as well as safety concerns for the students and others on the beach at that time.

On Saturday, March 16, Sham Jam will be hosted by the Seagrape Cafe and Fairfield University student organization B.R.O. This party will take place between inside the Seagrape, 1144 Reef Road, and on their tented parking lot between the hours of 11 a.m. and 3 p.m. The Seagrape advertises this as a pre-ticketed, QR-coded, Senior-only event, for students 21 years or older with valid ID. Per the Fire Marshall, capacity is capped at 535 people, inside and outside. The Seagrape will have five to seven private security personnel stationed onsite for the event.

#### **Actions by the Town:**

- A snow fence will be installed on the beach side of Lantern Point to curtail trash washing into the Sound and to deter unwanted guests.
- 30 trash barrels have been placed in the vicinity to encourage personal responsibility. Parks and Rec staff will be emptying them throughout the day.
- Police will maintain a visible and substantial presence in the area with a focus on crowd management, pedestrian safety, and curtailing illegal activity.
- Parks and Rec has designated the Penfield Beach overflow parking lots as Uber drop-off and pick-up zones.

#### **Actions by the University:**

- Fairfield University has contracted with a private trash collection company to clean up the beachfront area near Lantern Point from 5 to 8 p.m.
- A volunteer student team will perform additional clean-up Sunday morning.

#### **Actions by the Lantern Point Association**

 LPA has contracted with a cleaning company that will be on the beach Sunday morning.

Following the SantaCon debacle with bags of trash collected the morning after the party, and more trash taken out into the Sound by the tides, it is our intention that students treat our beautiful beaches with more respect, and properly discard their cans, bottles and cups in the receptacles provided.

In case of safety concerns for people or property, calls can be placed to the non-emergency police line at 203-254-4800 or 911 for emergencies.

Your thoughts, questions and concerns matter, and I want to hear from you. You can email me at firstselectman@fairfieldct.org.

Bill Gerber First Selectman

#### Next Steps in the Budget Process: Board of Finance Sessions

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 20, 2024 –Board of Finance -Public Budget Session #4 7:30 pm – Via Webex and BOE Conference Room 295 A/B, 501 Kings Hwy E.

THURSDAY, MARCH 21, 2024 – Board of Finance - Public Budget Session #5 7:30 pm – Via Webex and BOE Conference Room 295 A/B, 501 Kings Hwy E.

TUESDAY, MARCH 26, 2024 – Board of Finance –Budget Follow-Up, If Needed 7:30 pm Via Webex and Fire Training Center, Room 111, 205 Richard White Way, off Reef Road

SAT., MARCH 30, 2024 –Board of Finance -Public Budget Comment Session 9:30 am – Fairfield Warde High School Auditorium (change of venue), 755 Melville Ave.

MONDAY, APRIL 1, 2024 – Board of Finance – Budget Follow-Up, If Needed 7:30 pm – Via Webex and BOE Conference Room 295 A/B, 501 Kings Hwy E.

WEDS, April 3, 2024 – Board of Finance - Budget Vote-Public Exec. Session-No Public Comment

7:30 pm – Via Webex and BOE Conference Room 295 A/B, 501 Kings Hwy E.

#### **Primary Issues**

#### **UI Monopoles**

In the past few weeks, there have been four separate bills introduced in the state legislature to make changes to the Connecticut Siting Council and construction of electric transmission lines, recognizing the dissatisfaction with the Council's makeup, decision-making, utility application process, and inadequate resident notification. It is clear that the Council and the process need significant revisions. Our legislators are raising these bills because they take the threats to our community seriously.

Public hearings have already taken place for three of the bills—two in the House and one in the Senate. Written and oral testimony has been provided on behalf of the Town by First

Selectman Bill Gerber and his Chief of Staff Christine Brown as well as by the grassroots organizations fighting the monopoles in Fairfield.

A fourth bill, **HB** 5507: An Act Concerning State Agency and Court Proceedings Relating to Electric Transmission Lines, has been raised by the Judiciary committee. The committee will hold a public hearing on March 20 at 10 a.m. in the Legislative Office Building and via Zoom.

HB 5507 seeks to amend a statutory provision relating to the rights of parties and intervenors in proceedings before the Siting Council relating to the construction of electric transmission lines. Read HB 5507 here.

It is critically important for many citizens' voices to be raised at the hearing, whether in person, providing oral testimony by ZOOM, or by written testimony submission. Registration to provide testimony closes on Tuesday, March 19 at 3 p.m. <u>Here is where you can sign up to testify in person or by Zoom. Here is where you can sign up to provide written testimony.</u>

You can review any of the prior bills at the links provided below:

HB 5359: An Act Concerning the Composition and Expertise of the Connecticut Siting Council, Energy and Technology Committee. Read HB 5359 here.

SB 198: An Act Establishing Local Representation on the Connecticut Siting Council for Local Projects, Environment Committee. Read SB 198 here.

HB 5453: An Act Concerning the Membership and Processes of the Siting Council, Government Administration and Elections Committee. Read HB 5453 here.

For more information on these bills, call or email any of your state delegation representatives:

State Rep Jennifer Leeper at 860-240-8585, Jennifer.Leeper@cga.ct.gov.

State Senator Tony Hwang at 860-240-8871, Tony.Hwang@cga.ct.gov

State Rep Cristin McCarthy-Vahey at 860-240-8585, Cristin.McCarthyVahey@cga.ct.gov

State Rep Sarah Keitt at 860-240-8585, Sarah.Keitt@cga.ct.gov

If you would like to remain up to date on all details of the proposed monopoles plan and be a critical part of the grass-roots opposition, please fill out a membership <u>form for Empowering Fairfield here.</u>

<u>Updates will be posted on the Town's website here.</u> You can also find the UI Monopoles updates by going to the <u>Town of Fairfield home page</u> and scrolling down to **Trending Links: UI Monopoles**.

#### Flood Resiliency

**Flood Safety Awareness** 

Each year, more deaths occur due to flooding than from any other thunderstorm-related hazard. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports that over half of all flood-related drownings occur when a vehicle is driven into hazardous flood water. The next highest percentage of flood related deaths is due to walking into or near flood waters. People underestimate the force and power of water. Many of these drownings are preventable. Never drive around barriers that are blocking a flooded road. The road may have collapsed under that water. 6 inches of fast-moving water can knock over an adult. It takes just 12 inches of moving water to carry most cars away. It is never safe drive or walk in flood waters.

If you live in an area that is prone to flooding, have a plan. Be sure to sign up for Town of Fairfield Emergency Alerts here.

#### **Rooster River**

The Rooster River flood mitigation project is moving forward with plans to build detention ponds along the river at Tunxis Hill Park and the Fairfield Wheeler Golf Course. Following are steps to completion and an estimated timeline. Note that the deadline for public comments is April 5.

- **1.March 5**: Public Notice was published by USACE under the <u>Regulatory/Permitting Public</u> Notices.
- **2. April 5**: **Deadline for Public Comments** and regulatory agencies comments. The link is posted on the Town of Fairfield website here.
- 3. Additional 90 days after April 6th deadline to respond to any of the advisory agencies' comments
- **4. July / August 2024**: Estimated date to receive approvals from USACE and answer any comments from advisory agencies (Fisheries, FEMA). Note: This could take longer.
- **5. August September**: Consultants will finalize the design.
- 6. October -Bid Posting
- **7. December** Bid awards, pre-construction meeting, other approvals, if necessary, coordination with Bridgeport, etc.
- 8. January 2025- Construction depending on the weather.

#### FEMA Virtual Meeting on Coastal Erosion: March 28

Because coastal erosion is a hazard that threatens lives, property, and resources in Fairfield County, FEMA Region I has initiated a coastal erosion hazard area study for Fairfield County displaying projected hazards for 2030, 2050, and 2100, incorporating projected sea level rise. An evening virtual meeting will provide an overview of the study's methodology. There will be time at the end for community members to ask questions.

March 28,2024 6:30p.m.–8:00 p.m. <u>Virtual</u> Registration is required.

Individuals requiring accommodations, including sign language interpreters, Communication Access Real-time Translation (CART) and other accommodations should contact Kate McCarthy-Barnett at 617-816-6351 or kate.mccarthybarnett@fema.dhs.gov at least 2 weeks prior to date of event.

#### **Penfield Pavilion**





Significant progress has been made by our contracted construction team at the Penfield Pavilion. The demolition phase of the decks, ramps and stairs is nearing completion. The contractor is now preparing to commence excavation work around and under the building. Excavation around the building will facilitate various aspects of the job including access to below the building to allow for grade beam demolition.

Additionally, in the upcoming weeks, the overflow parking lots across from the pavilion will undergo a resurfacing process to help improve drainage within the lots. Parking will continue to be available during this time. We kindly ask everyone to be extra vigilant of construction trucks, personnel, and machinery operating in and around the area.

#### You Should Know

#### Wait Until 8th: Smartphone Delay for Children

Wait Until 8th is a nationally recognized organization dedicated to supporting parents who have chosen to delay giving their children a smartphone with access to social media and the internet until at least the end of 8th grade. In just over three weeks since the initiative began in Fairfield, more than 200 families have signed the WU8th pledge. The pledge does not include watches or basic phones that offer texting capabilities. In fact, WU8th offers a resource guide for smartphone alternatives.

WU8th is designed to support families who have already made the choice to delay buying their children a smartphone, and is not recruiting people who are uncertain, or judging families who do otherwise. Each family must choose what works best for them. Find more information on WU8th <a href="https://example.com/here.com/here.com/here.com/here.com/here.com/here.com/here.com/here.com/here.com/here.com/here.com/here.com/here.com/here.com/here.com/here.com/here.com/here.com/here.com/here.com/here.com/here.com/here.com/here.com/here.com/here.com/here.com/here.com/here.com/here.com/here.com/here.com/here.com/here.com/here.com/here.com/here.com/here.com/here.com/here.com/here.com/here.com/here.com/here.com/here.com/here.com/here.com/here.com/here.com/here.com/here.com/here.com/here.com/here.com/here.com/here.com/here.com/here.com/here.com/here.com/here.com/here.com/here.com/here.com/here.com/here.com/here.com/here.com/here.com/here.com/here.com/here.com/here.com/here.com/here.com/here.com/here.com/here.com/here.com/here.com/here.com/here.com/here.com/here.com/here.com/here.com/here.com/here.com/here.com/here.com/here.com/here.com/here.com/here.com/here.com/here.com/here.com/here.com/here.com/here.com/here.com/here.com/here.com/here.com/here.com/here.com/here.com/here.com/here.com/here.com/here.com/here.com/here.com/here.com/here.com/here.com/here.com/here.com/here.com/here.com/here.com/here.com/here.com/here.com/here.com/here.com/here.com/here.com/here.com/here.com/here.com/here.com/here.com/here.com/here.com/here.com/here.com/here.com/here.com/here.com/here.com/here.com/here.com/here.com/here.com/here.com/here.com/here.com/here.com/here.com/here.com/here.com/here.com/here.com/here.com/here.com/here.com/here.com/here.com/here.com/here.com/here.com/here.com/here.com/here.com/here.com/here.com/here.com/here.com/here.com/here.com/here.com/here.com/here.com/here.com/here.com/here.com/here.com/here.com/here.com/here.com/here.com/here.com/here.com/here.com/here.com/here.com/here.com/here.com/here.com/here.com/here.com/here.c

#### **Conservation Department**



#### **New Shellfish Permit Cards**

The Shellfish Commission will now be issuing plastic cards for all permits. All residents, non-residents, and seniors are welcome to visit the Conservation Department for a permit from staff or via the online system (via the QR code below or on the website) where a permit will be mailed to the address on file. Lanyards for permit holders will be available at the Conservation Department office. If you currently have a valid paper permit and would like to exchange it for a new card, please visit the Conservation Department office in Sullivan Hall and they can swap it for you.



#### **Adopt-A-Street Program**

The Conservation Department, acting on behalf of the Town of Fairfield Conservation Commission/Inland Wetlands Agency, has announced the official launch of the Town's new Adopt-A-Street program. The Adopt-A Street Program is designed to encourage community organizations, businesses, families and individuals to maintain the beauty of Fairfield's streets by keeping them litter-free. Keeping roadways clean will also prevent litter from entering nearby wetlands and watercourses via wind or roadway storm drains.

The program asks volunteers to submit an application form on the Conservation Department's <a href="webpage">webpage</a> requesting sponsorship for an approximately 500-foot section of a Town-owned roadway. Once approved, the resident or group will make a five-year commitment to safely remove and dispose of roadside litter on both sides of their sponsored roadway. The pledged commitment will be formally recognized by streetside signage naming them the sponsor for that portion of the road.

Trash grabbers will be available to borrow once sponsorship is approved. For the first year, the program will operate as a pilot and sponsorships will be limited, but, if successful, will serve as a model for Town beautification for years to come. Please contact the Conservation Department with any questions at 203-256-3071.



Keeping roadways clean will also prevent litter from entering nearby wetlands and watercourses via wind or roadway storm drains, eventually reaching Long Island Sound.

Photo of catch basin on Round Hill Road near Walls Drive

#### **Project Limulus: Horseshoe Crab Tagging**

Project Limulus began in 1998 in response to the declining horseshoe crab population in Long Island Sound. The vision for the project was to use scientific research to study horseshoe crabs in the Sound to inform management of the population and to educate the public about the importance of horseshoe crabs to ecosystem and human health. An information session on horseshoe crab tagging to support Project Limulus will be held on May 16. Learn more here.

#### Water Conservation Opportunity with Upcycled Rain Barrels

Aquarion Water Company is offering <u>upcycled rain barrels</u> for sale as part of its ongoing water conservation efforts. Fairfield residents can purchase a 60-gallon rain barrel designed to fit under a downspout and catch rainwater running off the roof. You can collect and store water for use in a garden whenever it rains. It takes just one-quarter inch of rainfall on an average roof to fill the barrel and provide water during dry periods, even when restrictions are imposed on water usage. The usage of rain barrels can help conserve water and reduce water bills.

You can order rain barrels online here. Barrels are \$85; orders must be received by May 1. Pick up will be on Saturday, May 11 at Fairfield Regional Fire School, 205 Richard White Way,

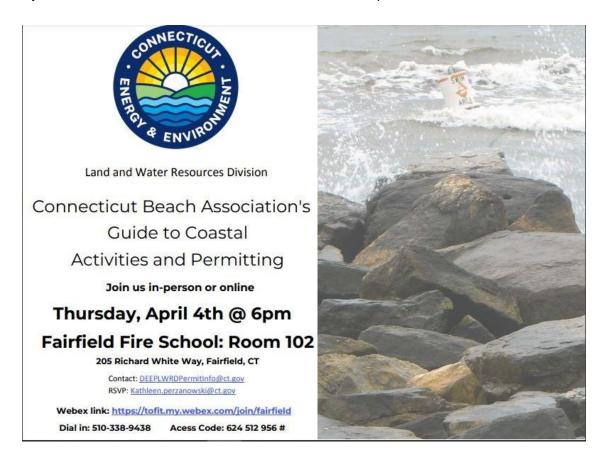
10 a.m. to 1 p.m.



#### **DEEP Presentation: Guide to Coastal Activities and Permitting**

In conjunction with the release of the latest edition of CT DEEP's "Connecticut Beach Association Guide to Coastal Activities and Permitting," their Land and Water Division will host a presentation followed by a Q&A on the guide. The beaches below the high- water line

are a public trust and there are many regulations on what you can and cannot do on in front of your beachfront house. Come hear from CT DEEP on April 4th.



#### Early Childhood Center Program Registration: Info Session April 4

The Early Childhood Center (ECC) will now offer a full day Pre-K program for 4-year-old children with locations at Warde, Stratfield and Holland Hill for the 2024-25 school year! Half day options are also available. ECC provides a friendly, caring, and stimulating preschool experience that meets the needs of all learners beginning at the age of three. To learn more about program offerings, hours, costs and details, visit the <a href="FPS website">FPS website</a>. Or visit the <a href="ECC">ECC</a> website.



#### **Aging in Fairfield**

Age Friendly Fairfield is a town-wide initiative to make our community a great place to grow up and grow old. As a member of the AARP Age Friendly Network, Fairfield commits to assessing the challenges of its aging population and identifying policies, programs and new ideas that will improve the quality of life for all ages in the community, in collaboration with

residents, communities and partners. The three to five-year project focuses on initiatives such as housing, transportation, outdoor spaces and buildings, communication and information, social participation and inclusion, health and community supports.

An Age Friendly Fairfield Survey was conducted last summer in partnership with Fairfield University and Fairfield Senior Advocates, to define parameters for Fairfield to achieve age friendly status. Highlights from the survey include:

- Accessible Transportation: Respondents expressed the importance of transportation options, including public transit, pedestrian-friendly infrastructure and transportation services to support mobility and independence.
- **Community Engagement**: A desire for increased opportunities for social engagements and intergenerational interaction to reduce social isolation.
- **Health and Wellness**: Access to affordable healthcare services, recreational facilities and wellness programs was identified as essential.
- Housing Options: Affordable housing options to accommodate diverse needs, including aging in place and downsizing.

Here is where you can learn more about Age Friendly Fairfield.

Here is An Introduction to the AARP Network of Age-Friendly States and Communities.

For more information, email agefriendlyfairfield@fairfieldct.org

#### Senior and Disabled Homeowners Program for Tax Relief

We are accepting applications for the Senior and Disabled Homeowners program. Applicants can apply in the Assessor's Office from now through May 15, 2024. State and local laws provide real property tax relief programs for Fairfield residents who are age 65 and over or totally disabled and whose annual incomes and assets are within specified limits. These programs are designed to help seniors and the totally disabled remain in their homes. Town tax relief programs are defined in Section 95-15 of the <u>Town Code</u> and are administered by the Assessor's Office. Details can be found here.

#### Free Tax Assistance

There are three ways that moderate income taxpayers can access free tax preparation assistance:

- 1. Fairfield Public Library: On Tuesdays through April 9 from 9:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., free tax preparation help will be available to library patrons through the services of VITA/IRS Volunteer Tax Assistance Program. This service is especially suited to seniors and low-to-moderate income households. No appointment is necessary; patrons will be helped on a first-come, first-served basis. Patrons requesting assistance will need a government-issued ID (e.g., driver's license, US passport, CT State ID card); Social Security cards for all household members, and any necessary tax documents, such as W-2 forms and past tax returns.
- **2. Bigelow Senior Center:** Each Monday and Wednesday from 9:00 a.m. to noon, free tax preparation help is available through a program offered by an AARP/VITA/TCE program. This service requires an appointment: call 203-256-3166 to schedule. 100 Mona Terrace.

**3. Fairfield University**: Each Friday from 9:00 a.m. to noon; each Saturday from 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. This service offered by a VITA/IRS program also requires an appointment. Call 216-334-6787 to schedule. 1073 N. Benson Road

#### Public Invited to Meeting on U.S. Route 1 Road Diet

On Thursday, April 25, 2024, at 7 pm, the Connecticut Department of Transportation (CTDOT) will host a Public Informational Meeting in conjunction with the Town of Fairfield regarding State Project No. 0050-0224 – U.S. Route 1 Road Diet which you can <u>read about</u> here.

The Public Informational meeting will be held both virtually and in Conference Room 295 A/B, 501 Kings Highway E., Fairfield, CT 06825 (across from Goodwill; in the same building as Save the Children). For those not able to attend in person, you may use Webex which also has a call-in option:

ViaWebex: https://tofit.my.webex.com/join/fairfield

By phone: Dial 510-338-9438. Enter Access Code or Meeting Number: 624 512 956 # From the Webex app, connect to meeting #: 624 512 956 #

#### **Be Prepared for Emergencies**



## BLS Healthcare Provider CPR/AED Training



March 24, 2024 9 am – 12 noon \$90 per student

(includes textbook and certification card)

## Layperson CPR/AED Training



April 22, 2024
9 am – 12 noon
\$70 per student
(includes textbook and certification card)

Looking for a CPR/AED or FIRST AID CLASS
Call us today to find out more

### Fairfield Regional Fire School

205 Richard White Way, Fairfield (203) 254-4708 frfs@fairfieldct.org



Would YOU know what to do in case of a traumatic bleeding event?





Trauma-related deaths worldwide due to bleeding







# FREE Stop the Bleed and Hands Only CPR Training

Fairfield Regional Fire School, 205 Richard White Way, Fairfield, CT

Monday, May 20, 2024—Three Sessions

Morning 9-11 am—Afternoon 1-3 pm Evening—7-9 pm Session Size Limited—Register Today



An Invitation from the Sustainable Fairfield Task Force

# POWERSMART FAIRFIELD

More Power. More Control.

You can own solar PV panels + an energy storage system and take control of your energy use.

You generate your own power and have a choice of whether to use it or sell it to the grid. Learn more about these combined technologies—and the generous financial incentives available—by registering for a tour of a Fairfield home with solar+storage. The host homeowner has clean energy day and night, and is fully prepared for grid outages.

MARCH

16

SATURDAY

# Renewably Energized HOUSE TOUR! Choose 2:00PM OR 3:00PM

Meet with the homeowner and see for yourself his home battery system that is paired with rooftop solar. Clean, quiet reliable power created by the sun, and stored for discretionary use!

Register with EventBrite and choose which 50-minute tour you want. Each one will start promptly on the hour.

Solar+Energy Storage: Fairfield Home Tour | Eventbrite

The Sustainable Fairfield Task Force encourages you to visit https://PowerSmartFairfield.wee.green to learn more details. "Energy Storage Solutions" program participants can get great incentives, rebates, federal tax credits, and tips on buying solar and/or battery back-up systems.

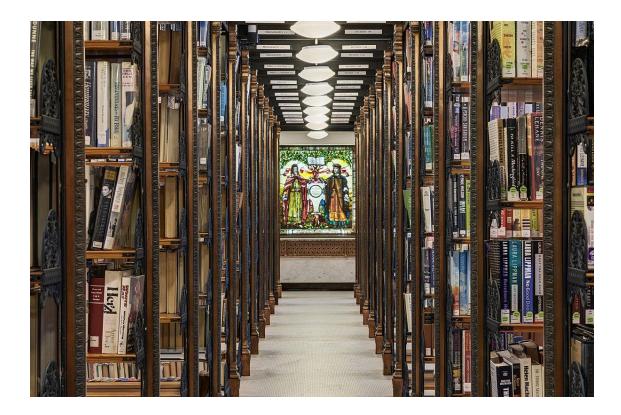








Make a Connection: Pequot Library



Fairfield is fortunate to have a number of non-profit organizations that enhance our quality of life and serve as valuable community resources. One of our historic treasures is the <u>Pequot Library</u>, located in the heart of Southport. The non-profit Pequot Library is part of Fairfield's public library system and features Tiffany stained glass windows, an original steel stacks wing, a glass floor, and historic reading rooms. It's home to a significant cache of <u>Special Collections</u> featuring early Americana and other treasures, which scholars as well as the general public can make appointments to view.

While honoring its past, the library keeps its eye on the future. As well as a gathering place to discuss topical issues, the library offers hands-on library services. An estimated 80 percent of its operating expenses are raised through fundraisers: Derby Day Celebration on May 4, the Garden Stroll on June 7, and the Summer Book Sale, kickoff day July 26.

Right around the corner: the <u>Living Bird-Friendly Series!</u> Get your home ready for springtime birds! Join the library for a special series exploring areas of bird-friendly living: eliminating window collisions, decreasing light pollution, planting native plants & flowers, and following bird-friendly pest control strategies. April 12-13.

#### **How to Contact Your State Legislators**

I encourage you to reach out to your legislators with questions or comments on their legislative work. Click on the name below to contact them at their website.

State Senator Tony Hwang State Representative Cristin McCarthy Vahey State Representative Jennifer Leeper State Representative Sarah Keitt

<u>Board of Selectmen Meetings</u>
The next regular Board of Selectmen meeting will be held on Wednesday, March 27 at 4:00 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.

#### **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.



Mill Hollow Park: The Mill Hollow Park and Open Space Area consists of about nine acres on the east side of the Mill River, just downstream of the Sturges Road Bridge. Little known fact: at one time, this area was home to a dog biscuit factory. Learn more about Mill Hollow Park here.

Photo credit: Joel Rock

#### 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, <u>click here</u>. You can also unsubscribe from any newsletter you don't want to receive. Go to the bottom of the email and click unsubscribe.