



**Town of Barkhamsted
First Selectman's Newsletter
Nº. 3, December 2008**



As I near the end of my first year as First Selectman, I want you to know how much I appreciate the opportunity to serve the town's residents. I hope this newsletter helps you keep up with town events.

2009/2010 Budgets – With the uncertainty of our economy and the State's budget deficit, the upcoming year will be difficult. The goal of the Boards of Selectmen and Finance is to tightly control next year's budgets. We are doing everything we can to control costs in order to keep taxes as close to this year's rate as possible. My hope is to accomplish this goal without eliminating services.

Capital Projects –Town Hall air conditioning and window replacements are almost finished, and new, low energy lighting will be installed. These projects will save energy and reduce our future energy costs. The new phone system, computer network and website have been completed. These improvements will make it easier to contact Town offices and to stay informed about town happenings.

Website – The new website has just been unveiled at www.barkhamsted.us and it's very user-friendly. It contains information on the Town, the Boards and Commissions, recreation activities and other community events and organizations. All meeting agendas and minutes are available on-line and we will add more tools in the near future.

Revaluation – In the next few weeks, you will receive a notice of the new assessment of your property's value. The Town hired Vision Appraisal Technology to re-assess all property in town in accordance with state requirements. The valuations are based on the October 1, 2008 market and will result in a total grand list higher than the previous grand list, which was based on 2003 values. Personal property and motor vehicle assessments are updated on an annual basis. Because the total appraised value of property in Town will go up, the mill rate required to raise the same amount of taxes will go down. If it is necessary to raise taxes next Spring, the increase will be based on the lower mill rate, not the current one. For more information on revaluation and your taxes,

please visit our website and click on the Assessor link or call 379-3600.

Economic Development – We have hired two residents, Mark Waterhouse and Leslie Cosgrove, nationally known economic development consultants, to create a strategy for the Town. They are being supported by Mike Casale, who has a very strong marketing and advertising background. The focus of this contract, to be completed in early Spring, is to enhance the business environment in Riverton and to create a business strategy for the Route 44 corridor. The output of the study will include firm actions we will need to take to create a stronger business environment in Town, without affecting our rural nature.

Road Crew – The public works department has completed most of their projects for this year and is ready for winter. They have filled in the potholes on town roads; they have resurfaced West River Road, Diane Drive and South Road and improved the drainage on West West Hill Road; and they have repaired many of the other roads and guard rails in Town. Besides preparing for the snow, they will be tree trimming or removing dangerous trees on town property over the next few weeks.

Justices of the Peace – All Justices of the Peace who have been appointed for the next four years must fill out a card that has been mailed to them by Maria Mullady, the Town Clerk. That card must be returned to her office by January 5, 2009. All JP's must re-take the oath of office.

Social Services – We all hope that 2009 is a better year for the nation's economy and for our residents. If you need assistance, we have a variety of services available. These include fuel assistance, housing rehabilitation loans, and the Cookie Jar fund for one-time expenses. Cynthia Williams (379-2053), Municipal Agent for the Elderly, and Debbie Brydon (379-1314) in the Town Hall are available to help you. You can always contact me if you have any questions at 379-8285 or dstein@barkhamsted.us.

Don



**Town of Barkhamsted
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PLEASE VISIT OUR NEW WEBSITE WWW.BARKHAMSTED.US AND LET US KNOW WHAT YOU THINK. IT HAS ALL OF THE INFORMATION THAT WAS ON THE PREVIOUS WEBSITE AND IS MUCH EASIER TO USE. WE'RE ALSO INTERESTED IN SUGGESTIONS ABOUT ADDITIONAL INFORMATION THAT YOU WOULD LIKE TO SEE.

YOUR SECOND PROPERTY TAX PAYMENT IS DUE BY THE END OF JANUARY. THE TAX OFFICE WOULD LIKE TO ENCOURAGE TAXPAYERS THAT ARE BEHIND IN THEIR TAXES TO MAKE PAYMENTS IN AN EFFORT TO BECOME CURRENT. IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS, PLEASE CALL TERRI COLLINS AT 738-4762.

APPLICATIONS FOR FUEL ASSISTANCE, THROUGH OPERATION FUEL, WILL BEGIN ON DECEMBER 1, 2008. APPOINTMENTS CAN BE MADE BY CALLING 379-1314. APPLICATIONS WILL BE ACCEPTED ON THE SECOND AND FOURTH WEDNESDAY OF THE MONTH BETWEEN 4:00 AND 6:00 PM AT THE TOWN HALL.

AS WE GET INTO THE WINTER SEASON, PLEASE OBSERVE THE TOWN ORDINANCE THAT REQUIRES CARS TO NOT BE PARKED ON TOWN STREETS DURING A SNOW STORM. THIS IS NECESSARY TO ASSURE THAT WE CAN REMOVE SNOW AND ICE FROM YOUR ROADS.

AND MOST IMPORTANTLY – DRIVE SAFELY THIS WINTER AND HAVE A HAPPY AND HEALTHY 2009.