



## Town of Barkhamsted First Selectman's Newsletter April 2008



Last Fall, I promised that I would send out periodic newsletters to the town in an effort to keep you up-to-date on events that are happening, or on other items that I thought were newsworthy. I would like to thank everyone (once again) for providing me with the opportunity to serve the Town as First Selectman. This is a great town. I'm meeting terrific people and participating in events I never had time for when I was working out of town and traveling too often.

Now that Spring has arrived, I would also like to congratulate the Town Road Crew on another fine job this winter. The weather cycles of cold and warm and cold again have been particularly rough on our roads, but the crew and their Foreman, Rich Novak, worked tirelessly to keep the roads safe and as clear of ice as possible.

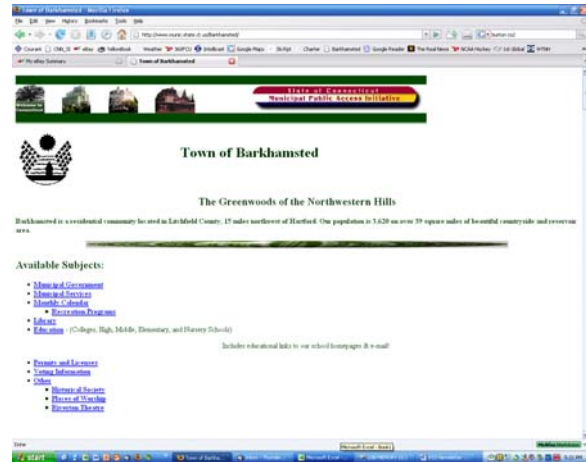
A couple of good things have just happened. Earlier this year, I applied for several grants and was recently notified by the State that the town will receive a STEAP grant of \$150,000 for continued development of the Squire's Tavern and two small grants of \$5000 and \$3450 for support of our seniors.

The Barkhamsted Historical Society has done an amazing job rejuvenating the Squire's Tavern and, with the STEAP grant, will be able to continue to improve it for the use of folks in town and to show it off to other folks interested in our region's history.

The other two grants will be used by our Municipal Agent for the Elderly (Cynthia Eastman Williams) to conduct programs for the Seniors; and by the Seniors organization to upgrade the town Senior Center to improve their ability to provide meals as part of their nutrition program.

If you haven't looked at our website (<http://www.munic.state.ct.us/Barkhamsted/>) in a while, it's changed. It may look the same, but the content has increased. You

can now view agendas and minutes for all town boards and commissions and we have added links to other agencies serving the town.



If the proposed 2008/2009 capital budget is approved, a new, easier-to-use website will be designed and implemented, which will allow us to add new features such as a listing of our hometown businesses.

Everyone in Town Hall and the Town Garage is now connected to the internet and has e-mail, so it's much easier to contact us. If you want to be notified of public meetings of particular interest to you (e.g., Planning & Zoning activities), please let Debbie Brydon (379-1314) know, and she will add you to the e-mail list.

I also want to make sure you are aware that the Town Hall hours have changed to make the departments more available to everyone who works during the day. We are now open until 6:00 pm on Wednesday, so that you can conduct business after work. Please take advantage of these revised hours for any of your business in Town Hall. The new hours are:

9:00-4:00 (Monday, Tuesday and Thursday)
10:00-6:00 (Wednesday)
9:00-12:00 (Friday)

The Town Clerk would like to remind you that you must renew your dog licenses in June. Updated rabies vaccination certificates are required and evidence of spaying or neutering must be provided to receive the lower fee.

### **Boards and Commissions**

In the months since the election, I have recruited a number of volunteers to fill vacancies and the Democratic and Republican Town Committees have presented candidates. The new members of the various commissions or newly appointed representatives include:

- ⇒ **Board of Finance**
  - **Gerry Gardner**
  - **Rich Winn**
- ⇒ **Inlands Wetland**
  - **Caprice Shaw**
  - **Tom Santoro (alternate)**
- ⇒ **Town Tree Warden**
  - **Chuck Gaura**
- ⇒ **Ass't. Emergency Management Director**
  - **Jim Lagassie**
- ⇒ **Municipal Agent for the Elderly**
  - **Cynthia Eastman Williams**
- ⇒ **Northwest Mental Health Board (town representative)**
  - **Barbara Herrlich**
- ⇒ **Winsted Youth Bureau (town representative)**
  - **George Murphy**

### **Assessor's Report – Grand List/Tax Credits**

The 2007 grand list is about \$303 million and is up by 1.3% over the last year. This increase and the increase in state aid from last year should enable the Town to maintain tax increases at the same level as the last two years. Last year, thirty elderly homeowners received tax credits amounting to more than \$17,700 (for which the town is reimbursed by the state), plus they received additional town tax credits of more than

\$14,900. The filing period for these credits runs from February 1 through May 15. Please contact Francine Beland at 379-3600 to apply for this program.

Revaluation is underway and is intended to provide uniformity in property valuations and to assure that all property owners are paying only their fair share. It is not intended to increase revenues. You will receive your revised assessment later this year after the full revaluation is complete.

### **Tax Collector's Report**

The Tax Collector's office is responsible for the billing and collection of taxes for the Town and for the Barkhamsted Fire District. Our collection rate for the last fiscal year was 98.5% (the ratio of taxes collected from taxpayers compared to the total tax bills for everyone in town). We typically budget for collecting 98% of the taxes that are due. We hope to maintain at least this level of collections in the future, but we are very concerned about the economic climate in the country and our region.

There has been an increase in the number of taxpayers signing up with MCC, our contracted vendor for on-line check and credit card payments. In order for you to take advantage of this timesaving feature, we will be providing a link from the town's website to MCC to make this program more convenient – more details will be in your upcoming tax bill.

Please let me know of other topics of interest to you for future newsletters (which I plan to send out quarterly). Feel free to call me (379-8285 in Town Hall or on my cell phone at 860-605-7380) or send me an e-mail if you have any issues you wish to discuss ([donstein@charter.net](mailto:donstein@charter.net)).

*Don*

Don Stein  
First Selectman