



**Town of Barkhamsted
First Selectman's Newsletter
Nº. 4, April 2009**



It appears that Spring has finally arrived and the weather is starting to warm up. Parts of the Town suffered a very significant ice storm in December and most of us had snow on the ground all winter. Rich Novak, the Highway Department Foreman, and I will be reviewing all roads in town to establish a priority list of repairs in an attempt to make travel in town as smooth as possible within our budget constraints.

The Town and its residents were very fortunate this winter that the price of home heating oil, diesel fuel and gasoline declined significantly. This price decrease helped weather the recession gripping the country a little more easily.

This is the time of year when town budgets and the tax rate are established. Please participate in the upcoming Board of Finance budget hearing on Monday, April 20th. The Annual Town Meeting and the Annual Budget Meeting will be held on Tuesday, May 5th. These meetings give you the chance to participate in setting the budgets for the Town and the Barkhamsted Elementary School. The big question that could affect taxes is the amount of funding we will receive from the State.

Economic Development

The economic development study of Riverton and the Route 44 corridor is making good progress. The consultant team has held three meetings with town residents to make sure that we are proceeding in a direction consistent with the town's desires. The first meeting regarding Riverton had 10 participants, the second one focused on Route 44 had 40 attendees, and the third meeting at the Riverton Grange involved 65 residents. The final report, including a detailed strategy and recommendations for next

steps will be provided to the Economic Development Committee and the Board of Selectmen in the coming weeks. The interest and enthusiasm for this initiative has been increasing and a number of folks have volunteered to assist in coming events.

World War II Veterans

The Town will have a special ceremony this Spring to honor residents who served in World War II. This ceremony will be conducted by the Connecticut Secretary of State, Susan Bysiewicz. Thus far, we have identified 17 veterans, who live in town. We would hate to omit anyone who served their country, so if you are a WW II veteran, please call Town Hall.

News from Francine Beland, Assessor

The revaluation is complete and all property owners have been notified of their revised property assessment. The total value of the Grand List, which determines the mill rate, went up 21%. Total real estate assessments rose by 24%, reflecting the increase in property values that has occurred since the last revaluation conducted 5 years ago. Personal property increased by 5.5% and motor vehicles decreased by 2.3%. The assessments are based on October 1, 2008 and do not reflect decreases in property values since that date. Assuming that the town does not have to raise additional tax revenue this year, the mill rate will decrease by the same percentage as the grand list increased.

The assessor would also like to remind all residents of the tax relief incentive for the elderly & totally disabled. You may find the information for Barkhamsted Tax Relief along with other exemption programs by visiting the Assessor's homepage on the town website.



News from Terri Collins, Tax Collector

In these hard economic times, our tax collections are running behind when compared to last year. Collections are approximately 1% behind the same time period in 2008. The tax office has just completed the spring round of delinquent billing and it is extremely important that these bills not be ignored. We are hopeful, that people will bring their tax bills up-to-date, since a higher collection rate can help to prevent increases in the mill rate for upcoming years. Liens will be filed on unpaid personal property taxes on the first of May and on unpaid real estate taxes the first of June.

News from Maria Mullady, Town Clerk

Please don't forget that dog licenses are due in June. Proof of rabies and proof of spaying or neutering are required to purchase a license.

Opening Day of fishing season is Saturday, April 18. Since the Riverton General Store is no longer selling sports licenses, they can be purchased at the

Town Clerk's Office during regular business hours, Mon., Tues., and Thurs. 9:00 to 4:00, Wed. 10:00 to 6:00 and Fri. 9:00 to 12:00. The Town Clerk's Office will also be open on Opening Day from 5:00 A.M. to 10:00 to issue sports licenses. If you have any questions, please call the Town Clerk's Office at 379-8665.

The Town would also like to welcome Rista Holda as our new Zoning Enforcement Officer and Inland Wetlands Officer. She will have office hours in the Town Hall on Friday from 9:00 -12:00 and will be available to do inspections and support the commissions, as needed.

Please call me any time you have questions at 379-8285 or by e-mail at dstein@barkhamsted.us.

Don

PLEASE VISIT OUR NEW WEBSITE (www.barkhamsted.us) AND LET US KNOW WHAT YOU THINK. THE UPDATED WEBSITE PROVIDES A GREAT DEAL OF INFORMATION ABOUT THE TOWN, ITS BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS, VARIOUS COMMUNITY GROUPS, AND TOWN EVENTS AND IS MUCH EASIER TO USE THAN THE PREVIOUS SITE. OVER 110 PEOPLE HAVE SIGNED UP TO RECEIVE E-MAIL NOTIFICATIONS OF EVENTS OR TOWN-WIDE NOTICES, SO PLEASE TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THIS FEATURE AVAILABLE AT THE BOTTOM OF THE HOME PAGE. WE ARE CONTINUING TO ADD CONTENT, SUCH AS REGULATIONS, AND PUBLIC NOTICES, AND ALL OF THE BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS POST THEIR MEETING SCHEDULE AND AGENDAS/MINUTES.

DON'T FORGET TO PARTICIPATE IN THE UPCOMING MEETINGS REGARDING THE TOWN BUDGETS AND RESULTING TAXES. THE BOARD OF FINANCE WILL HOLD ITS BUDGET HEARING ON MONDAY, APRIL 20TH AND THE ANNUAL TOWN MEETING AND BUDGET MEETING WILL BE HELD ON TUESDAY, MAY 5TH. THESE MEETINGS GIVE YOU THE CHANCE TO PARTICIPATE IN SETTING THE BUDGETS AND TAX RATES FOR THE TOWN AND THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL. PLEASE COME EXERCISE YOUR RIGHTS!