

STAFFORD

Connecticut

MUNICIPAL UPDATE

SEPTEMBER 2020



📷 JACQUELINE SIDOR, JMS ART & PHOTO

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☎ (860) 684-1778

OFFICE OF THE FIRST SELECTMAN

It's hard to believe that mid-September is already here. It seems like our precious summer months always pass swiftly and despite these very unusual days, this year was no exception. You would think during a pandemic, time and productivity would decelerate, but we've experienced quite the opposite at Town Hall. True to "2020 form" we've had a heightened focus on safety, response, and strategic tools to build a more resilient community.

Phase II policies continue at Town Hall. We are open to the public with required check-in at the Veteran's Meeting Room, where your name, phone number, and destination will be recorded for contact tracing purposes. Face coverings and social distancing are required, only one person at a time will be permitted in each department. We strongly encourage you

to continue to use on-line services, email, telephone, USPS, FedEx, UPS, and the Town Hall drop-box.

Each of our departments is hard at work, achieving regular duties while going above and beyond to combat the challenges of our current world. In early August, Tropical Storm Isaias rattled Stafford, leaving our community tangled in debris and without power for days. While our Public Works crews proudly serves this community each day, following the storm they worked around the clock to clear debris and help return utilities to our community, as well as our Fire Departments, Stafford Police, emergency crews, and C.E.R.T. members. Thank you for your extraordinary efforts and dedication.

Scheduled meetings will continue to be

held via Zoom Video Conferencing. You can watch or listen to the Town of Stafford public meetings on-line by visiting the Town's "Calendar of Meetings" page and clicking on the specific meeting that you would like (call-in details are listed on the respective meeting agendas). Recorded meetings or written minutes will be posted for future viewing. As always, if you have questions regarding Town Hall business or projects, please call the Selectman's Office or respective department.

I want to take a moment and wish our students, parents, teachers, and administration well as we navigate this new school year. Unlike any other, the return-to-school jitters bring a whole new meaning in 2020. Based on science, the Stafford Board of Education worked diligently to re-imagine learning with >>

STAFFORD TOWN CLERK



ABSENTEE BALLOT APPLICATION INFORMATION FOR THE NOVEMBER 3, 2020 ELECTION

The November 3, 2020 Election is still a couple of months away, but in the Town Clerks office we are preparing our in-office procedures to make it possible for you to vote by Absentee Ballot. With approximately 7200 active voters, we need to be efficient and focused, so that your vote counts. Please read carefully the information below:

To those planning on voting by Absentee Ballot the process is 2 part: The ballot application & the ballot itself.

The Secretary of the State will be mailing applications to EVERY active voter in mid-September. Your voting information is maintained by your local Registrar of Voters. The Town Clerk relies on that system to be correct and up to date. It is so very important for you to return your application to the Town Clerk as soon as you receive it. You may do so via the United States Postal Service OR you may use the Black Town Hall Drop Box located next to the Town Hall (railroad track side).

Once the ballots are available (beginning October 2, 2020), the Town Clerk will mail your ballot to the mailing address you provided on your application. It is equally important for you to return your ballot quickly to the Town Clerk. You may do so via the United States Postal Service OR you may do so via the Official Ballot Box located next to the Town Hall (railroad track side).

There are many protocols that the Town Clerk must follow in the process, and the quicker the ballot applications and ballots come back to us, the more time we have to meet those protocols.

By state statute, our other responsibilities cannot be put aside. In order for us to help you & assure that your vote counts, please help us and get the application and ballot back to us very quickly.

If you are planning on voting in person on Election Day, you do not need to mail back the application for an Absentee Ballot. Please feel free to call any time you would like assistance, verification, and clarification.

Karen G Troiano
Stafford Town Clerk

 (860) 684-1765

 CLERK@STAFFORDCT.ORG

Office of the First Selectman continued...

safety and equity in mind. Still, I will not downplay the unique challenges this year is expected to bring. Thankfully, you are not alone. We are a strong community and we will get through this together.

I will always be amazed by Stafford's ability to adapt, withstand, and recuperate. I continue to collect stories of residents helping one another in this time of peril and these accounts are inspiring as we continue to understand what we need to do for continued recovery. Business and citizen support are critical as we recoup. If you have questions about reopening procedures or simply need help, please don't hesitate to reach out to for assistance by calling (860) 684-1778 or email staffordtownhall@staffordct.org.

STAFFORD POLICE DEPT.



The school year has officially begun for students in Stafford and while the academic year looks a little different, school bus safety remains unchanged. The Stafford Police Department reminds motorists to stop your car when you see lights flashing on a school bus. Red flashing lights indicate that the bus is stopped and students are getting on or off. Don't start driving until the red lights stop flashing. Be aware that a child may dash across the street. Slow down. Be especially careful when driving on neighborhood streets and around school zones, always expect the unexpected.

Find additional school bus safety tips for motorists, parents, and children at: portal.ct.gov/DOT/PP_Policy/Documents/School-Bus-Safety

 (860) 684-3777

 DUNCAN@STAFFORDCT.ORG

STAFFORD COMMUNITY CENTER, SOCIAL SERVICES & SENIOR CENTER

In late August, the Connecticut Department of Aging and Disability Services Commissioner, Amy Porter, released reopening guidance for senior centers regarding on-site visits, programs, and services. The guidance allowed for reopening as early as September 1, but leaves decisions regarding specific opening timelines and available programs and services up to individual senior centers.

No two senior centers are alike; they vary widely in the physical set-up of their buildings, the activities and services that they provide, and the number of staff they have to do so. There is also a fairly large sub-set of guidelines for each type of activity that needs to be followed in order to reopen that related activity.

The Stafford Community and Senior Center, in collaboration with the First Selectman and Stafford Health Department, will be reviewing all guidelines in the coming weeks to determine which events and activities can be gradually re-introduced while complying with the corresponding guidelines. Interested persons can check the Center's page on the town website for any new updates.

We appreciate your patience and understanding as we work to find the safest path forward in these unprecedented times.

Grace Parrow
Director, Elderly Outreach & Municipal Agent on Aging

 (860) 684-3906  PARROWG@STAFFORDCT.ORG



STAFFORD GARDEN CLUB SCARECROW DECORATING CONTEST

Join the Stafford Garden Club for the 6th Annual Scarecrow Decorating Contest, featuring an assortment of whimsical scarecrows decorating Downtown Stafford throughout the month of October. Schools, organizations, and businesses are invited to join. Scarecrow setup following current COVID-19 safety guidelines will be Saturday, Oct. 3, with judging by Garden Club members on Saturday, Oct. 31. One prize of \$100 will be awarded in the schools, organizations, and business categories. See attachments for details and registration forms, please visit http://staffordct.org/news_detail.php?id=1551

 facebook.com/staffordgardenclub

TAX COLLECTOR

Currently, the Tax Office is encouraging payment by mail, on-line, or utilizing the black drop box located on the railroad track side of Town Hall. We understand that there are situations warranting the need to physically come into Town Hall to conduct business, we are happy to accommodate you. If your business needs to be completed in-person, you must enter through the back doors and check-in at the receptionist area, located in the Veterans Room. One person at a time will be allowed in the tax office, so please understand there may be a wait. Office staff will be wearing masks and visitors are also required to wear a face covering. All protocol is to protect the citizens of Stafford and Town Hall staff. Thank you for your understanding. Please contact the Tax Office at (860) 684-1760 if you have any questions.

Reminder Taxes Due – The extended grace period ends October 1, 2020. If taxes are not paid or postmarked by October 1, 2020 interest reverts back to July 1, 2020 and 6% will be charged to each unpaid account. Town and District hold separate interest charges.

 (860) 684-1760  IRVINGS@STAFFORDCT.ORG  TUCKER@STAFFORDCT.ORG

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS



Scheduled Six-Week Closure and Detour of Route 319 in Stafford for Construction Activities

The Connecticut Department of Transportation is announcing the scheduled closure and detour of Route 319 in Stafford from September 21, through October 30, 2020. The closure is necessary to facilitate roadway reconstruction activities, including installation of new drainage, realignment of the roadway, and reconstruction of vertical grades to improve sight lines on Route 319 (Orcuttville Road) between Route 32 and Route 190 in Stafford.

-- DETOUR INFORMATION --

Non-Truck:

- The section of Route 319 between Routes 32 and 190 will be detoured for EB (non-truck) traffic via Route 190 East to Route 32 in Stafford Springs (Stafford), left onto Route 32 North, follow Route 32 NB to Route 319; WB (non-truck) traffic via Route 32 south to Route 190, right onto Route 190 West, follow Route 190 WB.

Truck:

- EB truck traffic will be detoured from Route 190 East, right onto Route 30 in West Stafford, follow Route 30 SB to Route 140 at Crystal Lake in Ellington, left onto Route 140 East, then follow Route 140 EB to West Street in Stafford Springs (Stafford), left onto West Street, follow West Street to intersection with Route 32/190, left onto Route 32 North/190 West, then branch right onto Route 32 North, follow Route 32 NB to Route 319;
- WB truck traffic will be detoured from Route 319 West, left onto Route 32 in Stafford, follow Route 32 SB to Route 32/190 in Stafford Springs (Stafford), continue straight on Route 32 South/190 East, then right onto West Street, follow West Street to Route 140, right onto Route 140, follow Route 140 WB to Route 30 at Crystal Lake in Ellington, right onto Route 30, follow Route 30 NB to Route 190 in West Stafford.

DOT Project No. 0134-0147 started on April 13, 2020, with an anticipated completion date of September 3, 2021. The prime contractor is Spazzarini Construction Company, Inc.

 (860) 684-3448  DPW@STAFFORDCT.ORG

UPDATE: STAFFORD FALLFEST & TRICK-OR-TREAT ON MAIN STREET

It's with great disappointment the Town of Stafford announces the cancellation of both Stafford FallFest and Trick-or-Treat on Main Street, slated for October 3 and October 24, respectfully. The two town-promoted autumn events attract high volumes of residents and visitors where attendees gather in close quarters. The decision to cancel was in consult with local health officials and made with concerns for the health and safety of our community. Along with ensuring the well-being of participants, entertainers, vendors, staff, local business owners/employees, and first responders, State-mandated criteria (such as social distancing practices and one-way foot traffic) would be costly to implement and difficult to enforce. There are too many mitigating circumstances and challenges related to COVID-19 to make these events viable, safe, and financially prudent. While these cancellations are disappointing for a number of reasons, we anticipate their return in 2021 and look forward to a time when we can once again gather together as a community.

TOWN CONTACT INFORMATION

ASSESSORS OFFICE	684-1786
BUILDING DEPARTMENT	684-1775
FACILITIES DEPARTMENT	684-1789
FAMILY SERVICES	684-4239
FIRE MARSHAL	684-1791
GRANTS & MARKETING	851-8102
HEALTH DIRECTOR	684-5609
LIBRARY	684-2852
STAFFORD POLICE DEPARTMENT	684-3777
<i>Troop C</i>	896-3200
OFFICE OF THE FIRST SELECTMAN	684-1777
PUBLIC WORKS	684-5630
REGISTRAR OF VOTERS	684-1770
SENIOR CENTER	684-3906
SOCIAL SERVICES	684-7752
TAX COLLECTOR	684-1760
TOWN CLERK	684-1765
TRANSFER STATION	684-4364
TREASURER	684-1772
WPCF PLANT	684-4914
ZONING / LAND USE	684-1793