

# FIRST SELECTMAN COLUMN

06/08/23 ISSUE DATE

Sherman's Summer Camp sponsored through the Park and Recreation Commission begins on June 26. Sign-up for it has begun and John Wrenn, Camp Director, is available for sign-ups on Saturday mornings from 9am to 1pm in his office located in the Sherman School cafeteria (playground

side of the school). Beach passes are also available for pickup during that time. Last summer featured a record number of campers and we look for camp this year to be equally as popular if not more so. Sherman School graduation is on Thursday, June 15 this year at 6pm. Awards Night is the day before on June 14, also at 6pm. Graduation marks an important step for our matriculating students as they make their way into high school and move further down the road of adulthood. The Town of Sherman is always proud of our graduates and is also proud of the education that our students receive in Sherman.

We are holding a Town Meeting in Charter Hall this Saturday, June 10 at 10am. We will be asking for voter approval of five uncontroversial issues. The first two concern the annual appropriations from the Happy Acres Restricted Fund into the Happy Acres Operating Fund to have on-hand money for expenses – usually maintenance related – that come up through the year. No money can come out of the Restricted Fund without permission at Town Meeting from the voters, so this allows not having to ask for small amounts at a time. Rather, we allocate \$20,000 for maintenance to last throughout the fiscal year. We also will allocate \$35,000 to fund the stipend for our farm manager. These are standard procedures and something the Town does every year now that it successfully maintains a farm.

Other items: We are asking for approval to purchase a Renzor propane hanging heater for public works in addition to an upright Roth oil tank. This will not exceed \$26,000 from our capital non-recurring fund. We will be asking permission from the voters for \$9,000 from capital permission to purchase a new aluminum flatbed for truck # 3. Lastly, we will be asking for \$4,000 from capital to purchase an "OWL", which is a device to help allow us to better transmit remote meetings of the kind that we are now, since the covid pandemic, accustomed to holding.

I enjoyed attending the Northwest Connecticut Land Conservancy's (NCLC) "Spring Fling" at the Sherman JCC last Saturday. The NCLC is now the holder of our "open space" lands as the Naromi Land Trust and Weantinoge Land Trust joined together to form the NCLC. We have a lot to be grateful for here in Sherman with regard to people having the foresight to preserve open land. This is a primary reason why Sherman is so often described as "beautiful" and is also the reason why Sherman is such a lovely place to live.

On that note, it's important to realize that in this last session our state's General Assembly tried valiantly (is still apparently trying to salvage it) to pass something called "FAIR SHARE" which relates to affordable housing. Yes, it was a well-intentioned effort and sounds, well, "fair". But it is anything but "fair" in practice. Basically, it usurped all towns' zoning and regulations and allowed the state to examine each towns' affordable housing stock and then recommend a course of action that included forcing Towns to ignore their environmental considerations and build their own affordable housing in wherever the state deemed it possible to build it. Open space was susceptible and threatened. Our taxes would skyrocket. Lawsuits would clog the courts. Sherman would become unaffordable for many, especially young families and those on fixed incomes. This was possibly the most onerous and disastrous legislation to pop up ever. While our Sen. Harding and Rep. Callahan were against it, I wrote to all of our area legislators and implored that they too not support this thoughtless proposal down. Thankfully, the proposal is dead, but versions of "FAIR SHARE" keep cropping up and threatening us. To be continued, sadly. I always hold out hope that the State government will be a better partner to us smaller towns.



DON LOWE

TOWN OF SHERMAN