

# FIRST SELECTMAN COLUMN

06/15/23 ISSUE DATE

The bid process is over for the painting and repair of the rest of the Happy Acres buildings and we will be moving that project to Town Meeting at the June 22 Board of Selectmen meeting. We will be asking the residents in that Town Meeting to allow us to utilize a STEAP grant that my staff and I applied for and won that will pay for the painting and repair project in whole. I expect the work up there to begin in the middle of July and by summer's end all of the buildings will look as red and as grand as the large barn. (We completed the big barn's painting, re-siding, and repair about 18 months ago. We also did the main house.) By the way, it looks like Saturday, October 7 will be Farm Day up at Happy Acres and I'm sure this one will be bigger than ever. It's not too early to put that on your calendar.

I know I write about this a lot, but please don't speed on Sherman roads. There seems to be an uptick in careless, speeding driving again. I guess it is part of what summer brings. This is a bit disappointing because drivers in the months of February, March, and April were slowing down. We know this anecdotally, and we also know it even more surely through statistics from our speed indicators. But the fast drivers are back, especially in the center of Town. Be warned: we have correspondingly made an uptick in enforcement capabilities and Sherman is not a smart town to speed in if you want to keep your driving record clean.

The Town is currently exploring drafts for a short-term rental ordinance. My office fields numerous complaints about these Airbnb and VRBO, which are illegal in Sherman as per our zoning regulations. The thought behind adding an ordinance is that it better allows for enforcement by the state police and is a more cut-and dried way of putting an end to them. Currently, several short term rentals in Sherman are brazenly advertised on the aforementioned sites. Yet, stopping them by the means at our present disposal is not easy.

With regard to the last two paragraphs, so much of what my office deals with, especially in the summer months, are quality of life issues. They come to my attention in droves and of a remarkable variety, and there's no need to list them. I'll just say that it's challenging making everyone happy – as much as I wish I could: One person's freedom is another's annoyance. However, for the most part, I have to say, the issues that come up are dealt with by my office (and other related parties) in the most responsive and fair manner. Complaints are always listened to and always responded to. Some, as I mentioned, are hard to solve. Case in point is speeding on our roads. But we always try our best. And never hesitate to bring things to me. It's never a bother no matter what it is. If it's important to you, then it's important to me.

I've never been as thankful for blue skies in my life as I was last week when the smoky skies began to blow over and finally clear up. One really appreciates good air to breathe after an experience like that. It's a profound lesson to temporarily lose something like clean air to help us appreciate not only the air, but other aspects of our lives that we probably take for granted. Gratitude, as they say, is the gateway to grace.



DON LOWE

TOWN OF SHERMAN