

FIRST SELECTMAN COLUMN

06/29/23 ISSUE DATE

One of the items discussed at last week's Board of Selectmen meeting was an ordinance passed in 2017 concerning septic walkovers, wherein septic systems were checked for failures. After its passage, the ordinance was funded in order to pay for an individual to check on all of the homes' septic systems that were considered part of the Candlewood Lake watershed as this was the area we were most concerned about. After a period of diligent "walkovers", not a single failing septic system was found in Sherman. Due to the findings, and also due to the concern over private property rights that this ordinance produced, we have not funded any more inspection efforts. We are now considering removing this ordinance off the books. This involves a Town Meeting vote to remove it, which we will hold in the future. Meanwhile, I will put this information out there and await feedback from the Sherman public.

The topic of short-term rentals (Airbnb, VRBO, etc.) dominated our last Board of Selectmen meeting as we sort through options on how to stop them from happening in Sherman. Currently several homes (about 6 to 8) are advertised on Airbnb and VRBO sites that list Sherman as an address. These are not allowed as per our zoning rules and we are in the process of strengthening our efforts against them by creating an ordinance to state clearly that short-term rentals involving non-transient renters is illegal in Sherman. This is an on-going effort and concern.

This week marks the end of the 2022/23 fiscal year. While the exact dollar number is not available, the Town budget will once again end up in the black. Much thanks to all departments for judicious spending and to Liz LaVia, our business manager, and Eric Holub, our Treasurer, who keep us on the straight-and-narrow. This is also an opportunity for me to thank Selectman Bob Ostrosky and Selectman Joel Bruzinski for a successful year and for the continued teamwork and guidance. I am most fortunate to work with all four of these terrific individuals.

The Fourth of July falls on Tuesday of next week so let me wish you a safe and happy holiday as we celebrate our country's independence. Please keep safety a priority as you commune with friends and family. Independence Day is a good time to reflect on our gratitude that we live in a prodigious country with a rich history of debate and struggle over the tenets of our Forefathers who formed this nation. That's as it should be. Democracy is not a stress-free path, but it's the best one and our country serves as a model to the world of democracy's success. We need to be proud of that. I like Mark Twain's quote: "Patriotism is supporting your country all the time and your government when it deserves it."



DON LOWE

TOWN OF SHERMAN