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On Friday, Sept. 15, the new replica of the historic School for Colored Children on South Main Street – believed by some local historians to have predated state heroine Prudence Crandall's pioneering school – will be dedicated as a gift to the town of Colchester at 4:30 p.m. See story on page 25.

Town Hall Hub Heads Toward Referendum

by Lauren Yandow

Town Council has moved the \$18.98 million Town Hall and police station project to town meeting on its way to a November referendum.

The vote took place during a council special meeting on Tuesday.

"This is a project that's been 35 years in the making, so to get this far is pretty remarkable in itself," said Town Manager Michael Maniscalco.

If passed, a 33,400 square-foot municipal complex would be built on 5.4 acres of land off of East High Street near Lake Vista Drive. The two-story building would house all departments in the current town hall and the Middletown Avenue annex, the police department, Board of Education offices and a community room.

The town hall would include a transparent vestibule in the middle and a police station and community room on either side.

"As a whole, the town has seen a number of studies and a number of plans done" for the project, Maniscalco said. "I think the town resoundingly has said in the last few years, we're tired of doing studies, we're tired of planning, we want to see action and this is really the answer to some of that," he added.

Town Council Chairwoman Patience Anderson asked the 20 town residents in attendance at Tuesday's meeting if anyone would like to make a public remark. No one decided to take the floor. With no further discussion, the council quickly took a vote.

One 'nay' came from Council Vice Chairman Ted Hintz Jr., but with the rest of the council voting in favor, the proposed project is moving forward.

Hintz could not be reached for comment.

"It took a long time for us to get here," said Maniscalco. "It's a great testament to the work of a lot of town staff and a number of other individuals who've been involved," he added.

Beating out seven other submissions in a competitive bidding process, the project manager Steve Motto, along with his wife Lisa, donated the 5.4-acre parcel of land within their development. The couple also offered to serve as the town's project managers for a 4-percent cut of the total project cost.

Last week, Finance Director Jeff Jylkka said the impact to a taxpayer for the project amounts to a net mill rate increase of 1.24 mills in the first year, or an average of 1.10 mills over twenty years. That translates to a tax impact of \$220 per year for a resident with a home assessed at \$200,000.

The debt would not come due until 2022.

Now, with the project moving to town meeting, "town staff and town funds can't be used to advocate for the project," said Maniscalco. With that said, he added information about the project and "just the facts" are "more than allowed" as a topic of discussion.

State election law forbids the use of public

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RHAM Ranks 11th in State for SAT Scores

by Lauren Yandow

RHAM High School SAT scores rank eleventh out of all public high schools in Connecticut, according to data from the State Department of Education.

"RHAM is a real sweet spot in the state," said RHAM High School Principal Scott Leslie, while referencing the district's ranking for the 2016-17 CT School Day Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT).

High schools began administering the SAT to members of the junior class last year to make the college entrance exam accessible to all students and to reduce the burden of standardized testing. It replaced the Smarter Balance assessment.

According to the state education department website – edsight.ct.gov – a total of 267 RHAM juniors took the test last year. With an average English Language Arts (ELA) score of 588 and average math score of 587, the regional district's ranking put it just behind Glastonbury.

"I'm not surprised at all" of RHAM's rank, said Leslie.

Rather than students solely participating in the SAT outside of school, each spring the district administers the test to students during their school day. To better prepare for the SAT, the district administers a Preliminary SAT (PSAT)

to sophomores in the spring; juniors take the PSAT in the fall. The in-school test gives students "greater opportunities to take the test," said Leslie. Students who want to take the test more than once can do so outside of school, he added.

When asked what makes RHAM successful, Leslie said faculty members spend ample time crafting lessons while working together to make sure curriculum aligns with state standards.

He said the school's strong commitment to writing is evident across each of the academic disciplines.

Leslie said the latest SAT scores confirm the faculty is "doing something right." Additionally, he said the scores serve as feedback and help the district remain "on the right track."

With just a few months as superintendent, Dr. Patricia Law said she's also "not surprised" of the school's rank. Law said one thing that's been "most striking" since settling into her new role is the district's "real focus on relationships."

Students feel RHAM is a "place they want to be," she said, because they're encouraged to learn in an environment where teachers help support one another.

"When relationships are in place, like I see here, kids are going to learn," she said.

The school administration uses SAT scores as a tool to mark student achievement. Through discussion, teachers are able to go "deeper into embedding" those performance indicators into their lessons, said Law.

Law credits part of the district's SAT ranking to the addition of a collaboration period last year. It's a move she said has been a "bump in the right direction."

"Every teacher now has a collaboration period built into their schedule where they're collaborating with the co-teachers or teachers teaching the same courses," said Leslie. Allowing those discussions to take place on a daily basis has maintained consistency, he added.

The high school principal said he hopes the 2016-17 SAT rank gives all students the confidence to know they're "performing as well as any other student in the state," and opens their eyes to opportunities beyond RHAM. Whether graduates decide to go straight into a career or further their education in trade school or college, he said taking the SAT can be valuable. For those college-bound students, SAT scores are "very important" when it comes to college

acceptance, he added – particularly for the large population of RHAM students who apply to the University of Connecticut since the college has become more of a "reach school" in recent years.

Going forward, he said the district will continue to do what's best for its students with the help of a "community that's incredibly supportive of the school, parents that are incredibly supportive of their students, students that want to learn and a staff that makes it happen."

According to the state, the top ten districts are: Darien School District – ELA 627, math 633; Weston School District – ELA 626, math 613; New Canaan School District – ELA 616, math 614; Wilton School District – ELA 620, math 607; Westport School District – ELA 616, math 609; Avon School District – ELA 603, math 611; Ridgefield School District – ELA 613, math 600; Simsbury School District – ELA 614, math 597; Canton School District – ELA 611, math 572; Glastonbury School District – ELA 584, math 595.

A total of 38,421 students across the state participated in the CT School Day SAT. The average score of all students for ELA was 524, while the average math score was 507.

Town Hall Hub cont. from Front Page

funds, directly or indirectly, to advocate for an issue on the ballot once a referendum is pending.

For those unaware of the condition of the current town municipal facilities, Maniscalco said, “walk in the building, you’ll see.” For additional information, he said a video from last week’s Town Facilities Municipal Building Informational Open Forum can be found on the town website – easthamptonct.gov.

A special town meeting has been set for

Monday, Oct. 30 at 7 p.m. in the Middle School Library, 19 Child Rd. to vote for or against the project to proceed to referendum. If the project moves forward to referendum, residents can take to the polls on Tuesday, Nov. 7 between 6 a.m. and 8 p.m. at East Hampton High School, 15 North Maple St.

The next regular Town Council meeting is schedule for Tuesday, Sept. 12 at 6:30 p.m. in the Town Hall Meeting Room, 20 East High St.

Historic School for Colored Children To Be Dedicated in Colchester

by Julianna Roche

Beginning next weekend, community members will have the opportunity to take a step back into Colchester’s progressive past with a ribbon-cutting ceremony for the new replica of the School for Colored Children, which will be dedicated to the town.

Since last November, Bill Treiss, owner of Lost Art Joinery in Lebanon, has worked on building a newer and more accurate replica of the schoolhouse, a key piece of the town’s history and one that for the last two decades was represented by a small shed sitting next to the Colchester Federated Church on South Main Street.

The one-room schoolhouse, originally built in 1803 and also a part of the Connecticut Freedom Trail, became the first school in the state to educate African-Americans, operating independently before eventually integrating its students with those at Bacon Academy.

According to the Colchester Historical Society’s communications director Joanie DiMartino, the ribbon-cutting ceremony will be held Sept. 15, and the following morning on Sept. 16, members of the public are invited to join a group of historians and cultural experts in the first of a series of community conversations to discuss the history and future of the School for Colored Children – which will have its own long-term exhibit on display in the Colchester History Museum beginning in 2018 with assistance from a grant awarded by Connecticut Humanities.

The discussion will be held at the Colchester Historical Society and be moderated by Connecticut’s Old State House director Sally Whipple, and feature associate director for external affairs of the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture, Beverly Morgan-Welch, Yale historian Dr. Peter Hinks, and other historians and experts to discuss the history and future of the schoolhouse.

“The school is going to be owned by the town of Colchester, but the building itself cannot tell the whole story,” DiMartino explained. “We want the community to be more involved and want people to have a dialogue... we’re hoping not to just be inclusionary, but by putting on this exhibit, really making sure many voices

are reflected [in it].”

In 1831, a schoolteacher named Prudence Crandall had opened her own private school in Canterbury. Two years later, she was met with controversy and backlash after she began offering African-American girls an education at her school – which is also widely regarded to be the first integrated classroom in the U.S.

However, according to philanthropist and local historian Arthur Liverant (whose family hired Treiss and is donating the schoolhouse to the town), the School for Colored Children in Colchester may actually predate Crandall’s school in Canterbury and could possibly be the first school in the country that offered black children and Native Americans an education.

A narrative history researched and written by Hinks supports Liverant, explaining that in the 18th century, Colchester farmers relied heavily on the labor of enslaved African Americans. By 1774, he wrote, there were over 200 African Americans enslaved in Colchester, numbering more than 15 percent of the town’s 3,285 residents.

By 1784, the state had passed a Gradual Emancipation Act that freed the children born to enslaved African Americans born after March 1 of that year. Using \$35,000 left behind from Pierpont Bacon’s (who founded Bacon Academy) estate following his passing, the Colchester Board of Trustees decided to build a new academy in the center of town, on the site of the existing district school – which ultimately became known as “the school for colored children.”

According to Hinks, at its height the school had an enrollment of 30 to 40 children. Teachers were typically African Americans whose salaries – comparable to white teachers – were paid for by the town.

In 1833 however, the General Assembly passed the “Black Law” making it illegal for out-of-state African American students to attend school in Connecticut; the law was enacted in reaction to Crandall’s admittance of black girls to her school. In 1839, Hinks wrote, the Black Law was repealed, but the following year, the School for Colored Children closed.

Slavery remained present in the state until it was finally abolished in 1848 – the same year Bacon started admitting black students.



The historic School for Colored Children, which was open during the first half of the 19th century, had an enrollment of 30-40 children at its height. A new replica of the schoolhouse on South Main Street is being dedicated Friday, Sept. 15.

In 1998, to show appreciation for the schoolhouse’s historical value, the town collaborated with the Colchester Historic District Commission to create an exhibit that marked the location of the school, which was originally stationed between the town’s first firehouse and a former auto dealership.

A lawn shed donated by Carefree Sheds of Colchester was used to represent the building and Bacon Academy students even added furniture to the interior. However, after nearly 20 years, the building was in poor condition and in severe need of repair, eventually sparking Liverant’s interest in funding the replacement of the shed with a new replication of the school.

According to Liverant, the dedication of the schoolhouse to the town serves an even greater purpose than appreciating the school’s history itself, but to also recognize the progressive na-

ture of Colchester citizens and provide a dialogue for today’s community.

“The Colchester citizens in 1805 were progressive and thought that far ahead building the school,” he said. “We’re hoping we get a good race relations discussion going... race relations are not good right now [in the U.S.] and we need something to speak in favor of what’s going on.”

The dedication ceremony and ribbon-cutting for the schoolhouse will take place on Friday, Sept. 15 at 4:30 p.m. beginning at the Colchester Federated Church on 60 S. Main St. The following day, Saturday, Sept. 16 from 9 to 12 p.m., the Colchester Historical Society will host a Community Conversation panel with cultural experts, also at the church. Both events are free and open to the public.

Marlborough Residents to Vote on All-Day Referendum in November

by Julianna Roche

Following unanimous approval by the Board of Selectmen this week, Marlborough residents will have an opportunity to vote during November's municipal election on whether to move the annual town meeting on the budget to an all-day referendum – which will be held on the same day as the RHAM referendum.

The board was presented with the Charter Review Commission's (CRC) recommended changes to the town charter Tuesday night during a public hearing. It was met with majority approval from both selectmen and residents.

The process of revising the town charter, something that hasn't been done in 32 years, originally gained momentum in June once the Board of Selectmen appointed nine Marlborough residents, including three Democrats, three Republicans and three independent/unaffiliated members to the commission. The commission was then charged with reviewing four central questions regarding the charter – each of which had also been outlined in a petition started by residents Louise Concodello and Richard Denno in March, urging selectmen to get the ball rolling on the charter revision process.

Once the changes are submitted to the Secretary of State's office by Sept. 22, first selectwoman Amy Traversa explained the current CRC will be dissolved and following the November election, she's "publicly stated a couple times" that a second commission will be formed to do a more in-depth review of the charter, likely in early 2018.

"It would be ridiculous to start a charter review commission going into the holidays," she said at the hearing. "More has happened in the last two months than in 32 years...for a second charter review commission, we will deal with that at the appropriate time. This is not that time."

According to state statute, once a charter review commission is formed, it can work for no less than 90 days and no more than 18 months.

The charges reviewed by the CRC included voting on the town budget by an all-day referendum rather than a town meeting, instituting automatic charter revision with prescribed intervals of at least 10 years at which time it would be revisited, allowing each recommendation of the revised charter to be voted on independently of other recommendations, and increasing the Board of Selectmen from three to five members (currently seated on the board are Evelyn Godbout, Dick Shea, and Traversa).

Of the four charges, the commission put forth recommendations on the former two (which were both approved by selectmen) explaining that allowing for recommendations to be voted on independently was "a matter of process," rather than something that needed to be incorporated into the charter and that deciding whether to change the number of selectmen was an issue "to be deferred" to the second commission to review due to time constraints.

However, Shea argued the second CRC should consider including it in the charter.

"I think in the future you might want to in-

clude that in the referendum [section] simply because we have a past history of charter revision attempts which failed primarily because the Board of Selectmen elected to make it an all or nothing vote," he explained, referring to the last time changes to the charter were voted on in 2002.

At the time, selectmen decided to compile all the revisions into a single "yes" or "no" vote during the election. The vote was ultimately turned down, meaning none of the revisions passed.

Shea noted however, he "could live with sliding along on those things" until the next commission is established.

Godbout agreed, adding that while she felt there were areas where the language could be "made clearer" – such as whether each item in the budget can be voted on separately or whether the presentation of the budget would be done by the Board of Selectmen or the Board of Finance – she thought the proposed changes overall were "good" and "even if we pass it, it can be tweaked the next commission."

During the public comments portion of the meeting however, Board of Finance member Ken Hjulstrom, speaking as an individual, expressed concern that the language of the proposed changes was not clear enough, asking the board to consider "tabling everything until a full charter review can be done with adequate time and done thoroughly and properly."

Board of Finance Chairman Doug Knowlton – who said he "had a heavy hand" in helping

craft the language for the proposed changes – said he would "take criticism" for the language, but felt the proposed changes were "a joint effort."

"I'm comfortable with it," he said. "In my mind, it [the language] is simple, clean [and] it fits in with the way the rest of the charter is written at this point in time and I think that's very important."

Knowlton added he also felt "we need to get the referendum in place as quickly as possible and not delay it another year."

Presently, the town votes on the budget by town meeting – which is typically held at 7 p.m. in early May, allowing only a small window of time for residents to vote and can often conflict with residents' work or life schedules, preventing them from voting.

"I don't want to say there's universal support [for the referendum], but I haven't heard anyone saying they wanted a town meeting," Traversa said, adding it was an issue she wanted "to put to bed in November" before appointing a second commission early next year.

"It's a difficult process and it's why [passing charter revisions has] failed miserably in the past," she furthered. "The fact we are actually here authorizing this resolution to be put on the ballot is a massive achievement."

The next Board of Selectmen meeting will be held Tuesday, Sept. 19 at 7 p.m. in Town Hall.

Marlborough BOE Asks Town to Help Maintain School

by Julianna Roche

Board of Education members expressed frustration and concern during last week's school board meeting, following a presentation and discussion led by Superintendent of Schools David Sklarz regarding a lack of assistance in maintaining the Marlborough Elementary School's building and grounds by the town.

The question of where the responsibility for maintaining the school falls has been a subject of debate between the town and school board since 2004, when the elementary school underwent a major renovation which included a new addition. Upon completion, town officials made a commitment to oversee school building maintenance to ensure it would not fall into disrepair again.

At that time, Sklarz explained that the public works department was determined to be responsible for supervising grounds and maintenance care of the school for 65 percent of its time – which was then reflected as in-kind services from the town.

Over the years however, the superintendent said that percentage dropped to 50 percent in the 2012-13 school year and 30 percent in 2015-16, with the current school year showing little to no assistance from the town so far in overseeing the school building's maintenance.

"We had a system in place... but after today, we have to say, if [we don't have a system in place anymore], we need to move on. We can't go on like this," he said.

Sklarz furthered that, "we're educators [but] we know more about building and construction than we need to and every time we're spending

time on that, we're not dealing with educational issues."

Board of Education Chairwoman Ruth Kelly shared in Sklarz' frustration, adding that a lack of communication between the town and school board could partly be to blame.

"Things were handled a certain way over many, many years and all of a sudden, the town doesn't want to handle it the same way," she said. "I think the issue is that the town did not come to the Board of Ed and say 'we no longer can mow your grass or plow your driveway,' [but] nobody did that."

The chairwoman furthered that the school board was "sitting here thinking things are going to be taken care of the way they have for at least 40 years... [but] now in the last two years, it's become a real issue because bills are sent to the superintendent that he has no money to pay for unless he takes it away from education."

However, during the Sept. 5 Board of Selectmen meeting, First Selectwoman Amy Traversa stated that care for "the entire school goes to the Board of Education," not the town, and that the public works department – which consists of five employees, including director John Jones and public works supervisor Tony Gallicchio – has only been responsible for the school's field maintenance and snow plowing since she has been in office.

The first selectwoman furthered while she understood maintenance of the school and grounds was "of a serious nature," that she, Sklarz, and Gallicchio had "a conversation on more than one occasion" about the responsi-

bility falling on the Board of Education and "the fact they're [the board] not liking the answer, doesn't mean the conversation isn't taking place."

During his presentation, Sklarz argued however, that at 106,000 square feet, the elementary school is the largest building in town and a complex one at that – containing multiple boilers, air conditioning units, a complete kitchen and cafeteria, a well system and multiple generators.

He furthered that the school also shares both its community room and gym with the town to be used for meetings, productions, elections, and community events.

"We are a community school that has a community room," he said. "We've [the town and school board] got to get better about shared services... it's counterintuitive at a time of a major financial crisis that we're getting less united as one entity."

Other school board members shared in the superintendent's frustration, with board member Betty O'Brien questioning who was responsible for "changing the formula" regarding the school's maintenance, to which board member Wes Skorski replied "the first selectman."

"Most people report to the first selectman... it seems like the current administration doesn't want to do it [provide maintenance] and has been passive aggressively taking away services from us," he said. "We need someone to take care of that, to look at the building as a whole before the building does go into disrepair."

O'Brien agreed.

"The bottom line is we do need a person," she said. "John Jones and Tony [Gallicchio] are both absolutely excellent [and] doing a phenomenal job. I look at the town and say it's never looked so good, but unfortunately can't say the same about the school."

During his presentation, Sklarz proposed that assistance from the town in maintaining the school grounds would include a building assessment of the elementary school (as has been completed on all other town buildings), daily checks of mechanical systems, a weekly meeting or teleconference regarding school maintenance issues, an on-call expert to give advice in building and grounds maintenance issues, and establishing a trainer/trainee model to train school custodians to complete maintenance tasks and become more self-sufficient.

He furthered that if the town could not provide those services, the board's only other option would be to "go out to bid and outsource for services," which could be more expensive than sharing services.

"Was [our old model] perfect? No, but we can improve on it," Sklarz said. "Basically we just can't go on like this. If it's not an accident waiting to happen, it's close to it."

School board members agreed to ask the Board of Finance to add the topic of school maintenance to the agenda for its next meeting.

The finance board will meet 7 p.m. Wednesday, Sept. 13 at the Town Hall.

Andover Board of Selectmen Sets Town Meeting to Approve Ordinances

by Lauren Yandow

The Board of Selectmen has set a date for a town meeting to vote on separate ordinances that would give nonprofit landlords a tax break and increase town oversight of blighted property.

The proposals are described as a home tax abatement ordinance and an abandoned property blight ordinance.

If approved, the home tax abatement ordinance would authorize a tax break on housing owned by a nonprofit entity that is used solely for low- or moderate-income residents.

State statute allows towns to institute the tax abatement with the goal of reducing rent and improving the quality of low-income housing.

In town, Hop River Homes is currently the only facility that would qualify for the tax abatement, but First Selectman Bob Burbank said passing the ordinance would allow “others to qualify if something in the future comes through.”

During Wednesday’s board meeting, Town Attorney Dennis O’Brien said the property owners would have to prove they meet state requirements in order to qualify. The ordinance “should be easy to address and hopefully, enact and implement if the Board of Selectmen and residents of the town see fit,” O’Brien said.

If approved, the abandoned property blight

ordinance would set a standard to prohibit blight in the town for abandoned homes that are “dangerous to town residents,” said Burbank. The blight ordinance would apply to any parcel of land in town with a building or structure on it.

The proposed ordinance applies to abandoned premises, buildings that are unoccupied temporarily, structures with exterior openings and interior openings accessible to unauthorized persons, and places decaying beyond repair that present a hazard to the public.

O’Brien said the ordinance “sends a message” to owners of an unkempt property in the community to “let them know they need to maintain it.” That includes banks that own foreclosed properties, he added. If enacted, the ordinance would authorize the town to define, prohibit and provide for abatement and remedy of blight on abandoned premises.

The ordinance “is something we’ve tried to pass to clean up various areas in the town that we’ve had problems with in the past,” said Burbank. With complaints about homes that are hazardous due to an owner abandoning their property whether because of financial issues or a fire, Burbank said “there’s nothing the town can do” if the ordinance isn’t passed.

The ordinance would give people who are affected by it time to “clean up the property,”

O’Brien said. It also allows those affected – if they’re making progress – to work with the town, he added.

Anyone whose property is found to be blighted would be charged \$25 per day, said O’Brien. The fines, O’Brien added could “generate a lot of income for the town because people sometimes walk away from properties” due to foreclosure.

Board of Selectmen Member Cathy Desrosiers said the blight ordinance would also help to “protect the town from squatters.”

If need be, with the blight ordinance in place, the town would have the authority to “demolish buildings,” O’Brien said. But, “only in extreme cases,” he added.

The ordinance states it would also preserve and protect property values in the town.

Selectmen voted unanimously to send both proposed ordinances to town meeting on Tuesday, Sept. 19 at 7 p.m. in the Town Office Community Room, 17 School Rd.

During Wednesday’s meeting, Town Administrator Joseph Higgins asked the board for permission to hire a temporary part-time treasurer. The board unanimously voted in favor of hiring Beth Bauer for the position.

Higgins said Bauer will act solely as a con-

sultant to help in the hiring and training process of a full time town treasurer.

Higgins described Bauer as an asset to the finance department because she “comes with much experience” and is “highly skilled with computers.”

In her most recent position, Bauer worked as the finance director for the Town of Coventry. She will work 15 hours per week and will make \$50 per hour with no benefits.

During the meeting, an update on the progress of the Time Farm Bridge project was presented by Higgins. As of this week, he said the overall work is about 50 percent complete and the pavement is 59 percent complete.

Under a federal bridge program, the replacement of the bridge on Time Farm Road has been 10 years in the making, said Burbank. While the need for bridge replacement was “never due to safety issues,” Burbank said the new bridge will now allow for two-way traffic. Weather permitting, Burbank said the project is on schedule and the board anticipates the bridge “will be completed by no later than the end of the year.”

The next Board of Selectmen meeting will be held on Wednesday, Oct. 4 at 7 p.m. in the Town Office Community Room, 17 School Rd.

Prominent Developer Wants to Extend Office Zone in East Hampton

by Julianna Roche

Planning and Zoning commission members failed to reach a decision during a public hearing Wednesday night regarding an application submitted by well-known developer Wayne Rand to extend the area that can be used for office space in the Village Center.

If approved, the change would allow him to submit a second application for a zone change to the Main St. Venture, LLC property at 3 Main St. changing it from a residential zone to a professional office/residential zone.

Rand had originally filed a lawsuit against the planning and zoning commission last year after it denied his application to turn the residential property into a commercial zone, with litigation still pending. According to court documents, the commissioners had rejected the request because of concerns about increased traffic in the area, in addition to the need to protect “the integrity of historic resources” as outlined in the town’s Plan of Conservation and Development.

The property, a 1.84-acre parcel on which sits a yellow colonial home built in 1875, is a contributing resource to the National Register of Historic Places as part of the Belltown His-

toric District. Such homes are protected from “unreasonable destruction” under the Connecticut Environmental Preservation Act.

Planning and zoning official Jeremy DeCarli stressed both during the meeting and again Thursday morning that the application submitted to the commission by Rand’s attorney Timothy Furey this week was not a request for a zone change – not just yet.

“If the commission approves the text amendment change, it would simply allow Main St. Ventures to submit another application for a zone change and they would have to come back to the board requesting that,” DeCarli explained, adding that if the other four properties located in the zone also wanted a zone change, they would each have to submit an application to the commission individually.

Existing regulation allows office and residential space in the area fronting both sides of West High Street (Route 66) between North Main Street and North Maple Street; Rand’s change would add Main Street - up to 400 square feet from the intersection of West High Street – to the zone.

According to the regulation, the professional

office zone supplements uses in the adjacent commercial zone while retaining the residential character of the area.

“It allows for things like law or financial planning offices, while keeping those homes preserved,” DeCarli said. “A lot of people equate a PO/R zone to a commercial zone and they’re very, very different.”

For example, he said a resident of the single-family home could live on the top floor and run their business out of the first floor.

DeCarli also explained that ultimately, the commission would have “oversight” and “full discretion” on whether to approve or deny what is presented in terms of a site plan, which also included “parking and visibility” issues.

“The idea behind [professional office/residential zone] is to keep the residential character of a neighborhood in tact,” he said.

Not all residents expressed support for the potential zone change however, including resident Scott Jackson of 6 Main St.

“The thought of doing something commercial that would be busy outside, like a psychologist’s office, dentist’s office... that would become a major inconvenience to people

commuting through the area,” he said.

Other residents expressed concern about maintaining the historic value of the property.

Attorney Bill Grady urged the commission to keep the property’s historic value in mind when making a decision.

“I want to remind the commission... the concern last time I was in here, was they wanted to take a house from 1830 and leave it up to the developer to decide what to do it,” he said. “We were concerned with preserving it and not allowing commercial enterprises to creep down Main Street and destroy it. I don’t want you to lose sight of that.”

Resident Mary Ann Dostaler shared similar sentiments.

“I am in complete support of [the commission] doing what needs to be done to protect the integrity of the historic district,” she said. “The area is special to the community. It’s unique [and] worth preserving.”

The public hearing regarding the text amendment change will continue at the commission’s next meeting on Wednesday, Oct. 4 at 7 p.m. in Town Hall.

Belltown Women Raise Alzheimer’s Awareness

by Elizabeth Regan

Laura Wirtz has helped raise more than \$50,000 for Alzheimer’s research and support in the four years since her foster sister died of the disease just days before her 62nd birthday.

The centerpiece of the successful fundraising campaign is the fourth annual Hike 4 Hope on the Air Line Trail in East Hampton. Last year, more than 100 people came out to walk, bike, hike, push strollers and keep pace with their leashed pets on the crushed stone path.

Peggy Poresky is the one who came up with the idea for an outdoor, family friendly way to help bring attention to the sixth leading cause of death in the United States.

Poresky was working at Buckingham Estates in Glastonbury when Wirtz would visit her foster sister. That’s where the two East Hampton women decided to team up to end Alzheimer’s disease.

“It wasn’t just about raising money. We wanted to raise awareness as well,” Poresky said. “There’s a lot of stuff going on in the Hartford area, but there was nothing out in the more rural East Hampton, Marlborough and Colchester area.”

The hike is a fundraiser for the Alzheimer’s Association Connecticut Chapter’s Walk to End Alzheimer’s, held this year at Rentschler Field

on Oct. 1.

Wirtz first participated in the walk when it was held in downtown Hartford.

“When I walked down the state Capitol on to Bushnell Park, I was truly overwhelmed that I wasn’t the only one facing losing someone to this horrific disease. I really felt compelled to do more,” she said.

In addition to providing funds for research, the Alzheimer’s Association works toward enhanced care and support for those affected by the disease.

Wirtz said the association funds support groups for those with Alzheimer’s disease as well as the family members who care for them. There’s also a 24-hour hotline for information about the disease and an extensive collection of web resources that include online classes about the disease.

Poresky and Wirtz both talked about caregiver support as an integral part of the association’s mission.

Poresky said she came to understand the effects of the disease - on the people who have it as well as their family and friends - while working at the assisted living facility and now in her job as a receptionist at a medical practice spe-

cializing in dementia care.

“I really got to see how devastating the effects are,” she said. “You saw the families every day come in and visit; you saw the decline in patients after a couple years. It’s just so sad.”

Wirtz illustrated the gravity of the disease on everyone involved when she recalled how her sister’s husband made the decision to move her into Buckingham Estates. It was the day she came down the stairs wearing her underwear outside her clothes.

“He said he couldn’t do this anymore,” Wirtz said.

Wirtz and Poresky remains committed to raising awareness about the disease and raising money for its cure.

Some of the gratification comes from something as simple as being able to provide the Alzheimer’s Association hotline number to someone newly diagnosed with the disease or to point a caregiver in the direction of online resources, Wirtz said.

The Hike 4 Hope group has been a top fundraising team for the Hartford walk. Poresky and Wirtz, as well as Wirtz’s daughter, Jenilee Wirtz, and Marissa Crean, have all been recognized as Women’s Champions by the Alz-

heimer’s Association Connecticut Chapter for their volunteerism and philanthropy.

“Every 66 seconds a brain develops Alzheimer’s and two thirds of them belong to women,” the association said on its website. “More than 60 percent of caregivers for people with Alzheimer’s and dementia are women, with many having to reduce their own workload or even drop out of the workforce altogether to care for loved ones. Women are at the epicenter of this crisis and will be the driver in the solution.”

The Hike 4 Hope will be held tomorrow, Sept. 9, from 10 a.m.-1 p.m. Online pre-registration is \$13. Visit alzhike4hope.org to pre-register or to make a donation. Walk-up registration the day of the event is \$16; children under 11 are free.

There will be prize drawings, a scavenger hunt and face painting.

The event will include an Alzheimer’s Association booth, where a representative will be available to share information and answer questions.

All proceeds will be donated to the Alzheimer’s Association Connecticut Chapter.

Obituaries

East Hampton

Chelsea Elizabeth Reading

Chelsea Elizabeth Reading, 31, of East Hampton and formerly of Manchester, died Wednesday Aug. 30 at her home. Born Feb. 4, 1986 in Farmington she was the daughter of Neal Reading of Amston and Laura Potter of Manchester.

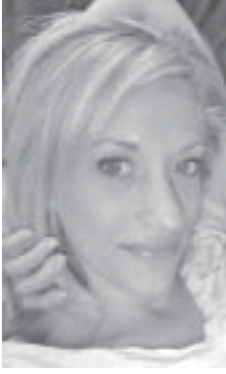
Chelsea received her bachelor's degree in international marketing from Elmira College and had most recently worked as a real estate agent for Coldwell Banker in South Windsor.

Chelsea was a rare spirit of beauty and love who shared heart and joy with all those who were fortunate to have met her. Despite the personal pain and trials of her own life, she always tried to bring joy and love to those around her. She chose many in her life to share with and look to for guidance and direction. Her smile could melt hearts, turn a cloudy day sunny and was the rainbow after the storm. Her light will live on in everyone's lives whom she touched and who touched hers. Her passing leaves a void in all our lives but will never truly be gone as she will still live on in each loved one's heart as we carry forward through our own journeys. "Grieve not for my passing, I only go on before you and wait until the day we shall all be together again."

She is survived by her father and stepmother, Charles Neal Reading and Alice Hagan of Amston, her mother and her partner, Laura Potter and Molly Stevens of Manchester, her fiancé Kyle West of Enfield, her brother Christopher Reading of Boulder, Colo., paternal grandparents Charles Neal and Petrea Lynn Reading of East Hampton, maternal grandparents Guy and Patricia Feeney of Manchester, step grandmother Alice Moran of Marlborough, stepbrother Patrick Hagan of Los Angeles, Cali., and her beloved dog Myles "Magoo," as well as many aunts, uncles, cousins and friends.

Calling hours were held Thursday at Spencer Funeral Home in East Hampton, followed by a memorial service. Burial will be private at the convenience of the family.

Donations may be made to Camp Care, 106 Route 66, Columbia, CT 06237 or to Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance, 55 East Jackson Blvd., Suite 490, Chicago, IL 60604. To leave online condolences, visit spencerfuneralhomeinc.com.



Marlborough

George John Sevich

George John Sevich, a resident of Marlborough for 40 years, and most recently of River-Woods at Exeter in Exeter, NH, for eight years, died on Sept. 1 following a long battle with Parkinson's Disease.

He was born on March 22, 1938 in Perth Amboy, New Jersey, son of the late George and Margaret Sevich.

He was the devoted and loving husband of Madeline Sevich for 40 years, who predeceased him in 2009. He was a graduate of Rutgers and Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute. He retired from Pratt & Whitney in 1997 after 37 years, and he also served as Vice President of Engineering for International Aero Engines.

George was a flying and sailing enthusiast. He owned and flew a Stinson airplane in the 1960s. As a sailor, he owned sailboats and sailed with his family for 13 years. He also loved to ski. He was a member of the Congregational Church of Marlborough for more than 35 years.

He is survived by his daughter, Karen Sevich Myers; his son, Jeff Sevich and his wife Nancy; and his sister Arlene Sevich Swarer and her children Jessica and her husband Steve, and Bubba. He was the adoring grandfather of Jake and Dessa Myers.

Funeral service will be Saturday, Sept. 9 at 1 p.m., at the Congregational Church of Marlborough. Burial will follow at the Marlborough Century Cemetery. There are no calling hours.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to the Michael J. Fox Parkinson's Foundation. To leave online condolences please visit spencerfuneralhomeinc.com.



Portland

Elizabeth (Elbie) Werkheiser

Elizabeth (Elbie) Werkheiser, 89, of Portland, passed away peacefully at home with her family by her side on Monday, Sept. 4.

Betty was born in New Jersey and moved to Pennsylvania after marrying Donald. She and her husband also lived in Connecticut and New York. Betty enjoyed traveling with her husband and loved playing cards with family and friends. She also had a passion for birds and flowers, and had won many ribbons at local fairs for her plants. Betty's family and friends will always remember her as an avid Boston Red Sox fan.

Betty is survived by her son, Donald Werkheiser, Jr. and his wife, Jean, of The Villages in Florida; daughter, Debra Yanke of Portland, CT; grandson, Robert Werkheiser and his wife, Lori of Norwich; granddaughter, Dawn Gardner of Newport, RI and three great grandchildren, Aiden, Peyton and Brooke.

Her loving husband of 59 years, Donald Werkheiser, Sr. and two brothers, Charles and Louis Horwath, preceded Betty in death.

Family and friends may call on Friday evening, Sept. 8 from 5-7 p.m. at the Doolittle Funeral Home, 14 Old Church St., Middletown. Funeral services and burial will be at the convenience of the family.

In lieu of flowers, donations in Betty's memory may be made to a local charity or animal shelter. To share memories or send condolences to the family, please visit doolittlefuneralservice.com.

Portland

Clarence Wilkins Jr.

Clarence Wilkins Jr., 88, of Portland, formerly of Granby, died Saturday, Sept. 2 at Middlesex Hospital. Born Aug. 2, 1929 in Hartford, Clarence lived most of his life split between Connecticut and Prince Edward Island, Canada.

Joining the United States Marine Corps as a teenager, he fought bravely in the end of WWII and The Korean War. On Oct. 7, 1952, Sergeant Wilkins, after being painfully wounded twice, refused medical care and continued to fight and reorganize his men to take an outpost in Korea, earning him the Silver Star and The Purple Heart. While serving in the Marine Corps, he had the honor of meeting Winston Churchill, who fought with his grandfather in the Second Boer War. After leaving the Marine Corps, Clarence worked for the State of Connecticut for 34 years.

Clarence is survived by his daughters Heather Wilkins of Connecticut and Holly Crawford of Port St. Lucie, Florida, and three grandchildren. Services and burial will be private.

The Portland Memorial Funeral Home, 231 Main Street, Portland is in charge of arrangements.

Portland

Marjorie Ann Shenstone

Marjorie Ann Shenstone (Johnson) passed away peacefully on August 17 at home with her family by her side. Marge was born in Portland on January 26, 1930 to Gustave and Anna Johnson. She attended nursing school before marrying William Shenstone and moving to South Glastonbury to raise four children, two of whom have passed, Mary Ellen and Michael, and two she leaves behind, Diane and John. William also predeceased Marge in 2008 after succumbing to lung cancer.

Marge was active with her Hi-Y group of teenage girls in the 1970s when they would do civic projects for the community and social activities. She loved her collies and raised them for a number of years; our house got to be known as the one with all the dogs around it. Marge also loved her many gardens which she tended to while helping Bill with his never-ending farm. She will now be reunited with Bill and Rest In Peace for eternity.

Hebron Man Accused of Abusing a Patient

by Lauren Yandow

A Hebron man has been arrested for his alleged involvement in a patient abuse case at the Whiting Forensic Division of the Connecticut Valley Hospital in Middletown, according to police.

Robert Larned, 45, of 24 Village Ln. was taken into custody on Tuesday just before 7:30 p.m., a press release said.

Larned is charged with five counts of cruelty to persons and five counts of disorderly conduct. According to the Connecticut Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS), Larned was a forensic treatment specialist for Whiting Forensic Division. He has since been placed on administrative leave from his position, police said.

Detectives from the Connecticut State Police Central District Major Crimes unit and the DMHAS arrested Larned and eight additional Whiting Forensic Division employees on the same day – Carl Benjamin, 39, of Hamden; Mark Cusson, 49, of Southington; Gregory Giantonio, 43, of Deep River; Clayton Davis, 48, of Hartford; Bruce Holt, 39, of Columbia; Willie Bethea, 45, of Middletown; Seth Quider, 34, of Enfield;



Robert Larned

Lance Camby, 48, of New Britain.

The eight employees have also been placed on administrative leave, said police. According to a state website, the Whiting Forensic Division of the Connecticut Valley Hospital consists of maximum security and enhanced security beds for individuals who are admitted due to Psychiatric Security Review Board commitment; criminal court order for restoration of competency to stand trial; voluntary or involuntary civil commitment; transfer from the Department of Correction while incarcerated or at end of sentence.

DMHAS said their administration was first notified of the abuse allegations at Whiting Forensic Division in late March.

This week, the *Courant* reported the nine arrests are the "first wave of enforcement actions in the largest patient-abuse scandal in memory at the state's maximum-security forensic hospital." Additionally, the *Courant* states this year a total of 31 mental-health workers were suspended over videotaped evidence of "sustained and progressively serious abuse" of the 62-year-old patient in one of the locked maximum security wards of Whiting Forensic Division.

The patient was moved from the facility once the abuse was discovered, police said.

The investigation is ongoing and police said they're anticipating additional arrests. All nine of the accused Whiting Forensic Division employees are scheduled to appear in Middletown Superior Court this week.

East Hampton Police News

8/24/17: Sarah Ford, 30, of 20 Greystone St., Willimantic was taken into custody pursuant to two active warrants for her arrest. Ford was charged with two separate counts of Violation of Probation.

8/27/17: Thomas Joseph Darcy, 61, of 43 School House Rd., Middle Haddam was arrested for failure to drive right and driving under the influence.

8/28/17: Scott Palmer, 39, of 9 N. Maple St.,

East Hampton was arrested for disorderly conduct, interfering with an emergency call and interfering with a police officer.

8/29/17: Sarah Ford, 30, of 20 Greystone St., Willimantic was taken into custody pursuant to an active warrant for her arrest. Ford was charged with failure to appear.

Officers responded to 12 medical calls, four motor vehicle accidents, three alarms, and made 18 traffic stops from Aug. 21-27.

Marlborough Police News

8/28: State Police said Steven C. Bertelsen, 23, of 122 Cheney Rd., was arrested and charged with third-degree burglary, fourth-degree criminal attempt/larceny, fifth-degree larceny, third-degree identity theft and third-degree forgery.

8/29: State Police said Ashley Gilpin, 28, of 18 High Meadow Rd. was arrested and charged with first-degree criminal mischief, second-degree mischief and breach of peace: threatening.

Colchester Police News

8/30: State Police said Todd Labbe, 49 of Exeter Rd., Lebanon, was arrested and charged with conspiracy to commit sixth-degree larceny.

Andover Police News

8/30: State Police said Gregg M. Carrara, 21, of 21 Lakeside Dr. was arrested and charged with negligent homicide with a motor vehicle and failure to drive at a reasonable distance.

Hebron Police News

9/1: State Police said Michael Jaworski, 42, of 37 Lake Rd., Andover, was arrested and charged with first-degree harassment, threatening and disorderly conduct: threatening.

Portland Police News

8/31: Portland police said Aurora Houghtaling, 43, of 23 Louis Ln., Colchester, was arrested and charged with operating under the influence and operating without a license.