

Woodbridge Town News



Woodbridge's Exclusive Newspaper

Mailed Free To Every Home in Woodbridge
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FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 10, 2023



Building Committee Unveils Plans for Community Center

BY BETTINA THIEL

WOODBRIDGE TOWN NEWS CORRESPONDENT

Architect David Stein presents conceptual plans for turning the old firehouse on Center Road into a community center.

The public had a chance to see conceptual plans for renovations to the old firehouse at the intersection of Newton and Center roads, giving it a new life as a community and cultural center. The presentation took place in the library meeting room on January 25, with architect David Stein and Building Committee chairman Sandra Stein (no relation).

The building has been unoccupied since a 2006 fire damaged the upstairs. The fire department has since moved into a larger new building across the street, although some equipment, including an antique fire truck, is still

stored in the old building.

Architect David Stein of Silver Petrucelli and Associates of Hamden introduced a master plan for the Community and Cultural Center and showed how the historic building could be connected to the larger town center campus. As far as the indoor spaces are concerned, flex space is the goal, in order to accommodate a variety of uses, ranging from gatherings to performances, yoga, exhibits and a café. Sandra Stein said the town's department heads were queried about their space needs and program ideas, and their responses informed the potential uses of the old fire bays.

Bay 1, the oldest part of the building, was built in the late 1920s, David Stein said. It presents a large open

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Participants in the 2030 Task Force enjoy a glass of beer while they hear about potential streetscape improvements in the town's business district.

Consultant Efforts To Streamline Traffic In The Business District

BY BETTINA THIEL

WOODBRIDGE TOWN NEWS CORRESPONDENT

In the third of its public forum sessions on January 30, consultants for the 2030 Task Force took a closer look at possible streetscape designs that could help make the business district more attractive.

The task force's charge is to define ways to grow the Grand List by 2030 – in the hopes that the tax burden will be borne by more taxpayers, and the mill rate will be lower. Their primary effort so far was to work on ways to make the business district a place where businesses thrive and people — from Woodbridge and other communities — want to hang out.

The particular challenge of this area is that it is home to not only businesses, but also homes and offices.

With the guidance of consultant

Laura Pirie the committee has been looking at two aspects, namely "traffic connectivity" — what can be done to slow down traffic and make people want to stop — and "placemaking," looking at building styles and sizes, intensity of uses, etc. Three public forums, each taking place at New England Brewing Co., were held to get input and feedback from people who live and work in the area, as well as those who live in the residential parts of Woodbridge.

Traffic has long been considered one of the main problems in the bottleneck of the Route 63/69/15 interchange. But contrary to the long-held belief of road widening in order to allow better traffic flow, their recommendation is actually to try and slow things down,

See "Task Force" On Page 3



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space that lends itself for flexibility of use, such as a lecture room and/or for exhibits. Similarly, Bay 2 could also be a multi-purpose room, for yoga or committee work. Design plans show a folding partition, to allow for different sized spaces.

The café could be located in Bay 3 – where the old garage doors can open up to an outdoor patio space. It could allow for cooking classes to take place. There could also be a maker space or a fitness space.

On the second floor is the fire department’s former meeting room. The dormers allow natural light to flood in. It could serve as a conference hall or allow yoga classes. The plan is to preserve the wood floor and re-clad the walls. A shaft where the firefighters used to hang their hoses to dry will house an elevator.

The roof and windows have been replaced through a previous grant and insurance proceeds, and the mechanicals were also replaced at the time. “The envelope is in good shape,” David Stein said.

The plan is to preserve the red brick of the old firehouse with its three bays. Even so, in its new role as a commu-

nity center, the entrance needed to be better defined than that of the old firehouse. The entrance would be the only actual addition to the building footprint. In their design, a metal panel wall guides the eye to the entrance, and at the same time it offers a space to hide a dumpster. Stein explained that the Historic Preservation Office wants any addition to a historic building to be clearly distinct.

Landscape architect Aris Stalis presented ideas on how to use the outdoor spaces between the new community center and the library for a number of outdoor activities. Plans show a pavilion, bocce court, community gardens; also, an amphitheater behind the library; outdoor reading spaces; a pollinator garden.

Handicap accessible pathways will connect the different venues in the town center, where people can share activities. As the building sits exposed to the drivers entering the town from the east, “it really is the gateway to your town,” Stein said.

The 60x30-foot pavilion will offer outdoor programming space for up to 80 people in attendance. “We are considering adding heating,” David Stein said. There will be outdoor charging stations for phones and computers

and hook-ups for food trucks. “It will be transformational for residents and staff,” said Sandy Stein.

The \$2 million grant does not cover the outdoor amenities, David Stein said. “But we need a master plan.” According to town finance director Anthony Genovese, the state grant does include money for a new storage facility behind the new firehouse. That project was not part of the presentation.

The audience of some 25 or so seemed enthusiastic about the project. “I love the cafe idea,” said one. Bill Banik, who teaches Tai Chi and yoga, was excited about the outdoor yoga space. Asked about the AC units, David Stein agreed, “AC units are hard to muffle. But you can introduce a new noise, such as that of running water.” He thought that some components can be located on the roof and/or condenser units can be installed inside. “The noise will be fairly minor,” he said.

Several people in the audience expressed concern about keeping the historic traits, such as the copper roof. Stein assured them that the intent was to restore it to the historic look. For instance, in some bays they intend to re-polish the concrete floor instead of replacing it.

“What do we do with buildings that

we no longer need?” Stein mused in his opening. Often, they have been knocked down, but he also pointed out successful conversions of historic firehouses into community buildings, such as a Youth and Community Center in Manchester and the Woodmont Borough Hall in Milford.

Aris Stalis, a landscape architect, showed an aerial view of the town center, and how the buildings could be connected. A larger parking area parallel to Newton Road would offer 29 spaces. On the other side of the building, a crosswalk across Center Road will allow pedestrians to cross to the Fitzgerald walking trail.

The Building Committee is inviting comments and ideas from the public. Send them to Executive Assistant Gerry Shaw at the First Selectman’s office, gshaw@woodbridgect.org. The committee was scheduled to present its plans on February 8 to the Board of Selectmen. If approved, the construction plans can be put out to bid, with a potential start in July. If things go smoothly the new community center will be done in spring of 2024. In addition to Sandra Stein, the Building Committee includes architect Robert Tucker, and Recreation Committee Chairwoman Andrea Weinstein.

“They invented hugs to let people know you love them without saying anything.” — BIL KEANE

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“Task Force” From Page 1

allow pedestrians and bicyclists to participate, and improve the overall look through street plantings and creating quiet spots.

Making the sidestreets connecting routes 63 and 69 one-way, for example, will improve traffic flow, said one consultant, David Sullivan, in addressing the audience. But “it will not accomplish what you are trying to accomplish here.”

Instead, they are suggesting making the roadways narrower, even main roads such as Amity Road, and add trees and green strips, shaded area and quiet spots, sidewalks and sheltered bus stops.

One businessman questioned whether public amenities would attract more crime and litter, mentioning the homeless encampment behind Stop and Shop as the type of issue he would be concerned about. Pirie suggested that typically, the more activity a particular area generates, the less crime it will attract. Williams suggested lighting and policing in areas where issues occur.

“Maybe hire private security officers,” he suggested.

Williams showed accident statistics for the area on a map, and found two spots particularly dangerous, namely the intersection of Bradley and Amity roads and the lower Litchfield Turnpike.

They are suggesting a traffic light at Bradley and Amity, and pedestrian

improvements for the whole area. He also suggested studying the signaling intervals on Litchfield Turnpike. “Minor tweaks can sometimes change the flow of traffic,” he said.

Ona Alpert, an owner of the Selden Plaza, asked to tweak the timing of the traffic light on Bank Street to allow for a left- turn up onto Amity Road.

“Each intersection will need to be looked at with a fine comb,” Williams answered. An updated traffic study would be part of their recommendation for Phase 2.

Alpert was also adamant that she would not want any trees on Bank Street. “Please, NO trees,” she said, adding for emphasis, “I would cut them down myself.” Trees block the view of the building, she explained. Lower plantings would be okay in her book.

One feature of the connectivity plan is a new narrow road connecting routes 63 and 69, parallel to the Wilbur Cross Parkway. It would re-direct driveway entrances away from Litchfield Turnpike, and allow customers to access businesses from that connector street, making the traffic flow there much smoother and safer, Pirie said.

Although the land is currently not for sale, this new road is a concept that could be part of a Master Plan.

The consultants are to present their findings at the Board of Selectmen, with Jason Williams introducing the preliminary connectivity plan on Feb. 8 and Laura Pirie presenting a “vision and placemaking” plan on March 8.

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As we step into February, there is a wonderful opportunity to honor and celebrate Black History Month. We should take time to acknowledge the heritage, accomplishments, and contributions of those who identify as Black and/or African American. While we celebrate the wealth of achievement, we must recognize on-going hardship and struggles for equity within this country.

The Ad Hoc 2030 Task Force (per their charge) continues to work on taking a Big Picture look at the changes the town should consider to diversify and broaden our Grand List. There have been three community meetings for all residents and owners/operators of property in the business district. Two important and distinct focal points have developed over the past 18 months – a connectivity strategy (sidewalks, vehicular and pedestrian safety, and walkability) and placemaking (making Woodbridge a destination, as opposed to just a passthrough). The strategies are inextricably linked, but no component of the Task Force’s thinking happens all at once. At present, the Task Force is concentrating on connectivity in order to maximize opportunities for grant dollars to offset expenditures. The Task Force will provide the Board of Selectmen (BOS) with an update at its February 8 Regular Meeting. If the Board of Selectmen is favorable, next steps include technical and engineering specificity through a grants process. The Task Force will continue to strategize on placemaking for the Business District and will provide the BOS with an update on that aspect of its work at its March meeting.

Excellent education is what brought many of us to Woodbridge and we must continue to prioritize it. I once

From the First Selectman BY BETH HELLER



again remind everyone that education expenses account for approximately two-thirds of the Town’s annual operating budget. As department budgets continue to increase without a corresponding increase in the Town’s grand list, the Town may be forced to cut valued services and/or accept larger tax increases. It will be up to the Boards of Finance and Selectmen to make these hard choices. While the budget process is always challenging, I expect this will be a very tough year. I am confident that we will make decisions on a budget that achieves a balance between the support of valued services and tax levels that are fair and reasonable. Our Grand List has increased by 1% this year – and our budget REQUESTS for next year are at 10%. Obviously a 9% tax increase cannot and will not happen.

Residents are encouraged to ask budget questions or to make suggestions. Budget meetings can be watched live on Channel 79, and the WGATV YouTube page. Please see the homepage of the Town’s website for a link. The most effective way for residents to share their opinion and/or ask questions is at the Monday, April 24 Preliminary Budget Hearing when the Board of Finance presents its proposed budget. This meeting will take place at 7:30 pm at the Amity High School Auditorium. Following this hearing the Board of Finance may make changes to its proposed budget which will then be presented at the Annual Town Meeting on May 15 at Amity High School

Auditorium at 7:30 pm.

There are two Beecher Road School committees I would like you to know about. The first is the new Enrollment, Instructional Needs, and Space Planning Ad Hoc Committee to review and address the implications of increasing enrollment at the school. This committee’s membership will consist of a cross section of district officials, school personnel, Town representatives and community members. Appointees will review enrollment projections, programmatic and instructional needs, and staffing configurations which pose challenges in the current setting. This committee will meet and make a report to the Woodbridge Board of Education (WBOE) at its September meeting.

The second committee, which has been meeting for several months, is the Town Building Committee for Beecher Road School Capital Projects. This committee is charged with putting together multiple Beecher projects for proposals from design professionals. Its charge reads, “The Committee shall be responsible for the budget, design, and construction re: repair and maintenance of leaking roofs, asphalt walkways throughout the Beecher Road School campus, North School parking lot, overgrown trees in the various areas of the campus, The Kucinskis Loop, areas of water incursions into the building, and necessary pool and security upgrades.” The committee is working to secure responses by late-winter/early spring. At that time, the committee will interview and se-

lect a firm to recommend to the BOS, mindful of the June 30 deadline for the WBOE to submit project details to the State for potential reimbursement.

Recently, the Community & Cultural Center Building Committee presented the schematics to the public for converting the Old Firehouse into a Community & Cultural Center. A conceptual master plan for the outdoor areas surrounding the building, including the Grove and around the library was also a component of the presentation. About 25 residents were present and asked excellent questions about design, use of materials, etc. The presentation was recorded and is available on YouTube. There is also a link on the Town’s website at woodbridgect.org. <https://www.youtube.com/user/wgatv79>. Next steps include obtaining the construction costs for the design and presentation of the entire proposal to the BOS at its meeting on February 8.

The Woodbridge Center renovation project is picking up steam and heading for a potential late Spring opening! While the construction process has been slow-moving at times due to supply chain issues, recent adjustments have moved the project into high gear. When finished, the Senior Center will be a modern, fresh, welcoming, air-conditioned space with excellent ventilation. This project is the result of years of planning, and, with State funding, will help those over 55 remain healthy and active through new and continuing health and wellness programming.

As always, I am happy to hear from you! Please stay healthy and safe. My door is always open to you, and I can be reached at bheller@woodbridgect.org or 203-389-3401.

Survey To Shed Light on Sperry Park

Sophia McDermott, a senior at Amity Regional High School, recently published a survey to raise awareness and better understand the use of Sperry Park. The survey is done in partnership with UConn’s Natural Resource Conservation Academy and the Woodbridge’s Sperry Park Committee. “I developed this short, anonymous survey to better understand awareness and recent use of Sperry Park among Woodbridge, Orange, and Bethany residents,” she wrote. “Additionally, the survey intends to educate participants on the history of Sperry Park, and attempts to find ways to honor that history.” A link to the survey is available on the Sperry Park website, <https://sperrypark.org/> or <https://sqr.co/sperrypark/> at or take a picture of this QR code:

The four-acre parcel was gifted to the Town of Woodbridge in 1907 by

the heirs of Enoch and Mary Atlanta Sperry who raised their family here in the mid-1800s. Known as ‘the Sperry Home Lot’ this parcel contains the foundation of the circa-1701 Sperry home, as well as remnants of the mill works the family operated for four generations on the banks of the Sargent River at Sperry Falls.

Today the property is overseen by the Sperry Park Committee, appointed by the Woodbridge Board of Selectmen. Future projects under consideration include a major clean-up and a comprehensive presentation of Sperry Park-related

history, wrote committee member Sheila McCreven in an email. “We’re looking forward to a presentation of

her findings that the committee will receive sometime in March,” McCreven wrote. “We understand that Sophia’s project with the Conservation Ambassador Program at the Natural Resource and Conservation Academy at UConn (<https://nrca.uconn.edu/cap/>) is oriented toward land use, so we were so pleased that the inclusion of the history of the park was possible in her survey.”

The committee is hoping to use the

data she presents to help determine next steps, perhaps even a collaboration with the Witness Stone Project, a program that shines the light on slavery in local communities. Project participants provide archival research, curricula and public programming to help students discover the local history of slavery. The work culminates with placement of “Witness Stone Memorials,” that honor enslaved individuals where they lived.

Even though an enslaved person was mentioned in the 1781 record, there is no documentation yet that they actually lived where the park is today. “Sperry family members owned many, many acres of land in this area, going back in the New Haven land records to the 1680s,” McCreven wrote. “So, there is much research to be done before we can say for sure where a Witness Stone might potentially be placed.”



“So, fall asleep love, loved by me... for I know love, I am loved by thee.” — ROBERT BROWNING

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Woodbridge Town News

Below are the next three issue dates & deadlines of the Woodbridge Town News.

Thank you for your submissions to Your Home Town Newspaper.

Upcoming Issue Date

Issue Deadline

March 10 | St. Patrick's Day Issue..... March 3

April 7 | Easter & Passover Issue..... March 31

May 5 | Mother's Day Issue April 28

Note: Copy due by 4:00p.m. Thank you.

FROM OUR READERS

Our Open Space

I recently heard an opinion suggesting that it is merely “an outspoken minority” which still seeks to protect the former Country Club of Woodbridge property from development. That assessment is far from the truth. What the speaker overlooked is the largely silent majority of residents who have come to value the former CCW as open space.

During the covid years, use of the property steadily escalated. First, the number of daily walkers from the neighborhood rose. Then, people arriving by car and parking in a line on Johnson Road became a common sight. They came to walk their dogs; to meet friends; to bird watch; to enjoy solitude; to fish; to photograph swaths of pollinator plants, and oaks and the huge pine trees. Later this month others will arrive to sled and snowshoe and skate and ski. Most of all they have come to love the changed, but still beautiful, landscape of the old golf course.

Residing next to the property, I’m frequently asked by residents from other parts of town what’s happening with the CCW land. One idea that merits new, town wide consideration is the joint proposal by the Woodbridge Land Trust and Park Association to place a conservation easement on the property. This proposal would align well with the state’s “goal of setting aside more than a fifth of the state (21 percent) as conservation land.”

Furthermore, “Protecting land enhances the quality of life for citizens, increases the value of nearby property, and also serves as a factor that people consider when deciding where to live.” (April 2022 Connecticut Magazine, p. 60)

If you are one of the people who has cherished the CCW property in silence, please make your voice heard now. Share your story of what it means to you. Otherwise, it may be lost to all of us.

Martha German

Woodbridge Town News

WTN LETTERS POLICY

Submit your letters for our "From Our Readers" section to:
Woodbridge Town News, P.O. Box 1126, Orange, CT 06477
or email: letters@woodbridgetownnews.com.

Please limit letters to 500 words and include a daytime phone number in case we have any questions. Letters must be exclusive to the Woodbridge Town News for publication. We reserve the right to reject any letter.

TOWN DEPARTMENTS

Woodbridge Agriculture Committee

Hello Woodbridge farmers and those interested in the conservation of Woodbridge’s working lands and agricultural economy. We’d like to re-introduce the Woodbridge Agriculture Commission, which is into its second year of activity.

Commission members consist of Kristyna Hul-land of Off Center Farm, Steve Munno of Massaro Community Farm, Chris Sorensen of Merry Mountain Farm, Leland Torrence of Forward Farm, and Andrea Urbano of Sperry

Falls Farm. The Commission meets regularly at 8:00 PM every second Tuesday of each month between October and April and often hosts a special meeting during the growing season.

Interested residents can visit the Town website for meeting minutes and agendas.

Please direct your agricultural related inquiries and concerns to Gerry Shaw at gshaw@woodbridgect.org. We are here to be of service and look forward to hearing from you.

OPINION

From the Democratic
Town Committee

BY ELLEN SCALETTAR
WDTC CHAIRMAN



Our Town Budget Process is
Underway: How to Stay Informed

Growing up in a big city, as I did, I still marvel at the accessibility of local government here in Woodbridge, and especially at the transparency and accessibility of the budget and the budget process. There are many opportunities to learn and engage at the level of detail that works for you.

A few preliminary facts to know:

- › Our fiscal year starts on July 1st. We are currently in FY 2023 that ends on June 30th and the budget process for FY 2024 has begun.
- › Our budget process is set forth in Article VI of the Town Charter: [woodbridgect.org; select "Town Charter and Ordinances"](http://woodbridgect.org/select/TownCharterandOrdinances)
- › Our current year budget is \$53.8M, nearly 2/3 of which goes towards education.

A good way to learn about our Town Budget is to view the Budget Book for the current fiscal year that ends on June 30, 2023. You can find it here: <https://town-woodbridge-ct-budget-book.cleargov.com/6342/introduction/introduction-from-the-first-selectman>. The Budget Book contains a wealth of information, including: Budget Overview, Funding Sources, Town Departments, Education, Capital Plan, and more.

Familiarity with the current year's Budget Book is a good way to understand what will be proposed in the Preliminary Budget for our next fiscal year.

If you are interested in the details of the FY 2024 budget that will be proposed by the Board of Finance, you may want to mark your calendar now for the Preliminary Budget Hearing that will be held on Monday, April 24th at 6 PM. This is the ideal opportunity to learn and ask about budget details, have input, and make suggestions for changes. The process works best when residents participate at this hearing, so that the Board of Finance and Department Heads can answer your questions and the Board of Finance can incorporate changes as the process moves forward.

Of course, a great deal of work goes into preparing the budget long before the Preliminary Budget Hearing. We have a "bottoms up" process that starts with our neighbors and friends who serve on the Town's Boards and Commissions and who monitor closely what the community needs, uses and values. Commissioners hear directly from interested and concerned residents. Perhaps you have contacted the Beecher or Amity Board of Education, the Recreation, Human Services or Library Commission, the Fire or Police Commission, or others.

The Commissioners work with department staff to prepare their department's proposed budget and present it to the Boards of Selectmen and Finance. Those Boards then spend many hours hearing presentations, analyzing the department requests, and discussing how best to meet the residents' needs within the necessary and appropriate budget restraints of our revenues and grand list. The process is laid out in the Town Charter and ensures that all stakeholders have a voice. If you would like to follow budget preparation or other work of Town Boards and Commissions, the schedule of meetings can be found at www.woodbridgect.org/calendar. The penultimate step in the budget process is the presentation by the Board of Finance of the Recommended Budget at the Annual Town Meeting on the third Monday in May. This year it will be on Monday, May 15th at 6 PM. By the time of this meeting, the budget will have been amended in accordance with changes adopted by the Board of Finance in response to suggestions at the Preliminary Budget Hearing and with any necessary last-minute adjustments. Finally, the Board of Finance sets the mil rate required to meet the expenditures in the budget.

Importantly, as residents of Woodbridge, we enjoy not only the transparency and accessibility of the budget and budget process, we also have the assurance that our fiscal health is in top condition due to our award-winning Finance Director, Tony Genovese, and his department. For the past several years, the Town of Woodbridge has been awarded the Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting as well as the Award for Distinguished Budget Presentation. It is my privilege to serve on the Board of Finance and I can personally attest to the outstanding performance of our Finance Department.

It is often said that budgets reflect values. Our Woodbridge Town budget reflects the high value we place on education; our Woodbridge Town budget process reflects our commitment to transparency and accessibility. As Woodbridge Democrats, we believe these are essential elements of a well-functioning democracy and we applaud these strengths of our Town.

If you are interested in learning more about the Woodbridge Democratic Town Committee, please get in touch with us by emailing us at: communications@woodbridgedems.org or visit our website: www.woodbridgedems.org

Other Side of the Aisle

BY CHUCK PYNE
WRTC CHAIRMAN



Help Us to
Help Our Town

Arguably, the most important activity of a municipal government is the budgeting process. The annual mill rate that establishes everyone's taxes (along with the assessed value of the property) for the coming fiscal year is set by the unelected Board of Finance, appointed by the Democrat majority on the Board of Selectmen. The good news is that there are public budget hearings where citizens can hear the deliberations that go into the town budget and can share their views on the subject. The bad news is these hearings are inherently insufficient. Why? The typical resident can't meaningfully participate in a budget hearing because it takes a lot of effort and time to understand what is in each department's budget. While we applaud any resident who takes the time to get involved in the budget process, the Woodbridge Republican Town Committee maintains that every resident should have the opportunity to vote on the total budget and mill rate in an annual referendum, just as we vote on the Amity budget. This is one of the important reasons why we need to embark on revision of the Town's Charter.

Another problem with our town's budget process is the failure of our current leaders to prioritize capital projects. Every homeowner has to prioritize expenditures – and put essentials like a new roof before cosmetic improvements such as a bathroom upgrade. In sharp contrast, the current town administration has multiple ad hoc committees developing capital building projects simultaneously with no effort to prioritize which projects are most important or to sequence the projects so as to even out capital expenditures over time. Current capital plans include such wildly different projects as an overdue re-roofing at Beecher, sidewalks between Amity and the Library, an upgrade to the space used by our Police Department and significant repairs to the Beecher pool. One can tell any organization's priorities by where it spends its money. But to look at our capital project list, you find a disorganized mix of must-do items combined with pet projects of senior elected officials. And what about investing in our downtown to generate much needed development and improve our tax base? Our local government has become transactional – no long-term goal, no clear vision of what we want to look like in the future. We need to do better. And we can, with your help.

Our local elections are now in November. Our local government depends on people who have the interest, energy, time and life experience to contribute positively to our town. If you are interested in running for office, please let us know now as we are beginning to develop our roster of candidates. In the November elections voters will choose our town's First Selectman, the five members of the Board of Selectmen, four of 9 members of the Woodbridge Board of Education, two of the four residents of Woodbridge who serve on the Amity Board of Education, as well as half of the members of the Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) and Board of Assessment Appeals. There is not an unimportant position on that list. The situation regarding affordable housing, for example, can have implications for the ZBA – and we know how crucial that is to Woodbridge's future.

In July both Republicans and Democrats will nominate candidates for the November elections. The Republican Town Committee is committed to nominating the best person for each elected position – regardless of his or her party affiliation. We have endorsed qualified Unaffiliated and Democratic voters in the past – and we are ready to do it again, for we are focused on each person's talent, dedication, and vision for our Town's future, not party affiliation. Potential candidates, and voters, should check at the door their views on national issues such as immigration, gun control, the national debt or other hot topics. The Woodbridge Republican Town Committee is focused on local issues – and recruiting the best people for the job. And we are also interested in meeting people who are looking to serve on the many Boards and Commissions, all of which play an important role in the leadership of Woodbridge. Are you interested? Find us at WoodbridgeGOP.com or email chpyne@gmail.com.

Woodbridge Town News

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Display ads start at only \$110 per issue.

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WOODBRIDGE EDUCATION

The Woodbridge School District Reflects on 2022 and Looks Forward to 2023

BY LYNN PIASCYK, MARIA MADONICK, SARAH BETH DELPRETE, JAY DAHYA, BROOKE HOPKINS, JEFF HUGHES, STEVEN LAWRENCE, MIKE STRAMBLER & ERIN WILLIAMSON

As the Woodbridge School District welcomes in the New Year, we are reflecting on many of the wonderful events that took place in 2022, and wanted to share them with the larger Woodbridge community.

This past spring, teachers and students at Beecher Road School (BRS) continued to amaze us with their high academic achievements. Students in grades 3-6 received the highest Smarter Balanced scores of any school in our District Reference Group (DRG), a classification system that groups districts in Connecticut together based on students' similar socio-economic status and need. These same students also earned 100 percent of the points awarded for math, science, and English language arts on the 2021-2022 Next Generation Accountability System, a system that awards points on a broad set of 12 indicators to help tell the story of how well a school prepares its students for success in college, careers, and life.

Recognizing the important role that social emotional learning has on improved academic outcomes, mental health, and classroom behaviors, spring also ushered in BRS's annual Empathy Week. During this week, stu-

dents engaged in a series of activities focused on empathy and inclusivity. As part of this, the school participated in a school wide read aloud with the book *I Am You: A Book about Ubuntu* by Refiloe Moahloli. This book was generously provided by the BRS Parent Teacher Organization (PTO), with all classrooms receiving a copy of the book.

As staff returned back to school this fall, BRS conducted its first-ever EDCAMP, which offered choice-based professional development. This model not only provided important professional learning opportunities, but also supported leadership development as teachers presented on topics in which they are highly skilled.

In preparation for the new academic year, the Woodbridge School District also created a Substitute Bank to ensure adequate coverage in our classrooms. As schools across the nation continue to struggle to find substitute teachers, this bank has helped BRS ensure that literacy and math specialists do not have to fill in to cover classrooms. In turn, specialists can remain in their roles and provide consistent support for our students. If you are interested in serving as a staff substitute at BRS please reach out to Assistant Principal, Jimmy Sapia at JSapia@woodbridgeps.org. We are always looking for qualified individuals to serve in these positions.

As the cold weather approached this winter, students at BRS used their cre-

ative skills to give back. In addition to BRS's annual Thanksgiving Food Drive, this year, students created blankets in the Library Maker Space which were donated to the local animal shelter. BRS' student council members raised and donated money to multiple organizations including Woodbridge Human Services, Beardsley Zoo, K9 First Responders, and Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation.

As a Board, we also want to take time to recognize our three new administrators who we welcomed in 2022. Donna Coonan, who won the 2022 Rising Star Award from the Connecticut Association of School Business Officials (CASBO), joined the district as Director of Business Services/Operations. Carrie Borcharding, who most recently worked at Greenwich Public Schools, also joined as the district's Special Services Director. In addition, and most recently, the Woodbridge Board of Education announced Vonda Tencza, long time Connecticut educator and administrator, as the district's new Superintendent. In a robust pool of candidates, Ms. Tencza rose to the top because she embodies the vision, experience, care, and warmth that the Board values and BRS deserves. We would also like to acknowledge and thank Interim Superintendent Christine Syriac for her leadership as we searched for our new Superintendent.

As we look towards 2023, we are thrilled that 11 of our 6th graders have

qualified to take part in the Connecticut Music Educators Association Honors Festival. Students auditioned for the program this past winter, in the first live auditions since COVID, and will be participating in a live performance in March. Also, in March we are looking forward to BRS's participation in Read Across America, where we invite community members into our school to share the joys of reading with our students.

As the Woodbridge Board of Education continues the work of the district in 2023, we strive to maintain both our high level of academic achievement and our supportive and inclusive community. We have accomplished this in years past with strong classroom support for students and educators, continued professional development for our teachers and administrators, and investment in our growth as a district. As we educate our students for their future success in middle school, high school, and beyond, we look to support our administrators and educators in developing and growing our curriculum and educational programs to ensure we are graduating students who are lifelong learners.

As part of that support, we want to acknowledge that February is "I Support My Connecticut Public Schools Month". If you know anyone who works at BRS or any other public schools, please take a moment to thank them and recognize their amazing work.

STUDENT NEWS

Achievements

Caelan Watson Presents at Lasell University Career Readiness Symposium

Newton, MA - Caelan Watson, a Lasell University student from Bethany, presented at the institution's annual Career Readiness Symposium. Watson presented their senior graphic design portfolio and shared the process and ideas behind their creations. The presentation incorporated the NACE competencies of professionalism and

career & self-development.

Lasell's Career Readiness Symposium takes place every fall and asks students to present original research, projects, or field skills that align with core career competencies shared by the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE). Part of the Symposium's goal is to collectively assist students in identifying and pursuing opportunities that allow them to become proficient in those areas as preparation for successful transitions

into the workplace.

Dean's/President's List Albany College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences

Albany, NY - Albany College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences (ACPHS) announces its Fall 2022 Dean's List recipients. More than 320 students - nearly 35 percent of its student body - were named to this honor, awarded to full-time students who have successfully completed their coursework with a

semester grade point average (GPA) of 3.5 or higher out of a possible 4.0 score. Among those named to the Dean's List is Keely Barletta of Bethany, CT, who is majoring in Public Health.

Bucknell University

Lewisburg, Pa. - Bucknell University has released the dean's list for outstanding academic achievement during the fall semester of the 2022-23

See "Student News" On Page 12

"Doubt thou the stars are fire, Doubt that the sun doth move. Doubt truth to be a liar, But never doubt I love." — WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

HUMAN SERVICES



Many thanks to Bailey, Moore, Glazer, Schaefer, and Proto LLP for their generous donation to benefit the Holiday Food Basket program at Woodbridge Hutman Services. Each year, this Woodbridge business offers community support for both the Thanksgiving and the December holidays.

Masks and test kits available: Contact Woodbridge Human Services if you would like to pick up at-home test kits, and a few medical, or KN95 masks. Please no walk-ins.

Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA): Tuesdays, 9 am - 12 pm. VITA is a free tax preparation service available to individuals who are income qualifying, to people who have a disability, and to those who speak limited English. For required tax documents and to schedule an appointment call 203-389-3429. The program began February 7 and runs through April 11.

Energy Assistance Program: Human Services is accepting appointments for residents applying for the 2022-2023 CT Energy Assistance Program administered by TEAM, INC. Income eligibility requirements must be met. For information, or to schedule an appointment, call Judi Young at 203-389-3429.

Food Pantry: Residents in need may call for access to non-perishable food each month. If interested in donating, the food pantry is in need of coffee, canola and olive oil, jams/jellies, canned chicken, laundry soap and personal hygiene products such as deodorant, toothpaste, razors, and shampoo.

Emergency Preparedness: Prior to a weather event or potential power outage, elderly residents and those with disabilities are encouraged to register to be placed on the Emergency Call List by calling Human Services.

Needed! Medical Loan Closet: Transport wheelchairs, in good working order, are needed for the Medical Loan Closet. Please contact Human Services to donate.

Mail and Package Theft: There have been a few local mail and package thefts recently. Some tips provided by the US Postal Inspection Service to ensure your mail safely arrives at its destination include promptly picking up letters and packages from your mailbox and at your door, depositing your mail in blue collection boxes close to pick-up time, bringing your impor-



Woodbridge Human Services, in conjunction with Griffin Hospital and the Department of Public Health (DPH) Mobile Vaccine Unit, recently provided a COVID-19 vaccine/booster clinic for all ages (6-months+). The event was well-attended by young and old alike.

tant mail into your local Post Office, and not sending cash in the mail. To report mail theft, go to <https://faq.usps.com/s/article/Mail-Theft> or call the Woodbridge Police Department.

Identity Fraud: When your personal information is stolen, it is identity theft. When your stolen data are used fraudulently, it is identity fraud. If you think you have been targeted, call the AARP Fraud Watch Network Helpline at 877-908-3360.

Departments work together for assistance to residents: The Human Services Department gratefully accepted a \$3,000 donation for the Resident Assistance Fund from the proceeds of the Recreation Department's annual 5K run. Thank you to the great Recreation team and all who participated in the event!

Recreational Marijuana: Legal recreational cannabis sales began on January 10 in Connecticut for those 21+. For information and guidance on the new laws and applications, please visit <https://beintheknowct.org/>.

Youth Services

BY NANCY PFUND



AMSB students get creative at the recent paint party with their own variations of a painting.

Call 203-389-3429 or email npfund@woodbridgect.org or youthone@woodbridgect.org for information or to sign up for programs. Like us on Facebook: <https://facebook.com/WoodbridgeYouthServices.CT>

Winter Paint Party

West Haven local company, Picasso Parties, came to Amity Middle School – Bethany teaching several 7th and 8th graders how to paint a colorful image. Students put their own creative twists on their paintings and enjoyed socializing and eating snacks with their friends for the short after-school activity hosted by Youth Services.

Senior Crafters Help the Homeless

The Woodbridge Center seniors generously donated two large bags of hand-crocheted hats, dolls, scarves, and gloves for the homeless. Youth Services transported those and any remaining toy donations to the Wallingford Emergency Shelter which is affiliated with Columbus House in New Haven. These items which were lovingly created will be much appreciated by people of all ages.

Generous Donations Bring Joy

Many thanks to: Arti Dixon, local musician, and Bob Smith for their huge collection of toys for children in need, the Woodbridge Fire Department, Santa and Mrs. Claus for their visits to wide-eyed kids, and to students and residents for their offering of We Care bags and household items for the homeless at New Reach in New Haven. Youth Services is enormously grateful.

Parent Primer–Vaping, Edibles, and Fentanyl Abuse Prevention

Orange Youth Services Director and BOWDAAC Prevention Coordinator Jessica Simone, Woodbridge Youth Services Director Nancy Pfund, and Amity Superintendent Jennifer Byars hosted a virtual prevention pro-

gram for parents. Speakers Lorrie McFarland from BHCare's Alliance for Prevention and Wellness and Tricia Dahl from Yale presented valuable information about Edibles, Fentanyl, and Vaping through the Amity School District on the evening of January 25th. Over one hundred parents attended the session. Parents may access the link to the webinar here - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3bJ3AMXC5lk>

Bethwood 6th Grade Meet and Greet

Youth Services will be hosting an evening program for Bethany and Woodbridge6th grade residents on Friday, March 17th, 2023. It is an excellent opportunity for the students to get to know one another before they transition to middle school. There will be refreshments, raffle, a DJ and an Obstacle Course. The fee is \$7 To pre-register for the event, call 203-389-3449.

Woodbridge First Selectman's Youth Award

If you know a Woodbridge youth (18 or under) who has worked to improve the Town of Woodbridge or has assisted its residents, please nominate that deserving youth for the First Selectman's Youth Award. School counselors, peers, school principals, and group leaders are encouraged to make nominations. Parents and family members may not nominate relatives. Nominations are due by April 3. Find the nomination form at the Town's website.

Woodbridge Job Bank Seeks Teens Who Want Work

The Job Bank in Woodbridge offers occasional jobs to teen residents (ages 13 – 18) who would like to work in Woodbridge to earn money. Youth Services provides an opportunity to learn about the interview process, safety on the job, and how to negotiate pay.

Do snow shoveling, yard work,

See "Youth Services" On Page 9



Adrenaline Rush Obstacle Course to be one of the highlights of the Woodbridge Youth Services Bethwood 6th Grade Meet and Greet. Photo from 2022 Meet and Greet.

“Youth Services” From Page 8

babysitting, dog walking, etc. Call for an interview at 203-389-3464 or e-mail npfund@woodbridgect.org. Masks and social distancing may be required.

Teens Need Jobs

Woodbridge residents who wish to hire someone for odd jobs like snow shoveling, babysitting, yard work, moving boxes, etc. Save your energy and keep teens working to gain experience. Call 203-389-3464 for more information.

Volunteers Needed

The Woodbridge Youth Advisory Board makes recommendations for Youth Services programming and seeks to include a diverse membership to support our diverse population. A few

positions remain open for adults and high school students. Community Service hours will be approved. Interested residents may contact Youth Services for information.

BOWDAAC-Let’s Talk Prevention

BOWDAAC (Bethany, Orange, Woodbridge Drug/Alcohol Action Committee) is a grant-funded Local Prevention Council serving the communities of Bethany, Orange, and Woodbridge. Its mission is to reduce underage drinking and substance use by promoting awareness through educational programs and community collaborations. New members are welcome. For more information or to join our committee, email info.bowdaac@gmail.com or check out our website www.bowdaac.org



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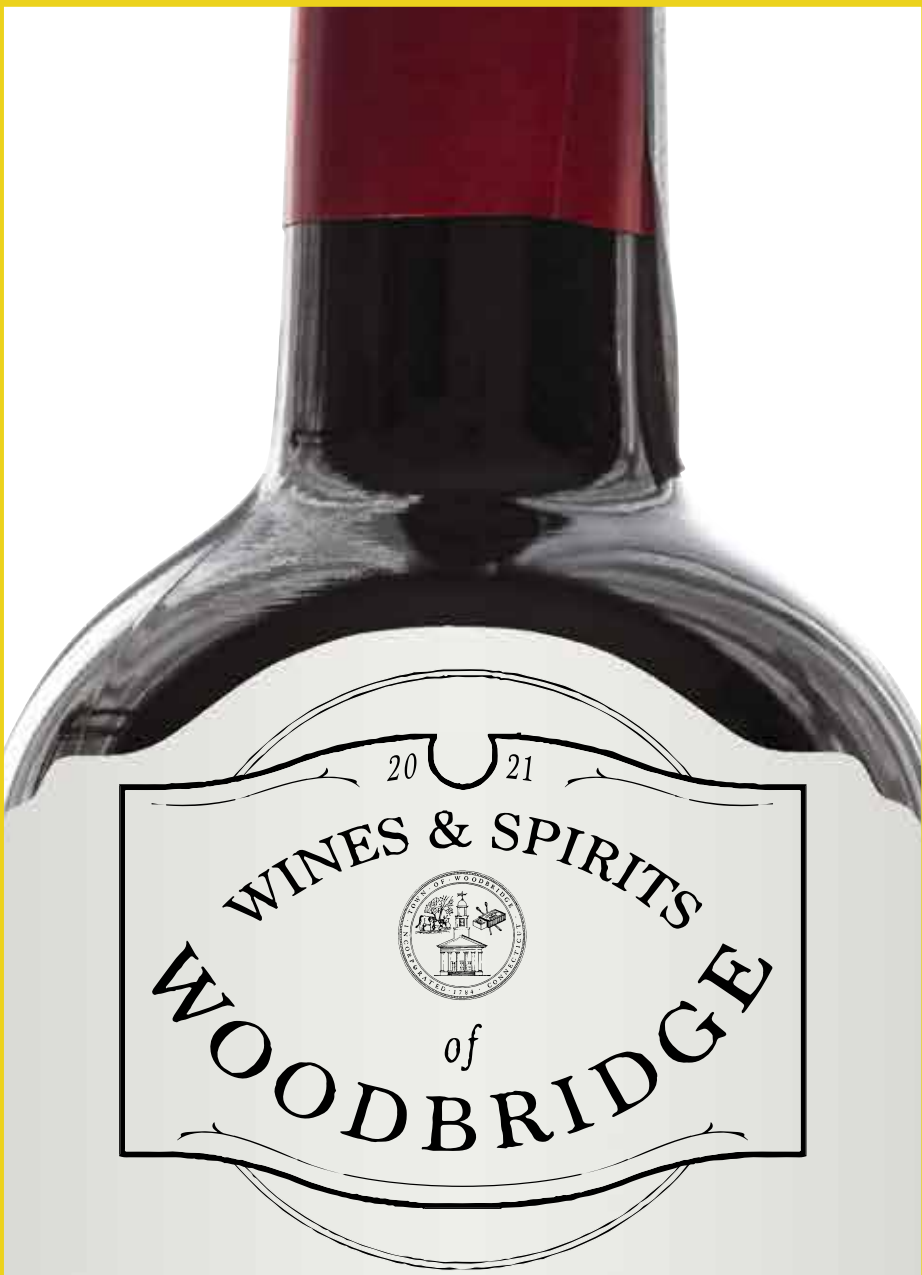
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- Medication Reminders
- Errands
- Shopping
- Light Housekeeping
- Meal Preparation
- Friendly Companionship
- Flexible Hourly Care
- Respite Care for Families

203.298.9700
VisitingAngels.com/Woodbridge



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This Valentine’s Day grab something you know will be enjoyed by someone special to you At wines and spirits of Woodbridge. Veuve Clicquot Brut Rosè and freixenet sparkling Rosè, a Decadent Red wine or a nice crisp white wine. We also have a great selection of bourbons and single malt scotch.

AT THE WOODBRIDGE CENTER



Left: Kristy Moriarty and Jessica Esposito of the Woodbridge Center display 150+ knitted and crocheted items made by the craft group. These items were donated by Woodbridge Youth Services to the Wallingford Emergency Shelter/Columbus House in January. Center: Tai Ji Quan: Moving for Better Balance participants begin a new 24-week session led by specially trained instructor, Bill Banick. The program is provided through the CT Healthy Living Collective with funding provided through the State of CT Dept. of Aging and Disability Services State Unit on Aging. Right: Debbie Schlegel of The Holli Shanbrom Real Estate Team, Coldwell Banker Real Estate, displays found space as a result of decluttering and organizing. Debbie and Holli shared this technique and more at the Decluttering and Organizing Your Home Lunch & Learn on January 11 presented by the Holli Shanbrom Real Estate Team.

Please note: The Woodbridge Center will be closed on February 20 in recognition of Presidents’ Day.

Are you over 55 years old? Contact The Woodbridge Center: Call 203-389-3430 or email kmoriarty@woodbridgect.org for information on all programming. Preregistration is required for all programming and events.

Facebook: Follow us on Facebook (The Woodbridge Center, Woodbridge CT) for current updates and local information. Look for fun programming photos as well.

Email blasts: Things change quickly - please make sure you are on our email blast list to receive Woodbridge Center updates. Call The Center at 203-389-3430 to subscribe.

Free Aerobic Classes for National Heart Awareness Month

Start or continue a healthy heart habit by participating in free aerobic classes every Tuesday throughout the month of February at The Center. According to the National Institute of Health, heart disease is the leading cause of death in the United States. As little as 60 minutes of moderate intensity, weekly aerobic exercise helps your heart. Being active can protect your heart, lower cholesterol and blood pressure, improve blood flow, and give you more stamina and the ability to cope with stress.

Aerobic classes will meet from 10-11 am in the Center Building gym. Thursday classes are also available for a \$3 drop-in fee. Preregistration is not required.

Sponsored Lunches

(for Woodbridge residents over 60 years of age)

St. Patrick’s Day Drive-thru Luncheon: You don’t have to be Irish to celebrate St. Patrick’s Day at the Drive-thru Luncheon on March 16 from 12-1 pm. This event is sponsored

by Coachman Square at Woodbridge and Southern Connecticut Gas/United Illuminating. Lunch will include a traditional corned beef meal. An additional treat will be provided by Hamden Rehabilitation and Health Care Center. Please RSVP by March 9.

Upcoming Programs

Valentine’s Day Card Craft: Create a button Valentine’s Day card to give to a friend or loved one. All supplies will be provided by Hamden Rehabilitation and Health Care Center. Program will meet on February 14 from 11 am - 12 pm in the Library Meeting Room. Please RSVP.

Lunch & Learn: Problem at the Pump: How atrial fibrillation and congestive heart failure compromise the heart’s ability to pump, and what can be done to fix it. Atrial fibrillation and congestive heart failure are two common cardiac conditions which become more prevalent as we age. But what are they, why do they occur, and how are they diagnosed and treated? Join Becket Gretchen-Harrison, cardiology PA and founder of Hearts at Home for a special presentation for National Heart Awareness Month to learn about these chronic heart conditions and what you can do to effectively manage them on February 24, 11:30 am - 12:30 pm in the Library Meeting Room. Please RSVP 203-389-3430. Lunch will be provided.

AARP Smart Driver Class: This course teaches proven driving techniques to help keep you and your loved ones safe on the road. In addition, it may provide a multi-year discount on your auto insurance. The program will take place March 8 from 9 am to 1 pm in the Library Meeting Room. The fee is \$20 for members, \$25 for non-members. Please RSVP.

Immersive Ireland Experience: Join Deb Urso of Hamden Rehabilitation and Health Care Center to experience Ireland through a virtual tour,

trivia, and tastings. This educational and entertaining workshop will meet March 10 from 11 am – 12 pm in the Library Meeting Room. No cost to participate.

Exercise

Pickleball: Monday through Friday, 12:30-3:30 pm, in the Center Building gym. New players please call to register. All levels are welcome. Call for more information. There is an annual fee of \$20 for residents, \$25 for non-residents.

Hobbies/Social

Bridge: Wednesdays and Fridays, 1-4 pm in the Library Meeting Room.

Craft Group: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 10 am - 12 pm, in the Woodbridge Room of the Library. Bring your current knitting, crocheting, or needlepoint project to work on while enjoying a lovely time socializing.

Painting for Pleasure with local artist Carole Abbate: Monday, 10 am - 12 pm, in the Library Meeting Room. Create your own paintings as Carole helps inspire beginners to intermediates to paint with acrylics or watercolors. Paint the subject of your choice-bring in a note card or photo for inspiration. No experience necessary. Call to sign-up for this 6-week, \$36 class. Class will be prorated.

Pinochle: Wednesdays, 1-4 pm and Thursdays, 1:30-4 pm in the Center Building, room 16.

Services Offered

(For Woodbridge Residents Only)

Tech Tuesday and Thursday, 2:45-4:15 pm: Need help navigating your computer, laptop, tablet, or smart phone? Call to sign-up for a 1:1 session in The Center’s computer lab with patient, knowledgeable, Amity High School student volunteers. No charge.

Computer Lab: Multiple computers and laptops are located in room 11 of the Center Building Human Services

corridor, which is open Monday - Friday, 10 am - 2 pm. Printing is available (first 5 pages free). Preregistration is required.

Transportation: Those over the age of 60, or who are temporarily or permanently disabled, may call to arrange car or wheelchair accessible van transportation to medical appointments to 17 surrounding towns, local grocery shopping, banking, pharmacy pick-up, and social engagements. This service is provided Monday - Friday from 9:00 am - 4:00 pm. Vehicles are cleaned between each use. Masks are required.

Meals: Healthy, well balanced, flash frozen meals for \$5.25/meal are available. Order by noon on Monday for delivery to your home during the same week. Choose from a wide variety of options including baked ziti, chicken piccata, flounder Florentine, and turkey pot pie. Meals include a roll, fresh fruit, and dessert. Two meal minimum order with a ten-meal limit. See website (<https://woodbridgect.org/541/Lunch-Meal-Programs>) for a complete list of offerings.

Frozen soups are available for \$1.50 per 10 oz. container. Varieties include: Italian wedding, beef orzo, minestrone, harvest vegetable, lemon chicken and rice, and many more. Call 203-389-3430 to place your order.

Friendly Visitor Program: Call Judi Young, Senior Social Worker, at 203-389-3429, to arrange for a friendly visitor.

Medical Loan Closet: Durable medical equipment, including walkers, wheelchairs, knee rollers, shower chairs, and more, is available for lending. Donations of transport chairs are needed. Call for details.

Job Bank: Residents may call Nancy Pfund, Youth Services Director, at 203-389-3429, to hire a student worker. Schedule now for snow shoveling, party assistance, baby-sitting, and more.

NEWS FROM THE LIBRARY

All information accurate at press time.
Be sure to check our website woodbridgetownlibrary.org or call us before your visit for any changes to our hours or events.

Library Announcements Now for sale: Totes with Notable Quotes!

Support the Library by purchasing a tote bag. \$20 each, 2 for \$35. Six different bags, each with a different quote. Examples: "A book must be the axe for the frozen sea within us." – Franz Kafka, "No need to hurry. No need to sparkle. No need to be anybody but oneself." – Virginia Woolf. Thanks to the Friends of the Woodbridge Library for their support.

Changes to Hours

Visit us Monday through Thursday, 10 am to 8 pm and Friday and Saturday, 10 am to 5 pm. The Library will be closed on Monday, February 20; we will return Tuesday, February 21 at 10 am.

New Online Card Registration Available

Are you a Woodbridge resident? You can now sign up for a library card online! Visit our website, woodbridgetownlibrary.org. After registering, you will immediately be able to use your new account to place holds on items for pick up at the library. We will then contact you via email within 2 business days with your new library card number. At this time, you will get full access to our electronic resources, including downloadable books and magazines. Please note that this is a temporary registration that will expire in 30 days. Before the 30 days is up, please visit the Woodbridge Town Library in person to verify your name and address. At that time, you will receive a permanent library card.

Do we have your email address??

Sign up for our email newsletters to receive notifications about events, new offerings, and library hours/closings. We typically only send one email a week. Join our mailing list by visiting our website and entering your email address in the form provided. That's it! (You can also give us your email address while in the building.)

Notary Services

Now available at the Library by appointment or by chance! Please contact the Reference Desk for more information desk (stop by or call 203-389-3434) or email Bill (warmstrong@woodbridgetownlibrary.org).

Library Information

Visit the Library website 24/7 to access digital resources - woodbridgetownlibrary.org. What's available at the Library:

- › In-person browsing: come see all



WOODBIDGE
TOWN LIBRARY

- of the new books, audiobooks, and DVDs!;
- › Computers: no appointment needed;
- › Printing, copying, faxing, and scanning;
- › Periodicals: recent newspapers and magazines;
- › Reference help: including getting started/troubleshooting our digital library services (hoopla, Kanopy, Libby, Creativebug);
- › Ancestry Library Edition: use this popular resource to explore your family history. Use our computers or bring your own device to work anywhere in the building on our wi-fi.

The Woodbridge Room is open! The study room is available for two-hour reservations; please call the reference desk to book your time. Our puzzles and children's toys are back, and so is our seating!

Call or email to place holds, ask questions, find out information, and more.

Department phones and emails:

- › Adult Services/Reference: 203-389-3434; reference@woodbridgetownlibrary.org
- › Children's Department: 203-389-3439; childrens@woodbridgetownlibrary.org;
- › Circulation/General info: 203-389-3433; circulation@woodbridgetownlibrary.org.
- › Not sure who you need? Email askus@woodbridgetownlibrary.org.

Socialize with us!

- › Facebook: [@woodbridge.town.library](https://www.facebook.com/woodbridge.town.library)
- › Instagram: [@woodbridgetownlibrary](https://www.instagram.com/woodbridgetownlibrary)
- › TikTok: [@woodbridge_town_library](https://www.tiktok.com/@woodbridge_town_library)

Library News Library Skywatch

Every Monday & Tuesday, conditions permitting (dark & clear), a reference staff member will assist the public in identifying and viewing celestial objects with our new Zhumell 1114mm refracting telescope. Join us on the Library lawn, from where we can see the Moon and the larger and closer planets. Telescope viewing starts 1/2 hour after sundown. Reservation not needed; walk-ins welcome. Contact Bill at warmstrong@woodbridgetownlibrary.org with questions.

The Library is now FINE FREE!

The Woodbridge Town Library has gone fine free, which means patrons will no longer be charged fines for overdue items. All existing overdue fines for

Woodbridge Town Library items have been removed, but this policy change will not include replacement fees for missing or damaged items. Please see the Circulation Department with any questions, or contact them at 203-389-3433 or askus@woodbridgetownlibrary.org.

Museum Passes Available

We have museum passes to area attractions, everything from The Beardsley Zoo in Bridgeport to the Wadsworth Athenaeum in Hartford, providing you with free or discounted admission. Reserve your passes online then print out at home (when allowed) or pick up at the library. We can also print them here for you. Visit <https://woodbridge.lioninc.org/museum-passes/> for more info. Please note that every attraction has its own policies for pass usage and availability may be limited.

From Adult Services Woodbridge Writers Workshop

Every second and fourth Tuesday of the month, from 3 to 5 pm. Gather with area writers as we read and critique our works in a friendly atmosphere. Register online or at the library. More information on our website or call the reference desk.

Woodbridge Scrabble Group

Wednesdays at 11 AM. Meet with friends and neighbors for friendly games of Scrabble every week in the Meeting Room. No registration required.

Indoor Film Screenings

Thursdays at 7 PM. Join us on Thursday evenings for a movie screening in our Meeting Room. No registration is required to attend, but seating is first come, first served.

- › February 16: *She Said*
- › February 23: *Till*
- › March 2: *Rogue Agent*
- › March 9: *The Fabelmans*
- › March 16: *Spoiler Alert*

Saturday Morning Meditation

Every Saturday at 10:15 am, one hour of silent Vipassana (mindfulness) meditation is hosted by experienced meditation instructors. Registration suggested, but walk-ins welcome too!

4 Critical Components to a Successful Retirement

Wednesday, March 8 at 6 PM

Learn how to get the most out of your retirement with these 4 critical components: Inflation, Social Security, Taxes Now & In Retirement, and Market Volatility & Income Needs.

This workshop is presented by USA Financial. Please register online or at the library.

Author Talk: Dr. Siegfried Kra

Wednesday, March 15 at 2 PM

Come and join us for a talk with local author and retired cardiologist Dr. Siegfried Kra! He will be discussing his newest book, *Dancer in the Garden*, which is a collection of vivid stories from Dr. Kra's life. Please register online or at the library.

Woodbridge Town Library Plant Swap!

Saturday, March 18

from 11 AM – 1 PM

Have plants that don't spark joy anymore? Extra pots laying around the house? Seeds you don't plan on planting? Drop them off at the library 3/16-3/17. Then return on Saturday to find new (to you) items! There will also be a potting station. All ages welcome! Please register online or at the library.

Especially For Teens Teen Volunteers needed!

Check out our teen page on our website to see what volunteer opportunities are available.

From The Children's Department Animal Facts Club

Monday, February 13 at

6:30 pm: Ages 7+

Registration required; meets monthly. This month's theme is extinct animals!

Drop-in Valentine's Craft

Tuesday, February 14; 10

am – 4 pm: Ages 3+.

No registration necessary.

Graphic Novel Club

Tuesday, February 28 at

6:30 pm: Ages 9+

Come discuss the graphic novel *Manu* and do a fun activity relating to the book! Please register.

Tiger Storytime

Wednesday March 8 at

4:30 pm: Ages 3+

Join us for songs, movement, tiger themed books, and a visit with a cat named Tiger. Online Registration Required.

Recurring Program

No registration required, come as often as you'd like!

- › Wednesdays at 10:30 am: **Storytime** (infants and up);
- › Thursdays at 4 pm: **Afternoon Craft Time** (Ages 3+);
- › Fridays at 11:30 am: **Morning Craft Time** (Ages 3 to 5, perfect for preschoolers and homeschoolers!)

“Student News” From Page 7

academic year. A student must earn a grade point average of 3.5 or higher on a scale of 4.0 to receive dean’s list recognition. Those from Woodbridge named to the Dean’s List are: Ellie Luciani, 2023, Markets, Innovation & Design; and Will O’Brien, 2026, Undeclared.

Colgate University

Hamilton, NY - Simon Khairallah, a member of the Colgate University Class of 2025, has earned the spring 2022 Dean’s Award with Distinction. Khairallah is an International Relations and Psychology major from Woodbridge, CT, and is a graduate of Amity Regional High School. Students who receive a term grade point average of 3.6 or higher while completing at least three courses during the spring 2022 semester earn the Dean’s Award with Distinction.

College of the Holy Cross

Worcester, MA - Matteo Delsanto of Woodbridge was named to the College of the Holy Cross Fall 2022 Dean’s List. A member of the Class of 2024, Delsanto was named to the Dean’s List for outstanding academic achievement during the fall semester of the 2022-23 academic year. To qualify, students must pass four or more letter-graded courses with no failing grades during the semester and earn a GPA of 3.5 or higher.

Iowa State University

Ames, Iowa - More than 10,200 Iowa State University students have been recognized for outstanding academic achievement by being named to the fall semester 2022 Dean’s List. Students named to the Dean’s List must have earned a grade point average of at least 3.50 on a 4.00 scale while carrying a minimum of 12 credit hours of graded course work. Jason Christopher Luciani, 4, Mechanical Engineering from Woodbridge, CT was named to the Dean’s List.

Lasell University

Newton, MA - Caelan Watson, a Lasell University student from Bethany, was named to the Dean’s List for their academic performance in the fall 2022 semester. To be named to the Dean’s List, Lasell students must complete at least 12 credits as a full-time student and achieve a semester GPA of 3.5 or higher.

Lehigh University

Bethlehem, PA – Dean’s List status, which is awarded to students who earned a scholastic average of 3.6 or better while carrying at least 12 hours of regularly graded courses, has been granted to Ethan Lavi of Woodbridge in the Fall 2022 semester.

Miami University

Oxford, OH - Arielle Likier, of Woodbridge, CT, was named to the Dean’s list at Miami University for the 2022-23 fall semester. Miami University

students who are ranked in the top twenty percent of undergraduate students within their division for the fall semester 2022-23 have been named to the Dean’s list recognizing academic performance. Likier is earning a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology.

Nichols College

Dudley, MA - Casey Sexton from Woodbridge, CT, achieved Dean’s List for the fall 2022 semester at Nichols College. The President’s List and Dean’s List recognize those students who achieve high grades during a single semester. To be included on the President’s List, a student must have a grade point average of 3.85 or higher for at least 12 undergraduate credit-hours and must have received no grades below B- during the semester. Students with a minimum grade point average of 3.5 for at least 12 undergraduate credit-hours and no grades below B- will receive Dean’s List honors.

Quinnipiac University

Hamden, CT - The following Bethany students were named to the dean’s list for the Fall 2022 semester at Quinnipiac University: Jeremiah Schurman. The following Woodbridge students were named to the dean’s list for the Fall 2022 semester at Quinnipiac University: Kevin Alston, Ephemia Nicolakis, Janina Skuret, Jeffrey Tafuto, and Julia Turski. To qualify for the dean’s list, students must earn a grade point average of at least 3.5 with no grade lower than C. Full-time students must complete at least 14 credits in a semester, with at least 12 credits that have been graded on a letter grade basis to be eligible. Part-time students must complete at least six credits during a semester.

Southern New Hampshire University

Manchester, NH - Sarel Botha of Woodbridge has been named to Southern New Hampshire University’s Fall 2022 President’s List. Full-time undergraduate students who have earned a minimum grade-point average of 3.700 and above for the reporting term are named to the President’s List. Full-time status is achieved by earning 12 credits over each 16-week term or paired 8-week terms grouped in fall, winter/spring, and summer.

SUNY New Paltz

New Paltz, NY - SUNY New Paltz is proud to congratulate Benjamin Lee of Woodbridge, CT, for being named to the Dean’s List for the fall 2022 semester. Well done! Dean’s List designation is reserved for students who excel academically and earn at least a 3.3 grade-point average in a semester with a full-time course load.

University of Bridgeport

Bridgeport, CT - Anna Schuell, of Woodbridge, was named to the University of Bridgeport’s Fall 2022 President’s List. Schuell was among more than 300 students named to the Fall

DEATH NOTICES

Martha W. Freeman

Martha Whitlock Freeman (Marcie), 78, died peacefully at her home in Essex on January 3, 2023 after a brief illness.

Marcie was born in New Haven on November 30, 1944 to the late Martha and Reverdy Whitlock and lived her entire life in Connecticut. She grew up in Woodbridge, graduating from Amity High School in 1962 and Colby Junior College (now Colby-Sawyer College) in 1964. In 1969 she married Greydon (Grey) Freeman of Hanover, NH. They lived in New Haven and Bethany before returning to Woodbridge in 1977, where Marcie remained for nearly 45 years before relocating to Essex. She was a devoted and loving wife to Grey until his death in 2015. She was active in the Junior League of New Haven from the 1960s until the 1980s and worked for many years at the Foote School as assistant to the Head of School.

She loved so many things, but nothing more than her children and grandchildren. Grandkids could always count on “Granny Girl” to host tea parties with “proper” etiquette, finger sandwiches, cookies, sugar cubes, milk with the barest hint of tea, and lively conversation. When each granddaughter turned eight, Marcie provided a trip to “Birthday Street” (usually downtown New Canaan), during which they celebrated eight years with eight stops and a small gift at each stop: a book, a toy, an outfit, a pair of shoes, a random knickknack, lunch, ice cream, and chocolate.

She was an accomplished cook capable of producing marvelous gourmet dinners on special occasions, although among her grandchildren she was particularly renowned for her grilled cheese sandwiches and scrambled eggs. Her secrets were always low heat and lots of butter.

She enjoyed traveling immensely, returning again and again to favorite destinations including New York City, Paris, Kiawah Island, Maine, and classic hotels up and down the East Coast.

She was a meticulous organizer and marvelous event planner. Her gift wrapping was so beautiful that it often seemed a shame to disturb it to get at the present within. She loved Christmas above all other holidays, and her entire family cherishes the most recent celebration in Essex not quite two weeks before her death.

She appreciated elegance, grace, manners, pomp, and pageantry. She wrote perfect thank-you notes, adored the Union League Café, loved marching bands, listed Queen Elizabeth on the guest list of her dream dinner party, and threw herself wholeheartedly into the weddings she planned (as well as occasionally eavesdropping on ones that happened to be taking place at one of those classic hotels while she was staying there).

Later in life she became an enthusiastic golfer and mahjong player, devoted fan of professional and college football, and avid watcher of Gilmore Girls and unsurprisingly, The Crown.

In one of her meticulously kept journals, she listed some of her simpler pleasures: “waves washing up on the shore, the smell of newly mown grass, bugler’s ‘Taps,’ the sound of golf clubs rattling in the bag, and stars in the night sky.”

Her legacy will live on in her three children, Jonathan (Rebecca Makkai) of Lake Forest, IL, Courtney Phillips (John) of Malvern, PA, and Hunter of Raleigh, NC; in her granddaughters Sarah, Lucy, Alice, Lydia, and Heidi; and in the many friends she made over the course of what she described, simply, as “a great life.”

Services will be private at the request of the family.

2022 President’s List. To be named to the President’s List, a student must maintain a term grade point average of 3.7 or higher.

University of New Hampshire

Durham, NH - The following students have been named to the Dean’s List at the University of New Hampshire for the fall 2022 semester: Hannah Sosensky, earning High Honors; Emily Hoddinott, earning High Honors; and Zachary Zunski, earning High Honors.

University of Vermont



Burlington, VT - The University of Vermont is proud to announce that the following Woodbridge students have been named to the dean’s list for the fall 2022 semester: Austin Rowland, majoring in Environmental Sciences;

and Emily Kline, majoring in Social Work. To be named to the dean’s list, students must have a grade-point average of 3.0 or better and rank in the top 20 percent of their class in their respective college or school.

The University of Wisconsin-Madison

The University of Wisconsin-Madison has recognized students named to the Dean’s List for the fall semester of the 2021-2022 academic year. To be eligible for the Dean’s List, students must complete a minimum of 12 graded degree credits in that semester. Each university school or college sets its own GPA requirements for students to be eligible to receive the distinction. Emma Kravetz of Woodbridge, enrolled in the School of Business has been named to the Dean’s List.

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Congregation B'nai Jacob Happenings

Weekly Services
Daily Minyan Services

- › Monday-Friday – 7:45am
- › Sunday - Thursday – 6:00pm (on ZOOM only)
- › Sunday – 9:00am
- › National Holidays – Times vary

Weekly Shabbat Services
Friday Eve – 6:00pm
Saturday – 9:45am

Upcoming Events
Pre-Passover Kosher Wine Tasting
Thursday, March 23 at 7:00pm
in the Library at CBJ.

Join us for a fun opportunity to learn about, taste and purchase Kosher Wine from Israel in time for Pesach.

RABBI NATAN MARGOLIT
Sunday, March 26 at 10:00am at CBJ

Integrating Jewish Wisdom and Ecological Thinking to Heal a Fractured World

Join Rabbi Natan Margalit, Chair of the Rabbinic Texts Department and Director of the Earth-Based Judaism at the ALEPH Ordination Program (AOP), to discuss his recent book, The Pearl and the Flame, which brings a new integration of ecological thinking and core Jewish concepts. Copies for signing will be available.

YAHAD
YAHAD, the combined religious school for Congregation B'nai Jacob and Congregation Or Shalom, is gearing up for a vibrant year of education. For students in grades K-7, (member-

ship required).

Gan Hayered Sundays
Open to all Jewish 3-year olds and 4-year olds in the community!

Play-based Jewish curriculum, offered Sunday mornings, provides a warm, caring environment in which children can develop social skills while also learning about Jewish holidays, traditions, and values.

For more information about any of the listed events, programs, or inquiries about becoming a member of B'nai Jacob:

- › Call: 203-389-2111
- › Email: office@bnaijacob.org;
- › Visit our website: bnaijacob.org.

Congregation B'nai Jacob is a conservative synagogue located at 75 Rimmon Road, Woodbridge, CT. ALL ARE WELCOME!



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ARTS & LEISURE



Left: A Whispering Pines Stream , and right: Irene Stahl and Linda Francois.

Stahl Donates Whispering Pines Preserve to Bethany Land Trust

The Land Trust is pleased and grateful to receive a donation of 49 acres of woodlands, streams and historic features that has been lovingly tended by the late Carlton Stahl and his wife, Irene Stahl. The 49 acres abut two Land Trust parcels along Briar Road in the Bethany Farms section of Bethany and the town’s Carrington Preserve.

Land Trust ownership means that the existing wildlife corridor and natural habitat of many species will be protected in perpetuity. As this is in an area of rich history, both colonial and indigenous, it means that any historic features will be protected from development.

“This is a wonderful gift to wildlife and to those who will enjoy a walk in the woods,” said Linda Francois, Land Trust president. “It is so important to save our vanishing natural areas before it’s too late.”

The Land Trust field crew will mark the boundaries, establish trails and hopes to open up a trail for the public to enjoy by late spring.

The Whispering Pines gift is the latest in a series of land preservation activities of the Land Trust over the

past several years. In 2016, the 36.4-acre Woodward Nature Preserve was received as a subdivision set aside followed by the purchases of the 25.2-acre Grobe Preserve in 2018 and the 6.9-acre Van Epps Preserve in 2020. Last year, the Land Trust entered into an agreement with Connecticut Water to purchase 19.7 acres on the Bethany-Naugatuck border that will become the Three Sisters Preserve. Funds received from grants and generous donors have made purchases at bargain sale prices a reality. The current protected acreage is 403 acres owned outright and 200 acres in conservation easements.

“The Land Trust is working on several exciting land preservation projects. The support of our generous donors make these possible. We hope you will help!” explains Peter Simon, Land Trust treasurer.

The Bethany Land Trust, Inc. is a private, charitable, non-profit corporation dedicated to preserving our natural lands. To make a tax-deductible donation to the Land Trust please visit: <https://bethanylandtrust.org>.



The American Kestrel, the smallest falcon, is a species of “Special Concern” in Connecticut. Kestrels have been seen at the CCW property.

Birds –and Birders– Flock to the Former Country Club

Like many outdoor pastimes, bird-watching has recently experienced a sharp increase in popularity due to the pandemic. One estimate puts the number of active “birders” in the United States at over 15 million in 2020. Locally, members of several organizations for bird enthusiasts have discovered that the former Country Club of Woodbridge (CCW) property on Woodfield Road is a birder’s paradise. A member of the Menunktauck Audubon Society recently described the old golf course as “wondrous habitat for a wide range of resident and migrating birds, plus - the native plant bonanza on display there is unparalleled in this area. I have never seen more common milkweed, golden rod, or aster in one place.”

The former golf course is listed on eBird – a website managed by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology where birders from all over the world enter their sightings -- as a “Hotspot.” To date, 64 species have been recorded at this Hotspot including the American Kestrel, a type of falcon that has been in long-term decline due to loss of habitat. Once abundant in the Northeast, the Kestrel is currently listed as a “State Species of Special Concern” in Connecticut.

During the recent fall migration, one Woodbridge birder observed 50 dif-

ferent bird species during one 3-hour period at the former country club. This is an extremely impressive number of species for one day of fall migration.

Last November, at the invitation of the Woodbridge Land Trust and Woodbridge Park Association, staffers from Audubon Connecticut conducted an assessment of the CCW Property designed to:

- › Determine what birds are currently utilizing the habitats on the property
- › Describe and assess current forest bird habitat conditions on the property
- › Make recommendations for protecting and improving habitat for a suite of priority forest birds

The Audubon report points out that this property is part of a corridor of undeveloped land that connects the Regional Water Authority’s Maltby Lakes Recreation Area, the Yale Golf Course, and surrounding woodlands to the south with West Rock Ridge State Park and other RWA lands to the north. This corridor has immense value for habitat connectivity within the surrounding urban landscape. In addition, the property also offers an important component of shrubland habitat, which is quite rare in Connecticut and necessary for certain bird species and for pollinators.

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Congregation Beth El – Keser Israel Events

Protests in Iran

Author Roya Hakakian will speak about *Women, Life and Liberty: Current Protests in Iran* on Saturday, February 11. Born and raised in Tehran, she arrived in the U.S. in 1985. Her writing includes the memoir *Journey from the Land of No: A Girlhood Caught in Revolutionary Iran* and also *Assassins of the Turquoise Palace*, about the shooting of Iranian and Kurdish opposition leaders in Berlin in 1992. An active thinker of foreign relations, Hakakian is a founding member of the Iran Human Rights Documentation Center and currently serves as an editorial board member of World Affairs. Details at beki.org



Roya Hakakian

Retrospective Exhibit

Cynthia Beth Rubin will speak about her retrospective exhibition on display at BEKI, entitled *Sensing Connection*, on Sunday, March 5. In works spanning decades of explorations, Rubin depicts imagined sensations of the unseeable yet essential aspects of our world. In collaboration with the Menden-Deuer Oceanography lab at the University of Rhode Island, recent work explores bringing empathy, awareness, and curiosity to the unseen or rarely seen microscopic life of the ocean. Details at beki.org



Cynthia Beth Rubin

Keeping Our Kids Safe

BE SMART for Kids will be the topic for a Zoom conversation Wednesday evening, February 22 with Joanna Taczanowsky, who is the state lead of that effort. The presentation, part of a campaign to raise awareness about secure gun storage, will address gun accidents and the risk of guns in suicide. Email office@beki.org for details and the Zoom link.

Carol Anderson Film

A new documentary conceived and narrated by Carol Anderson will be shown on BEKI Zoom Wednesday evening, March 1, followed by a conversation with the producer. Professor Anderson is the Charles Howard Candler Professor of African American Studies at Emory University and author of the *New York Times* best-seller *White Rage: The Unspoken Truth of Our Racial Divide*. The film is titled *I, Too*, from the Langston Hughes poem with those opening words. Details at beki.org



Carol Anderson

Classes with the Rabbi

Current learning opportunities with Rabbi Eric Woodward include a discussion of the weekly Torah portion on Thursday mornings; Philosophy and History of Conservative Judaism via Zoom on Thursdays at 7 pm; and Talmud study (Chapter 2 of Tractate Shabbat) on select Sunday mornings. On Saturday, March 4, he will lead a class about the Theology of Purim. Details at beki.org



Rabbi Eric Woodward

Children's Programs

Children's Havura, K-2 Kehila, and Junior Congregation, all led by parent volunteers, meet in person each Saturday morning. On Saturday evenings in February, BEKI offers a kid-friendly Havdalah on Zoom. This online event includes singing the blessings along with Rabbi Eric Woodward and reading a story with Education Director Annie Norman-Schiff. For more information and the Zoom link, consult anormanschiff@beki.org.

In Person and Online

BEKI offers in-person services twice daily, led by Rabbi Woodward and congregants. Weekday services also are on Zoom. To request the Zoom link, email office@beki.org.

Located at 85 Harrison Street (corner of Whalley Avenue – Route 63 – in Westville)



Land Trust Board Reps Attend Housing & Conservation Summit

Two members of the Woodbridge Land Trust Board of Directors, Bryan Pines and Cathy Wick, attended the recent "Summit on Housing and Conservation" sponsored by the Connecticut Land Conservation Council. The approx-

imately 100 attendees participated in a full-day program of panel discussions and presentations by leaders in the land conservation and affordable housing sectors, discussing ways to collaborate for the benefit of the entire community.

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