

MESSAGE FROM MONICA

August 4, 2022

Dear Darienites,

Burglaries, and stolen cars with key fobs inside, are an ongoing issue in Darien. Many, if not most, of these crimes would be prevented by residents simply locking their vehicles and taking their keys with them at all times. Cars have been stolen from virtually every street in Darien, at all hours of the day and night. There is never a safe time to leave your car unlocked.



The Darien Police Department has spent thousands of hours on unlocked car burglaries and the Detective division is doing great work on identifying many of the perpetrators via diligent “after the fact” investigative efforts. Most often the thieves are looking for “easy scores” like cash, phones, computers, purses, etc. Unfortunately, many of the stolen cars are used in different crimes such as; robberies, drug deals, firearms offenses and homicides in other communities. Please do your part to prevent these ongoing thefts by simply locking your car at all times. When thieves come and repeatedly find cars locked, they will move on.

Thank you for keeping in contact with me with your thoughts, questions, and concerns.

Sincerely,
Monica McNally

UPCOMING MEETINGS & EVENTS

PRIMARY ELECTION AUGUST 9, 2022

Darien is having a dual (Democratic and Republican) primary on Tuesday, August 9, 2022, for all local voting districts in Darien. Unaffiliated voters are not eligible to vote. Please note that there is no same day-registration in CT for a primary election. Check the Registrars of Voters' [website](#) for voter registration deadlines.

VOTER REGISTRATION

The deadline for in-person enrollment to vote in the primary with the Registrars office is 12:00 pm on Monday, August 8, 2022. (Exception: Applications of servicemen and persons out of the country may be received throughout the day.)

VOTING INFORMATION

Polls will open at 6:00 am and close at 8:00 pm. Voting will take place by the absentee ballot application and ballot process, available through the Town Clerk's office, or in-person at Darien's six poll locations. Signage will be placed at all poll locations, directing voters to their respective voting districts.

POLLING LOCATIONS

District One: remains at the Board of Education Building, 35 Leroy Avenue.

District Two: is temporarily relocated to the Mather Center at 2 Renshaw Road, accessible by the

PEAR TREE POINT BEACH SURVEY CLOSURES

8.5.22

BOARD OF SELECTMEN

8.8.22 7:00 PM

PRIMARY ELECTION

8.9.22

6:00 AM – 8:00 PM

OX RIDGE BUILDING COMMITTEE

8.10.22 10:00 AM

ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON SUSTAINABILITY

8.10.22 10:00 AM

DARIEN POLICE COMMISSION

8.11.22 4:00 PM

BOARD OF FINANCE

8.16.22 6:30 PM

PARKS & RECREATION COMMITTEE

8.17.22 7:30 PM

lower parking lot at Town Hall.

District Three: remains at Noroton Heights Fire Department, 209 Noroton Avenue.

District Four: remains at Hindley School, 10 Nearwater Lane.

District Five: is temporarily relocated to the Mather Center at 2 Renshaw Road, accessible by the lower parking lot at Town Hall.

District Six: has moved to the Mather Center permanently, as a result of the 2020 state redistricting.

The complete meeting schedule of all Boards and Commissions is available [here](#).

RESIDENT REMINDERS NEWS & TIPS



PEAR TREE POINT BEACH SURVEY

The Darien Parks and Recreation Commission is conducting a survey to seek valuable input from Darien residents to help determine the desired improvements to the facilities at Pear Tree Point Beach. The survey closes tomorrow, August 5th. If you have not yet participated, please do, as the Parks and Recreation Commission hopes for widespread participation from Darien residents.

The survey is available on the Parks and Recreation site [here](#).

BEACH INFORMATION

August is a great time to use our town beaches! Both beaches are open from 6:00 am to 10:00 pm. Parking permits are still available for purchase at Town Hall if you don't already have one, and daily passes are for sale at the security booths for \$53 per vehicle. The Weed Beach security booth is open from 9:00 am to 9:30 pm, and the security booth at Pear Tree Point Beach is open from 9:00 am to 9:00 pm.

Both Weed Beach and Pear Tree Point have concession stands available for your convenience.

Weed Beach Grill hours are weekdays 10:00 am - 7:00 pm and weekends 10:00 am - 8:00 pm. The concession may close earlier if it is slow or the beach is not crowded.

Pear Tree Point concession is open weekdays from 4:00 pm – 7:00 pm and weekends from 10:30 am – 7:00 pm.

The beaches are also a great place to have an outdoor picnic or barbeque during the warm summer months. Please call the Parks & Recreation office at 203-656-7325 to obtain a permit.

For swimming safety, the Darien Health Department collects and tests water samples for bacteria at both beaches once a week. They maintain a beach HOTLINE (203-656-7323) and communicate with the Parks & Recreation Department to ensure residents are continuously informed about whether beaches are open or closed. The status of beaches is also posted on the Health Department [website](#).

HURRICANE PREPAREDNESS

We are in the heart of hurricane season which runs from June 1 through November 30. Here are some simple steps from FEMA and our Emergency Services Director, Mark McEwan, which you can use to prepare yourself and your family for a storm.

- Know your [Evacuation](#) Route: check with local officials about what shelter spaces are available this year. Don't forget — coronavirus may have altered your community's plans.
- Gather Supplies: have enough food, water, and other [supplies](#) for every member of your family to last several days. Consider the unique needs of your family, such as supplies for [pets](#) or medication for seniors. Adding extra masks, soap, hand

sanitizer, disinfecting wipes or general household cleaning supplies can help to protect you from COVID-19 when you evacuate to a shelter.

- Make an Emergency Plan: make sure everyone in your household knows and understands [your hurricane plan](#). Don't forget a plan for the [office](#), [daycare center](#), [school and any other locations you frequent](#).
- Plan with Disability in Mind: no two people are the same; each of us moves, functions, and navigates the world differently. It is important to make your emergency plan based on what works best for you. Creating a support network or planning ahead with accessible transportation can ensure that you stay safe when a storm strikes. Visit [Ready.gov/disability](#) for more information on how to plan if, for example, you are blind, hard of hearing or have sensory disabilities.
- Remember the Furry Members of Your Family: [pets](#) need their own emergency plans and supply kits. Certain shelters won't accept pets. Taking action in advance, such as seeking out shelters that DO accept pets, can make a difference. It's also a good idea to plan with neighbors, friends or relatives to make sure that someone is available to care for or evacuate your pets if you are unable to do so.
- Download the FEMA mobile app: download the [FEMA mobile app](#) for disaster resources, weather alerts and safety tips. Available in English and Spanish, this app provides a customizable checklist of emergency supplies, maps of open shelters and recovery centers, disaster survival tips and weather alerts from the National Weather Service.

DRY WEATHER FIRE SAFETY TIPS

Fortunately, the stage two drought warning in our area has been lifted due to the recent heavy rains, but our conditions are still dry. Below are some fire safety tips from our Town Fire Marshal, Bobby Buch:

- Avoid using fire pits; as sparks could easily catch dried lawns or brush on fire.
- Properly dispose of all smoking materials in metal closed lid containers.
- Fire pit/ fireplace ashes should only be disposed of in closed metal containers, as the ashes stay warm for over a week, even though they will feel cool to the touch.
- When cooking, be sure the grill is at least 10 feet from the home, away from combustibles, and never left unattended.
- Always make sure you have working smoke detectors throughout the home.
- Avoid using sparklers and other fireworks.

GOVERNMENT 101

AFFORDABLE HOUSING PLAN UPDATE

At the July 26, 2022, public hearing on the Darien Affordable Housing Plan, the Planning & Zoning Commission heard from members of the public regarding the draft Affordable Housing Plan. On September 6th, 2022, during their next regularly scheduled meeting, the Commission will discuss the comments received and will decide if further changes to the Plan will be made based upon the comments. A vote to adopt the Plan is possible during the September 6th meeting.

CT LEGISLATIVE ACTS AFFECTING RESIDENTS

At the conclusion of each legislative session, the non-partisan Office of Legislative Research compiles reports on public acts organized by topics. These reports include various topics such as "Acts Affecting Seniors," "Acts Affecting Education," "Acts Affecting Business and Jobs," and much more. Follow this [link](#) to access the full range of acts.

INTERESTING INFORMATION

Darien Town Hall, the Public Works Garage and the Police Station have solar panels on their roofs. The panels, which are maintained by ENCON at no cost to the Town, produce a savings of approximately \$12,000 per year. In December of 2019 these three buildings were selected based on the size of the roofs, and a 20 year contract was signed with the power rate locked at \$0.062 per kWh.

COMMUNITY NEWS

SHELLFISHING

Shellfishing is a wonderful family activity, especially when the water is warm, and Darien has several beds available to licensed residents. Residents can easily obtain a shellfishing permit through the Town Health Department website by clicking [here](#). If you make an appointment to bring in your completed paperwork, you will receive your permit at that time. Otherwise, you can drop off your paperwork and you will receive the permit in the mail. To schedule an appointment please call 203-656-7320.



The State Bureau of Aquaculture, which regulates shellfishing in Connecticut, has recently changed the shellfishing map which can be accessed [here](#). As with the beaches, rainfall and other environmental factors can affect when shellfishing beds are open, so residents should call 203-838-9807 to verify before heading out.

EMPLOYEE & HIGHLIGHTS

EMPLOYEE: ALICIA SILLARS

In her own words...

As the Youth Director for the Town of Darien for almost 26 years, hands down the greatest part of my tenure here has been the people I've met, the relationships I've forged and the many partnerships the DYC continues to enjoy to this day. From sponsoring community events (Halloween Window Painting; Tilley Pond Model Boat Regatta; family concerts; drive-thru food drives and more) to having an active role with a variety of Human Services organizations (Parent Awareness; Depot Advisory Board; Human Services Planning Council; Juvenile Review Board), the overall "health" of the community -- especially the youth -- has always been a priority and driving force for DYC engagements.



Two of the most notorious programs the DYC sponsors are the TOPS programs (Teen Options) and the Summer Camp Program. TOPS provides social and recreational activities for the middle school-aged population throughout the school year. Students sign up annually as TOPS members (free of charge for membership, however a nominal cost-covering entrance fee is assigned to each event) and begins on August 22, 2022, for the 2022/23 school year. The TOPS program relies almost 100% on parent volunteers to plan, execute and chaperone the activities. Without those volunteers, the TOPS program could not exist. The summer camp program provides four grade-level camps for close to 300 kids every summer (not to mention employment opportunities for 30 - 40 individuals). Accommodating kids entering grades 1 - 9, each camp has its own: staff; calendar; special events; field trips, and more. I have had the most unbelievable fortune of working with an amazing leadership team, many of whom have worked with me for over 20 years. Truth be told, I'm not sure who loves the DYC program more -- kids and their parents or me!

None of these accomplishments would be possible were it not for the tremendous volunteer force this community boasts. From serving on the Commission (up to 7 adult members and 2 - 4 high school students per grade) to helping at TOPS events, to volunteering at one of many DYC sponsored events, there's an opportunity for anyone to be involved -- and to make an impact. It is one of my greatest prides in life that through this career, I know that I have made an impact as well.

DARIEN ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON SUSTAINABILITY

From Committee Chair, Carolyn Bayne...

The Darien Advisory Committee on Sustainability was originally convened in October 2012 as the “Transfer Station Advisory Committee,” to examine the business model of the transfer station and to develop a public education program highlighting single stream recycling. In November 2018, as the committee's work expanded, the Board of Selectmen elected to participate in the Sustainable CT program, and the committee was renamed to the current “Advisory Committee on Sustainability” (ACS).

The Committee consists of seven residents, with the First Selectman, Director of Public Works, and the Chairman of the RTM Public Works Committee serving as ex officio members. Current members include Carolyn Bayne (Chair), Dan Dolcetti, Kathy Finnegan, Christine LaJaunie, and Cliff van Voorhees.

The ACS continues to work closely with the Department of Public Works to monitor the operation of the transfer station, including the Swap Shop, and to recommend actions to reduce municipal solid waste and increase the quantity of recycled or repurposed materials.

As a member of Darien’s Green Team, the ACS promotes sustainable initiatives of other town organizations, including the Darien Nature Center, the Darien Land Trust, the Darien Pollinator Pathway, and the Darien Library.

Committee members also follow sustainable initiatives in neighboring communities and around the state, collaborate formally or informally with various towns, and participate in regional coalitions focused on reducing waste, conserving natural resources, and advancing clean, renewable energy. Recommendations are made, as appropriate, to the First Selectman.

A few of the Committee’s major initiatives include solar roof-top installations on three town-owned buildings (2019), the first municipal food scrap recycling program in lower Fairfield County (2018), and a permanent Swap Shop building (2017). For the latter two projects, the Committee applied for, and was granted, funds from state and non-profit organizations. The Committee also completed a rigorous application for the Town of Darien’s certification from Sustainable CT (2019) and is currently in the process of applying for recertification.

The ACS regularly communicates on social media via “Darien Recycling Center” and occasional articles in print and online media. Residents are encouraged to contact the ACS directly with questions or concerns through email: recycle@darienct.gov.

There are currently two vacancies on the ACS. Residents interested in working with the town to promote sustainable initiatives are encouraged to contact Linda O’Leary in the First Selectman’s office loleary@darienct.gov.

MENTAL HEALTH

9-8-8

This three digit number, formerly known as the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline, is a 24/7 call, text, and chat line which will connect you to trained crisis counselors should you or someone you know be experiencing suicidal thoughts, mental health concerns, substance use, or other emotional crises. 9-8-8 has been built off of the existing lifeline (1-800-273-8255). Both numbers will be able to connect you to the exact same services and will remain in effect. When people call, text, or chat 988, they will be connected to trained counselors that are part of the existing Lifeline network. These trained counselors will listen, understand how their problems are affecting them, provide support, and connect them to resources if necessary.

MENTAL HEALTH TASK FORCE

The Mental Health Task Force met for the second time on Thursday, July 28th. As per the recommendation of mental health experts, a smaller group participated in a postvention suicide training presented by The Hub. A plan has been developed for Darien, creating the Untimely Death Support Team for Darien, to assist if such a death should occur in the future. The Task Force is now in the process of creating sub committees to address the ongoing mental health needs of our community, and will be developing a town wide mental health needs assessment survey in the near future.

HUMAN SERVICES

SENIORS FARMERS MARKET NUTRITION PROGRAM

Darien seniors may now be eligible to receive discount vouchers for locally grown fruits and vegetables through the Connecticut Department of Agriculture. Darien Human Services is a designated Local Coordinating Agency for the Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program (SFMNP) which provides vouchers for locally grown fruits, vegetables, herbs and honey to eligible low income seniors.

Vouchers can be redeemed at any local Farmers Market. The Darien Farmers Market is held every Wednesday from 10:00 am – 3:00 pm at Goodwives Shopping Center parking lot, 25 Old King's Highway North. Vouchers are valid through November 30th.

Interested seniors (60 years of age or older) must be Darien residents and have a maximum household income of no more than 185% of the federal poverty level (\$2,096/month for a single person and \$2,823 for a couple). Proof of income is required. Please contact Darien Human Services at (203) 656-7328 Monday through Thursday 8:00 am - 5:15 pm to schedule an appointment to receive a voucher.

BACK-TO-SCHOOL PROGRAM

The Darien Human Services Department is accepting donations of gift cards for their Back-to-School Program. This program provides \$50 worth of gift cards for school supplies for students grades K-12 whose families receive any of the following: Darien Human Services Programs; free or reduced lunch program; Parks & Recreation or Town Youth Commission camp scholarships; SNAP; Husky Healthcare, or services from Person-to-Person. Gift cards from Target, Walmart, Kohl's and Amazon are preferred so children can buy supplies (including basic clothing items).

Gift cards can be delivered to the Human Services Department in Town Hall, room 109, Monday through Thursday between 8:00 am and 5:15 pm. Gift card distribution is scheduled from August 8th through August 25th, also Monday through Thursday between 8:00 am and 5:15 pm. To learn details and program requirements refer to the Human Services [page](#) on the Town website.

[Sign up here to receive the newsletter](#)

