



TOWN OF DARIEN NEWSLETTER

September 29, 2023 - Issue 43

MESSAGE FROM MONICA

Dear Darienites,

The arrival of Fall, with cooler temperatures and changing leaves, offers numerous opportunities for residents to enjoy the outdoors. Besides taking a walk or hike in many of our town parks, there are several upcoming events organized by the Parks & Recreation Department and the Youth Commission for residents of all ages. Highlights for October include a Family Movie Night and the Rocktoberfest Music Festival, both set to take place at Highland Farm, along with the always popular Halloween window painting contest. The success of events like these is largely due to the active participation and dedication of our volunteers. We extend our gratitude to all of you serving on various committees, commissions, boards, and working groups.



A special acknowledgment is due to the Pear Tree Beach Building Committee members who have devoted countless hours to a very public project over a long period of time. They carefully adjusted the scope of the project as community input was provided and the invaluable work done by the committee in gathering input and securing DEEP approvals for plans mitigating flooding in the area is an important milestone for improving beach access.

As we send this newsletter to you, a heavy rainstorm is hitting Darien. Our work crews have tried to prepare for the rains, but please use caution in areas historically prone to flooding. Flood construction projects discussed at recent public hearings are long term improvements presently in the planning stages.

Please continue to reach out to me with your thoughts and comments.

Thank you,

Monica

DATES & INFORMATION

UPCOMING MEETINGS

BOARD OF SELECTMEN

10.2.23 7:00 PM

SEWER COMMISSION

10.3.23 4:30 PM

PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION

10.3.23 7:30 PM

PEDESTRIAN INFRASTRUCTURE ADVISORY COMMITTEE (PIAC)

10.3.23 7:30 PM

DARIEN POLICE COMMISSION

INTERESTING INFORMATION

The Human Services Department maintains a "Loan Closet" of durable medical equipment. The loan closet provides free, short-term loans of equipment such as wheelchairs, walkers, canes, and crutches. A refundable deposit of \$50 (check payable to "Town of Darien") is required for wheelchairs, transport chairs, and walkers with a seat.

CERTIFICATE OF EXCELLENCE

This week the Town was notified by the Government Finance Officers Association of

10.5.23 4:00 PM

**PLANNING & ZONING
COMMISSION**

10.10.23 7:30 PM

**OPERATIONS PLANNING
COMMISSION**

10.11.23 8:30 AM

BLIGHT REVIEW BOARD

10.11.23 5:30 PM

The complete meeting schedule of all Boards and Commissions is available [here](#). Most meetings can be viewed on DarienTV79.com.

For additional events and programs happening within Darien, click [here](#) to view the Darien Community Calendar available through the Darien Chamber of Commerce.

the United States and Canada (GFOA) that Darien has been awarded the Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting for its annual comprehensive financial report - FY ending June 30, 2022. This marks the 32nd consecutive year Darien has received this impressive award. The Certificate of Achievement is the highest form of recognition in the area of governmental accounting and financial reporting, and its attainment represents a significant accomplishment. Thank you to Jennifer Charneski for her leadership and professionalism in the role as Director of Finance for the Town of Darien.



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RESIDENT REMINDERS, NEWS, & TIPS

Parking Permits

Parking permit renewals were mailed out yesterday, September 28th. Payments are due by October 31st. Any changes in contact information, or license plate additions and deletions should be emailed to Anne DiCeglie, Parking Administrator, at adiceglie@darienct.gov along with a copy of the new registration(s). Renewals will not be issued to accounts with outstanding parking tickets and/or past-due motor vehicle taxes until the delinquencies are resolved.

Security Guards at Weed Beach

This Sunday, October 1st, is the last day security guards will be at Weed Beach.

Absentee Ballot Registration

Absentee ballots will be mailed out on October 6, 2023, per state statute. Registered voters must complete the registration application to receive an absentee ballot. Applications are available in the Town Clerk's Office or online at:

<https://oabr-sots.ct.gov/OABR/absenteeBallotReqPortalHome.do>

Absentee ballots are provided for the following circumstances:

- Absence from Darien on Election Day
- Serving in the military
- Sickness
- Physical disability
- Religious tenets forbid secular activity on Election Day
- Working as a poll worker on Election Day at a site other than your own

Paddle Tennis

The weekly paddle tennis reservation system will open on Monday, October 2nd for those looking for courts on opening day, Monday, October 9th. Throughout the season, reservations can be made up to 1 week in advance.

Sewer Bills

Sewer Service bills covering the period October 1, 2023, through September 30, 2024, have been mailed to residents. Statements of \$500 or less are due by October 31st. Bills over \$500 will automatically be split into two equal installments, with the first payment due October 31 2023, and the 2nd one due April 30, 2024. Residents with two installments will receive a bright orange reminder card in the mail in March if they have any amount due on their account.

The bill is based upon the homeowner's average water usage, according to Aquarion, during the non-irrigation months of November 2022 through March 2023. The water usage period listed in the previous newsletter was incorrect.

Payments may be made in person in the Tax Office at Town Hall (Monday-Thursday, 8:00 AM - 5:15 PM), online through the Town website www.darienct.gov, or by mail. Checks are payable to the Darien Tax Collector. Please note that sewer service charges are not included in escrow payments.

At Home in Darien Leaf Raking and Snow Shoveling Applications

Please call At Home In Darien at 203-655-2227 for an application to have the leaves raked in your yard and/or snow shoveled from your public sidewalk only. Sign-up is available through October 10th. Due to the limited number of volunteers, priority will be given to those who live alone or with another senior.

COMMUNITY NEWS

Great Island School Bus Grounds Tour Postponement

Due to the poor weather, the Great Island School Bus Grounds Tours originally scheduled for Saturday, September 23rd, were postponed. The Town is currently working closely with the bus company to confirm a new date for the tours and will inform all registered participants as soon as a date is finalized. All existing reservations will be honored for the same timeslots on the rescheduled date, and notifications regarding the change will be sent out via email.

Halloween Window Painting Contest Registration

Registration to participate in the annual Halloween Window Painting Contest, hosted by the Youth Commission, begins October 2nd. This fun annual tradition, which will take place on October 21st, is open to all Darien middle and high school students. Teams of up to 5 students are assigned to paint a Halloween-themed window at participating Darien storefronts. See darienct.gov/yc for details and registration.

Darien Library Emergency Preparation Program

On Wednesday, October 4th the Darien Library will host a presentation by VOICES Center for Resilience. The program will include a panel discussion that highlights the efforts of local and state agencies to prepare communities for emergencies. Panelists include: Marc McEwan, Assistant Fire Marshal / Emergency Management Director, Darien and Robert F. Kenny, Jr., Connecticut Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection Division of Emergency Management and Homeland Security. Preparedness tip sheets and behavioral health resources will be distributed to those in attendance. The event is free and open to the public. Registration is suggested.

Movie Night at Highland Farm: THE SUPER MARIO BROTHERS

On Friday, October 6th, the Darien Youth Commission and Parks and Recreation Department will be screening The Super Mario Brothers film at Highland Farm. The film will begin at approximately 6:30 PM. Pack a picnic dinner, grab some friends, a few chairs, and blankets, and come with the family to enjoy this free outdoor event.

Rocktoberfest at Highland Farm

On Saturday, October 7th, from 12:00 PM – 6:00 PM, the Parks and Recreation Department is hosting Darien's biggest music festival - Rocktoberfest. Car passes are \$25.00 and walk-in advance tickets are \$5.00 (\$10.00 at the gates). To purchase tickets go to the [Upcoming Events](#) section of the Parks and Recreation page on the Town website.

Music will include the opening act Hawkins French Band, a second band, Rave On, and then headliner Hazzard County. Come enjoy the music, food truck options, and multiple local craft vendors. There are still several volunteer opportunities available. Please see the [SignUpGenius](#) to volunteer. Questions and requests for more information should be emailed to [Cassie Schull](#) in the Parks and Recreation Department.

PARKS AND RECREATION

Cherry Lawn Gazebo Restoration

This restoration project was completed in late August. A ribbon-cutting ceremony is scheduled for Saturday, October 7, at 10:00 AM. The Dordelman family, who provided the generous restoration donation, will be in attendance.

McGuane Park Updates

Field Renovation Project

With approvals from the Board of Selectmen and the RTM, the Town has accepted the generous gift of up to \$200,000 from Darien Little League to restore the three athletic fields at McGuane Park. The bidding process will begin soon with the goal of completing the project before the spring of 2024.

Cement Patio and Foundation

The cement patio and foundation restoration project outside of the snack bar began on September 11th. Trees and roots that lifted the cement patio were removed in preparation for a new concrete patio to be poured. During the project, the bathrooms will be closed off, but a portable toilet will be on site. The project is expected to last 3 to 4 weeks, depending on the weather.

Playground

A new playground opened to the public in July. The Inclusive Whirl, which is the final piece of equipment to arrive, is due to be installed shortly. Thank you to The Lion's Club for generously donating and installing the beautiful fence around the park that provides increased safety for

POLICE CRIME TIP

The Darien Police Department has seen a rise in complaints of Sextortion. Sextortion is a form of child sexual exploitation where children are threatened, or blackmailed by a person who demands additional sexual content, sexual activity, or money from the child. The blackmail or threats are most often with the possibility of sharing with the public nude or sexual images of them. This crime may happen when a young person has shared an image with someone they thought they knew or trusted, but in many cases, they were targeted by an individual they met online who obtained a sexual image from them through deceit, coercion, or some other method. In many cases, the blackmailers may have stolen or taken images of another person and they are communicating through a fake account. The blackmailer may have sent images as well.

The Department of Homeland Security offers these tips to parents to protect kids against Sextortion:

- Be a safe space. Your children may be embarrassed, but you should have an open dialogue with them before they're exposed to sextortion. Let them know you have their backs if something happens in the future.
- Consider limiting your children's internet use or spot-check their phones and other devices. Keep tabs on the people your children are communicating with; this can be part of an open and ongoing conversation about what is (and isn't) appropriate online. It also may be worth considering a rule against devices in bedrooms overnight or shutting off Wi-Fi access after a certain time.
- Review your child's social media privacy settings. Keeping accounts private can prevent predators from gathering their personal information.
- Keep the door open. Let them know they can come to you and ask for help, and that

- helping will always be your top priority.
- These predators are powerful because of fear, and their victims suffer ever more negative consequences as the crime carries on over days, weeks, and months. If you're the adult a child trusts with this information, you should comfort them, help them understand they have been the victim of a crime, and help them report it to law enforcement.

HUMAN SERVICES



Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (SFMNP)

Vouchers for the Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program are still available. The vouchers provide eligible low-income seniors access to locally grown fruits, vegetables, herbs, and honey. Voucher booklets, containing approximately \$30 in credits, are valid through November 30th. Please call the Human Services Department at 203.656.7328, to schedule an appointment to apply for vouchers. Proof of income is required.

The Darien Farmers' Market is held every Wednesday from 10:00 AM – 3:00 PM at the Goodwives Shopping Center parking lot, 25 Old King's Highway North.

Medicare Enrollment and Counseling

Medicare Open Enrollment runs from October 15th through December 7th. During this time, residents can evaluate their current plan, review other plan options for cost savings, and make changes. Residents who have previously reviewed their coverage with Medicare CHOICES counselors, Ali Ramsteck or Cynthia Hall, can schedule an appointment by calling Human Services at (203) 656-7328. If you are new to Choices Counseling, you may make an appointment with Oliver Smith, an experienced Medicare CHOICES Counselor with Southwestern CT Area Agency on Aging, who will provide Tuesday office hours at the Mather Center by appointment through December 5th. To schedule an appointment with Oliver please call 203 656-7490.

American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (AFSP) Out of the Darkness Walk

On Saturday, October 22nd, The American Foundation for Suicide Prevention will host the Fairfield County *Out of the Darkness Walk* at Sherwood Island Park in Westport. Last year there was a tremendous turnout of Darien residents, and we hope to continue that tradition for this important cause. Please register through the [Fairfield County Out of the Darkness](#) website.

Sign up here to receive the newsletter



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