



TOWN OF DARIEN NEWSLETTER

August 18, 2023 - Issue 40

MESSAGE FROM MONICA

Dear Darienites,

As summer vacations draw to a close, I hope you've had a chance to relax and enjoy time with family and friends. Our students will be back to school on August 30th and I want to wish all of our returning students, and our first-time students, a very happy start to the new academic year. As students will be waiting at bus stops, walking, or bike riding to school, I hope drivers will use extra caution traveling around town.



Over the summer, our two Town volunteer school building committees, the Ox Ridge Elementary School Building Committee, and the Hindley, Holmes, and Royle Building Committee have been hard at work. Their dedication to enhancing the learning spaces for our students is greatly appreciated. Special acknowledgment goes to the Hindley, Holmes, and Royle Building Committee for the careful and thoughtful decision to delay construction until next spring. This proactive measure ensures the best outcomes for the students and control over project costs. Thank you to both committees for their commitment and dedication to these projects.

Connecticut Sales Tax-Free Week runs from Sunday, August 20, 2023, through Saturday, August 26, 2023. During this time period, clothing and footwear costing less than \$100 is tax exempt. This makes it the perfect time to shop locally for your end-of-summer and fall clothing needs.

Please continue to keep in contact with me with your thoughts, questions, and concerns.

Happy Summer,

Monica

DATES & INFORMATION

UPCOMING MEETINGS

BOARD OF SELECTMEN

8.21.23 7:00 PM

GREAT ISLAND COMMISSION

8.23.23 6:30 PM

DARIEN POLICE COMMISSION

8.24.23 4:00 PM

Special Meeting

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

COMMUNITY NEWS

Darien End of Summer Luau

The Parks and Recreation Department is hosting an end-of-summer luau at Weed Beach on August 25th. This fun event will include DJ Entertainment, games, and contests including best-dressed individual, best-dressed group, limbo, and more. To purchase tickets and for more information go to the Parks and Recreation [events page](#) of the Town website.

view the Darien Community Calendar available through the Darien Chamber of Commerce.



Follow on Social Media
@TownOfDarienCT
#TownOfDarienCT

RESIDENT REMINDERS, NEWS, & TIPS

Parks and Recreation Program Registration

Registration for all Parks and Recreation fall & winter program offerings will begin on Wednesday, August 23rd at 10:00 AM. Darien residents are given priority. Visit the [Parks and Recreation page](#) to register. Advanced Seasonal Paddle Tennis Court Reservations will be opening up at the end of August. Residents will receive details by email and should monitor the [website](#) and social media for updates.

New Signs in Town

Darien has two new WELCOME TO DARIEN signs! The first sign is installed on the Stamford Town line, on the Post Road, near Giovanni's. The second is on the Post Road as you enter Darien from Norwalk. The Department of Public Works will be replacing multiple older metal parking lot signs in late August and early September.



Old Kings Highway South Repair Work

Old Kings Highway South will be closed to through traffic from Tuesday, August 15, 2023, through Sunday, August 27, 2023, for construction on the bridge over Stony Brook River. Detour signs will be in place directing motorists to use Post Road to avoid the construction zone, but all residences will remain accessible throughout the construction period. Thank you for your patience while this repair work is being completed. Updates will be shared via social media.



The aerial view photo above shows the location of the bridge closure (red). The yellow lines indicate the streets within the detoured area and shows the ingress and egress routes (Glen Gorham Lane, McCrea Lane, and portions of Old Kings Highway South).

Noroton Heights Train Station Sidewalk

To ensure the safety of pedestrians by the Noroton Heights Train Station, the Department of Public Works has submitted a proposal to the State of Connecticut for a contiguous sidewalk along Heights Road, leading from Noroton Avenue to Hollow Tree Ridge Road.

Human Services Back-to-School Program

The Darien Human Services Department is still accepting donations of gift cards for the program. Gift cards from Target and grocery stores are preferred - children are in need of food and basic clothing items. Gift cards may be delivered to the Human Services Department in Town Hall, room 109, Monday through Thursday between 8:00 AM and 5:15 PM.

The back-to-school gift card distribution runs through August 24th. Cards can be picked up at the Human Services Department in Town Hall, Room 109, Monday through Thursday, 8:00 AM to 5:15 PM. The back-to-school program provides gift cards for school supplies for students in grades K-12 whose families receive any of the following: Darien Human Services Programs; free or reduced lunch program; Parks & Recreation or Darien Youth Commission camp scholarships; SNAP; Husky Healthcare, or services from Person-to-Person. Complete details and program requirements are available on the [Human Services](#) page of the Town website or call 203-656-7328.

State of Connecticut Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan

The State of Connecticut is looking for feedback on its hazard mitigation plan which is currently being updated. The Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan is meant to guide the actions that the State will take to reduce risk from disasters over the next five years and beyond. As the plan update is developed, community input is critical. The responses and comments will inform the 2023 update. Residents can help identify hazard areas, share their experiences, and provide input on what they want Connecticut to prioritize by taking the

survey here: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/CT-HMP-2023>. The survey will take approximately 5 minutes to complete.

Noise Abatement Survey

The WestCOG New Canaan Branch Noise Abatement Survey is active until August 31st. The more feedback received from the public, the better the results of the survey and hopefully, the more effective the solutions. Darien residents are strongly encouraged to provide their input. The [survey](#) is available on the Westcog.org website.

Proposed Parking Regulation Changes

On September 5th at 8:00 PM during the regularly scheduled Board of Selectmen meeting, a Public Hearing will be held to receive public comment regarding proposed fee increases and parking lot regulation changes at train station parking lots in town.

Proposed rate increases include:

- Daily rate increase from \$4.00 to \$5.00. The daily rate will include tax
- Monthly rate from \$400 including tax, to \$450 plus tax
- Merchant fee from \$100 including tax, to \$125 plus tax

An informal rate study showed that Darien train station parking rates are significantly lower than neighboring towns, both on the New Haven mainline and auxiliary lines. Parking rates in Darien have not increased since 2018, largely due to the pandemic. The current fees are no longer keeping up with the cost of maintaining the parking lots. Additionally, in anticipation of Darien's future partnership with the State to rebuild the Noroton Heights Station house and pedestrian overpass, the Town needs to look towards building funds to support the debt service. Darien's estimated share of the project cost is \$7 million.

Proposed regulation changes include:

- Changing the language on where holders of residential permits for the Tilley lot can park. Currently, residents are allowed to park in the lower and mid-level lots all day. Unfortunately, this results in customers of the businesses, who share the same lots, having difficulty finding convenient parking during business hours. The proposed language would limit permit holders to mid-level and upper lot parking from 8:00 AM to 8:00 PM, Monday through Friday. Access to lower lot parking for permit holders would be overnight and weekends only.
- Changing the starting time at which daily pay parkers may park in the permit lots from 8:00 AM to 9:00 AM. The last peak train leaves Noroton Heights at 8:57 AM. Allowing daily pay parkers in the permit lots at 9:00 AM should still give permit holders that commute daily sufficient preference for those spaces.
- Permit holders can expect to see new fees reflected in their October renewal letters if the rate increases and regulation changes are approved by the Board of Selectmen during the September 5th meeting.

MATHER CENTER

The Mather Center will be closed from August 21st through August 25th for maintenance, cleaning, and repairs. Since the space cannot be enjoyed physically during this brief closing, residents may enjoy watching a 16-minute video walking tour of the Center produced by Darien TV79. The [video](#) includes a wonderful introduction to the Center and its many offerings. The tour was filmed, edited, and produced by Brianna Quesada, one of TV79's NCC students who is now moving on to Quinnipiac for further studies.

Continuing Education Is Back at Darien Senior Programs!

August 30:	Chess Club **new**
September 6:	Advanced Watercolor & Acrylic with Nobu Miki
September 7:	Beginner French with Hendrik Vriesen **new**
September 11:	Beginner Acrylic with Joseph Fama

(prepayment & registration required)

September 12: Chair Yoga with Mary Ann Freeman

September 15: Advanced Spanish with Luz Rincon

September 19: Mixed Level Watercolor with Elizabeth Linehan

To register for these classes and other programs, call 203.656.7490

FLOODING

Grove Street & Tilley Pond Area Drainage Study Public Meeting

The Public Meeting originally scheduled for July 25th has been rescheduled for Monday, September 11th at 7:00 PM. This informational meeting will address the recently completed drainage study of the Grove Street and Tilley Pond area, focusing on recent flooding between Tilley Pond and the Goodwives River. The results of the Grove Street and Tilley Pond drainage study will be explained in detail, and will include all, or some, portion of the following roads: Lakeside Drive; West Avenue (near Tilley Pond); Leroy Avenue; Squab Lane; Grove Street; Day Street; Brook Street; Gideon Lane; Post Road (between Corbin Drive & Center Street); Corbin Drive; Center Street; and, Old Kings Highway South.

A portion of the meeting will be devoted to questions and answers specifically related to this drainage study. Other drainage studies in progress in Darien will not be discussed during this meeting. The drainage study document can be found on the [Public Works](#) page of the Town of Darien website, under Stormwater Information & Guidelines (on the left) and then [Grove Street & Tilley Pond Area Drainage Evaluation Report](#).

The meeting will take place at the Town of Darien Town Hall auditorium, easily accessible from the front circle parking area. Additional parking is available in the lower front parking lot and TV79 will video tape the program for residents that are unable to attend to view after the meeting.

HUMAN SERVICES



Renters Rebate

The Renters Rebate application deadline is September 7, 2023. Please call the Human Services Department at 203.656.7328 with questions or to make an appointment. The Department is open Monday through Thursday from 8:00 AM to 5:15 PM.

State law provides a reimbursement program for Connecticut renters who are elderly or totally disabled, and whose incomes do not exceed certain limits. Persons renting an apartment or room or living in cooperative housing, or a mobile home may be eligible for this program. Renters' rebates can be up to \$900 for married couples and \$700 for single persons. The rebate amount is based on a graduated income scale, and the amount of rent and utility payments (excluding telephone) made in the calendar year prior to the year in which the renter applies.

Eligibility requirements are:

1. Must be 65 years of age as of December 31, 2022, or disabled and collecting Social Security Disability payments.
2. One year or more residency in Connecticut.
3. Income must not exceed \$40,300 for a single person or \$49,100 for a married couple.
4. Disabled persons under age 65 must show proof of Social Security disability.
5. If you filed a 2022 income tax return, a copy is required.
6. Proof of income must include:
 - Social Security (Form 1099)
 - Pensions
 - Interest on bank accounts
 - Dividends
 - Wages

Proof of rent and utilities for all 12 months, or the months you were renting in 2022 is required. A printout from the utility company, receipt of rent payment from your landlord, and canceled checks are all acceptable.

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. The voucher is a booklet containing approximately \$30 in credits, which can be redeemed at any local farmers' market. 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. Vouchers are valid through November 30th. Eligible seniors, age 60 or older, must be Darien residents and have a maximum household income of no more than \$2,248/month for singles and \$3,041/month for couples (185% of the federal poverty level). Please call the Human Services Department at 203.656.7328, to schedule an appointment to get your voucher. Proof of income is required.

HEALTH DEPARTMENT

The State of Connecticut Mosquito Management Program is monitoring mosquitoes for the presence of viruses that can cause illness in people including West Nile virus (WNV), Eastern equine encephalitis virus (EEE) and ZIKA. The mosquito trapping and testing program, coordinated by the Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station (CAES), began in June and continues through October.

The CAES maintains a network of mosquito-trapping stations in municipalities throughout the state with two traps located in Darien. Mosquito trapping is conducted at each site every ten days on a rotating basis. Mosquitoes are grouped (pooled) for testing according to species, collection site, and date. Test results are available approximately one week after mosquito collection and positive results are reported to local health departments by the State Department of Public Health (DPH).

The Connecticut Department of Public Health (DPH) reported that mosquitoes positive for WNV have now been found in Darien. Finding mosquitoes positive for WNV commonly occurs each year at this time, not only in Darien but in many locations throughout the State. It is important to note that no cases of West Nile Disease have been diagnosed in Connecticut residents thus far this year.

To reduce the chance of being bitten when outside, wear protective clothing such as long sleeves, long pants, and head cover. Light-colored, loose-fitting clothing is preferable because dark clothing radiates more heat and attracts more mosquitoes. Insect repellents containing DEET, picaridin, IR3535 or oil of lemon eucalyptus can be used by most people and are often effective for varying lengths of time. Permethrin, a synthetic pyrethroid that is widely available for repelling and killing ticks, also repels and kills mosquitoes. It is applied to clothing and provides longer-lasting protection. Do not apply permethrin products directly to the skin. Although not marketed as repellents, there are several cosmetic liquids and creams that claim some level of mosquito repellency. These products may effectively repel when mosquito pressure is light, but need to be reapplied frequently. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) provides further information on the use and effective use of repellants. Minimizing the time spent outside at dusk and dawn will reduce

the potential exposure to mosquito bites.

To help manage the mosquitoes around the home eliminate standing water where mosquitoes can lay eggs. Mosquitoes prefer to rest in shady, calm areas and avoid open, sunny, breezy areas. Mowing tall grass will reduce places where mosquitoes can rest. Mosquitoes are most active around dawn and dusk although some, such as the common saltmarsh mosquito, may be active throughout the day or may be more active during cloudy, humid weather. Simply avoiding outdoor activity during these peak mosquito times can minimize contact with mosquitoes.

For more information, please view the following websites: Centers for Disease Control (<https://www.cdc.gov>) Connecticut Department of Public Health (<https://portal.ct.gov/dph>) Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station (<https://portal.ct.gov/caes>) <https://portal.ct.gov/mosquito>

POLICE INFORMATION & CRIME TIP



Safety Tips While on Vacation

Pack the least amount possible, and be sure your luggage stays under your control (or that of authorized personnel) at all times.

Carry only the credit cards and ATM cards you absolutely need. Do not carry large amounts of money.

Make sure your home is secure—all deadbolts locked, lights left on timers, and deliveries cancelled or collected by a trusted neighbor who has your travel schedule.

Make sure everyone in your party (adults, teens, and children) has the name, address, and phone number of the place you are staying and that they carry the information at all times.

Never leave your room/house key out somewhere where a stranger would be able to pick it up, such as at a restaurant or pool.

Do not leave rooms unlocked in your lodgings. Insist that everyone carries his or her keys when outside the room/house.

When traveling, always take your car keys or FOB, and lock your vehicle at all times, especially at gas stations, rest areas, or other public facilities.

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