

Spring 2021 Newsletter



Virtual GFA Annual Meeting Notice

Please join the Board of Directors at our **Annual Meeting**, which will take place on Monday, May 3rd 7:00PM on Zoom. Please RSVP by sending an email to greensfarmsassociation@gmail.com and you'll get a link to the meeting. **Our guest panel will be the Chair of the Planning and Zoning Commission, Danielle Dobin, State Representative Johnathan Steinberg, and State Senator Tony Hwang to discuss that latest developments with affordable housing legislation.**

CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS! We have room on the Board for interested neighbors who want to help preserve this great neighborhood. Please contact me at art@greensfarms.org.

Recapping 2020 and a look into 2021

The COVID-19 pandemic has continued to stress us all despite the early signs of re-opening of schools, businesses and our government offices. Our local assets of Burying Hill Beach and Sherwood Island State Park have continued to provide a place to escape to the outdoors. We thank all our essential, healthcare, and public safety workers keeping us safe and supplied with what we need.

Affordable housing takes front and center in a year of social justice initiatives. While locally Westport has continued to be under the 8-30g moratorium there has still been an enormous amount of activity locally and at the State level. The affordable housing Planning and Zoning sub-committee has moved forward with recommendations for **Affordable Dwelling Units** along with lifting the cap on **multiple family housing** development. P&Z chair Danielle Dobin has attended some of our Board meetings to keep us up to date. Local development projects replacing the former location of **Rogers Septic** along with a repurposing of the site of **Men's Warehouse** are adding some affordable units per our local regulations.

State affordable housing legislation is a critical concern of the Board. Hard to summarize here, but the push is largely to drive State level control superseding local zoning regulations in order to dramatically expand multi-family housing. Yet the various bills in play do not tie this expansion to affordability which would create an even worse situation in more expensive towns like Westport.

In line with using local innovation and creativity to increase affordable housing the Board endorsed a project on **Connecticut Department of Transportation** land bordered by West Parish and Hillandale Road. Local neighbors were in support and efforts by First Selectman **Jim Marpe** and P&Z Chair **Danielle Dobin** to lobby the State to turn over a portion of this property have made progress. This project should add a significant amount of affordable housing.

We continue to work with the town on the issue of **traffic on Greens Farms Road plus Morningside South** in front of Greens Farms elementary school. The pandemic has greatly reduced traffic volumes, yet continued diligence is needed here.

The work to replace the **Beachside Avenue bridge over I-95** is in full swing at this time. We will monitor progress and the impact on our area.

It appears that development of individual homes on the **Kowalsky property** is moving forward as evidenced by recent filings with the Conservation Commission. We will monitor those plans for adherence to conservation, environmental and zoning regulations.

The owner of **Post Plaza** had been submitting plans to revamp the property in preparation for a new, un-named tenant after the departure of Barnes and Noble. Traffic, noise, lighting, and buffers are all concerns the Board has been in support of local neighbors in dialog with the owner. At this time the owner has pulled their application so the future is unclear.

Finally the ongoing saga about the repair or replacement of the **Cribari Bridge** continues. The Association continues to lobby for repair of the existing structure, both for its historical value and the traffic limiting role it plays because of its smaller size.

Annual Membership

Please consider sending your annual membership fee of \$35 to Green's Farms Association, PO Box 10, Green's Farms, CT 06838. A strong membership allows the Association to better lobby on your behalf. You can also pay with PayPal at our web site, www.greensfarms.org.

Art Schoeller
President – Green's Farms Association