



BARRE TOWN MUNICIPAL NEWSLETTER

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February 2017
www.barretown.org

P.O. Box 116
149 Websterville, VT 05678
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Sledding Party
Sunday, February 12
1:00 pm—3:00 pm
Behind Town Offices
Hot cocoa & marshmallows

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POLICE CHIEF STEVENS TO RETIRE AFTER 26 YEARS

Barre Town Chief of Police Michael Stevens and the town Selectboard have announced Chief Stevens' plans to retire June 30, 2017. Stevens has served as Barre Town's Chief of Police since September, 1990. With more than 26 years as police chief, Stevens has led the department for more than half the years Barre Town has operated a police department. He has served the town more than 30 years, having been hired as a patrol officer in August, 1986.



Selectboard chairman Tom White, who served on several budget committees before being elected to the Selectboard, praised Stevens for his vision and practicality. White said he has been impressed with the police department's equipment with a budget that is consistent year after year. He mentioned the department's use of body cameras for several years while other communities were still discussing providing the cameras.

Town Manager Carl Rogers has valued the Chief's service, including as a member of the town's management team, saying "Mike Stevens thinks first about the Town's needs and its best interest, not his own interest or the department's."

Seven full-time officers report to Chief Stevens. On the occasion of his retirement, they had this to say: "We at the police department want to wish Chief Stevens well in the next stage of his life. Serving as police chief for 26 years is no small feat. Thank you for your leadership and guidance and for providing a fun and rewarding place to work." Sergeant Dodge, who has worked with Chief Stevens for 20 years, added, "I would like to thank Chief Stevens for providing me the opportunity to grow as a supervisor, and learn the administrative and leadership side of policing."

Chief Stevens has served in several other capacities as well. He represents Vermont law enforcement on the State Emergency Response Commission, and is currently chair of the Local Emergency Planning Committee for Washington County. In the past he served as President of Barre Kiwanis Club, and was a Director on the Board of Washington County Youth Service Bureau for 20 years. He is a member of the American Legion.

The next Chief will have some big shoes to fill. In January, the Selectboard began discussions, consultations, and planning for recruiting and selecting the next chief. Stevens will assist with the recruitment and selection, as needed. The goal is to hire the next chief before July 1 to facilitate a smooth transition.

By Elaine Wang, Assistant Town Manager

UPCOMING DATES & EVENTS

- 2/12 - Sledding Party
- 2/15 - Property Taxes, Sewer Fee Due
- 2/18 - Town Budget Tour
- 3/07 - Town Meeting
- 3/11 - Rabies Clinic
- 3/13 - Town Caucus
- 3/22 - Beekeeping Workshop
- 4/01 - Dog License(s) Due
- 4/01 - Winter Parking Ban Ends
- 4/05 - Composting Workshop
- 4/15 — Homestead Declaration

SEASONAL EMPLOYMENT

Would you like to enjoy the outdoors and make money at the same time? Become a seasonal employee at the Town of Barre! We are hiring for five seasonal positions in two departments. The optimal candidates will be able to return for several summer seasons in a row. Pay begins at \$10.75 an hour with possible attendance bonuses.

Department of Public Works: Seasonal DPW employees assist with various tasks to maintain and improve Barre Town's roads and utilities. Required training will be provided. The schedule is M-F 7:00am-3:30pm. Earn a paycheck and still have the afternoon free for summer fun! Application review for four spots will begin on March 20.

Recreation and Cemeteries: Recreation and Cemetery duties include mowing, trimming, and other landscaping tasks as well as painting and light building work. Application review for one spot will begin on March 20.

To apply: The application for these positions can be picked up at the town offices, or downloaded from the town's website at www.barretown.org. Submit your application by the dates above, by email to offices@barretown.org, or by mail to Town of Barre, PO Box 116 Websterville, VT 05678.

By Elaine Wang, Assistant Town Manager

ANNUAL DOG LICENSE(S) ARE DUE



Do you own a dog? Does the dog live in Barre Town? If you answered yes to both questions then by Vermont law (20 VSA Sections 3541-3591, 3801-3813) your pet is required to be **licensed annually** in the

Barre Town.

What do I need to license my pet?

1. Have a current rabies certificate on file with the Town Clerk's Office or provide the office with a copy of the certificate at the time you license.
2. Pay the license fee (\$10.00 for a spayed or neutered animal and \$14.00 for an animal that is not fixed).

3. Remember the deadline to license your dog(s) is April 1, 2017. If your pet is found to be unlicensed after April 1, 2017 you can be fined \$35.00.

If you have a rabies certificate on file with the Town Clerk's Office but it will expire before April 1, 2017, you will receive a postcard reminder to have your dog re-vaccinated and to file the new rabies certificate with the Clerk's Office.

Dog license renewal forms (for dogs with current rabies certificates) for calendar year 2017 will be in the mail by the end of January. Be sure to check the license information carefully, make corrections if necessary, sign, enclose your payment, and return to the Town Clerk's Office in the detachable envelope.

By Donna Kelty, Town Clerk-Treasurer



RABIES CLINIC

The Barre Town Fire Department will be hosting their annual rabies clinic for dogs and cats on March 11, 2017 at the South Barre Fire Station, 528 South Barre Road (Rt. 14).

Shots will be given between the hours of 1:00 pm and 3:00 pm and the cost per animal is \$15.00.

All proceeds benefit the Barre Town Fire Department.

The Barre Town Clerk will be on hand to license dogs that reside in Barre Town; however, dogs and cats from outside Barre Town are welcome as well.

By Chris Violette, Fire Chief

HAZARD MITIGATION PLAN

Staff, with assistance from the CV Regional Planning Commission, continues to work on the all hazards mitigation plan. All hazards means natural and manmade disasters are considered. Flash flooding, severe winter weather and windstorms are identified as the main threats. The plan looks out five years for possible action items, which could include physical (infrastructure) improvements, changes to local plans and regulations, natural systems protection, and public awareness.

A presentation to the Selectboard in early April is being planned. The presentation at a Selectboard meeting gives residents an opportunity to learn about and comment on the plan by attending the meeting, or watching it on CVTV or on the town website.

By Carl Rogers, Town Manager

MARCH TOWN MEETING DAY FAQ

Traditionally, the first Tuesday in March, voters from around the State gather at their respective polling places to make decisions on local issues. This day has become known as “Town Meeting Day.” This year, as is customary for Barre Town, the March election will be for school issues only. Municipal issues will be decided in May.



What's on the School Ballot? Barre Town has two school districts (Barre Town Middle & Elementary School and Spaulding Union High School). However, all questions will be on one ballot. On March 7, 2017, voters will be asked to vote on the standard things such as election of School Directors (one for Spaulding High School and two for the Elementary School), a School District Treasurer, and to approve a stipend payment for these elected officials. Other equally important questions will be the proposed fiscal year 2017-2018 school operating budgets, whether to allow the School board to borrow operating funds, and asking for monies to be put into a capital reserve fund.

Where do we vote? All Barre Town elections are held at the Barre Town Middle & Elementary School gymnasium (70 Websterville Road). Polling hours are 7:00 a.m. – 7:00 p.m. Parking is available in the school lot. Please use the side entrance. If you need assistance getting from the parking lot to the gymnasium, please contact the Town Clerk's office at 479-9391 prior to election day.

Can't make it to the polls? Request an early ballot. To request an early ballot for this or any election, contact the Town Clerk's Office at 479-9391 or dkelty@barretown.org.

When is the deadline to register to vote? I am very glad you asked – as there is none! On January 1st a new law went into effect allowing for same day voter registration.

What does same-day voter registration mean for me? Prior to January 1st, if you were not a registered voter in a town and wanted to vote in an upcoming election, you would have been required by law to submit a completed application to the Town Clerk by a certain date. If you missed that deadline, you could not vote in the election unless a judge issued an order directing the Town Clerk to add you to the voter checklist. The same day voter registration law removes the deadline to register to vote, allowing you to come to the polls on election day, complete the checklist application, and vote!

Another big election change is the creation of an online voter page which is hosted by the Vermont Secretary of State. This online “My Voter Page” gives an individual many options for managing your voter rights. From this webpage, you can register to vote, change your voter registration from one town to another, obtain information on state and federal elections, request and find the status of your early ballot request. To view the online voter page go to <http://olvr.sec.state.vt.us>.

More information on local elections (including the warning and sample ballot once available) can be found on the Barre Town website www.barretown.org.

Let your voice be heard – VOTE!

TOWN CAUCUS MEETING NOTICE

The Barre Town Non-Partisan Caucus meeting will be held on Monday, March 13, 2017 at 6:30 p.m. at the Barre Town Municipal Building.

What is a Non-Partisan Town Caucus? A Town Caucus is a meeting of the members of a political party who get together to select/nominate a candidate for an elected office (Selectboard, Moderator, Town Clerk, etc.). Non-Partisan just means that the political parties hold their meetings together, not separately.

Why does Barre Town hold a Caucus? Many years ago, there were issues in recruiting individuals to run for an elected office. So, to ensure there is at least one candidate for each municipal office, the decision was made to hold a Non-Partisan Town Caucus. While the meeting holds no “official standing” and is not required by law, we continue the tradition today for the same reason.

BARRE TOWN'S ANNUAL MEETING AND ELECTIONS

In accordance with our Town Charter, Barre Town has two (2) municipal elections, an Open Town Meeting and a vote by Australian ballot.

The Open Town Meeting (first Wednesday in May), is a ‘from the floor’ vote. It will be held on May 3, 2017, in the Municipal Building, Selectboard meeting room, and begins at 7:30 p.m. Articles to be voted on will include: setting the property tax and sewer installment due dates; asking for approval to apply the State tax credits pro-rata (i.e. to deduct the credit amount from the total tax amount, and divide the remaining balance into 4 installments); to seek approval for the Selectboard to buy/sell real estate; and to present the Wendell F. Pelkey Citizenship & Service Award. Immediately following the Open Meeting there will be a presentation/overview of the proposed budget.

The second vote is the Election of Officers and Voting by Australian ballot, which will be held on Tuesday, May 9, 2017 at the Barre Town Middle & Elementary School Gymnasium. Polling hours are 7:00 a.m. – 7:00 p.m.

The items appearing on the ballot include: election of Town Officers (Selectboard members, Auditor, Moderator, and Town Constable); voting on budgets (General Fund/Highway Fund); a Cemetery appropriation; some of the elected officer wages; and numerous not-for-profit agency requests.

For local election information visit our homepage at www.barretown.org and look for a link under the Announcements section.

By Donna Kelty, Town Clerk-Treasurer

PROPERTY AND SEWER TAXES DUE FEBRUARY 15TH

NEXT NEWSLETTER ISSUE IN APRIL!

STAFF CHANGES

Retirements: Police Chief Stevens' pending departure (see front page) is not the only big change to the 'veteran' staff roster. Pat Doyle, who was among the first EMTs hired by Barre Town when it started its EMS department 25 years ago, was its longest-serving member when he retired on December 31, 2016. His colleagues valued, and will miss, his work ethic, reliability, and collegiality. During his tenure, he helped many a shift partner transition to Barre Town's large emergency medical service, building their confidence to help patients facing life-threatening crises.

Bill Crowther also retired at the end of 2016, having served as Assistant Town Clerk and Assistant Treasurer for 19 years. Bill furthered the professionalism of the Town Clerk's Office through his membership with the Vermont Municipal Clerk's Association and International Institute of Municipal Clerks. He completed projects for the office that created lasting efficiencies, and played a key staff role for the Flags for Veterans Committee and Cemetery Commission. Bill provided training to Assistant Clerk Deb Lefebvre, who was offered and accepted Bill's position, helping ensure consistent financial management going forward. Recruitment is underway for an Assistant Town Clerk to take Deb's former job.

Additions: On December 12, the Department of Public Works was pleased to welcome a new but experienced crewmate in Todd Newton, of Graniteville. He comes to us from the State of Vermont Military Department and has operated heavy equipment and done construction for over ten years. This winter, Todd is working nights, so he's helping keep our roads clear, enabling the rest of us to get to where we need to go in the morning.

We also have a new police officer keeping us safe. Kyle Laughlin started as a patrolman after Thanksgiving last year. He grew up in Williamstown and worked previously in the Orange County Sheriff's Department. Kyle is working towards qualifying for the police academy and becoming a full-time certified officer. He likes meeting with the public so if you see a tall Barre Town Police Officer you haven't seen before, say hi.

We wish our former colleagues an enjoyable retirement, and give a hearty welcome to our new teammates!

By Elaine Wang, Assistant Town Manager

RECREATION OFFERINGS

Pickleball - The Barre Town Recreation Board is once again helping you beat cabin fever by hosting Indoor Pickleball on Sundays this winter through March 19th. Play is 4:00pm to 6:00pm in the Barre Town School gym. Pickleball veterans and newbies alike are welcome.



The Rec Board is providing three courts and rackets. Wear comfortable clothing and sneakers, and bring a water bottle. No charge to play or learn!

Groomed Trails - Millstone Trails Association (MTA) is again grooming loops in the Town Forest for XC skiing, snowshoeing, and fat biking this winter. The trails feature varied terrain and three different loops when conditions are favorable. To access, park at either Town Forest parking lot at 44 Brook St. or the end of Barclay Road. This year they are also providing more options for low-key snowshoers and XC skiers by grooming the Millstone Hill West bike path (by the Barre Town School), and two small loops in the Barre Town Rec Area. These gentle trails are great for beginners and for anyone who wants to get out but not go 'all out.' Visit the MTA website to find out what the trail conditions are before you head out: www.millstonetrails.com/trail-conditions.

The trails are free to use by the public. However, MTA is run by volunteers, so if you can, please consider making a (tax-deductible) donation to support their grooming and more. To do so, visit their homepage www.millstonetrails.com.

Winter Co-Ed Softball Tournament - It's that time of the year again! The 19th Annual Freezing Fun for Families (FFF) softball tournament, hosted at the Barre Town Rec Area, will be held February 24-26. Registration will be limited to the first 68 paid teams, at the cost of \$300 per team. They often sell out, so don't delay!

Each year, FFF raises over \$20,000 to help Vermont families that have a child facing a serious illness. This year's beneficiaries are Jaelyn Huckins (age 10) of Barre, who is fighting Osteosarcoma, and Carissa Francis (age 3) of Colchester and Fletcher, who is battling a Stage IV Metastatic Wilms Tumor.

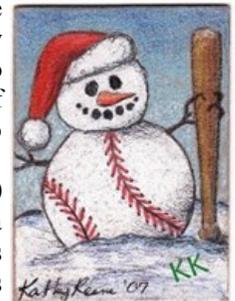
If you're not up for playing winter softball, you can still help: come to watch the games and purchase concessions; buy a \$25 seat to their dinner and silent auction of rare sports, music, and pop culture memorabilia to be held on Saturday February 18 at the Barre Elks Lodge; or join their growing 500 club by giving \$500 or more.

For more information visit their website at www.freezingfunforfamilies.com.

Guided Snowshoeing - We're excited to announce that guided snowshoe tours will be held in the Town Forest this winter on three Saturdays: February 4th 1:00 pm-3:00 pm; February 25th, 6:00 pm-7:30 pm, and March 4th, 1:00 pm-3:00 pm. Bring your own snowshoes and be sure to dress for the weather; bring a flashlight or headlamp to the February 25th evening tour. *But no pets to any tour, please.*

Beekeeping 101 Workshop - Wednesday, March 22, 6:30 pm - 9:00 pm. Interested in having your own beehives in your backyard come spring? Come to this workshop to learn about the components of a beehive, and basic beekeeping. You'll be able to place orders, too. Courtesy of Vermont Beekeeping Supply and Barre Town Recreation Department. Free!

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CONT'D—RECREATION OFFERINGS

Backyard Composting Workshop - Wednesday, April 5, 6:00 pm - 8:00 pm. Are you interested in composting in your backyard as a cheap and environmentally-friendly way to dispose of your food scraps, but have questions or concerns about what to compost, and if there will be odors or attracting animals? Come to this workshop to learn how to compost right to address these concerns, and more. Cassandra Hemenway, the Outreach Manager at the Central Vermont Solid Waste Management District will talk about easy ways to get started composting, provide troubleshooting help to composting veterans who might have a question or two, and provide information about Vermont's Universal Recycling Law, which bans food scraps from the landfill by 2020.

There will be a demo of how to build easy bins out of affordable materials. Workshop participants will go home with a counter-top food scrap collection pail, a booklet to remind you of what you learned, and a handout explaining what goes in- and stays out of- the compost bin. One lucky participant will win a compost bin!

The workshop and items above are free; in addition, ready-made backyard composting equipment will be available at the workshop for purchase at-cost. If you think you will purchase one or more during the workshop, please visit www.barretown.org or call 479-9331 to sign up.

By Elaine Wang, Assistant Town Manager

BUDGET WORK COMMENCES



The last newsletter included a notice that the Selectboard was seeking applications for the Budget Committee. From the applications received, the board appointed Bob Nelson and Norma Malone to the committee. Town Clerk-Treasurer Donna Kelty chose Justin Bolduc for her appointment. Those three filled out the committee by appointing John Hameline and Gerry Parrott. The Budget Committee, charged with the responsibility of establishing the fiscal year (July 1 to June 30) 2017-2018 budgets, is comprised of the Selectboard and these five citizens.

During its two months of service, the Committee will set the amount of the General Fund and Highway Fund budgets, which will then be presented for voter approval. The Committee will determine the amount of the Sewer Fund, Water Fund, Equipment Fund, Ambulance Fund, Cemetery Fund and Building Fund budgets. These budgets, whether set for voter approval or for the year, affect the property tax rate, sewer fee and water rate for FY 17-18. The Committee decides what facility improvements will be accomplished and what services will be offered.

Their work is a big deal. The public is welcome to observe the meetings, held on Tuesday nights from 6:30 pm to 8:00 pm in the municipal building at 149 Websterville Road. The topic of conversation for each meeting is listed on the Selectboard's meeting agenda for that night. These

agendas are posted at Hannaford, Graniteville General Store, Trow Hill Grocery and on the town website (www.barretown.org).

Residents are encouraged to join the Committee on its tour of town facilities and project sites. (See article on this page.)

Very preliminarily, major changes or topics to be included in the proposed FY 17-18 budgets are:

General Fund - 1) debt service reduced \$25,000 (town forest loan); 2) tennis court repairs (\$24,000); 3) liability and property insurances increasing; 4) fire department's self contained breathing apparatus (\$50,000 - \$60,000).

Highway Fund - 1) stormwater regulation fees kick-in (\$2,400); 2) road paving program \$32,100 greater than current year.

Equipment Fund - Significant revenue and expense account changes due to town no longer servicing school's buses.

Ambulance Fund - Staff's new work schedule (supposed to save money) changing many expense accounts.

Sewer Fund - Payments for vacor purchase (\$50,000 - \$60,000).

Water Fund - Continue building 8" water line from Mill Street to East Cobble Hill Road.

Building Fund - Second half of DPW shop roof (\$42,000).

Cemetery Fund - Restoration of Maplewood Cemetery historic fence (\$5,000).

BUDGET TOUR INVITATION

Part of the Budget Committee's process of learning about and evaluating the budget requests is to visit each department's major facilities. The budget tour helps the Committee better understand department operations and budget needs. Transportation for the tour is provided by bus. There are plenty of spare seats on the bus. The public is invited, indeed welcomed, to fully participate in the tour. Citizens' questions and suggestions enhance the value of this education process.



If past practice is followed, the tour will be Saturday, February 18. Participants gather in the municipal building (149 Websterville Road) between 7:30 am - 8:00 am. Morning beverages and snacks are offered to everyone. The tour begins at 8:00 with departments housed in the municipal building. Conversation and questions are encouraged on the ride between stops. The tour finishes between 12:30 - 1:00 pm.

All participants receive a tour booklet, which gives some budget-related history of the town's buildings and describes each department - staffing, operation, recent budgeted projects and acquisitions, and, of course requests for the next fiscal year. Budget facts and figures are listed as are all town facilities (all playgrounds, pump stations, water tanks, bike paths, etc.). The tour also points out projects (road paving, sidewalk construction, utility work).

Department heads (chiefs, directors, superintendents) greet

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CONT'D - BUDGET TOUR INVITATION

participants at their station, garage or office. Departments visited include: ambulance, fire, police, public works (highway, sewer and water), town clerk's office, planning and zoning, and others.

The tour is free. Children accompanied by an adult are welcome (Any high school civics students looking for extra credit?). Registration or sign-up is not necessary.

For more information contact the town manager's office at 479-9331 or crogers@barretown.org. **Hope to see you on the tour!**

By Carl Rogers, Town Manager

PROJECT UPDATES

Websterville Fire District Merger: In November, Barre Town voters approved the merger of the town and the Websterville Fire District Number 3 (WFD#3), which supplies water to 124 accounts, maintains 12 hydrants, and operates a water treatment plant. Voters also approved to levy a special assessment against WFD#3 customers to pay for debt related to major projects not benefiting the entire consolidated system. WFD#3 members still need to vote; that is scheduled for February 22nd, 9am-7pm, at their office at 105 Church Hill Rd. If their members also approve the merger, this constitutes a proposed charter change which must be approved by the Vermont Legislature before going into effect.

South Barre Sidewalk Project: The State has declared the right-of-way clear for this project to construct about 300 feet of new sidewalk on the northeast side of Bridge St. The 85% plans and material specifications have been submitted to the State for approval. We expect to publish the request for construction inspector proposals this month. The project is still on track for construction in 2017. Funds for this project are 80% from the state and 20% from the town.

East Barre Sidewalk Project: This sidewalk is still working through right-of-way. One of the landowners, the Aldrich Public Library, abutting the project has granted their easement required for the project, and furthermore generously waived their right to compensation, in consideration of the benefits they and the village will receive from the sidewalk. Other landowner discussions are still underway. With regards to the grant that the town applied for in October in order to be able to finish the project, announcement letters are being mailed in late January.

There are no updates to the state intersection projects of Rt 14/Sterling Hill/Bridge St., Rt. 110/Mill St./Bianchi St., or Quarry Rd/Rt. 14.

By Elaine Wang, Assistant Town Manager

TOWN PLAN AMENDMENTS

Following the Planning Commission's lead, the Selectboard has held two public hearings regarding proposed amendments to the Town Plan that were discussed in detail in the last edition of this newsletter. The public hearings were held on January 3 & January 17, 2017. The Selectboard may

act (i.e. approve entirely, make minor revisions, or send it back to the Planning Commission) on the proposed amendments at their February 7, 2017 meeting. If and when the Selectboard approves, the Town will ask the Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission for approval of the plan, in compliance with State law.



The amendments include new language in chapter 3, transportation, regarding the use of fossil fuels; language to protect views in chapter 5; and stronger language in chapter 8, energy, that would possibly give the Town more say over where renewable energy projects go in Town. To read the proposed amendments you can navigate to the Planning Commission's page of the Barre Town website (www.barretown.org), or contact the Planning and Zoning Office at 802-479-2595.

By Chris Violette, Planning and Zoning Director

VOLUNTEER VACANCIES

Many citizens contribute to making Barre Town the wonderful community that we enjoy, including by serving on boards and as part-time officers. Currently, we have need of a few more volunteers! Please consider the following opportunities for rewarding service:

Recreation Board: As you may have noticed from this newsletter, the Rec Board organizes all kinds of fun, and helps our community be healthy and connected throughout the year. It meets the first Monday of the month at 6:00 pm, and members usually spend a few additional hours a month supporting events. The Rec Board needs to fill one vacancy. If you are interested, submit your name by February 10 to the Town Manager's Office at offices@barretown.org or by calling 479-9331. For more information, contact the Town Manager's Office.

Deputy Health Officer (DHO): The DHO handles cases involving Vermont's rental housing code, dog bites, and disposal or storage of trash when the Health Officer is not available. The work of these public health officials varies on a call-by-call basis. Typically, there are fewer than 10 calls per year, of which about half require follow-up and written reports. Training is available and the VT Department of Health provides a very useful handbook. The DHO receives a \$400 annual stipend. If you are interested, please submit a letter of interest to the Selectboard, PO Box 116, Websterville, VT 05678. A short resume would be helpful. Appointments are made official by VT Department of Health. For more information, visit their website at www.healthvermont.gov/environment/town-health-officer.

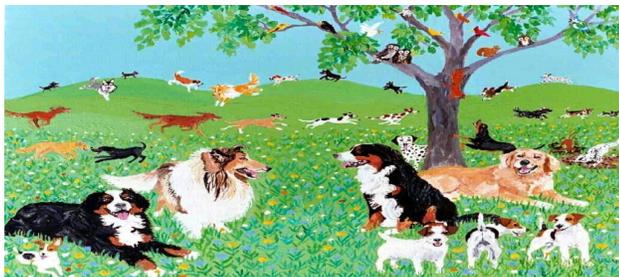
Phoenix House Community Relations Working Group: Phoenix House is a national nonprofit that provides individualized drug and alcohol addiction treatment. Its South Barre facility on Route 14 needs a South Barre resident to

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CONT'D - VACANCIES

volunteer on its Community Relations Working Group, which meets quarterly for 1.5 hours. The volunteer's role is to represent the concerns of South Barre residents. If you are a South Barre resident interested in serving, send a letter to the Selectboard at the Town Office address, PO Box 116, Websterville VT 05678. For more information, contact the Town Manager's Office at 479-9331.

By Elaine Wang, Assistant Town Manager



DOG PARK IN OUR FUTURE?

The town Recreation Board has had at least three discussions about making a dog park. After one of those discussions, dog park users who met with the Recreation Board conducted a survey on Front Porch Forum. The Board hasn't chosen a course of action yet, but there could be a public meeting and another survey to come.

A well-designed dog park would have a small dog area separated from the main section. The enclosures would be double-gated to prevent escapes. The park would offer water (during warmer months) and be easily accessible.

Recreation Board members heard some community members wished to have a well-designed park in the Barre area. The Board invited dog park users to a meeting (December 5). The users noted dogs are better behaved if exercised regularly. Not everyone, however, is able to walk their dogs on the road, a bike path or in the town forest. A dog park provides an option for turning a dog loose to run and to play without fear it will run off or be a nuisance on neighbors' property. Dog parks also are a gathering place where people meet and talk.

The dog park supporters said they'd help with fundraising, construction and maintenance. If and when a decision is made that there should be a dog park and where it will be, site work would include creating a water service and installing fencing with proper gates.

First, however, the Recreation Board has to decide if there should be a dog park, and, if there should be, where it would be sited. The Board has considered several town properties, including an area in the main park and at the East Barre Park. The Board knows it has heard only from supporters and users of dog parks and needs to hear from all town residents. A meeting may be called to collect public input. Another survey, possibly at a town election, may be conducted. Watch the Recreation Board meeting minutes and check the town website announcements for news.

By Carl Rogers, Town Manager

HOMESTEAD DECLARATION FORM

Every Vermont homeowner must file the Homestead Declaration Form (HS-122) every year, regardless of whether a state income tax return is filed. If you don't, you'll pay higher taxes than you need to - \$1,000 more on average in Barre Town! And the lower your income, the more money you can save on your tax bill, by also filing the Property Tax Adjustment Form (HI-144).

The deadline to file the HS-122 with the VT Department of Taxes is April 15, 2017 for the home you occupy as of April 1, 2017. However, you can file the HS-122 as early as January 15, and it is in your interest to file it early – that way, your property tax bills in the coming year are correct from the very first and no adjustments will need to be made afterwards. For the same reason, file the HS-122 early even if you intend to ask for an extension on filing your income tax return.

Often, elderly residents who live in their home and do not need to file a state income tax return are not filing their Homestead Declaration Form, paying way more in property taxes than they should be. Check with your elders – family and friends – to make sure they are submitting their HS-122.

The HS-122 form should be available online in February from tax.vermont.gov. If you have trouble finding it, or don't have a computer, contact the Barre Town Assessor's office; stop by, or call 479-2595 to have one mailed to you. The library, Barre Area Senior Center, and Project Independence can also help you access the form.

If you miss the April 15 deadline, file the HS-122 anyway. If you do not file the form at all, you will be charged the higher, non-residential, tax rate (this year, the rate is .3105 higher per \$100 of assessed value) for the state education tax part of your tax bill throughout the year. (Note that a late filing of the *HI-144* will *not* result in further savings to your *property* tax bill, though your *income* taxes will still be adjusted.)

If you have any questions, Joyce in the Assessor's office is happy to help – drop by, or contact her at 479-2595 or jbeaudin@barretown.org.

By Elaine Wang, Assistant Town Manager



TOWN FOREST LOGGING

The 2016 town forest logging contract was suspended last winter due to lack of snow and soft ground. Logger George deNagy resumed logging in January, 2017. This winter deNagy is harvesting timber on 42 acres in the northeast corner of the main block of the town forest, the area near the Littlejohn Road - Donahue Road intersection.

Forest users may want to avoid the Heifer Pasture, Littlejohn, Rambler and Scrambler trails located in this quadrant. The VAST trail is open to traffic.

Logging, under supervision of consulting forester Jeff Smith, is to be done by April 1, 2017.

By Carl Rogers, Town Manager

Development Review Board – *By Chris Violette, Planning & Zoning Admin. (M. Nicholson, M. Reaves, C. Sanborn, C. Thygesen, S. Driscoll, G. Richards, J. Valsangiacomo, J. Fecteau, J. Hameline)*

November 2016: Approved 2 lot sub, City of Barre, South Barre; approved 2 lot sub SJL Lockerby, 30 Richardson Road; approved 2 ft. right-of-way and 2 ft. yard variance, R. Datema, 2 McHugh Road.

December 2016: Approved boundary line adjustment, SJL Lockerby & T. Coulter, Overland Ave.; approved sign variance 3'x5', Barre Town Recreation Board, Brook Street.

January 2016: Approved boundary line adjustment, T. & S. Estes, 10 Terry Court.

Planning Commission – *By Chris Violette, Planning & Zoning Admin. (C. Sanborn, C. Thygesen, C. Violette, C. Duke, J. Hameline, G. Clain, D. Pierce)*

November 2016: No meeting.

December 2016: Discussion on Act 174 in relation to the new law that requires Town Plans to be compliant and to receive substantial deference before the Public Service Board; discussed seeking enhanced energy planning help for the Central VT Regional Planning Commission.

January 2017: No meeting.

Traffic Safety Advisory Committee - *By Harry Hinrichsen, Town Eng. (C. Liese, D. Newall, J. Blow, W. Kirby, V. Valerland)*

November 2016: Improve signage for weight limits to restrict trucks by posting south end of Miller Road Ext. to 24,000 lbs.; discussed center line and sideline striping on Miller Road Ext.; reviewed paving and road widening project on Graniteville Road; reviewed school zone signs for Montessori School on Farwell Street; scheduled Public Hearing for 1/25/17; scheduled workshop for 12/28/26.

December 2016: Reviewed draft policy for line striping Class 2 & 3 roads; reviewed list of Class 2 & 3 roads and status of striping on each.
