



# WINDSOR

NOW and THEN

**DEADLINE for MARCH issue:**  
Thursday,  
February 24  
Send news to:  
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(mark subject line:  
WN&T)

## Windsor, Massachusetts

Volume XXXVIII, No. 2

[www.friendsofwindSOR.com](http://www.friendsofwindSOR.com)

FEBRUARY 2022

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### Windsor Now & Then Guidelines

This paper is a publication of Friends of Windsor, Inc., a nonprofit public organization dedicated to fostering communication and supporting town organizations, welcomes submissions from community groups and members supporting these goals.

This is a non-sectarian publication and not a forum for promoting any particular religious or political position. The articles included do not necessarily reflect the views of FOW. We reserve the right to edit and deny publication on the basis of length or content.

To enable us to accommodate as much information as possible, we request that basic news items be limited to about **150 words**. For submission of longer feature articles related to appreciation of Windsor's unique assets (natural setting, people, and community), email [fowindsor@gmail.com](mailto:fowindsor@gmail.com).

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### From Patty Crane, FOW President



The snow's coming down in earnest now, and the wind is howling. We're at the start of what's predicted to be a historic blizzard. Tim and I are hunkered down in Boston, in the storm's sweet spot, where we've been spending most of our time over the past six months. We're in the midst of another kind of storm: a serious family health issue, the kind that reminds us how precious life is and how to focus on what really matters. Family, friends, community — being there for and taking care of each other. We have so much to be thankful for, especially the support and well-wishes from so many of you, our Windsor neighbors and friends. Your messages, cards, texts and calls carry us through.

We all have our own challenges and individual stories and, in this particular community, those stories overlap through time to tell a collective story about who Windsor is. I recently looked back at the 2020-21 issues of this newsletter and was reminded of the many ways we've been carrying each other through the evolving challenges of this pandemic, helping each other stay connected, safe, cared-for, remembered, informed.

In a hilltown community such as ours, with no main street or central gathering place, it's not easy to connect names with faces and faces with stories (especially during a pandemic!), but stories are what bring and keep us together. This is why, in 2022, one of Friends of Windsor's goals is to bring you more stories about the people and places in our community, present and past. We hope to showcase more voices, sharing, among other things, library book news and reviews, nature sightings, profiles of local artists, musicians, our younger folks, new neighbors, and even Windsor's pets. That's just for starters. Our hope is to build momentum and excitement, enticing more and more of you to share a story, a photo, a quip.

We'll be telling you about other projects as they evolve. Meanwhile, a heartfelt thanks to all of you who help this community to be its best. And, as always, we are especially grateful for our donors, whose generosity allows us to do what we do.

I'd love to be home watching the snow whip across our fields and pile up in its predictable drifts, but it's just as beautiful here in the city, maybe—all things considered—even more so.

Wishing you all much joy and good health!

*Patty*

SEND US YOUR STORIES! — Do you have a story to tell? Expertise to share? A new project or business to promote? Get in touch with your submission, or to ask for our help pulling your story together. Contact Susan Phillips at [susanphillips@fastmail.fm](mailto:susanphillips@fastmail.fm).

## From the Green Committee

With municipal aggregation on the distant horizon (at least 18 months away), those of you who have contracts with third-party suppliers may want to consider your contract agreement, since there could be a fee if you want to end the contract prior to its termination date. If you have a third-party supplier, you won't be notified when the aggregation plan is put into place. That notification will hopefully allow customers to opt for a different mix of renewable/non-renewable energy content in electricity supply, and to "opt out" of the plan altogether. (A solar array at your home or your participation in a community solar plan does not constitute a third-party supplier.)

You may want to compare your third-party supplier to the municipal aggregation terms, however, that information won't be available until after we are given the go-ahead by the state to negotiate a plan. There is no guarantee that the aggregation rate will be lower than the Eversource "Basic Service" rate, although customers in municipal aggregation offered by other towns and cities have experienced savings. --Holly Higinbotham, [higinbo@hotmail.com](mailto:higinbo@hotmail.com), 413-212-4352

### Energy Tip

Water heaters are the second highest source of energy usage in many homes. Your water heater heats to a set temperature, then maintains that temperature 24/7, continually reheating water to that temperature, whether you use it or not. Setting the temperature a few degrees cooler can save a significant amount of energy.

## Tamarack Hollow Nature & Cultural Center Events

Boreal Spruce-Fir Forest Ecology, Trees and Tracking Snowshoe Programs at Tamarack Hollow, Windsor: Sunday February 20, 10am-12pm. \$20 per person/per program. Snowshoe rentals available for \$5. Registration required by email: [aimee@gaiaroots.com](mailto:aimee@gaiaroots.com)

Notchview Boreal Forest snowshoe (or hike) programs: Saturday February 19 1-3pm; Tuesday February 22 10-12. See [www.thetrustees.org](http://www.thetrustees.org) for details

## REFLECTIONS FROM MAME WHELIHAN HEATHER HILL FARM, SHAW ROAD

**Firsts.** There are many firsts in life, and many are fun to remember. Like the first time I ordered a lobster. A group of us took a girls' trip to Hampton Beach for fun and games, during which we went to a great seafood restaurant. I had never had a lobster in its natural outfit, so I ordered it.

I was sitting and chatting when the waiter brought the lobster and placed it in front of me. I looked down and there was this creature looking up at me with two staring eyes. I flung up my arms and screamed. Said lobster landed face-up in my lap. The waiter left, and so did I. The lobster remained. I love lobster but, "baked-stuffed" is the way to go, not looking up at you, giving you the guilt trip. Matter of fact, scallops are much friendlier. *I never saw the waiter again. I think he quit.*

## Playground Update

We are pleased to share that the Selectboard approved \$60,000 from the ARPA funds towards the construction of our playground. That will enable us to break ground in Spring 2022!

The committee has selected Bears Playgrounds to work with on the design and implementation of the equipment. We are currently in the design phase. If you have children or grandchildren, please download the catalog at [bearsplaygrounds.com/download.html](http://bearsplaygrounds.com/download.html) and let the committee know what equipment your kids really love.

We want this to be a fun place for families to enjoy so input from kids is essential! If you would like to be a part of the project moving forward, we are meeting regularly via Zoom on Wednesdays at 5:30 p.m. All are welcome. Call or text to Barbara Connors at 860.965.6594 to get on the meeting reminder list. --Barbara Connors

## Bird Watching Tip

from Holly Higinbotham

February is a good time to listen to owls who are starting to mate. Listen in the evenings and at night for their calls, the "hoot-hoot-hoot" of Great Horned Owls and the "Who-cooks-for-you?" of Barred Owls. So crack your windows open a bit, and listen to "who's" in your neighborhood

## Windsor Cultural Council News

The following projects have been approved for funding by your local Mass Cultural Council for 2022:

- \* Tamarack Hollow Nature and Cultural Center's 13th annual Berkshire Drum and Dance Fest
- \* Windsor Historical Commission's "Windsor History Day" (in the fall)
- \* Windsor Free Public Library's museum/park passes
- \* Berkshire Wildlife Sanctuary-guided nature walk in Windsor
- \* Plainfield Congregational church - Concerts at 7 (chamber music in August)
- \* Windsor Parks and Recreation-for park playground
- \* Jeanne Johns, portraits of Hilltown folks
- \* Hilltown Families events (published on [www.HilltownFamilies.org](http://www.HilltownFamilies.org))
- \* Jazz and Blues workshop. every other Sunday at the town park
- \* Nuno felting classes at the town hall - ongoing (contact Irene Young on Windsor Facebook page; 743-2484)
- \* Danielle Field, a class in aromatherapy-essential oils for skin care products
- \* Cabaret Theater at the town hall from the "Great American Songbook"
- \* Eugene Uman Convergence Project, a jazz concert in the park
- \* Friday Night Cafe sponsored by Cummington Village Church

More information will be provided as the dates draw closer for each event or project.

The Windsor Cultural Council will be looking for three new members this summer. We'd love to have you join us to help bring these wonderful projects to life. Contact the council at [windsormassculturalcouncil@gmail.com](mailto:windsormassculturalcouncil@gmail.com). More about this in upcoming issues of WN&T. --Val Kohn



!

## From the Finance Committee: FY23 Budget Planning

The Finance Committee is working on the town budget for fiscal year 2023 (July 2022 – June 2023). There are new developments to plan for. But first, an update on FY22 (the one we're in).

We started FY22 in good financial stead, with about \$820,000 in the bank (free cash plus stabilization funds). We had targeted the tax levy to increase about 3%, but the appropriation for tax abatements and exemptions was higher than anticipated, with a 3.9% increase.

\* **The average single-family tax bill increased 1.8%** from \$2,821 to \$2,873, the 9<sup>th</sup> lowest average in the state (of 326 towns reporting) and lower than all neighboring towns except Savoy.

\* **The tax rate increased** from \$13.1 per thousand dollars of valuation to \$13.2 per thousand. Most wages and salaries were budgeted to grow about 2 percent, which was slightly higher than inflation when the budget was compiled.

\* **We have begun paying down** the \$1.35 million borrowed to finance the broadband. The total cost of the buildout was about \$3.2 million, of which the town, through its borrowing and annual budgets, provided about \$1.65 million. We managed to lock in a decent interest rate on the loan (2.75%) and will pay \$172,125 this year in interest and principal.

\* **Inflation was over 7%** in December 2021, eroding the real value of the modest salary increase extended to town employees in FY22. We are not sure to what extent we can offset this impact in FY23, but it will be a major focus of the committee and we will continue monitoring inflation developments as we prepare the budget.

\* **The broadband MLP generated** a \$27,000 operating surplus in FY21 which will become available for use in FY23 (as part of free cash).

\* **We are expecting the first disbursement** from the federal Connect America Fund (CAF) by November 2022, with an amount up to \$360,000 and up to \$85,000 annually thereafter for another 5 years or so (totally about \$880,000). Still uncertain, but the initial disbursement may be available FY23 via a special town meeting. These funds will help offset the budget impact of debt service and other budget support for the buildout, freeing up resources for

other uses. When that happens, we can pursue a combination of a slower growth in the tax levy, a more ambitious capital improvement program, and/or an expansion in town services. --Scott Rogers, Chair, Windsor Finance Committee

## Town Clerk Notes

**Open position:** Snow shoveler for Town Office and Town Hall buildings. Minimum wage. Contact SB.

Nomination papers for Local Election are available from Town Clerk. Due March 30. Offices on the ballot:

### **Select Board**

2-year term: **No candidates to date**

3-year term: Chris Cozzaglio, *unopposed*.

**Moderator:** Mark Efinger (*incumbent*)

**Planning Board:** Doug McNally (*incumbent*)

**Constable:** Kip Buoymaster (*incumbent*)

**Tree Warden:** Mark Hauge (*incumbent*)

**Finance Committee:** Don Hall (*incumbent*) *may run; but has not committed*

**Library Board:** Beth Webb (*incumbent*)

**MLP Broadband Committee:** 1-year; 2-year & 3-year positions: **no candidates to date**

**Budget process** for FY23 is underway (see story at left). Departments should send special requests or anticipated expenses to the Finance Committee.

**Police Officer Position Open:** See job post: [windsormass.com/employment](http://windsormass.com/employment).

**Select Board Meetings** will be VI ZOOM for near future. Link info on town website (agendas; calendar).

Select Board has a new assistant, Liz Lounsbury, who has agreed to assist the SB until June 30, pending an expanded SB assistant job position or the establishment of a Town administrator. The SB number is 413-684-3811 ext 4 or [ELounsbury@windsormass.com](mailto:ELounsbury@windsormass.com).

**ARPA FUNDS.** The Town of Windsor will receive \$258,000 over the next 2 years to fund Town needs made evident by the pandemic. The SB is gathering community input as to how best to apply these funds. Chris Cozzaglio floated a survey and has been meeting with community members. Contact a SB member with suggestions.

**Playground:** The SB has pledged \$60k to the playground fund to facilitate outdoor activities and healthy lifestyle.

**Town Hall:** The SB earmarked up to \$45k to enhance the Green Committee's grant for air source heat pumps. A generator is also being considered.

**Steering Committee,** chaired by Holly Higinbotham, is tasked with developing a long-term plan for Windsor. They are seeking community input on what is important to Windsor and envisioning the town in 5-15 years.

**River Road Culvert on the Savoy Line** was close to being completed but the cold temperatures made it impossible to finish. The road will open as soon as spring temps allow. The Highway department is continuing to sand the Bush detour to Route 116.

**Dog Licenses.** We have a new process, with licenses issued for 3 years. 1-year licenses are available upon request.

Rabies vaccination records, sent by local vets, will be updated monthly and owners will be notified of expirations. Kennel licenses will be issued annually. Registration for puppies required at six months old. Dogs registered in an off-year will receive a 1- or 2-year license.

**COVID at Home Tests** for distribution from the town have been ordered, but shipment is delayed. When received, they can be requested from the Town Clerk, according to Board of Health distribution protocols.

The Postal Service offers a free shipment of 4 COVID tests per residential address: [www.usps.com/covidtest](http://www.usps.com/covidtest)

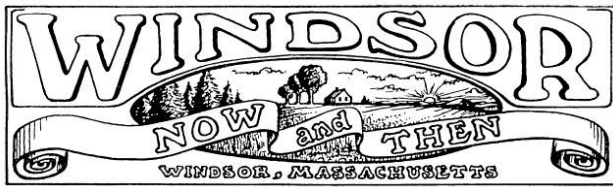
### **Cannabis Application Received**

ZBA received a Special Permit Application from Mountaintop Marijuana Cultivators, LLC, 1335 Savoy Road, Windsor, for a growing establishment. The ZBA held its first data collection hearing January 13 and will meet again January 27. For details, see ZBA website or contact directly.

The SB is working with legal counsel on the Community Host Agreement with Mountain Top. Details can be found on SB minutes, zooming into SB meetings, or by contacting a SB member. The Conservation Commission will be meeting to discuss in early February.

**Don't forget to return your annual census!** --Madeline Scully

FEBRUARY 2022



1890 Route 9, Suite 8

Windsor, MA 01270

### Celebrating Windsor's Pets *by Leslie Reed*

#### Remembering Hector



Photo by  
Tony Gola

With sadness we share the news that Hector, Prem Sangar's loyal companion of 11 years and a fixture in the center of town, died in November.

Hector came into Prem's life during a very tough time following the unexpected loss of her husband, Ashok. Their daughter, Vasundhra, was a college freshman

in Boston and had a dream in which her late father presented her mother with a

dog. She took it as a sign and, on her next visit home, visited a breeder and found a puppy – a mix of German shepherd and black Lab.

When Vasundhra introduced the puppy to her mother, he did not yet have a name. They tried out several names, and one day the puppy responded to Hector. Over time, the name proved to fit perfectly: Hector means "steadfast" and "protector."

Hector greeted everyone who came into Sangar's General Store. He had several friends who loved to borrow him for a walk. He brought joy to the town, and Prem misses him every day.

#### Kids and their Pets

Who: Peter Age: 4 Where: Peru Road



Peter is pictured with his family's 6-year-old dog Zoë, a Rottweiler mix. Although Zoe doesn't play much, Peter loves it when she snuggles with him on the couch and gives him licks.

A recent addition to the family is Book, a one-year-old Lab mix, *pictured below.*



Book loves to play tug of war and to chase a ball that's stuffed with things he can pull out. He's still in the chewing phase and, true to his name, is known to chew a few books. He has also eaten two apple pies!

Peter and Book share the same November birthday.

The family also includes two kitties – Simon (male, 9) and River (female, 10) – who love to sleep.

Do you have a favorite pet you'd like us to highlight? Let us know at [fowindsor@gmail.com](mailto:fowindsor@gmail.com)