

DEADLINE for JUNE issue: Friday, May 29
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Windsor, Massachusetts

Volume XXXVI, No. 5

www.friendsofwindsor.com

MAY 2020

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FOW News

Windsor Stories, Worth the Wait

As we've had a chance to really dig in to the "Sharing our Stories" project, special inserts to Windsor Now & Then highlighting interviews with some of Windsor's long-time and lifetime residents, we've realized that it's going to take us longer than expected to get it done just right. Transcribing, editing, gathering photos and other background for these 18 interviews is a big job, and our inability to meet in person hasn't made it any easier! But we are working away, in a responsibly physically distanced fashion. We'll keep everyone updated.



Helping Neighbors, Creatively

The Covid-19 pandemic is changing our lives in uncounted ways. It's a source of joy to see Windsor rise to the challenge. Our back page story features Connie Wood, who has been turning her creative energy and desire to help into dozens and dozens of washable fabric masks, available free to town residents. Thank you, Connie! Meanwhile, the Windsor Volunteer Fire Department is treating birthday children to a rousing ride-by. And our elected officials and town employees are doing all they can to keep the wheels turning and the lights on. Look at the Town Clerk's notes for a plan to keep busy at home and win a valuable prize. Keep it up, Windsor, and share your tales of how you are helping, or have been helped.

Easy No-Knead, No-Bake Bread

While learning to bake bread at home is a Covid-19 cliché, here in Windsor there's no need! FOW board member and expert baker Dominique Frink is offering free delivery of bread, eggs and some other items to Windsor residents every Saturday. Check out the Lion's Tooth Farm Facebook page or web site <https://lionstoothfarm.com/shop/>.

Keeping the Connection

As all of us figure out how to stay connected, safe, and sane in these strange and ever-changing circumstances, Friends of Windsor works to strengthen the fabric of our community. We depend on, and are grateful for, your support. Donations are gratefully received, as are suggestions and story ideas! --Susan Phillips

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-length articles related to appreciation of Windsor's unique assets—our natural setting, people, and community—contact fowindsor@gmail.com.

FRIENDS OF WINDSOR INC. BOARD MEMBERS

Patty Crane, president; Julia Allan, director; Deborah Balmuth, co-editor; Cindy Efinger, director; Dominique Frink, director; Val Kohn, director; Eileen Markland, director; Susan Phillips, co-editor; Leslie Reed, treasurer; Robin Tesoro, director.

Paper Talk

In these challenging times, I'm feeling fortunate and blessed to live in our little town—surrounded by nature and supported by neighbors and friends. Those happy daffodil faces popping up from the earth are perhaps the best encouragement of all! Stay safe, stay well, and may the wonders of spring raise your spirits and renew hope. --Deb Balmuth

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 susanphillips57@gmail.com*

Wifi Hotspot Coming to Windsor

Governor Baker announced an initiative to create WiFi hotspots in towns that are working on their fiber broadband networks but do not yet have service. Windsor is among the towns that will have a 250 MPS hotspot at the town office building. That is 10 times faster than what we have now!

People will be able to sit in their cars in the parking lot and access the network or, when the weather is warmer and it stops snowing, sit on the lawn. When I signed Windsor up to participate, I had to promise that we would monitor the behavior of users to ensure that they are following state guidelines in social distancing. We were told that if the hotspot caused people to gather too close, it would be discontinued.

Because we have a local area network, this hotspot will also somewhat enhance the speed of the wifi at the Town Hall. There too we ask folks to adhere to the distancing guidelines.

We have no reported cases of COVID 19 in town. Let's kept that way. --Doug McNally

Town Clerk Notes

The Windsor Annual Town Meeting has been delayed until **Monday, June 1 (rain date June 2)** and moved, to allow for social distancing, to our Town Park on Peru Rd.

The warrant will be posted at all public locations and on Facebook to allow residents to thoroughly read it and ask questions ahead of time. If it appears any article requires extensive discussion, the ATM may be recessed by the moderator and reconvened at a later time to allow for more resident input. Bring a folding chair and enjoy the Windsor fresh air.

Town Election May 11, 12-6 will have a drive through option. Enter the Town Hall driveway at the church end. There are no competitive races. The election ballot is on on the Windsor website under "municipal resources" tab.

Dump stickers will be available in June, and on sale at the transfer station in late June. You may also purchase by mail. The fee is \$75 for up to 3 stickers. When the office reopens, stickers may be purchased from the town clerk.

Dog licenses can be purchased by mail or email. There will be no late fees charged until July 1.

2020 Federal Census Update. Windsor currently has a 40% response rate. We need western mass representation in State government and other benefits that derived from the results of this Federal Census that only happens every 10 years. You may reply online 2020census.gov, by phone 844-330-2020, or by mail.

Unfortunately, the census is not mailed to PO boxes so responding online is the best way. You do not need a code from a postcard or anything else, just your address. If you need assistance call the town clerk. --Madeline Scully

Virtual Scavenger Hunt

Virtual Contest, Real Prizes!



On May 10, the Town of Windsor will launch round 1 of a Virtual Scavenger Hunt.

Check the Windsor, MA Facebook page that morning to find a list of items that can be found in your house or outside.

Individuals or teams have until 5 pm on May 16 to find and photograph TEN of the items on the list, and then post the photos to the page. All successful entrants will be entered into a drawing, and one lucky winner will get a free **dump sticker** for the coming year.

Round 2 will start on Sunday May 17, with a new list of things to find, deadline 5 pm on May 23, with another dump sticker up for grabs.

You must be a member of the Windsor, MA Facebook group to post photos, so if you haven't already, please visit the page and ask to join. Mention you are a Windsor resident. It sometimes takes a few days for requests go through. It's easy and a great way to find out what is happening in town. This is the most effective way for the town to get news to residents in a timely fashion, I ask all residents to check it daily, especially these days as we work to stay safe, physically distant, yet still connected.

COVID 19 Issues

Don't go hungry. There are resources and people to help. Call the town clerk 413-684-3811 ext 1 or 910-620-0162, or COA outreach 413-329-4364 for help. All communication is confidential.

Berkshire Health Systems has a TOLL-FREE HOTLINE for questions regarding COVID-19. Hours: 7 am to 7 pm, seven days a week. CALL 855-262-5465 (855-BMC-LINK)

Resources for CARES Act Unemployment Benefits

Under the stimulus/disaster CARES Act passed and signed into law in late March, there is the potential for additional unemployment for people who have been let go from their employer.

If you are self-employed and your business has been affected by the coronavirus, you may also be eligible for unemployment benefits under this Act.

A place to start to investigate if you are eligible for additional unemployment: <https://www.mass.gov/topics/unemployment>

FAQ for self-employed workers in Massachusetts:

<https://www.mass.gov/guides/pandemic-unemployment-assistance-benefits-guide/#-frequently-asked-questions->

SENSE OF COMMUNITY

"The best way to not feel hopeless is to get up and do something. Don't wait for good things to happen to you. If you go out and make some good things happen, you will fill the world with hope, you will fill yourself with hope."

—Barack Obama

Windsor Church Update

At Windsor Church, we may not be filling the pews, but we are still meeting as a "Church Without Walls!" We've been meeting weekly via Zoom, checking in with each other and continuing to participate in our community projects. Our new Music Director, Eileen Markland, along with her talented musician friends have been providing beautiful guest music for our virtual services. And we have even expanding our reach beyond Windsor with people joining us on Sundays from as far away as Georgia and California!

We are working on giving the parsonage a much-needed makeover in anticipation of opening our new community Wellness Center focusing on the mental health needs of children and families. And as many of you may have noticed, the latest windstorm did a number on our steeple! So we are working on ways to have that repaired. Our bees have been moved temporarily to another location while the solar field is worked on, but when they return, you are welcome to come visit them!

Our friends at Louison House are in need of supplies to continue their work for the homeless and we are ramping up efforts to help them meet their needs.

If you would like to be involved in any of our community projects or would like to attend a Zoom service, let us know! We would love to see you. --Heather Juby, Minister

Green Committee Report

On this year's Annual Town Meeting warrant, the FY21 budget line item for the Green Committee is \$7,500. Most of the funding for Green Committee projects is from Green Community grants through the Massachusetts Department of Energy Resources (DOER). The DOER grants must be based on a licensed engineer's report and cost estimate. Frequently, bids to complete a project come in at a higher cost than the engineer's cost estimate. Having a line item in the budget for energy projects allows funding for the difference between the amount of grant and the lowest bid received to complete the energy project. When a bid is more than the grant, it is necessary to have town funding for the difference. If the town funding is not available, we cannot use the DOER grant.

Most of the \$7,500 allocated for the Green Committee in the current fiscal year (FY20) will not be spent before the end of the fiscal year on 6/30/20. DOER took a long time to award the current grant (\$62,800). For the approved projects, we are at different stages in the process of awarding contracts, and the majority of the work will be completed after 7/1/20. Having the \$7,500 in the FY21 budget will allow us to fully use the DOER grant.

On a related note, the photovoltaic array, which has been operating at the town office since 6/18/18 (and was funded by a previous DOER grant), is earning solar renewable energy certificates. Income from selling SRECs is expected to continue at about \$8,000 per year.

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A Farewell Note from Chief Barnaby

I have stepped down from the daily operations of the Windsor Police Department and retired from my position as Chief of Police as of April 28, 2020.

Windsor is fortunate to have many dedicated community members who serve the community. It has been a privilege to work shoulder-to-shoulder with these individuals with a common cause of continuing to make the town of Windsor a great place to live, work, and visit. I would like to thank the Selectboard for their dedication to the town of Windsor and the support they provided me as I led the police department over the years. The support that I have received as a member of the Windsor Police Department will never be forgotten.

It is comforting for me to know that as I depart from my role as police chief, the community is being left with a police department that is well equipped, trained, and committed to serving the needs of Windsor. I am proud and thankful for being given the opportunity to serve this town. Thank You!! --Thomas Barnaby



Note: I will be staying on temporarily, working for Chief Kip Buoymaster until the COVID-19 situation calms down.

Reflections from Mame Whelihan

Heather Hill Farm, Shaw Road

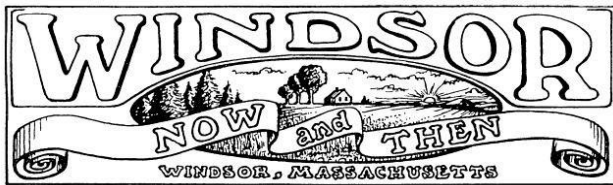
Hail to the Chief! The call to Social Distancing came at a disruptive time for our scheduled swearing-in ceremony for our new Chief of Police. Never fear, our Town Clerk is at the ready.

Kip Buoymaster was to stand in his driveway with his right hand raised and the Town Clerk would deliver the Oath for him to repeat from more than the required six-foot distance.

Unbeknownst to Kip and his wife, Jessica, the Clerk had alerted members of our community who wanted to attend and witness the event. Ten o'clock arrived and so did a large segment of the town. Route 9 became a car line of Social Distancing participants. Kim and Doug from our Selectboard were enthusiastically in attendance; Highway Supt. John Denno and his wife, Colleen arrived; Retiring Police Chief Tom B. managed the cruiser; and Police Officer Tom H. joined us.

It was a very festive and safe "swearing-in" with many more Windsorites parked and safe along Route 9. See--Social Distancing can be observed and managed quite well. Jessica, stood much further than the required six feet and her proud cheering could certainly be heard all down the line. Their resident pet bird, Louie, watched from his window. Kip looked happily surprised when Scott pulled up with a Windsor fire truck and filled the air with a congratulatory blast. It was a swearing-in ceremony we will remember. Our Town Clerk did herself proud in swearing in and welcoming our new Chief of Police. It will be a tough act to follow. *All Hail to the Chief.*

MAY 2020



1890 Route 9, Suite 8

Windsor, MA 01270

DONATION ENVELOPE ENCLOSED

The Face Behind the Masks: Connie Wood

There's a small, essential business on Shaw Road that has been lighting up Windsor's Facebook page with likes and thanks the past few weeks. The kudos are for the dozens of face masks that Connie Wood has been making and offering to town residents at no cost.

Someone who is "always doing crafty stuff," Connie typically passes the winter months by drawing or painting. This winter she changed it up by making and selling colorful, reusable shopping bags by repurposing animal feed bags. Then the coronavirus hit, reusable bags were tabled, and she wanted to help. A friend of hers was making face masks and Connie thought that was something she could do.

She borrowed a sewing machine from her granddaughter Ruby. Her daughter Carrie loaned a mat and rotary cutter. A big Red Sox fan, Connie made a few prototypes by cutting up some tee shirts she had on hand. She posted them on Facebook and offered them for pickup on her porch for free. She followed those up with a dozen patterned cotton masks and they were gone within hours. The requests kept coming.

Connie is immunocompromised, cannot be in direct sunlight, and is on doctor's orders not to leave her house. When she ran through all her fabric, and thought she was going to have to stop production, neighbors dug out their home stashes and delivered the goods to her porch.

Connie says "The whole town has been great. They're always asking 'Do you need anything?'"

Connie ramped up production, making as many as 26 in one day, and Friendly Fred's offered to be the pickup point for the masks. One Facebook user commented "Wow! Do you have elves in your house?" Joyce Pirelli of Friendly Fred's was amazed at how quickly they went out the door and posted "ALL GONE! Yup...45 minutes...gone!" Connie got right back to work.

The community has expressed daily gratitude for Connie's generosity,

posting: "Thank you so much for your hard work and caring," and "Thank you for this kind gesture." A new resident wrote "It's things like this that confirm we bought in a great community."

Connie says she likes to be busy, that it helps keep her mind off things. "I'm just happy to help and to do my part," she adds. "I just want everybody to stay safe."

Thank you, Connie, for your community spirit. You are our sunshine. --Leslie Reed

