



# Happy 250<sup>th</sup> Birthday, Windsor!

Windsor Now & Then Special Commemorative Issue • June 2021 • Volume XXXVII, No. 6

**P**erched on a plateau in the Berkshire Hills at an elevation of 2,031 feet, Windsor was not seen as the most hospitable place to settle at the time of its incorporation 250 years ago, on July 4, 1771. The prevalence of wolves was one of the pressing topics raised at an early town meeting. Later, in July 1838, Nathaniel Hawthorne made this journal entry on a trip to the Berkshires: “The highest point of our journey was at Windsor, where we could see leagues around over the mountain, a terribly bare, bleak spot, fit for nothing but sheep, and without shelter of woods.”

Fortunately, for many of us living here today, the woods have returned to these previously sheep-filled acres, and we’ve embraced the solitude, rich wildlife, snowy winters, and cool summer breezes as positive attributes. What is it that has made this small town in the wilds of Berkshire County endure—and even flourish—for 250 years? Volunteers!

With little overarching infrastructure, it’s the cooperative spirit of the residents who shape our community. Whether in an official, town-appointed or elected role or in an informal, neighbor-to-neighbor role, the volunteers of Windsor are at the heart of our resilience—and our future.

For this special commemorative issue, we invited volunteers to tell us about their role or group, what they enjoy about their activities, and how they’re contributing to the life of Windsor today. This issue offers just a snapshot of Windsor’s many dedicated volunteers. Many more unsung heroes abound in our community. We hope we’ve captured the spirit of the many people who help make Windsor a special place to live—and all those volunteers who have stepped up over the past 250 years to make it what it is today!

*\*Note: The member lists are current as of June 1, 2021.*

## SERVING THE COMMUNITY FOR 130 YEARS: OUR ALL-VOLUNTEER WINDSOR FREE LIBRARY

The Windsor Library was founded in 1891. In the Annual Town Report of 1896, the Library Trustees noted: “We are now prepared to say, after nearly five years’ experience, that the Public Library in our town, its methods of distributing books, is a success. We now have 504 books in the three divisions of the Library (Windsor, East Windsor, Windsor Bush- i.e., private homes, the books moving from one to another). We begin the new year with balance of \$60.34. (from the dog fund) Trustees: S.M. Andrews, L.E. Packard, B.H. Hollis.”

Fast forward to 2021. Our group still include three Trustees: Beth Webb, Katherine Richter, retiring Holly Higinbotham and incoming Sandy Kalmus; our Librarian, Margaret Birchfield; CW Mars Coordinator, Katherine Richter; and a slew of volunteers who staff the desk three days a week: Heather Zanolli, Sandie Zink, Sue Riley, Kurt Wachtel, Ben Harellick, Marcia Musiak, Stephanie Jimenez, and Val Kohn.

Today, Windsor’s library, housed in the Town Office Building (formerly Crane Community School) holds: 2,000 videos, 5,000 adult books, 2,500 children’s books, and a collection of audiobooks.

While the library has been shuttered for the past year due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we’ve been keeping busy digitizing our catalog, meaning we’re switching all our records over from paper to



▲ Volunteer Ben Harellick is one of many who help staff the Windsor Free Library desk.

digital. This will enable us to be part of the CW Mars system, making our collection available to other libraries as theirs will be available to us. Margaret and Katherine have spent countless hours weeding the collection as they prepare each item to be scanned and entered into the system—a huge job! Once 80% of the collection is online, new library cards will be available to all residents. New volunteers are most welcome.



### KEEPING THE FLAGS FLYING: WINDSOR'S FLAG FUND

Jeb Chard, the one-person committee behind Windsor's Flag Fund, explains what he does: This is a donation-based fund, utilizing no town resources. Every year, in advance of Memorial Day, I install flags on the poles along Route 9. I remove damaged flags and replace them and repair or replace the pole brackets. The flags are removed by Veteran's Day to protect from the winter weather. It's a simple thing that brightens our town corridor and puts a smile on many faces. I love putting them up every spring and hearing cars honking as they drive by, expressing their appreciation.



The flag fund is the purest of grassroots endeavors. We never have, nor ever will, ask for taxpayer dollars to support this. Those that want to support it, contribute. I'm happy to report the fund is very stable, allowing me to purchase more flags this year than in the past! As long as the people of this town enjoy and support us, the flags will fly.

◀ *Boy Scout Troop 93 Scouts placed flags at veteran graves May 2017 and May 2018. Boy Scouts of America programs in Windsor are available for girls and boys from kindergarten through age 18. Windsor's Scoutmaster is Stu Besnoff.*



▲ *Flag fund coordinator, Jeb Chard, gets an assist from his son, Asa Chard, as they mount flags along Route 9, all purchased with donations from townspeople.*



### TRAINED FOR A QUICK RESPONSE: WINDSOR VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT

Our dedicated group of volunteer firefighters and EMTs meet every Monday night to train and plan for keeping our community safe.

**Officers:** Scott Eastwood, Fire Chief; Charles Sturtevant, Assistant Chief; Don Allard, Captain; Bruce Forgea, Captain; Blake Edwards, Lieutenant; Phil Lombardi, Lieutenant, EOMS; James Hyatt, Lieutenant.

**Firefighters and EMTs:** Lila Allard, EMT; John Denno, Firefighter; Jericho Koch, Probationary Firefighter; Jordan Koch, EMT; Trinity Koch, EMT; Jack Markowitz, Firefighter; Charles Riley, Firefighter; Carl Schmitt, Firefighter.



## WORKING TO MAKE WINDSOR GREENER: WINDSOR GREEN COMMITTEE

*Members:* Marnie Meyers, Jan Bradley, Holly Higinbotham, Bob Meyers, Stu Besnoff

Appointed by the Selectboard, the Green Committee members are tasked with helping improve the environmental sustainability of activity in the Town of Windsor, including residential, commercial, and municipal property. Our recent efforts have resulted in improvements to the Town Office building (including insulating, as pictured at right), Town Hall, and Highway Garage. Through the Solarize Program, we've helped homeowners with installation of solar electricity.

We seek Massachusetts grant funding to improve municipal facilities and reduce utility expense, while also reducing our carbon impact. We have secured Massachusetts grants of \$208,670.90 for energy projects to benefit the town. We currently have a grant application pending to fund additional energy improvements at the Town Hall and Highway Garage.



## 50 YEARS OF PRESERVING WINDSOR'S HISTORY: WINDSOR HISTORICAL COMMISSION

*Members:* Deborah Balmuth, Cathy Garcia, Aimee Gelinas, Dan Kohn, Susan Phillips, Jack Sobon, Val Trela, Heather Zanolli

Spurred on by Windsor's 200<sup>th</sup> birthday celebration in 1971, the Windsor Historical Commission was officially established as a town-appointed committee and the current museum building was moved to its Route 9 site (from the corner of Savoy Hollow and Shaw Roads) in 1973. The Museum collection was created and donated by volunteers. Noteworthy are the wonderfully crafted dioramas of scenes from Windsor's past, created by Olive Volsky with help from Bernard Drew and others. We also have a rich collection of historical photos donated by past Windsor residents.

For our first 50 years, the Historical Commission was completely supported by donations and fundraisers, including our annual Fall Pie Sale & Festival. In the time of land lines, commission members would call every household in town and ask for donation of a

homemade pie. On the festival day, dozens of pies were delivered—and purchased! With a decline in the number of pie bakers in town, our festival has evolved into a harvest festival and museum open house in recent years.

Thanks to support from the Town and from a state grant for our 250<sup>th</sup> celebration, we are making much-needed repairs to the museum building. We've also moved archival material to a more temperature-controlled environment in the upstairs room at the Town Hall. We're eager to document and digitize the photographs and archives and are looking for new members to help in this work. We're also reorganizing the museum collection and developing new signage for visitors. We meet monthly and would love to have some additional volunteers, either formally appointed as members or informally helping out with special projects. Everyone is welcome at our meetings, generally held on the first Tuesday of every month.



▲ In 1997, volunteers from the Historical Commission were joined by others in town to raise the timber-frame shed outside the museum. The shed was designed by Windsor's own master timber-framer (and Commission member), Jack Sobon.



▲ The timbers were prepared by volunteers who held regular work meetings over the course of the preceding year.





▲ *Windsor's Jazz Workshop*, held at the Town Park on Sunday afternoons from 1:30 to 4PM (every other week, from spring through fall), attracts musicians and listeners locally and from all around western Massachusetts. Organized by Windsor volunteer and saxophonist Scott Rogers, the event has been funded by the cultural councils of Windsor and neighboring towns. During the pandemic summer of 2020, this was the only chance many of us had to hear live music! (pictured: Dave Christopolis, bass player)

## BRINGING THE ARTS TO TOWN: WINDSOR CULTURAL COUNCIL

*Members:* Ben Harellick, Isabella Harellick, Barbara Connors, Abby Duffy, Jane Lyon, Susan Riley

Appointed by the Town to administer funds allocated to Windsor by the Massachusetts Cultural Council, the Windsor Cultural Council provides direct grants to assist individuals and organizations in providing programming that will enrich the cultural life in Windsor. We meet four times a year to consider grant applications and make the challenging decision of how to best administer our limited budget.

The volunteers at the Windsor Cultural Council are much like all the volunteers in our amazing town--big hearts filled with commitment, initiative, and action. We enjoy being part of this council because, while we are a small group, we can make a meaningful and positive contribution to our beloved town of Windsor.

If you have a talent or skill that you would like to share with your community, please consider applying for a grant. The Cultural Council always has its eyes set on the next big event so please stay tuned for an announcement. If you would like to participate and join in the fun, please let us know.

## SUPPORTING OUR ELDERS: THE WINDSOR COUNCIL ON AGING (COA)

*Member:* Sue Jacobs, Sandie Zink, Diane Pennetti, Diane Saunders, Alan Zawistowski, Sue Riley and Peter Menard.

The COA is a group of resident volunteers appointed by the Selectboard to address the needs of our older population. Our mission is: "To serve older Windsor adults by providing opportunities and resources that advance the quality of life in a rural community." We meet monthly on the second Monday at 10 AM in the Town Office building. Meetings are posted and are open to the public.

Although the board members all come from different backgrounds and employment experiences, we share a commitment to helping others and all find our work for the town fulfilling.

Jessica Buoymaster is our Outreach Worker, who reaches out to help residents access services such as fuel assistance, supplemental nutrition assistance (SNAP), Brown Bag (a monthly food supplemental program through the Food Bank of Western Massachusetts), and weatherization. Her small salary is paid equally by the town and a state grant.

We are also fortunate to have Cathy Hall, who has extensive training in health insurance counseling. As a volunteer through the SHINE (Serving the Health Insurance Needs of Elders) program managed by Elder Services of Berkshire County, Inc., Cathy answers questions and advocates for Windsor residents having problems with insurance companies and medical billing issues.

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown, we had planned a



▲ COA team preparing to deliver nonperishable food to eligible Windsor residents as part of the Brown Bag Program, a monthly food supplemental program through the Food Bank of Western New England.

*From left to right:* Outreach Worker Jessica Buoymaster, and COA board members Sue Jacobs, Alan Zawistowski, Sandie Zink, Diane Pennetti and Sue Riley. (Not pictured: Diane Saunders and Peter Menard)

Senior Expo for May 2020 that had to be cancelled, but we hope to hold it in 2021. Friends of Windsor has been a tremendous supporter of the COA, offering to include our page of news in their publication every other month.

We join our friends and neighbors in celebrating the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary and all it means to live in Windsor. We are a small town with a BIG heart!

**ADDITIONAL TOWN-APPOINTED  
AND ELECTED VOLUNTEERS***(as of June 2021)*

*Moderator:* Mark Efinger

*Board of Health:* Ed Fahey, Rebecca Slick,  
Kolleen Schmitt, Bonnie Stapleberg

*Board of Registrars:* Joe Birchfield, Sandie Zink

*Central Berkshire Regional School District Representative:*  
Elizabeth Lounsbury

*Cemetery Commission:* Janet and Gary Boody,  
Marcia Musiak

*Conservation Commission:* Tom Musiak, Wendi Volk,  
Glenn Roy, Dicken Crane, Mary Stucklen, Tony Gola,  
Janet Sadlo

*Finance Committee:* Scott Rogers, Peter Sternerup,  
Michael MacDonald, Tim Crane, Don Hall

*Planning Board:* David Zink, John Jones, Albert Grillon,  
Doug McNally, Holly Higinbotham

*Building Committee:* Cindy Efinger, Peter Sternerup,  
Matthew Nowicki, Dave Melle

*Broadband team:* Doug McNally, Don Hall, John Jones,  
James Tribble

*COVID-19 Response Coordinator:* Cindy Efinger

*Tree Warden:* Mark Hauge

*Veteran's Agent:* James Clark

**A FEW MORE VOLUNTEERS TO  
CELEBRATE—SOME OFFICIAL,  
SOME JUST MOVED BY THE  
VOLUNTEER SPIRIT!**

*Wild & Scenic Westfield River Committee:*

Jim Caffrey, David Zink

*Pandemic-protection Mask Maker:* Connie Wood

*2020 COVID-19 Summer Food Meals and Delivery Team:*

John Connors, Cindy Efinger, John Jones, Kim Tobin,  
Barbara Connors, Mark Efinger, Jane Lyons, Susan Phillips,  
Debbie Kowalczyk, Chuck and Susan Riley,  
Jessica Buoymaster

*Snowmobile Club Trail Work:* Donny Allard

*Food Drive:* Sue Jacobs

*Sign Maker:* Scott Brockway

*Special Olympics for Golf:* Cindy Carrigan

*Snow Shoveler:* Asa Chard (shovels town and  
other people's yards)

*Volunteers who assist in Town Offices & with Annual report:*

Sandie Zink, Lynn Unwin

*Donator of Furniture to Town & Town Park:* Ron Hughes

*Neighborhood Keeper, takes care of elderly in neighbor:*  
Warren Mayer

*Rebuilt Spring House:* Bob Mayer, Dick Jacobs, Dave Melle

*Hayride for Foster Children Day:* Jim Iwanowicz

*Brings Chocolate Cake to the Sick:* Heather Zanolli

**VOLUNTEERS WHO HELP GOVERN:  
WINDSOR ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS (ZBA)**

*Members:* Tim Crane, Lee Flournoy, John Garcia,  
Marcel Mazeau, Jack Sobon, David Zink

The ZBA is the town's permit-issuing authority and as such, responds to applications for special permits, applications for variances, and appeals against the building inspector's determinations. Our core mission is intentionally narrow, as dictated by state law. We interpret zoning regulations, issue or deny appeals, and issue or deny special permits. The building inspector is the zoning enforcement officer.

We have no regularly scheduled meeting other than an annual organization meeting where we review our rules and regulations. In most cases, hearings are held following an applicant's request for a special permit or a variance. Appeals hearings of the building inspector's determination are rare. We're dedicated to treating applicants objectively, fairly, and that we are relatively removed from political influence. We encourage residents considering filing for a variance or special permit to come prepared, which sometimes requires an attorney, as legal representation can be money well spent.

**VOLUNTEERS WHO HELP GOVERN:  
WINDSOR PLANNING BOARD**

*Members:* Doug McNally, Holly Higinbotham, Albert Grillon,  
John Jones, David Zink

The Planning Board deals with creating and amending the town's zoning by-laws. In the past, we have put in many long hours to compose new zoning by-laws.

We do not meet on a regular basis, only as needed to enact new or modified zoning by-laws.

Recent activity has included developing a bylaw for cannabis establishments, and another for large scale industrial and commercial facilities. The Board has initiated a Master Planning process and will be inviting all residents' input about future development and community priorities for the Town.



## A CITIZEN-INITIATED NONPROFIT TO PROMOTE COMMUNITY: FRIENDS OF WINDSOR

**Board Members:** Julia Allan; Deborah Balmuth, co-editor; Patty Crane, president; Cindy Efinger; Dominique Frink; Val Kohn; Eileen Markland; Susan Phillips, co-editor; Leslie Reed, treasurer.

Friends of Windsor was established in 1984, shortly thereafter becoming a 501c3 non-profit public foundation. We meet monthly, with the mission to foster communication and cultivate community.

It's fun to think back to those beginning years when our founders, Arnold and Carolyn Westwood, welcomed other community minded folks (several are still members) to their dining room table to brainstorm and plan for the coming year, always followed by a delicious dinner! Our monthly newsletter, *Windsor Now & Then*, has been in continuous production for 37 years. Those first issues from 1984

were typed on a typewriter, the articles cut out with scissors, and hot-waxed onto a paste board that had to be hand-delivered to the printer in Dalton. My, how times have changed!

What hasn't changed is the generosity of Windsor folks who donate to support our production costs for the newsletter, the phonebook, and our many other projects. In the early days, that meant books and magazines for the library and schools, grants to the Historical Commission, piano lessons and suppers at the Town Hall, contra dances and Homecoming celebrations in addition to WN&T and the biennial phonebook. And, of course, our two large tents which we still lend to other nonprofits and Windsor residents.

More recently, we've created the Friends of Windsor Facebook page and website,

featuring the special "Our Town" video we created, along with a rich collection of photos taken by Windsor residents. Other major projects include: posting 24 historical site markers around town; the special newsletter inserts Flashbacks (stories from Windsor's history) and Sharing Our Stories (oral history interviews with long-time residents); the Windsor Grown Festival; photo exhibits and musical events at the East Windsor Chapel; and creation of the "Welcome to Windsor" sign and surrounding pollinator garden on the Museum grounds on Route 9. In celebration of the 250<sup>th</sup>, we created a special issue of the Windsor Community Directory, featuring a colorful gallery of photos from Windsor's talented residents, as well as this special commemorative issue of *Windsor Now & Then*.



▲ Creation of the pollinator garden and the hand-crafted "Welcome to Windsor" sign (made by Scott Brockway) are two of the recent projects sponsored by Friends of Windsor.



## HATS OFF TO OUR SALARIED OFFICIALS IN SERVICE TO TOWN

While some of our elected officials receive salaries for their effort, the dollar amounts don't seem to reflect their hard work. We value their dedication and commitment to making Windsor a safe, healthy, and enjoyable place to life—and appreciate the many additional hours they log in while serving the town.

## WINDSOR'S PAID TOWN OFFICIALS

### *Police Department:*

Kip Buoymaster  
Jordan Koch  
Tom Hartman  
Tom Barnaby

### *Maintenance:* Dave Melle

### *Selectboard:*

Kim Tobin  
Doug McNally  
Janet Sadlo  
Asst. Madeline Scully

### *Town Clerk:*

Madeline Scully

### *Animal Control Officer:*

David Melle

### *Constables:*

Jordan Koch,  
Kip Buoymaster  
Dave Melle

### *Custodian for Town Offices:*

Deb Drumm

### *Emergency Manager:*

Nicole Woodard

### *Transfer Station Attendant:*

Larry Robert



▲ *Windsor Police* Chief, Kip Buoymaster, and Officer Jordan Koch, ensuring safety for all at the 2020 Annual Town Meeting held in the Town Park during the COVID-19 pandemic.

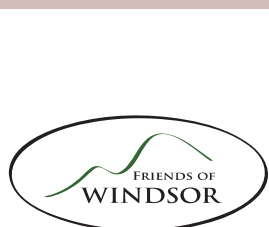
## KEEPING OUR ROADS OPEN YEAR-ROUND (NO SMALL FEAT!): THE TOWN HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT

Employees: John Denno, Superintendent; John Poplaski and Robert Sumner, Road Crew

Our job is to keep Windsor's roads safe and serviceable to the public. We are responsible for all maintenance and repairs of town roadways and buildings, bridge and culvert repairs, beaver damage and solutions, storm damage, water runoff, sand and salt usage in the winter, truck and heavy equipment maintenance and repair, spring cleanup of the sides of roads, and responding to the unpredictable damage that the four-season weather of Windsor causes. Other responsibilities include removing litter and deceased wildlife from town roadways, budget, and applying for grants to cover town road work.

We work Monday through Friday and additional days when snow and storms require the roads be serviced. We work to use the town resources wisely and ask residents to be patient when it comes to road maintenance and repair.

One of our current projects is repaving River Road and replacing three culverts with small bridges that will allow the fish and wildlife to have a safe passage and promote healthy life in the streams from the Westfield River (officially designated a National Wild & Scenic River).



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.

**YOUR SUPPORT MAKES THIS NEWSLETTER POSSIBLE.  
TO MAKE A TAX-DEDUCTIBLE DONATION TO  
Friends of Windsor, Inc., mail check to:**

FOW, 1890 Route 9, Suite 8, Windsor, MA 01270,  
or email: [fowindsor@gmail.com](mailto:fowindsor@gmail.com)

Windsor Now & Then  
Special Commemorative Issue  
1890 Route 9, Suite 8  
Windsor, MA 01270



## CELEBRATING WINDSOR'S VOLUNTEER SPIRIT!



▲ The Welcome sign, crafted by Windsorite Scott Brockway, was envisioned and funded by Friends of Windsor. (photo by Barbara Connors)



▲ A volunteer meal-delivery team mobilized at the town hall during the COVID-19 pandemic in summer 2020 to prepare and deliver nutritious meals to quarantined residents. (photo by Barbara Connors)

Interior photos by Leslie Reed, Susan Phillips,  
and courtesy of contributing groups.