



# WESTFORD NEWSLETTER

April 2017



## Westford Town Office

1713 Vermont Route 128, Westford, Vermont 05494

Phone (802)878-4587 • Fax (802)879-6503

<https://westfordvt.us/>

## Town Office Notes

### Essex-Westford Unified Union School District Annual Meeting

The annual meeting for the Unified Union School District will be held on Monday, April 10<sup>th</sup> with Australian ballot voting taking place on April 11<sup>th</sup>. The warning and sample ballot can be viewed at <https://westfordvt.us/essex-westford-unified-union-school-district/>.

- **April 3<sup>rd</sup> (Monday)** - Budget informational meeting, 6:30pm at the Westford School in the Common Area
- **April 4<sup>th</sup> (Tuesday)** – Budget informational meeting, 6:30pm at the Essex High School in the auditorium
- **April 10<sup>th</sup> (Monday)** – 5pm deadline to request an absentee ballot.
- **April 10<sup>th</sup> (Monday)** – Annual meeting and public hearing for Australian ballot questions, 7pm, at the Essex High School in the auditorium.
- **April 11<sup>th</sup> (Tuesday)** – Voting day for Australian ballot articles. Polls will be open from 7am to 7pm in the Westford School gym.

If you have any questions concerning voting, please call or email the Town Office.

### Dog Licenses

Dog Licenses are due by April 1<sup>st</sup>. A current rabies certificate is required. If you are unsure if the current certificate is on file, please call the Town Office. **If you no longer have your dog or your dog has died, please let us know!** For your convenience, you may mail or drop off the fee and rabies certificate along with a self-addressed stamped envelope and your license will be mailed to you. The fee until April 1<sup>st</sup> is \$11.00 for spayed or neutered dogs and \$13.00 for dogs that are not spayed or neutered. Dog licenses obtained **after April 1<sup>st</sup> are subject to a late fee.** We encourage all dog owners to register their dogs before April 1<sup>st</sup>.

### Homestead Declaration

If you are a Vermont resident and own and occupy a homestead as your domicile as of April 1<sup>st</sup>, **you must file a Homestead Declaration by April 18<sup>th</sup>.** For more information on filing the Homestead Declaration, please go to <http://tax.vermont.gov/property-owners/homestead-declaration>.

### Spring Yard Clean Up

Spring has arrived! When cleaning up your yard, please keep in mind:

- Burn permits are required prior to any burning. Burn permits are available online (<https://westfordvt.us/administration/fire-warden/>), from the Fire Warden (Dennis Angiono, 879-1231) or from the Town Office during regular office hours.
- Yard waste, such as leaves, brush and topsoil are not considered household garbage, therefore Myers will not collect these materials when picking up your garbage. You can compost yard waste or bring it to a participating CSWD drop off center. For a list of centers please visit <http://www.cswd.net/>.

### Senior Luncheons

The Senior Luncheon will be on April 10<sup>th</sup> at noon at the Red Brick Meeting House on the common. All seniors (55+) are welcome. Please join us for a home cooked meal and good conversation. If you need a ride, please call me at 878-3090 or Beth Menut at 893-2263. Cross your fingers that the weather co-operates this month. Hope to see you there! It's pot luck this month! Carol Howrigan, President

### Newsletter Deadline

The deadline for the May Newsletter is 12:00 noon on Monday, April 24<sup>th</sup>.

# TOWN OF WESTFORD

## SEEKING MOWING QUOTES FOR 2017 SEASON

The Selectboard is requesting quotes for mowing of the following properties:

- Town Common
- Town Office/Library
- Area near the statue (between Brookside Road and White Church Lane)
- KP lot (small area on Route 128 just before the village)
- Spiller lot (red house on corner of Common Road and Brookside Road)
- Small area to the left of the covered bridge on Cambridge Road.

All properties require weekly mowing. Trimming is not required weekly however the maximum amount of time between trimmings shall not exceed two weeks. The mowing schedule must take into consideration the 4<sup>th</sup> of July as well as the Farmers' Market schedule (TBD). Mowing shall be done in a manner that allows sufficient time for grass clippings to dry unless weather conditions make this impossible (e.g. raining for several days in a row leading up to the Farmers' Market and July 4<sup>th</sup>).

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The Selectboard is also requesting separate quotes on behalf of the Brick Meeting House Society and the Westford Cemetery Commission for the following properties:

- **Brick Meeting House**, large brick building located on Route 128, east of the town common. Mowing shall be done on the same schedule as the town properties.
- **Brookside Cemetery** (Maple Tree Lane), **Richardson Cemetery** (Covey Road), **Cloverdale Cemetery** (Route 15), **Osgood Hill Cemetery** (Stoney Ridge), **Plains Cemetery\*** (Plains Road), and **Pleasant View Cemetery**, (Route 128 North – including the small open area in front of cemetery/along entrance). The cemeteries require mowing on an as needed basis, usually about every 2 weeks and trimming every other time throughout the growing season.

**\*Note** - Plains Cemetery is comprised of sandy soil and as the season progresses, requires less frequency of actual mowing.

The job also includes spring cleanup (i.e. branches and brush) and final clean up in early October. Spring cleanup and the first mowing need to be completed by Memorial Day.

The mowing schedule needs to take into consideration the following holidays: Mother's Day (May 14), Memorial Day (May 29), Father's Day (June 18), Independence Day (July 4), Labor Day (Sept. 4), and Columbus Day (Oct. 9).

**Note** – All gravestones, upright fieldstones and markers need to be treated with care to maintain their integrity and while they need to be trimmed/mowed around they are susceptible to damage from trimmers and mowers. Stones and markers cannot be dislodged or removed.

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- \* Please submit 3 references with your quotes.
- \* The chosen contractor will need to provide proof of liability insurance and may need to complete a W-9.

For additional information, please contact the Town Office at 878-4587 or [townclerk@westfordvt.us](mailto:townclerk@westfordvt.us).

**The Selectboard, Brick Meeting House Society and Cemetery Commission reserves the right to reject all quotes.**

**Mail quotes to Town of Westford, Attn: Nanette Rogers, 1713 VT Route 128, Westford, VT 05494 or email to [townclerk@westfordvt.us](mailto:townclerk@westfordvt.us). Quotes must be received by 4:30 p.m. on April 12, 2017.**

# WESTFORD PUBLIC LIBRARY

<http://westfordpubliclibrary.org>

(802) 878-5639

[westfordpubliclibrary@gmail.com](mailto:westfordpubliclibrary@gmail.com)

1717 VERMONT ROUTE 128, WESTFORD VT 05494

## Travel Talk- 7-8:30pm - Wednesday, March 15

### **Destination: Tunisia**

**Presented by: Jason Crooks**  
"Join us for a trip to Tunisia! An invitation to a close friend's wedding led our family to a place not included on many American's bucket list. In the days leading up to the Arab Spring we visit Roman ruins, Star Wars sets and trek to the county's highest point." Refreshments served.



**Knitting Refresher Course**  
**Thursday, April 13 6:30-8pm**  
**Instructor: Marianne Bassford**  
So, you've learned the basic knit stitch - what's next? Marianne will be here to teach a more advanced basic techniques or help you with your cast on and binding off techniques. Great class for beginning knitters. All supplies provided, or bring your problem pieces.

## **The Westford Public Library is accepting donations for our Annual Fourth of July Book Sale.**

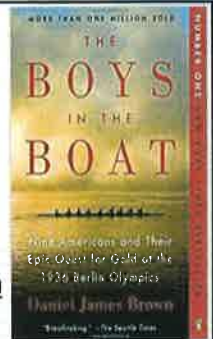
In hopes of bring you a better, more organized book sale - We will be accepting donations on the **certain Saturdays of April, May and June from 10am-Noon**. Please, stick to these times only. So that's **4/8, 4/22, 5/6, 5/27, 6/10, and 6/24**. We are also limiting drop off of donations to **TWO BOXES PER PERSON PER VISIT**. We **WILL NOT BE ACCEPTING**: VHS tapes, Cassettes, Music CDs, textbooks, encyclopedias, magazines, and moldy or damaged books. Ask yourself "Would I lend this to a friend?" If the answer is no, then keep it out of the book sale. We **WILL BE ACCEPTING**: books in good condition, hard covers, paperbacks, kids books, DVDs, and audiobooks.  
**DO NOT USE THE BOOK DROP FOR DONATIONS**  
**- IT DAMAGES THE LIBRARY BOOKS AND MAKES A BIG MESS!**



## Library Hours

<b>Wednesday:</b>	<b>1-7pm</b>
<b>Thursday:</b>	<b>10am-7pm</b>
<b>Friday:</b>	<b>1-7pm</b>
<b>Saturday:</b>	<b>10am-2pm</b>

**Adult Book Group**  
**Wed., April 19**  
**7:00-8:00pm**  
**Pick up your books at the front desk!**  
**The Boys in the Boat: Nine Americans and their Epic Quest for Gold at the 1936 Berlin Olympics**  
**By: Daniel James Brown**



Out of the depths of the Depression comes an irresistible story about beating the odds and finding hope in the most desperate of times—the improbable, intimate account of how nine working-class boys from the American West showed the world at the 1936 Olympics in Berlin what true grit really meant. It was an unlikely quest from the start. With a team composed of the sons of loggers, shipyard workers, and farmers, the University of Washington's crew team was never expected to defeat the elite teams of the East Coast and Great Britain, yet they did, going on to shock the world by defeating the German team rowing for Adolf Hitler. The emotional heart of the tale lies with Joe Rantz, a teenager without family or prospects, who rows not only to regain his shattered self-regard but also to find a real place for himself in the world. Drawing on the boys' own journals and vivid memories, Brown has created an unforgettable portrait of an era, a celebration of a remarkable achievement, and a chronicle of one extraordinary young man's personal quest. (from Amazon.com)

## **Early Literacy Storytime - Birth to Pre-School Every Thursday at 11am No registration required!**

**4/6/17: Theme: Spring**

**4/13/17: Theme: Eggs**

**4/20/17: Theme: Gardens**

**3/27/17: Theme: Ms. Shelley's Choice**

Storytime consists of several stories around a theme, as well as a theme-based craft. All ages and levels of attention are encouraged to come. Don't worry if they fidget - they are still getting a lot out of it!

The WESTFORD PUBLIC LIBRARY provides access to materials, technology, reference services and programs to meet the informational, educational, and recreational needs of the Westford community.

# WESTFORD PUBLIC LIBRARY

<http://westfordpubliclibrary.org>

(802) 878-5639 ♦ [westfordpubliclibrary@gmail.com](mailto:westfordpubliclibrary@gmail.com)

## April Library Events

- April 5 - Trustees Meeting 7-9pm**
  - April 8 - Donation Drop off 10am-Noon**
  - April 8 - Easter Crafts 10:30-Noon**
  - April 12 - Travel Talk: Tunisia 7-8:30pm, refreshments served**
  - April 13 - Knitting Refresher Course 6:30-8:00pm**
  - April 14 - Art Opening: Small Things by India Tresselt 6:30-8:00pm, refreshments served**
  - April 18 - Dorothy's List Book Group Wrap Up Event for Brown Girl Dreaming 3-5pm (with permission slip from school)**
  - April 19 - Adult Book Group - Boys in the Boat 7-8pm, refreshments served**
  - April 22 - Donation Drop off 10am-Noon**
- Crazy 8's Club 2-5 Wednesdays 3-5pm**  
**Crazy 8's Club K-1 Thursdays 3-5pm**  
**Storytime every Thursday 11am**



**Crazy 8's Math Club!!!**  
 Weekly April thru June  
 Grades K-1 - Thursdays (begins 4/13)  
 Grades 2-4 - Wednesdays (begins 4/12)  
 No classes 4/26 or 4/27 (April vacation)  
 Bus transport provided from school, pickup at Library between 4:30-5:00pm

Crazy 8s is an afterschool Math Club sponsored by Bedtime Math. There will be two clubs: grades K-1 and 2-4. This is a FUN, exciting enrichment opportunity. Clubs will be led by fantastic moderators and follow an action packed curriculum. More information will be given to those who sign up. Your child should plan to attend all classes - best behavior expected. Permission slips and more information emailed home to families who sign up.  
**SPACE IS LIMITED!**  
**EMAIL OR CALL THE LIBRARY TO REGISTER!**

**Babies: Plan Ahead!**  
**Welcome Baby Tea - May 13**  
 10:30-Noon  
 Families of babies born March 2016-March 2017 will get an invite in the mail soon! If you have not gotten one by the end of April, let Bree at the library know!



**Easter/Spring Crafts**  
**Saturday, April 8**  
 10:30am-Noon  
 (after the Rec. Dept. Egg Hunt on the Common)



Stop by the library to make some cute and cuddly crafts after finding eggs on the Town Common.



**Art Opening: Friday, April 14 6:30-8:00pm**  
**SMALL THINGS**  
 Embroidered and stitched artwork by India Tresselt

Featuring the Made on Monday project (52 small stitched pieces, one made every Monday in 2016), other embroideries, and recent temari balls. India's art will be up at the Library April - June.



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## SCHOOL BOARD NOTES

Our local school board has a shrinking set of responsibilities as we approach the official start of our new district. We hope to leave all district matters in an excellent state in an effort to make the transition as smooth as possible.

Upon reflection, it is encouraging to see how many of our discussions have been grounded both in good data and best practice. Without a doubt, this is attributed to several years of very focused work from our staff and principal. Our school has been at the front of efforts to align curriculum and assessment with student data management systems. This allows for the ability to quickly dive deep into all student achievement results and find real, actionable results. Longitudinal data to compare classes (and students) to themselves over time provides a strong measure of accountability when changes are implemented. Connecting all of this to social and emotional behavior adds another layer of understanding.

The above may sound a little distant from what we normally think of as the daily workings of a school, but it is an example of what is happening underneath the covers. The benefit to students is that the ability to provide appropriate supports is quicker and more focused. From a community point of view, we have a system of accountability where curriculum and staffing decisions are driven by real data.

This is all part of the DNA of what makes Westford School the place it is. One exciting aspect of partnering with other districts is that our teachers will now have a larger community of professionals to learn from/with.

So, what is left for our board?

First off, we must see through the remainder of the fiscal year, and execute a financial audit. We are on track for expenses and should end the year in good financial shape.

The largest piece of work remaining includes drafting and/or finalizing all contracts with the town surrounding the transfer of property. As the two signing entities, the school board and Selectboard will work together to accomplish this task. We appreciate the collaboration of the Selectboard and are confident that the remainder of the task is on track.

Respectfully,

Westford School Board

Mark Drapa, Christian Frenette, Martha Heath, Kim Phinney, Andre Roy

### 2017-2018 KINDERGARTEN REGISTRATION IS HERE!

It's time to start thinking about kindergarten registration for the fall of 2017. If you have a child that will be 5 before September 1, 2017, please register them for kindergarten by April 21, 2017. Also, please mark your calendar for kindergarten orientation which will be held at Westford School on Friday, June 9, 2017. We have several sessions planned for that day: Session 1 8:30—10:00 am, Session 2 10:30—12:00 pm, Session 3 12:30 – 2:00 pm

If your child will be attending Westford School this fall, and is not currently enrolled in our pre-school, you can download a copy of the kindergarten registration forms off of the Westford School website. Printable registration forms are accessible through the Westford website. There are links on the home page to both the kindergarten registration packet and to the kindergarten orientation schedule. The Westford School website is:

<https://westford.ccsuvt.org/>.

As we are busy planning for next year, we thank you for your quick response. Please do not hesitate to contact us should you have any questions about registering your child for kindergarten, need a hard copy of the registration packet, or wish to RSVP for kindergarten orientation. Please email Terri Martin at [tmartin@ccsuvt.org](mailto:tmartin@ccsuvt.org) or call the school at 878-5932. Please let us know your preferred time(s) for orientation and we will do our best to accommodate your request.

We look forward to meeting you and your child. If this is your family's first child to enter Westford School—welcome! ☺

## ESSEX WESTFORD SCHOOL DISTRICT NOTES

**Transportation:** The EWSD School Board has accepted a bid from CCR to provide high school transportation for Westford students attending Essex High School. Bus routes and schedules will be developed later in the spring.

**Annual Report:** The annual report for the EWSD will be available this week. Hard copies will be available at the Town Office and at the Westford Library. You can read the annual report online at [www.ewsd.org](http://www.ewsd.org).

**Budget Informational Meetings:** The Westford School Board will host an informational meeting on the EWSD FY18 proposed budget on Monday, April 3<sup>rd</sup> in the common area at the Westford School. The meeting will begin at 6:30pm. The EWSD School Board will hold an informational meeting on the budget on April 4<sup>th</sup> at Essex High School. The meeting will be held in the high school auditorium and begins at 6:30pm. We urge you to attend one of these meetings.

**Annual Meeting:** The annual meeting of the EWSD will be held on April 10<sup>th</sup> at Essex High School. The meeting will be in the auditorium and will begin at 7:00pm. The agenda for the annual meeting can be found online at [www.ewsd.org](http://www.ewsd.org).

**Budget Vote:** The vote on the proposed EWSD proposed FY18 budget will be held on April 11<sup>th</sup>. This vote is by Australian Ballot. Westford voters will vote at the Westford Elementary School. The polls will be open from 7:00am to 7:00pm. The annual report contains a detailed description of the budget and the projected tax implications. Information on the budget can be found at [www.ewsd.org](http://www.ewsd.org). Clicking on "EWSD Annual Meeting Information" will lead you to the warning, the annual report, and a power point presentation on the budget.

Please don't hesitate to contact us with your questions.

Martha Heath ([martha.heath@board.ewsd.org](mailto:martha.heath@board.ewsd.org)) and Andre Roy ([andre.roy@board.ewsd.org](mailto:andre.roy@board.ewsd.org))

### FIRE WARDEN NEWS

As we leave another winter behind us, it will not be long before the remaining snow will disappear and fire danger escalates due to drying ground fuels consisting of leaves, grass clippings and branches left over from last year. The combination of fast drying ground fuels, the possibility of less than average rainfall, and high winds can be a deadly prescription for property and forest fires.

Due to these conditions you must be extremely vigilant when engaging in any burning whatsoever. Never burn without a permit, which you can get from the Town Office or Fire Warden. You may also obtain a permit online through the Town website. Always have suppression tools such as water hoses, shovels and rakes on hand to extinguish your fire should it become necessary. Never, ever leave your fire unattended or allow it to burn out overnight. If your burn gets out of control, call 911 immediately. Only branches, leaves and clippings can be burned locally in Vermont. No treated or painted wood, newspapers or any household garbage is allowable under Vermont State Law. No accelerants of any kind may be used to start your fire.

As always, weather conditions will be monitored by me several times a day to insure the possible conditions for a controlled burn. Weather can change fast and you must decide whether to burn based on the present conditions, even if you have a permit. Please remember you are solely responsible for your fire and any damage it may cause.

If you have any questions pertaining to your burn, please call me at 879-1231.

Thank you  
Dennis L. Angiono



# Westford PTO

April 2017 Newsletter

The Westford PTO mission is to enrich our children's lives with educational and extracurricular activities.

## Opportunities to Get Involved

### Spring Craft Fair and Fine Arts Night

Friday, May 12<sup>th</sup> from 5:00-8:00 pm

*Live music, artwork on display, face-painting, a silent auction, and more!*

We've moved the event to a Friday night, and extended our hours for more family fun. Enjoy the student art and enjoy the wonderful local craft shopping just in time for Mother's Day gifts! Weather permitting, food vendors will be out on the front lawn.

### School Spirit and Staff Appreciation Week

April 17<sup>th</sup> – 21<sup>st</sup>

Watch for family donation signups for staff lunches and prepare your students for a fun week!

### Science Fair – Thursday, April 20th

Come see how our students are exploring science! The PTO is funding a special program this year – you won't want to miss it! Keep a lookout for more information.

### Box Tops for the 2018 Ski & Ride Program



Help us raise money for the **2018 Ski & Ride Program at Smugglers Notch** by clipping and turning in Box Tops for Education. Every box top submitted is worth 10 cents funding for the program. Clip the box tops, put them in a baggie, and place them in the collection box in the main hallway. Participating items are listed online at <https://drive.google.com/file/d/0BxQc2dA7gmKdSEVksHpsRHRiZ1k/view?usp=sharing>

Contact the Westford School PTO with questions, comments, and ideas:

E-mail: [westfordvtpto@gmail.com](mailto:westfordvtpto@gmail.com)

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/westfordvtpto>

Website: <http://westford.ccsuvt.org/hope-parent-organization/>

## PTO Calendar

**Thursday, March 30**  
*Teacher conferences,*  
no school.

**April 17 – April 21**  
*School Spirit and Staff*  
*Appreciation Week*

**Thursday, April 20**  
*Science Fair*

**April 24 – April 28**  
*Spring Break,* no school.

**Friday, May 12, 5-8pm**  
*Fine Arts Night and*  
*Spring Craft Fair*

**Monday, May 29**  
*Memorial Day,* no school.

**REMINDER:**  
*Clip your Box Tops!*  
Collection box in the lobby.

**Follow us on Facebook!**

**Check out**  
**Principal Lewis' blog:**  
[westfordprincipal.blogspot.com](http://westfordprincipal.blogspot.com)

# Westford Italian Dinner

**What:** An Italian dinner and raffle put on by the 8th grade class to help raise money for their end of the year trip.

**Where:** Westford School Gym

**When:** April 7th, 6-8 pm

**Price:** \$7 per person, seniors eat free, \$25 max per family



At the dinner there will be caesar salads, ziti, vegetarian and meat lasagnas, accompanied by a dessert of cookies and ice cream.

The raffle prizes include: Jay Peak Pumphouse family of 4 pass, Smugglers Notch Bash Badge, a Vermont Teddy Bear, and many more prizes from places such as Phoenix books, Talent Skatepark, Metro Climbing, Montshire Museum, and Snowflake Chocolates.



# Westford Recreation

Mission Statement:

The Westford Recreation Department was created to provide recreational, educational, athletic, cultural, and entertainment activities to all Westford residents and neighbors. We strive to offer programs for a wide variety of ages, abilities and interests. We depend on community input, support and volunteers to make these programs successful.

## Youth Programs

### Afterschool Yoga

Wednesdays May 3rd - June 7th \* 3pm - 4:30pm  
Grades 3 and up \* RBMH \* Bus to RBMH Available  
Minimum 5 participants \* Maximum 12 participants



Students practice yoga through playful, creative and fun poses paired with cool music, games, stories and journaling. Students are having fun as well as learning new skills focused on keeping their mind and bodies healthy. Relaxation or savasana as it is called in yoga will be sure to be wonderful with a mist of heavenly scents and foot massage!

### Afterschool Art Club

Wednesdays April 5th - May 17th \* 3pm - 4:30pm  
WES Art Club \* Grades 3 - 5  
\$85/participant  
Minimum 6 \* Maximum 15



Stay Tuned For  
More Upcoming Youth Programs!



Recreation Department Committee Members

Bekah Gwozdz, Coordinator	662-1042	Danielle Vierling	871-9404
Maureen Carpenter	893-5096	Jeff LaBossiere	
Martha Bennett	878-9269	Greg Baker	324-5537
Nancy Volkers			

Email: [WestfordVTRec@gmail.com](mailto:WestfordVTRec@gmail.com)



### Art Camp

June 26th - June 30th \* 9am - 5pm

WES Art Room \* Ages 7 - 11

\$250/participant

Instructor: Amanda Feller

### Soccer Camp

August 7th - Aug 11th \* 8:30am - 5pm

WES Soccer Fields \* Grades 3 - 6 (In Fall 2017)

\$125/participant Full Day \* \$65/participant Half Day

8:30am - 12:30pm: Soccer Exploration

1pm - 5pm: Sports/Game Exploration

Participants staying for the full day will need to bring a bag lunch.



Stay Tuned For  
More Summer Camp Offerings!

## Adult Programs



### Gentle Yoga Flow with Kim Horton, RYT

Wednesdays March 1st – April 5th

8:45am - 9:45am

All levels welcome!

Red Brick Meeting House

6 weeks: \$60 for series or \$12 drop-in

### Power Flow Yoga

Thursdays February 16th - March 16th

6:15pm - 7:30pm

All levels welcome!

Red Brick Meeting House

5 weeks: \$60 for series or \$13 drop-in



## Amazing Dragons and Damsels!

Monday April 3rd \* 6pm - 9pm

Includes Optional 2 hr+ field trip (Date and Time to TBD by participants)

Red Brick Meeting House

\$12/participant \* Minimum 10 participants



Three hour presentation includes folklore, biology, life cycles, hands-on show-and-tell (field guides, nymph cases to view with 10x lens, photos), and hand-outs.

Field trip date and site will be coordinated with interested participants. Field trip will include use of net, catch-and-release identification, photos, and a printed species list sent to participants.

## Mah Jongg

### Introduction to Mah Jongg

Saturday April 1st 1pm - 4pm

RBMH \* \$10/participant \* Minimum 6 participants

### Mah Jongg for Fun and Flexibility

Tuesdays April 4th - April 25 6pm - 9pm

RBMH \* \$35/participant \* Minimum 6 participants



## Mark Your Calendars!

### Ice and Sip

Friday May 19th 6:30pm - 8:30pm

Additional Details to Follow!

This event is very similar to a paint and sip.

The only difference is we will be decorating cakes instead of painting canvases.

Westford's own Leta Powers will be our instructor for the evening.



## Adult Pick Up Basketball

Wednesdays through May 31st

8:00pm - 9:30pm

WES Gym

# Westford Recreation Department—Registration Form

NAME (Parents) \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_ TOWN \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

E-MAIL ADDRESS (only to be used for WRD mailings) \_\_\_\_\_

HOME PHONE \_\_\_\_\_ ALT PHONE \_\_\_\_\_

EMERGENCY CONTACT \_\_\_\_\_ PHONE \_\_\_\_\_

DOCTOR'S NAME \_\_\_\_\_ PHONE \_\_\_\_\_

Please list medical conditions, physical limitations, allergies, or restrictions WRD should be aware of: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Name	Grade	Program	Fee
1. _____	_____	_____	_____
2. _____	_____	_____	_____
3. _____	_____	_____	_____
4. _____	_____	_____	_____
5. _____	_____	_____	_____
<b>Total Fee:</b>			_____

**Would you be willing to coach or be a parent helper?**     Yes     No

I agree that Westford Recreation may use photographs of registrants with or without their name and for any lawful purpose, including for example such purposes as publicity, illustration, advertising, and Web content.

**\*\*\*Please contact a Recreation Department member if your financial situation is preventing you from signing yourself, or your child, up for a program. Scholarships are available.\*\*\***

**RELEASE/WAVIER AGREEMENT:**  
 I am fully aware of the inherent risk, and give my consent for the above named applicant(s) to participate in the program(s) listed above. I hold harmless the Town of Westford, Westford School, their employees, elected officials, and/or any volunteers or instructors from any and all liability from any injury, claim, costs or loss of services which may be incurred by me, or us, or our minor children on account of participation in said program(s). Permission is hereby granted for me or us, or my child(ren) to receive emergency treatment if needed and I authorize the attending physician to administer any needed medical attention. Furthermore, I certify that I, or we, or my child(ren) are in good health and that there are no limitations to my/our participation except in writing above. I have read this document carefully and sign it voluntarily with full knowledge of its significance.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Send registration with check payable to:  
**WESTFORD RECREATION DEPARTMENT**  
 Town of Westford, 1713 VT Rt.128, Westford, VT 05494

# ISN'T THIS MY LAND?

## AN INTRODUCTION TO PLANNING AND ZONING IN VERMONT

### Surviving the Local Regulatory Process

**S**ure it's your land, but that doesn't mean you can do anything you want with it. If your town has adopted planning and zoning, there are rules to be followed, applications to be made, perhaps variances or conditional use permits to be sought. Like a Chinese finger puzzle, the more you struggle against these local controls, the more they will resist you. To make it through the process, you need to learn how the system works and how you can make it work for you. That's the reason for this pamphlet.

Many people don't pay much attention to planning and zoning until it gets in their way. When the reality of these local regulations first comes home to them, they are sometimes shocked and surprised, sometimes angry that the town can intrude in what they believe to be their private affairs. But planning and zoning is founded on the belief that all the people of a town have a right to decide *how* their town should be developed. Local regulation of land use is not designed to stop development, but to ensure that it's done systematically, according to standards that guarantee reasonable use of property without interfering with the reasonable use of others' property.

Anything shouldn't be built anywhere. Appropriate development has its place, in order to ensure an orderly community and protect the town's own investments in the local economy, its highways, water and sewer systems, and schools. You know you wouldn't appreciate some kinds of commercial development in your residential neighborhood.

Planning and zoning is a public process, and requires the vigilance of all citizens, not only in

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### Distinguishing Between Planning and Zoning

Planning is the process of designing a community's future. Zoning is the process of regulating proposed uses of property to fit with the design. Both are legitimate mechanisms for change, if they are properly adopted.

The municipal plan is developed by an appointed planning commission and adopted by the board of selectmen in most towns. Voters since 1988 can petition for a vote on whether to have the town plan adopted and amended by the electorate. The plan is used as a guide to the development of bylaws. It is also used in Act 250 proceedings as a benchmark for deciding whether a proposal pending before the District Environmental Commission (or Environmental Board) conforms to criterion 10 of the law.

The land use map is part of the plan. It shows the various zones which determine how property should be used. Residential, agricultural, commercial, industrial, conservation, forest and public uses are common in Vermont. It may indicate areas planned for open space as well.

Zoning bylaws or amendments are usually drafted by the planning commission, reviewed and approved by the board of selectmen, and adopted by a vote of the town, when the town has a population of 2,500 or less. A town of over 2,500 but less than 5,000 residents may also choose to become a "rural town" and vote bylaws and amendments directly. Municipalities of 5,000 or more (or those over 2,500 that have not voted to become "rural towns") adopt bylaws by an act of the selectmen or city council, unless voters equal to five percent of the checklist petition to have a particular proposal voted by Australian ballot.

When there's a conflict between a plan and a bylaw, the bylaw

prevails. This is because a plan is a prospective vision of how the community should grow, while bylaws may implement only part of that vision at this time.

The principal enforcement tool of the planning and zoning process is the zoning bylaw. Bylaws tell us explicitly what can be done on property (if the bylaw is silent, it usually means you can't do it). They tell us what types of development can take place and at what density, how far back from the edge of the property development can occur and how much of a site can be developed. Sometimes they limit the height of a building. Bylaws also regulate driveways, accessory buildings (garages, for instance), screening (trees and shrubs), and parking and circulation.

In most cases, to develop you need a permit.

### A Little Preparation Will Go a Long Way

You have to read the rules before you can understand them. That's why it's so essential for you to ask the town clerk for a copy of the municipal plan, map, bylaws, including any special bylaws such as those relating to subdivisions, and local sewer and building ordinances if the town has adopted them. You should also get a copy of Chapter 117 of Title 24, the state's law on planning and zoning. Contact the regional planning commission or the state Department of Housing and Community Affairs at 828-3217 for a copy.

Once you have these materials, try to make sense of them. Read them over slowly. With the town bylaws and map, find the location of your property and read the appropriate regulations that fit with the zone in which the property is located. Read the sections that apply to the project you intend to build, noting any special require-

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**A Little Preparation** *continued from* ments and procedures. To understand the foundation of planning and zoning, read Chapter 117 of Title 24 carefully, noting where the sections that will apply to you appear. Sections 4403 and 4404 describe the process of adopting and amending bylaws. Section 4413 and following discuss the subdivision process. The administrative and enforcement process is covered in section 4441 and following, and appeals from the zoning administrator and variances in 4461 and following.

Before you file an application, talk to the town zoning administrator about your plans. Knowing how he/she interprets the bylaws is critical to your planning process. Ask for help on completing the application and, if necessary, on fitting what you intend to do to what the bylaws require.

You may also find some advantage in a review of the minutes and decisions of the planning commission and the zoning board of adjustment. Knowing how they have ruled on applications in the past will give you a fair indication of how they will treat your application, if their approval or review is necessary.

#### **Surviving the Local Regulatory Process**

how the system is administered but in how it is designed. That's why it's important to all of us to follow the public debate on proposals to adopt or amend the plan, the map, and the bylaws.

To survive the regulatory process, you need to understand it. You need to know what the rules say, how they can be challenged if they don't fit with your plans, and how to propose and implement changes if all else fails.

Above all else, try to remain patient and courteous throughout the process. Assume that it will take time and effort on your part. Don't fight it; make it work for you. In most cases, attitude can improve your chances of doing what you want with your land.

## **The Players in the Zoning and Planning Game**

The officials you are apt to meet in the process of planning and zoning include the zoning administrator, the planning commission, the zoning board of adjustment and the board of selectmen. Each has a unique role to play, one that you ought to understand in order to ensure the most efficient use of your resources and time. You may also meet your neighbors in a public hearing on your application, although they may not seem neighborly if they object to your proposal. You need to know their rights in order to protect yourself.

The *zoning administrator* is appointed by the planning commission, upon the approval of the board of selectmen. There are no special prerequisites to serving in this position, not even residency. Ideally, the administrator is a person who understands how to administer a code, who has a good sense of diplomacy, and who has the courage to stand firm when the rules require it. State statutes use the term "administrative officer" to describe this official, but the common name is zoning administrator.

The administrator is charged with the responsibility of interpreting and enforcing the zoning bylaws literally. If the bylaws set a fifty-foot setback in one zone, the administrator has no choice but to insist on it or deny the application. The administrator can only issue a permit if the proposals fit snugly within the confines of the bylaws.

Enforcement is another responsibility of the administrator. If a citizen builds in spite of what the bylaws say, the administrator may take the offender to court and seek a fine or a court order to remove the violation.

The *planning commission* is usually appointed by the board of selectmen, unless the town votes to elect commission members at town meeting. The commission writes and reviews the plan, map,

and bylaws in most cases, although if at least five percent of the voters on the checklist petition the commission, other proposals will be reviewed. Bylaws may also grant the commission the power to conduct a site plan review in cases of developments other than single residences. In this duty, the commission is limited to a review of the adequacy of traffic access, circulation and parking, landscaping and screening, and protecting the utilization of renewable energy resources.

The commission approves all subdivisions, if the community has adopted subdivision regulations.

The *zoning board of adjustment* hears appeals from decisions of the zoning administrator, grants variances when they are appropriate, and issues conditional use permits where the bylaws require. It too is appointed by the board of selectmen.

The *legislative body* (the board of selectmen, village trustees or city council members or aldermen), in addition to its appointive responsibilities, adopts the plan, approves all bylaws before they can be put to a vote of the electorate in rural towns. In urban municipalities, they actually adopt the bylaws in most cases.

"Interested persons" round out the cast of characters in the zoning process. They are admissible parties to public hearings on site plan reviews and subdivisions before the planning commission and to appeals, variance or conditional use proceedings before the zoning board of adjustment. They have the right to participate in the hearings and to appeal the decisions of these bodies to superior court. The category of "interested persons" includes adjoining landowners, state agencies, and the municipal conservation commission.

## **Key Words and Concepts**

Like all governmental systems, planning and zoning has its own language. Knowing what the words mean and how to use them in context gives you an ad-

vantage in your dealings with the officials who administer planning and zoning in your town. Some of the following terms may also be defined in your bylaws.

Any development requires a zoning permit. If it is for a permitted use, the permit is issued directly by the zoning administrator. If the permit is for a conditional use, it requires a special review by the zoning board of adjustment and usually the imposition of special conditions to be imposed before a permit can be issued. Part of the permit approval process could involve review by the planning commission.

A *variance* is an exception to the bylaws, granted by the zoning board of adjustment after it finds evidence to justify an affirmative vote on each of the five criteria, listed in 24 V.S.A. §4468. If your land simply doesn't allow you to build a garage anywhere but close to the road, because the land is hilly, for instance, you may qualify for a variance from the front setback if you can show that your case satisfies the five criteria. Variances are approved by the zoning board of adjustment.

A *subdivision* is a partition or division of land into two or more parcels. Some subdivision bylaws expand on that definition to include condominium or shopping center projects. If a town has subdivision regulations, the planning commission reviews the project. The state also issues subdivision permits under separate authority (and separate requirements).

*Existing small lots* is a term used to describe lots that do not conform to the minimum lot size as established by current bylaws, if the lot existed at the time zoning was adopted. *Nonconforming structure* describes a building that doesn't meet the requirements of the current bylaws but that existed before zoning. Perhaps it sits too close to the neighboring property or the highway or has a greater density than the bylaws require. When a commercial enterprise, otherwise

forbidden in a residential zone, preexists the bylaws, it's a *non-conforming use*.

Uses, structures and lots that preexist zoning may be continued in spite of the adoption of bylaws that would prohibit their creation after the effective date of the regulation. Structures and uses usually may not be expanded without special permission under most zoning bylaws. Zoning theory assumes that every property may be put to some *reasonable use*.

For more on definitions, check your local bylaws.

## Deadlines and Defaults

The legislature has established deadlines for many of the decisions to be made in zoning, and provided defaults in case the deadlines are not met. For instance, if a zoning board of adjustment does not issue a written decision within 45 days of the end of a hearing on an appeal or variance, the law steps in to grant the relief requested by the appellant by operation of law (which means automatic approval). The same principle applies

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## A Sample Variance Case

Because variances are so common, a little more comprehensive consideration of that form of appeal may be justified here. The key to variances is understanding the five criteria. This isn't going to be easy because of the way they are written. Here they are, with key words highlighted:

1. That there are **unique physical circumstances or conditions**, including irregularity, narrowness, or shallowness of lot size or shape, or exceptional topographical or other physical conditions, and **that unnecessary hardship is due to such conditions**, and not the circumstances or conditions generally created by the provisions of the zoning regulation in the neighborhood or district in which the property is located.
2. That because of such physical circumstances or conditions, there is no **possibility** that the property can be developed in strict conformity with the provisions of the zoning regulation and that the authorization of a variance is therefore necessary to enable the **reasonable use** of the property.
3. That the unnecessary hardship has **not been created by the appellant**.
4. That the variance, if authorized, will not alter the **essential character of the neighborhood** or district in which the property is located, **substantially or permanently impair the appropriate use or development of adjacent property**, reduce access to renewable energy resources, nor be detrimental to the public welfare.
5. That the variance, if authorized, will represent the **minimum variance that will afford relief** and will represent the **least deviation possible** from the zoning regulation and from the plan.

Being able to answer the zoning board's questions about these five criteria will be essential to success in your variance appeal.

when the law provides that a conditional use permit is granted by default if the board fails to render a decision within 60 days of the final public hearing on a permit.

If the planning commission fails to approve or disapprove a site plan within 60 days of receiving the plan, the law deems that the plan is approved. If it fails to approve, modify and approve, or disapprove a subdivision plat plan within 45 days after the public hearing, the plan is approved by operation of law.

Even the zoning administrator has mandatory deadlines. If the administrator fails to approve or disapprove a zoning application within 30 days of its submission, the permit is approved automatically on the 31st day.

Some town officials feel that these default mechanisms are unfair, especially when they realize that no other regulatory system in Vermont has such limits. They may even be surprised when the applicant points out that a default has occurred. As an applicant or appellant, however, counting days and marking the target date off on the calendar isn't a bad idea.

### **The Hearing**

When a public hearing is required, as in a site plan review, appeal, variance request, subdivision, or conditional use, the board or commission is required to provide at least 15 days published and posted warning. The hearing is public, and any "interested person," as defined by the statute, may appear and participate as a party. The zoning administrator is also a party, although many administrators don't see themselves in that role.

Before testifying, each party must be sworn. This is the traditional oath— Do you solemnly swear that the evidence you shall give relative to the cause now under consideration shall be the whole truth and nothing but the truth so help you God? (or, if an affirmation, under the pains and penalties of perjury).

### **After the Hearing is Over...**

Each applicant/appellant before the planning commission or zoning board has a right to appeal the decision to the superior court within thirty days of the decision. You need not wait for the written decision if you were present and know that the oral decision was against you. Court appeals take time and cost money. As an alternative, you may want to think about redesigning your proposal to meet the board's or commission's objections, or about petitioning for a change in the zoning bylaws to permit you to do what you've been denied.

Usually the applicant/appellant goes first. Sometimes you will be allowed to make a short presentation; in other cases, depending on the board or commission, the members of the public body simply ask questions to assist them in reaching a decision on whether the proposal is appropriate.

Taking time to prepare for the questions that will be asked is highly advisable. Know in advance precisely what the bylaws say about the standards you must follow. If necessary, have copies or citations available so that the board or commission members don't have to waste

their time looking for the source of the law. Discussing the case fully with the zoning administrator in advance of the hearing, including the asking of questions designed to give you fair warning of what to expect from the board or commission, is energy well spent.

Some boards or commissions will seem intent on getting you to change your proposal to fit their whims. Try not to compromise too much if you believe in what you want to build. Ask politely for the specific statutory or bylaw authority for their demands and stand firm, when necessary, to preserve what you want to do. You can always redesign the offensive part of the application and return later for another try.

Having copies of exhibits for each member of the board or commission is a nice touch. So is writing up a short summary of your case, to help the body focus on what you think is most important to your case.

Don't be surprised to be asked back for a second or third hearing, especially if you are proposing something more than a single family dwelling.

Don't fail to attend every public meeting held on your application or appeal so you can protect your interest and speak up if someone tries to question your proposal. Most boards and commissions make site inspections. Don't miss attending yours, if only to avoid having other parties offer evidence against you.

### **The Vermont Institute for Government**

The Vermont Institute for Government (VIG) is a nonprofit corporation dedicated to improving educational opportunities for local officials and the public on how government works. It consists of representatives from each of the major groups in Vermont that offer such training. For more information contact:

#### **Vermont Institute for Government**

R.R. 4, Box 2298  
Montpelier, Vermont 05602  
223-6500



Get Ready!  
**THE WESTFORD FIRE DEPARTMENT TAG SALE**  
to benefit the Westford Volunteer Fire Department

Drop Off Dates:



- \* Saturday, April 29, 9 AM- Noon
- \* Monday, May 1, 6:30 PM- 8:30 PM
- \* Friday, May 5, 4 PM- 6 PM

Declutter your home, shed, and garage and bring items for donation to the Westford Town Garage on Cambridge Rd.

**NO CLOTHING, BOOKS, COMPUTERS, TV'S OR EXERCISE EQUIPMENT, PLEASE.**

For more information, please call Susan Schmidt (878-7573).

Tag Sale Date:

**Saturday, May 6; Green Up Day; 9 AM – 2 PM**

**Westford Town Garage, 35 Cambridge Rd., Westford**

**Come find bargains and support your local  
volunteer fire department.**



## INCOME TAX FORMS

The Vermont Tax Department is no longer sending income tax booklets to the town office. There are 3 ways you can get your state income tax forms:

- Print forms from the Vermont Tax website ([www.bit.ly/vttaxforms](http://www.bit.ly/vttaxforms)).
- Order forms by email ([tax.formsrequest@vermont.gov](mailto:tax.formsrequest@vermont.gov))
- Order forms by phone (855-297-5600)

You can also access the Federal forms online at <http://www.irs.gov/Forms-&-Pubs>.

## Howard Coffin: Vermont and the Civil War



Wednesday, April 5<sup>th</sup>  
7pm

Westford Brick Meeting House  
1685 Route 128

From Cedar Creek to Gettysburg, Vermonters were central to the Union cause. Vermont author and Civil War historian Howard Coffin addresses the Vermont contribution to the Civil War.

This event is free, open to the public, and accessible to those with disabilities. Contact Caroline Brown at [carolinebrown802@myfairpoint.net](mailto:carolinebrown802@myfairpoint.net) or (802)878-8890 for more information.

A Vermont Humanities Council event hosted by Westford Historical Society.

*Under grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH). Any views, findings, conclusions or recommendations expressed in this program do not necessarily represent those of the NEH or the Vermont Humanities Council.*

Vermont Humanities, 11 Loomis Street, Montpelier, VT 05602  
802.262.2626 or [vermonthumanities.org](http://vermonthumanities.org)

## WESTFORD FRONT PORCH FORUM

If you have not joined the Westford Front Porch Forum, please consider doing so. Everyone is invited to participate. This is a great way to connect with neighbors and the community and it's free! Check it out at [http://frontporchforum.com/!](http://frontporchforum.com/)



# Westford Music Series

*presents*

## ZACK TYLER

**Event Date:** Sunday, April 23<sup>rd</sup>  
**Time:** 4-5pm  
**Where:** UCW white church - Route 128 top of the Common, Westford VT  
**Contact:** Marjorie Hamrell; 802-879-4028

The Westford Music Series presents the singer-songwriter playing folk-inspired musician, ZACK TYLER, at the UCW white church on Sunday April 23<sup>rd</sup> from 4-5 pm. Zack recently moved to Vermont and is a fresh new talent on the folk music circuit. Prior to his arrival in Vermont he spent years performing along the South Shore and Cape Cod Massachusetts. Zack's unique vocals set him apart from his peers as a solo acoustic performer with comparisons to Ray Lamontagne, Eddie Vedder and Phillip Phillips. Zack released his first album, Two Separate Ways, in 2015.

The Westford Music Series supports performers with free will donations and has been serving the community of Westford and surrounding areas for the past 9 years.

### **SOUP 'N CHOCOLATE SUPPER**

**Saturday, May 6<sup>th</sup>, 5-7PM**

Brick Meeting House, Route 128, Westford

Soup, Chili, Salad, Artisan Bread and **Chocolate** Desserts.

**Silent Auction - Great Prizes**

Benefits the UCW White Church Preservation Fund

Adults \$8 - Children \$5 (over 5 years) - \$25 maximum for families

### **UNITED CHURCH OF WESTFORD APRIL SCHEDULE**

**April 9, 8:30am** – Palm Sunday Service

**April 16, 8:30am** – Easter Sunday Service

Officiated by Rev. Katherine Arthaud. We are an Open and Affirming Community Church.  
All are welcome!