



Kent Newsletter

Friends and neighbors,

Budget season is upon us already! At the February meeting, the Board of Selectmen voted to move the capital plan to the Board of Finance for their consideration. Once the BoF approves it, it moves onto the Planning & Zoning Commission for their consideration.

The BoS will move into review of the operating budget through a number of meetings with departments within town government as well as a number of town civic organizations that receive grants from the town. The BoS will take a deeper look at where we are headed from a fiscal standpoint.

Eventually, later this spring, we will post the draft budget for the community to comment and ask questions on. Last year, due to the pandemic, the budget process was done online and via Zoom. We know this was a big change to the way it has traditionally been done, and we received an enormous amount of budget feedback from the community, which helped the BoS sharpen their pencils. While we're awaiting word from the governor, the sense is that it will be another unique process. Stay tuned on this topic...

Our community is strong and resilient. Every day I see and hear about how we are all helping each other get through this challenging time. Whether that is by shopping in town to support our local businesses, or reaching out to a neighbor after noticing their walk had not been shoveled, this is the best part of our small community - we will get through this by helping one another.

The budget season and the ongoing pandemic remind me of how important civic engagement is. I encourage you to attend a board or commission meeting, consider serving on a board or commission, reach out to a board or commission chair with a question or comment. Civil discourse is a pillar of a well-informed community and a productive, progressive government.

Remember...

- ...take a breath,
- ...give folks a minute,
- ...assume some positive intent.

Stay well,

Jean

COVID 19 Updates

Updates on infection rates and testing: Below is our daily case rate, which is based on a rolling two-week average - going back to the beginning of November:

ending 11/12 - 12.9

ending 11/26 - 28.3

ending 12/10 - 25.7

ending 12/24 - 33.4 *attributed to uptick at South Kent School

ending 1/07 - 10.8

ending 1/21 - 30.9 *attributed to uptick at South Kent School

Outside of small clusters at the schools, our numbers continue to be very low. The message from the governor and the Department of Public Health last week on our call was "**double-down on your vigilance.**" The variants that are more highly contagious, coupled with early days of vaccination mean we all need to keep doing what we've been doing for the past 11 months:

Wear A Mask | Wash Your Hands | Watch Your Distance

COVID19 Test Site: The COVID testing site at the Transfer Station has tested over 2,100 people so far. We have confirmed that the site will stay open through at least March 15th.

Vaccination rollout: we are getting there - keeping in mind that vaccination is voluntary so not everyone chooses to be vaccinated, approximately 75% of residents 75 years and older in our community have been vaccinated.

In a [press release](#) issued Monday, the governor announced an updated rollout and timeline for vaccinations. ***This is a shift from the governor's plan previously identifying additional groups such as essential workers.*** Here is an excerpt from the press release:

Those who are currently eligible to receive the vaccine under Connecticut's COVID-19 vaccination program include all individuals over the age of 65, as well as all healthcare personnel, medical first responders, residents and staff of long-term care facilities, and residents and staff of select congregate settings. Over the coming weeks, eligibility will expand based on age according to the following schedule:

- *March 1, 2021: Expands to ages 55 to 64*
- *March 22, 2021: Expands to ages 45 to 54*
- *April 12, 2021: Expands to ages 35 to 44*
- *May 3, 2021: Expands to ages 16 to 34*

In addition, the program will expand in March to include preK-12 school staff and teachers, as well as early childhood providers, all of whom will be provided the vaccine at dedicated clinics specifically set up for those workers.

The options to register for a vaccine can be found on the [CT Coronavirus portal](#) webpage. For those who prefer to call to register to be vaccinated, the CT Vaccine Assistance Line is 1-877-918-2224, seven days a week, between 8:00a and 8:00p. *Please note: this number is books appointments at select vaccination sites.*

Upcoming Dates of Interest

Wednesday February 24 | Special Planning & Zoning meeting | 6:00p | via Zoom

Wednesday March 3 | Board of Education monthly meeting | 5:00p | via Zoom

Always visit the [Town website calendar](#) for a complete schedule of meetings

Town Government

Transitions: We are, in so many ways, beginning to see transitions within Town government.

We have all heard the sad news of the passing of 32 year Public Works employee *John Lindsay* and longtime Transfer Station manager *John*



Kaminski in December. As two of the most iconic faces around town, they represented the spirit of our community and our hearts go out to their families and loved ones.

Patty Braislin is retiring after 35 years as the Town's Assessor. She remarked recently that she's been doing this job (in multiple towns) for so long, she has signed more Grand Lists than any other Assessor in the state. That is no small feat! *We wish her and her husband all the best as they begin a new chapter (we hear that will involve a lot of time with the grandkids).*



35
Years of
Service



Transfer Station: Big news! Oak Ridge has almost completed building our brand new glass collection container! Better known as a "doghouse", this will enter us into the glass pilot program that we are participating in through Housatonic Resource Recovery Authority. Informational signs are up and staff have been handing out informational materials about the program and what glass is accepted. I hope we will take delivery and begin collecting glass

in the next few weeks. This is a big, positive step for recycling efforts in our community. Once the container becomes full, it is hauled to Urban Mining in Beacon Falls to be processed into a material used as a filler in the making of concrete. Using 100% of the glass collected, it can replace up to 50% of the cement used in making concrete, reduces embodied CO2 emissions on a nearly ton-for-ton basis, and creates a more durable concrete that is more resistant to the effects of winter maintenance materials like salt.

Because it is processed locally, it reduces transportation emissions, and supports our community's commitment to The Connecticut Coalition for Sustainable Materials Management.

Kent was an early signer back in the summer of 2020 to the DEEP initiative, which is focused on reducing the amount of waste that is generated in our state, improve reuse, recycling, organics collection, and to explore innovative solutions to reducing waste.



After School Program send Valentines to Veterans: Earlier this month, KCS after school children created cards to send to veterans through the Valentines for Veterans Program through the volunteers at the VA Connecticut Healthcare System in Newington. Big thanks to KCS students for their BIG hearts!

Civic Engagement

Are you passionate about the environment, social justice, and equity issues? Do you have ideas about how to create a more vibrant, resilient community? If these things are important to you, and you want to make true change for our community, consider joining the Kent Sustainability Team! Kent has signed on to participate in the SustainableCT Program, which helps towns become more sustainable through actions in 13 categories ranging from

strategic materials management, to inclusive and equitable community impacts and many more. The kick-off meeting will be scheduled this spring - contact [First Selectman Jean Speck](#) if you would like to join the team.

Happenings Around Town

Calling all Kent civic organizations!

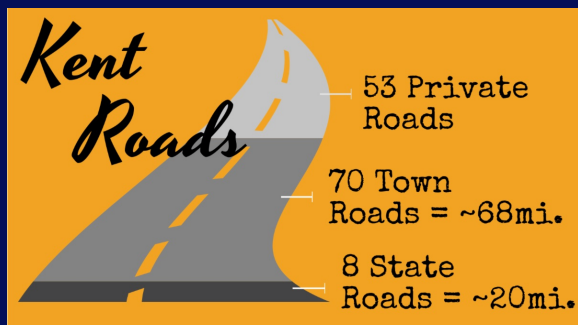
Do you have information you would like to share with the community? We would love to post it here. Send links, events, notices, etc. to adminassist@townofkentct.org by the last Friday of the month and we'll include it in this section.

Did You Know?

A road by any other name...

...is not just another road.

This infographic gives you an idea of how many miles our Road Crew preps for, plows and maintains in each storm. In addition to the roads are the sidewalks in the village, as well as the Town Hall, firehouse, Transfer Station and other municipal lots.



Join the Town of Kent's Newsletter listserv and stay informed. Click the image to join, or sign up via text by texting "KENT" to 42828.



You can now find weather-related closures for our Food Bank, Town Hall and COVID Testing site in the WFSB weather closures listing!

visit our website: www.townofkentct.org

