COLUMBIA

UPDATE JANUARY 2020
Happy New Year! The new year offers us a time to reflect on the previous year and look forward to the new year and new beginnings. Looking back on the past year some notable projects included; updates to Rec Park that involved new ADA playground accessible units; resurfacing of the tennis court; the girls softball field is almost complete, and a new road has been started to provide better safety and ease in traffic flow. The Public Works Departments town-wide initiative for tree removal/safety pruning resulted in over 200 trees being removed or pruned. The Town embarked on a risk management initiative to mitigate and reduce slips/trips/falls on town-owned property and improve handicap accessibility by establishing a town-wide risk management program. A new tax payment process through Webster Bank Lock Box has streamlined the tax printing, processing, and payment process. The Senior Center Van program has expanded to better cover wellness trips, as well as medical appointments. In partnership with the Trust for Public Land, the first phase of the Mono Pond State Park Expansion has begun. The “old firehouse” has been refurbished into a Board of Education/Town Maintenance Facility. The Public Works Salt Shed has been completed. A new redesigned entrance to School House Rd. was designed to improve safety and the new digital sign has been installed.

**ASK THE SELECTMAN:** The “Ask the Selectman” event will be held at the Saxton B. Little Library in the Conference Room, **January 11, 2020 from 9:00 am to 10:00 am.**
**VOLUNTEER ON A TOWN BOARD OR COMMISSION:** Please consider volunteering your time on the Town’s Boards/Commissions.

There are vacancies in:
- Conservation & Agriculture Commission
- Economic Development Commission
- Inland Wetlands & Watercourses Commission (Alternates)
- Planning and Zoning Commission (1 vacancy for regular member and 1 alternate)
- Recreation Commission
- Szegda Farm Management Committee
- Youth Services Committee (vacancy for youth member)
- Zoning Board of Appeals (Alternate)

**ARE YOUR SMOKE AND CARBON MONOXIDE (CO) ALARMS WORKING PROPERLY?** All homes need to have properly working smoke and CO detectors. It is important to replace these devices if they are over ten years old. The sensitivity of the alarm sensors decrease over time – they may sound when you push the test button, but they may not work accurately when needed in an emergency. You can check the age of your alarms by looking at the label that should have a manufacture’s date listed with the month/year.

It is recommended that the batteries be changed in all devices twice a year. Changing the batteries at the same time we change the clocks is an easy way to remember to complete this important task.

All devices should be installed as per the manufacturer’s instructions. For any questions on alarms or other fire safety topics, please contact the Town of Columbia Land Use Office at 860-228-0440.
WHERE TO GO FOR NEWS AND INFORMATION: If you would like to receive the newsletter please sign up on the Town of Columbia’s website. We encourage residents to please sign up for email notification and the Emergency Alert Program. Please feel free to reach out to me for additional information or concerns you may have.

Mark B. Walter, Town Administrator
860.228.0110
townadministrator@columbiact.org
UPCOMING TOWN MEETINGS

Please check the Town of Columbia’s website for any updates.

- Recreation Commission - Rec Office, Thursday, January 2, 2020 at 6:00 PM
- Inland Wetlands & Watercourses Commission - Conference Room, Monday, January 6, 2020 at 7:00 PM.
- Board of Education - H. W. Porter Cafetorium, Tuesday, January 7, 2020 at 7:30 PM
- Board of Selectmen (BOS) - Conference Room, Tuesday, January 7, 2020 at 7:00 PM
- Fiscal Policy Board - H.W. Porter Conference Room, Wednesday, January 8, 2020 at 8:30 AM
- Youth Services - Conference Room, Wednesday, January 8, 2020 at 5:30 PM
- Economic Development Commission - Conference Room, Wednesday, January 8, 2020 at 7:00 PM
- Lake Management Advisory Commission (LMAC), Wednesday, January 8, 2020 at 7:30 PM
- Szegda Farm Management Committee - Conference Room, Thursday, January 9, 2020 at 6:00 PM
- Columbia Conservation & Agriculture Commission - Conference Room, Thursday, January 9, 2020 at 7:00 PM
- Planning & Zoning Commission - Conference Room, Monday, January 13, 2020 at 7:00 PM
- Financial Planning & Allocation Commission (FiPAC) - Conference Room, Wednesday, January 15, 2020 at 7:00 PM
- Columbia Open Space - Conference Room, Thursday, January 16, 2020 at 8:00 AM
- PUBLIC HEARING - Yeomans Hall, Tuesday, January 21, 2020 at 6:00 PM (see Legal Notice for further details)
- Board of Selectmen (BOS) - Conference Room, Tuesday, January 21, 2020 immediately following the Public Hearing beginning at 6:00 PM
- Commission on Aging (CONA) - Beckish Senior Center, Wednesday, January 22, 2020 at 9:00 AM
- Environmental Advisory Committee - Conference Room, Tuesday, January 21, 2020 at 5:30 PM
- Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) - Conference Room, Thursday, January 23, 2020 at 7:00 PM

Please visit our website to access the Community Calendar.
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

BAIT BUCKET DISPOSAL CATCH BASIN AVAILABLE FOR ICE FISHERMAN: Please use the bait bucket disposal catch basin located in the parking lot in front of the State Troopers office at the Murphy House. Please do not throw any bait on the beach or in the lake.

SAND: Free sand (up to 2 five-gallon containers) is available to residents during the winter months located behind the Swap Shop at the Transfer Station. Residents must provide their own container for the sand. The Transfer Station is open on Wednesday’s and Saturday’s from 8:00 am to 4:00 pm.

TOWN CLERK


Applications for absentee ballots are available now in the Town Clerk’s office.

JUSTICES OF THE PEACE: This is the year for Justices of the Peace to be nominated. If you are interested in this position, contact your party affiliation chairman. If you are not a member of a major party, contact the Town Clerk’s office for more information at 860-228-3284.

FISHING AND HUNTING: Sports licenses for 2020 are available for purchase in the Town Clerk’s office and on the DEEP website as well. Opening Day for Fishing is April 11, 2020.

ASSESSOR’S OFFICE

The Homeowners program will start accepting applications again as of February 1, 2020. If you are already in the program you will receive a letter from us reminding you to file. If you are not already in the program you will need to bring a copy of your 1040 income tax forms for 2019 calendar year to our office once they are completed or all your income information if you do not file income taxes.
This year’s maximum income limit for married couples is $45,100, and for unmarried filers it is $37,000 which includes all income including your social security income. If you have any questions, feel free to call us at 860-228-9555.

BECKISH SENIOR CENTER

The Beckish Senior Center of Columbia invites all artists from the area to display their artwork in the main hall. Come in and enjoy work from our local artists. The Beckish Senior Center is open Monday-Friday – 8am -3pm

In the month’s of January and February the Senior Center will highlight the work of Janice Knight. Janice’s oil paintings reflect her love of nature featuring landscapes of Connecticut.

Past artists included Kim Kordowony and Robert Oxenhorn.

Kim recently moved to Columbia. During the fall Kim displayed her work depicting life in Japan from photos taken by her father. Kim’s father served in WWII and became a career Air Force Officer after the war. When Kim was 4 years old, her Dad was sent to Shiroi Air Force Base near Tokyo, where she lived from 1955-1959. Her father drove around the area, taking hundreds of slides of everyday events and working people. The family witnessed traditions and ceremonies of 1950’s Japan, just as the country began to embrace the Western World. Years later, Kim inherited her Dad’s old slides. Her exhibit is based on those images. Kim has a bachelor’s degree of Science in Interior Design from the University of Missouri. In 1997, Kim started taking classes at a local community college and has been painting and drawing for the last 20 years. Kim enjoys exploring color and design, and often apply fabrics to her paintings. Kim primarily paints birds, and other animals, and enjoys interpreting her view of the natural world.

Robert Oxenhorn, has lived in Columbia over 30 years. Robert is an accomplished artist who captures the lush New England countryside using shapes created from tonal values and color in some works and conceives new worlds of color and movement in his brilliant abstract pieces. Oxenhorn graduated from Hartford Art School of the University of Hartford with a bachelor’s degree in Fine Art and Design. He earned early recognition for his works by winning numerous regional and national competitive exhibitions. Robert
became a graphic designer and illustrator. He designed and illustrated for numerous companies. Much of his work is published nationally. Robert has entered fine art pieces into multiple art shows throughout Connecticut. The Mystic Museum of Art, The Wadsworth Athenium, Lyme Art Association, Slater Museum, and The Hygienic Art Gallery are some of the organizations where Robert’ artwork has been displayed. He plans to display his works of new worlds of color and movement in his brilliant abstract pieces in the spring at the Beckish Senior Center.

Do you need help with chores around your home? A new program in Columbia is pairing senior citizens with teens from the community. The teens can help with yard work, light housework, reading, or computer assistance. The program is funded through State Department of Education YSB grant, which means that the teens will work for seniors at NO COST to the senior citizens. Income eligible seniors only.

Contact Bernadette at the senior center for an application or contact Katheryn Graham at AHM Youth & Family Services at 860-228-9488 for an application or more information.

COLUMBIA TRANSPORTATION SCHEDULE & INFORMATION

Suggested Donations for Round Trips: (Trips to the Beckish Senior Center are Free.)

$2.00 within the town of Andover, Bolton, Coventry, Hebron, Lebanon, Mansfield, Marlborough, Willimantic, Colchester, and Windham.

$5.00 within the towns of Glastonbury, Manchester, Norwich and Vernon, Lisbon, North East Area.

$10.00 for UConn Medical Center, Farmington, Hartford Hospitals and VA Hospital Newington, Bloomfield, Avon and East Hartford.

$3.00 pp group outings sponsored by the Beckish Senior Center and CSO, Columbia Senior Organization. Trip information is updated monthly in the GEM Newsletter available at the Beckish Senior Center, Town Hall, Saxton B. Little Library, and many local businesses. The Newsletter can also be found on the Town Website along with other general information at www.columbiact.org. Suggestions are always welcome; they should be addressed to the Senior Center Director, Bernadette Derring at 860-228-0759 or 188 Route 66 Columbia CT 06237.
# January

**BECKISH SENIOR CENTER** 860-228-0759

Center Hours: Monday - Friday ~ 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM

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**Senior Center Hours**

Monday - Friday 8:00 AM to 3:00 PM

Everyone is welcome to come and participate in all we have here at Beckish!
TOWN DEPARTMENT NEWS AND INFORMATION (Continued)

**TAX DEPARTMENT: Real Estate and Personal Property Taxes:** The second installment of Real Estate and Personal Property taxes will become due **January 1, 2020** and **the last day to pay without a penalty will be Monday February 3, 2020.** Supplemental Motor Vehicle taxes (motor vehicles registered after 10-1-18) will become due **January 1, 2020** and will be mailed at the end of December. **The last day to pay the Supplemental Motor Vehicle taxes without a penalty is Monday February 3, 2020.**

The **Tax Office hours will be extended during January and February 3, 2020 and will be Monday through Wednesday 8:00-4:00, Thursday 8:00-6:00 and Friday 8:00-12:00.** The Town Hall has a drop box on the right side of the front door and has on-line tax lookup and tax payment options (fees apply to payments only) at [www.columbiact.org](http://www.columbiact.org). Please call the Tax Office 860-228-0230 for more information on this service.

**CONSERVATION EASEMENT MONITORING:** Beginning this past fall and into winter, members of the Town of Columbia Conservation and Agriculture Commission (CCAG) will be visiting the properties in town that have conservation easements attached to them.

The Land Trust Alliance defines a conservation easement as “a voluntary legal agreement between a landowner and a land trust or government agency that permanently limits uses of the land in order to protect its conservation values”.

A notice about the scheduling of the visit will be sent in advance to the property owner(s). Property owners are welcome to join the CCAG member(s) during the visit.

The CCAG members(s) will file a Conservation Easements Monitoring Report for each property. The report will include written and photographic documentation identifying the condition of the conserved property on the date(s) of the inspection.

Over time many properties in town have changed hands and the new owners of the property are unaware that their property has a conservation easement or unaware of the limited permitted uses of the area under conservation easement. So, this is a great time for the CCAG member(s) to meet with and educate the property owners on its restrictions.

Please remember that the CCAG members(s) are NOT involved with enforcement regarding findings of un-permitted activity. Enforcement is under the jurisdiction of the Town of Columbia Zoning Enforcement Officer (ZEO). Thank You – CCAG Secretary Tom McGrath
COMING EVENTS

1/2/20 & 1/16/20: MOBILE FOODSHARE: THURSDAY, JANUARY 2ND AND 16TH FROM 1:15 PM TO 1:30 PM COLUMBIA-BAPTIST FELLOWSHIP, 195 US-6: An outdoor food distribution service for persons of low income. Please bring your own grocery bag. Text FOODSHARE to 85511 to receive the mobile schedule and cancellations directly on your phone. More info.

COMING UP AT THE SAXTON B. LITTLE LIBRARY THIS MONTH:

Puzzle Swap – Trade your old jigsaw puzzles for something new to you! A perfect activity for cold and snowy days. SBL puzzle swap will take place on Saturday, January 18th, from 1:00-3:00pm. Stop in the Library for details about what you can exchange!

Downton Abbey Fan? – our Friday movie series will start the new year with the Downton Abbey movie, Friday, January 3rd at 1:00pm. If Downton Abbey’s not your thing, be sure to stop in and see our January line up, including Ad Astra and Judy.

Heart Art for Kids – Join us on January 30th at 6:00pm to create themed art just in time for Valentine’s Day! Limited to 20. Contact Megan at 860-228-0350 or mquigley@columbiactlibrary.org to register.

Little Foodies join us for Little Hands Art inspired by Food on Wednesday, January 24th at 10:30am for ages 18 months to 4 years. Limited to 12. Stop by or contact Megan at 860-228-0350 or mquigley@columbiactlibrary.org to register.

Visit our website at columbiactlibrary.org or like us on Facebook to keep up to date with everything going on at your local library, including story times, book groups, Friday movies, knitting group, writers group and more!

1/12/20: COLUMBIA CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH (323 CT-87)
COMMUNITY BREAKFAST: SATURDAY, JANUARY 12, 2020, 8:00 AM – 11:00 AM, Parish Hall: Contact the Church office with special requests. We aim to please. 860-228-9306. Breakfast includes omelets and Belgian waffles made to order and served with grits, scrambled eggs, bacon, sausage, frittata of the month, fruit, homemade baked goods, coffee, tea and juice. Something new each month. Lactose and gluten free items available.

ALL YOU CAN EAT: $10.00 Adults $9.00 Seniors $4.00 for children under 12
1/26/20: COLUMBIA PARKS & RECREATION CUPCAKE CHALLENGE
JANUARY 26, 2020, 8:00 PM, YEOMANS HALL.

COLUMBIA PARKS & RECREATION
CUPCAKE CHALLENGE

CANDY THEMED

2 pm YEOMANS HALL
$5 to taste

SUNDAY
JANUARY 26, 2020
$10 to enter

REGISTER ONLINE
HTTP://COLUMBIA.RECDESK.COM
PHONE: 860-228-8513
EMAIL: RECREATION@COLUMBIACT.ORG
PRESCHOOL SCREENING

The Early Childhood Team of Horace W. Porter School is pleased to announce that we will conduct Preschool Screenings for Columbia 3-year olds (turning 3 by December 31, 2020) and any 4-year olds not previously screened (and not turning 5 by December 31, 2020). The screening dates will be on Tuesday, January 28 and Tuesday, March 31. The purpose of this screening is to collect information about each preschooler’s early development in the areas of cognition, communication, motor functioning, and social interaction. This will help us to determine whether your child needs any special services in order to prepare for school success.

Parents can also include their children in the Preschool Lottery starting around January 15, 2020 for possible placement in the 2020 - 2021 Porter School Preschool Program. Please go to www.hwporter.org and click on Preschool Registration that is located on the yellow ribbon in the middle of the page on/or after January 15. For more information, please call Deb Dupuis, Admin. Assistant to the Director of Student Services at 860-228-0585.

If you have concerns about a child that has not yet turned 3 years old, please contact Birth-to-Three program at 800-505-7000.

FRIENDS OF THE LIBRARY

Friends would like to thank all of you who helped make 2019 a successful year. With our membership drive, donations of money and books, we can offer some help to our library. For those of you who frequent the library, you will know what our contribution provides. This year we hope for the same success.

We would also like to ask for more Chapel volunteers. We need help with some of our sections such as History, Parenting and Health. Our crew sorts through thousands of books each year so that on sale days, only the best are presented to the public. If you are interested in learning more please email Laurie Rogers at laurob927@sbcglobal.net with the subject “FOL Volunteer” or stop by the library and talk with the librarians.
We have many people who help with our book sales to make them successful, but we’d like to acknowledge the men who do the heavy job of collecting books from the Transfer Station here in Columbia and thank Michelle Schroder for recently joining them in that task. We want to thank them for the hours spent in this capacity.

Our book donations sustain us so keep them coming! This is what we are about, NO BOOKS to a landfill!

Please join us at our next sale on **February 7th, 8th and 9th.**

Look for our sign on the Green and our [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com) Page - Friends of the Saxton B. Little Free Library.

**COLUMBIA HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

**Irish Heritage Event - By Judy Ortiz**

The Columbia Historical Society will be hosting a series of events in 2020 where we will learn the origins of different family traditions. The first event will be held on March 6th at 6:30 at Yeomans Hall. Ryan D. Mahoney, Executive Director of Ireland’s Great Hunger Museum at Quinnipiac University, will present a lecture on the museum’s assemblage of art focused on Ireland’s Great Hunger and how it is relevant to understanding the life, land, language and culture of Ireland, as well as a number of modern issues we face today. The museum contains the largest collection of Great Hunger related artwork in the world. From March 2018-March 2019, a major portion of its collection was exhibited in Dublin, Skibbereen, and Derry for its traveling exhibition Coming Home: Art and the Great Hunger. The exhibition was viewed by over 110,000 visitors.

This event is open to the public and a free will donation would be appreciated. Light refreshments will be served. If you have any questions, feel free to contact Judy Ortiz at (860) 208-9881.
Celebrating Family Traditions - By Judy Ortiz

During the year 2020, the Columbia Historical Society will be hosting programs and exhibits that celebrate the traditions that every family holds dear. Such traditions include those brought from ancestral locations and heritages, those handed down in living memory from parents and grandparents, and those developed in modern times through family gatherings for holidays or significant events.

Programs will focus on the cultures of groups that migrated to this area from around the world. These cultures will be celebrated through storytelling, food, and music. For those interested in researching their family’s past, a three-part course in genealogy will be offered. Families will also be offered the opportunity to display family items that illustrate their family’s traditions.

Every family has a story to tell. We hope you will share yours with the Columbia community. For further information or to find out how you can get involved, contact Judy Ortiz (860) 208-9881 or jortiz6151@gmail.com.
Scouts BSA Columbia Troops 162B and 162G: Times are Changing and We are Growing!

The BSA’s mission is to prepare young people to make ethical and moral choices by instilling in them the values of the Scout Oath and Scout Law. Scouts BSA is a year-round program for all youth 11-17 years old that provides fun, adventure, learning, challenge, and responsibility to help them become the best version of themselves. As of February 2019, the Scouts BSA program opened up admission to girls ages 11 to 17. Columbia Troop 162 witnessed and embraced many changes: we now have 5 young ladies who have formed Troop 162G, and our Troop 162B has increased to 20 members strong!

Columbia’s Troops have been working since February on collaborative projects. Last May, Columbia Troops 162G and 162B worked together during our first annual Scrap Metal Drive. We would like to thank Columbia residents: your scrap metal donations raised nearly $970.00 for our troops! Many thanks are extended to John’s Scrap Metal, who donated a large dumpster, and the Gates Family, who allowed us to use their Rolgate Property for staging that day. With the success of our first scrap metal drive, we are planning for another drive in April! More recently, we are very appreciative of your non-perishable food donations that were collected in early December. In spite of the fact that the winter weather impacted the annual Gazebo and Tree lighting, we were still able to collect over 175 food items for the town food bank. Thank you, Columbia! These Scout efforts, along with your support, allow all of us to give back to our community.

Look for our Scouts around town: every Saturday, our Scouts are sorting redeemable cans and bottles at the Transfer Station. Please stop by if you see one of us there. While we might not be in uniform, we would like to let you know who we are and how we serve our community. Troops 162B and 162G are so proud to call Columbia our home. During the school year, our Troops meet on Thursday nights in the hall of St Columba from 7:00 pm to 8:30 pm.
AHM YOUTH AND FAMILY SERVICES

Columbia Residents are invited to take part in a number of new human service programs that are being offered this winter and spring through neighbors at AHM Youth and Family Services. New programs include: SMART Recovery Group for Young Adults coping with an addiction (ages 18-24) - Every Monday 5:30 pm-7 pm at AHM, SMART Recovery Group for Friends & Family - Every Thursday 5:30 pm-7 pm at AHM, and an ADHD Parent Support Group - Every 2nd and 4th Wednesday 6:30-7:30 pm at AHM. These programs are free of charge to Columbia residents.

Columbia seniors needing help from an AHM Youth Worker with small household projects should inquire about the TASKs program. Call Brendan Grimm at 860-228-9488 for more information. There is no cost for this program.

On Saturday, March 21, 2019, AHM’s Board of Directors and St. Peter’s Episcopal Church will once again team up to present Nature and Adventure Day, as part of Maple Festival 2020. This all-day event offers a wide range of indoor and outdoor exhibits and interactive environmental education activities for children and adults. Tickets can be purchased at the door.

Each of these activities will take place on the AHM Campus, within minutes of Columbia. AHM’s address is 25 Pendleton Drive in Hebron. The office number is 860-228-9488 and check out the new website at www.ahmyouth.org.

Columbia residents also have access to what is called the AHM Family Resource Center, which includes:

- KinderRama Pre-School
- Play and Learn Groups
- First Steps in Music
- Romp and Stomp
For more information on the location of these programs, dates and costs, please contact Becky Murray, the AHM Family Resource Center Coordinator at 860-228-0871 or email at BeckyM@ahmyouth.org

AHM is a public charity that provides a wide range of human services for the residents of Andover, Columbia, Hebron, and Marlborough. The Town of Columbia has town residents that serve on the AHM Board of Directors. There are many different volunteer opportunities at AHM. If you are interested in learning more about AHM’s work in Columbia, call Tressa Giordano, AHM’s Executive Director at 860-228-9488.