



TOWN OF MONROE

OFFICE OF THE FIRST SELECTMAN

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FIRST SELECTMAN'S UPDATE TO TOWN COUNCIL October 13, 2020 Town Council Meeting

COVID-19 UPDATE

- As of today, the total cases in Monroe is at 163. We have been advised by the state that cases reported on Monday may include positive cases from 9/26-10/8 that are newly reported by DPH as part of catch-up reporting. The Governor's office is reporting that the state's 7-day rolling test positivity rate is approximately 1.5%.
- In concert with the State's Phase 3 Re-Opening which began yesterday, the following changes took effect today:
 - Town Hall is open for walk-in services. Rules regarding social distancing and mask requirements must be followed.
 - The Edith Wheeler Memorial Library has expanded hours for express browsing and allowing walk-in access, subject to overall reduced capacity limitations. Details at www.ewml.org.
 - We continue to encourage scheduling appointments for Town services online (www.MonroeCT.org/appointments)
 - We continue to encourage servicing remotely by calling or emailing Town Hall and to use the "Library to Go" service.
- Halloween
 - The State Department of Public Health has released recommendations for Halloween this year, which are attached and also available on our website at www.MonroeCT.org/COVID-19. For parents and residents who choose to participate in Trick-or-Treating activities on Halloween night, please take specific note of the guidelines regarding Trick-or-Treating.
 - Based upon the state guidelines, our Youth Commission will not be holding their annual Trick or Trunk event this year.
 - The Library's annual Halloween parade for preschool children will be conducted as a drive-through event on Friday, October 30th, and employing all recommended safety precautions. Details and signup will be posted at www.ewml.org.

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

As you are likely aware, Dave York has been our Emergency Management Director (EMD) for over two decades. During this time, emergency management has evolved considerably, and currently requires a significant and increasing amount of time. The current COVID-19 pandemic highlights the intensity and complexity of planning and response. Dave has a passion for our Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) and has decided to focus his efforts on leading the volunteer CERT team. In that capacity, Dave York will assume the role of Deputy EMD-CERT. While this is a critical support role, it will be less demanding of his time.

Keith White has served as Deputy EMD since his promotion to Police Captain. Since then, he has taken on increasing responsibilities for emergency management, as evidenced recently during our response to Tropical Storm Isaias and the ongoing pandemic. Keith White will assume the role of Emergency Management Director.

There remains an ongoing need for a broadly focused Deputy EMD. I am pleased to share that Bill Davin will assume the role of Deputy EMD. I hope you will join me in congratulating Keith and Bill on these new assignments, and thanking Dave for his many years of service as EMD, and for his continued leadership on our CERT Team.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT – NEW BUSINESS UPDATES

- **Warehouse Wines & Spirits:** Existing business will be moving from Main St. and occupying 4,600 square feet of the former CVS location in the Big Y shopping center on Monroe Turnpike. Final approval pending at next P&Z meeting.
- **Biometrics/Northeast Laser:** Will expand their current location on Main Street into the 6,800 square feet vacated by Warehouse Wines.
- **Angelo's Specialties Fine Foods** opened on Elm Street (former Gaetano's location) on 10/4. We are looking to schedule a ribbon cutting.
- **Crown Pizza:** In the process of approvals to open on Main Street (former Tuscany's location.)

CELL TOWER UPDATE

As was reported earlier, a public informational meeting was conducted on 9/30/2020 regarding the cell tower proposal by ARX Wireless at 345 Fan Hill Rd behind the Chalk Hill building. While the next step in this process would be consideration by Town Council of a ground lease, based upon outstanding questions raised during the public meeting, this matter is not yet ready for Town Council consideration. I am specifically awaiting for ARX to finalize their report confirming their evaluation of other Town land in the area and to correct certain addresses on their balloon simulation report. Furthermore, while the proposed lease is still under review with the Town Attorney, any lease to be considered would incorporate assurances from ARX to provide an independent power density emissions report to demonstrate compliance with FCC regulations.

PURA INVESTIGATION

As I announced in August, the Town of Monroe was granted intervenor status in the PURA investigation regarding the Eversource response to Tropical Storm Isaias. We continue to collect statements from residents and businesses at www.monroect.org/pura, and have received over 70 reports, all of which will be submitted to PURA according to their docket schedule later this year.

There are three, additional opportunities for any member of the public to speak directly to PURA during the following scheduled public hearings. All will be conducted via ZOOM and you must register in advance:

- **Wednesday, October 21, 2020, at 11:00 a.m.**
- **Thursday, October 22, 2020, at 9:00 a.m.**
- **Friday, October 23, 2020, at 9:00 a.m.**

More information and registration links to the public hearings are available on the Town website under “News and Announcements”

Connecticut Department of Public Health Halloween Guidance

The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic requires all of us to take steps to keep ourselves, our families, and our communities safe and healthy: wear our masks, wash our hands frequently, and maintain social distancing. As a result, we will need to celebrate many fall traditions differently this year, including Halloween. Traditional Halloween activities carry a high risk for spreading COVID-19, but we can reduce that risk significantly by organizing and participating in fun, lower or moderate risk alternatives. The holiday may look different this year, but the Connecticut Department of Public Health (CT DPH) believes we can still enjoy a happy (and healthy) Halloween.

The CT DPH recommends that everyone planning to participate in Halloween activities this year review the [guidance](#) recently issued by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). That guidance describes “lower” “moderate” and “higher” risk activities. DPH recommends that Connecticut residents avoid higher risk Halloween traditions and focus celebrations on the lower and moderate risk activities.

The ability to maintain social distancing and follow face covering rules is especially important when participating in Halloween activities. In addition, please refrain from leaving your home for any Halloween activity and do not pass out Halloween candy if you are ill or have traveled to one of the states listed on the [Connecticut travel advisory](#) between October 16th and October 30th (i.e. 14 days before Halloween). In this case you should be following the testing and self-quarantining guidelines, per [Executive Order No. 9C](#). CDC guidance and safety tips are summarized below, along with additional considerations for restaurants and colleges and Universities.

PARTIES AND EVENTS	
Events to consider	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In lieu of in-person house parties, host virtual Halloween events, e.g. virtual costume contests.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Host drive-by Halloween events, e.g. neighborhood or town-based house decorating.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prepare candy scavenger hunts at homes with your household members.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have a Halloween movie night with the people in your household.
Events to avoid	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Large parties that exceed 25 people indoors or 150 people outdoors <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hosting an indoor party that exceeds 25 people indoors or 150 people outdoors can result in a fine of \$500 Attending a party that exceed attendance rules can result in a fine of \$250
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Large Halloween-themed parades where physical distancing cannot be maintained.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Indoor haunted houses where people may be crowded together and screaming Hayrides or tractor rides with people who are not in your household Traditional trick-or-treating where treats are handed to children who go door to door (See Trick or Treating tips below)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trunk-or-treat events where cars gather in a large parking lot and allow children to move from car to car to collect candy.
Other guidance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restaurants that choose to host Halloween-themed events should strictly adhere to capacity and physical distancing guidance as outlined in Sector Rules.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Colleges and universities should consider alternatives to on-campus costume parties or trick-or-treating between dorms, as these activities will be challenging to maintain physical distancing. Guidance for safe Halloween activities should be shared widely with on- and off-campus students.

TRICK-OR-TREATING	
Recommendations for Halloween 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Traditional trick-or-treating is a high risk activity. Instead, the CDC and CT DPH recommends participating in one-way trick-or-treating where goodie bags or a large bowl of candy are placed outside of your home for families to grab and go while continuing to social distance. • If you are preparing goodie bags, wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 second before and after preparing the bags.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For people who choose to hand out candy: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Before you answer the door, make sure your face covering is in place over your nose and mouth, wash or sanitize your hands before answering door. • Remain six feet from the Trick-or-Treater. • Place the candy inside the child’s bag for them instead of having them take it from the bowl themselves.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homes providing candy may set up hand sanitizer stations outside or parents/guardians can pack a travel bottle of their own.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents/guardians should limit the number of homes their children visit.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is not recommended to trick-or-treat with people outside of your household.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remain six feet away from people outside your household at all times.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All trick-or-treating participants should wear a mask or face covering while outside at all times. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A costume mask (such as for Halloween) is not a substitute for a cloth or surgical mask. A costume mask should not be used unless it is made of two or more layers of breathable fabric that covers the mouth and nose and does not leave gaps around the face. • Do not wear a costume mask over a protective cloth or surgical mask because it can be dangerous if the costume mask makes it hard to breathe. Instead, consider using a Halloween-themed cloth mask. • Do not wear a costume rubber mask over another face covering of any kind.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All trick-or-treating participants should wear a mask or face covering while outside at all times.