



Washington Economic Development Committee  
Tues, May 12, 2020

**Notes:**

> State of Washington CT

- **the Town** - Jim Brinton, Michelle Gorra, Jay Hubelbank

Mid-March Town Hall closed to direct public access but fully staffed with services available as needed. Guidance provided by the Governor with a daily “online meeting”. Parks and Rec focused on Keep Safe...programs likely to open later with many canceled.

Substantial funding provided by weekenders to support local businesses with several weeks of support for the employees and a businesses themselves.

- **the Schools** - Megan Bennett, Carney O'Brien

R12 Schools

98% of the student online. June 18 schools will close. May 20 the custodial staff will return to the schools. In-person Graduation canceled with the names of Washington graduates “flagged” on the Town Hall lawn.

Summer school tentatively planned for July.

Washington Montessori School

Distanced learning since mid-March with very strong family support. Reopening unlikely. Graduation options to be guided by the Governor’s recommendations. Summer school under consideration for July...likely to be online.

Enrollment is strong with weekenders considering staying.

**Project NOW** – Bringing Young Families to Washington – Julie King

Real estate market strong with commitment to “find a home here.” Survey of recent arrivals ready. R12 and Montessori to introduce recent enrollee families.

- **the Businesses** - Lisa Stein Val Sedelnick, Fran Keilty

First Selectman strong appreciation to the WBA for their support and website keeping the community informed.

Very strong community support for the local businesses...much appreciated. Real challenges. Remanaging customer flow and supply chain. Curbside - 150% of the work for 35% of the revenue. Working hard to avoid laying off staff. Unclear as to reopening with the May 20<sup>th</sup> directive from the Governor – keeping the employees safe?

> **Washington Business Promotion** - Julia Nable (SandorMax), Lisa Stein

- Project update:

We sent out the Stroll/Treasure Hunt materials to all the businesses who have signed up, including their Clue Letters to put up in windows.. We've been fielding questions, mostly from folks concerned they may not have their full window decorations completed by tomorrow. We've let them know that is not a problem, as the Stroll will continue through June 21st and we'll be promoting it all along.

We've had a great response:

41 total signed up

34 for Stroll

23 for gift card

39 for social media profiles

Here is the link to the live spreadsheet:

[https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1M4exhL9pu8xtMcq4lKdQomFp5\\_bjIQj9lb9OOoe5l6k/edit#gid=685859161](https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1M4exhL9pu8xtMcq4lKdQomFp5_bjIQj9lb9OOoe5l6k/edit#gid=685859161)

Here is the link to the Stroll/Treasure Hunt event: <https://explorewashingtonct.com/events/washington-gems-treasure-hunt/>

(Map and Clue worksheet can be downloaded from the event page)

- Realtor Community

**Julia Nable** <[julia@sandormax.com](mailto:julia@sandormax.com)>

**To:** Julia Nable

Wed, May 13 at 1:26 PM

To our realtor community,

The Town of Washington and the WBA have been working on several promotional initiatives to assist our local businesses and organizations during this crisis. It was suggested by realtors we've spoken with that it would be helpful for those new to town, especially recent renters, to have handy access to information about things to do around town, shopping, and special services.

We created a "Welcome to Washington" email blast that includes helpful links as well as links to relevant articles on [ExploreWashingtonCT.com](https://explorewashingtonct.com). We will be sending that email to you later this afternoon. Feel free to forward it directly to your renters, or copy and paste any of the information into your own e-news template for sharing on future communications.

And as always, we invite you to share any of the content on [ExploreWashingtonCT.com](https://explorewashingtonct.com) with your clients or prospects.

We look forward to hearing from you with other suggestions you may have.

Best regards and stay well!  
Julia

## New Local Restaurant Farm-Share Service OVERVIEW – Howard Rosenfeld

The Northwest Connecticut Regional Food Hub works with 30 farms in northwest Connecticut picking up their fresh, locally grown produce and delivering it to happy wholesale customers (schools, grocery stores, and restaurants). During the COVID-19 pandemic, we want to continue supporting our region's farmers and getting fresh, healthy food to the region's residents. We also want to continue our relationships with our local chefs and restaurants and support them during this difficult time. In order to do that we propose to partner with local restaurants that would like to offer a farm/share CSA service to their customers. Currently we have 14 restaurants from all over CT interested in this service and 450 residents who expressed interest in a farm share service through our website.

**HOW WILL IT WORK?** You may have seen that many restaurants across the country are adopting this new service. Here are links to a few articles about them: • Locally-owned D.C. Restaurant Adopts CSA Model • 10 LA Restaurants Selling Produce Boxes to Support Local Farmers Restaurant reach out to their customers and allow them to order a "farm share" online. The restaurant then puts in a bulk order through our online ordering system by Monday of each week by noon. We will deliver your order by 10 am on Wednesday or Thursday depending on where you are located. You will then put together your shares and your customers can do curbside pick-up.

**WHAT WILL IT COST AND WHAT WILL BE INCLUDED?** You can decide how to price your shares. We have suggested a price to the customer of \$30/wk for a weekly share of produce for a family and \$15/wk for an individually sized share. The growing season is just getting underway here in Northwest Connecticut but salad greens, spinach, spring onions, radishes, and kale are growing. As the season progresses we'll have beans, leaks, tomatoes, peppers, cucumbers, squash, herbs, potatoes- whatever is growing. Local bread and eggs can also be added to the shares and we're happy to source those for you as well. We will plan to post what will be available to include in the farm shares for that week on Sunday of each week. You can order what you want to include from that list.

**WHAT WILL WE DO TO PROMOTE PARTNERS?** As mentioned above, we have over 450 people who have gone onto our website to express interest in this farm-share service.

1. We will email them directly to tell them about our restaurant partners.
2. We will have partners listed on our NWCT Food Hub website.
3. We will highlight these restaurants on DiscoverLitchfieldHills.com.

2.

**HOW CAN WE HELP GET THIS TO RESIDENTS IN NEED?** We are already partnering with many of the local food banks in the region. When your customers sign up online, you could allow them the option of donating a farm share to someone in need. We can then partner with your local food pantry to get that share to a family who needs it.

**INTERESTED?** We'd like to know ASAP. We plan to do initial outreach to interested customers by the end of this week (April 24th). Please contact Renee, Food Hub Manager at [nwctfoodhub@gmail.com](mailto:nwctfoodhub@gmail.com) or 203-206-5459 (cell) FMI.

### > **Wifi in the Depot** - Jay Hubelbank

Fully implemented in the Town Hall Cupola. Coverage in the Plaza. Repeater installed in Washington Supply providing coverage to Titus Road/The Pantry. Request made to Judy Black for repeater installation.

## > **NW Connect** – Wayne Hileman

Clear indication of the critical value of fiberoptic network covering NW Connecticut. Tremendous cost. Not likely be covered by the commercial providers. It is unclear where funding will be found.

## **Community/Senior Center Update**

After meeting with the Selectmen and listening to public comments at a recent workshop, it was decided to investigate the Titus Park property. It has several advantages; the town owns the property, it has public water supply nearby, no drilled well required, it is in close proximity to the Depot and the land is clear of any buildings or obstructions.

There is still much work that has to be done to determine soil conditions, delineate regulated setbacks, septic systems, parking areas and size and options for the location of the building. What are the current flood plain restrictions? Once those items are determined, we need to process the proposal through all the regulatory commissions; Wetlands, Zoning, Planning, ZBA, etc

In order to acquire this information we hired S.L.A.M. Collaborative and Milone and MacBroom to assist us in determining the feasibility and appropriateness of the area. Starting this week they will review the property survey, determine elevations, soil conditions, feasibility for parking, septic system and possible building locations. Create a schematic of a building and its size etc. We will have the information required to present to the regulatory groups.

The big question is when is all this going to happen? what is the time table? The whole project, to the grand opening, we estimate to be five years. In the short term, the feasibility and appropriateness part will be done by the end of May or mid-June. We hope to have all the required permits and approvals by the end of the calendar year. Following those activities we will enter the design stages that will require going out to bid and developing timelines and costs.

We plan to continue with our workshops to keep everyone informed on the accomplishments and plans.

## **CTvisit.com**

## **We Want to Promote Reopened Businesses!**

As tourism businesses start to reopen beginning May 20, we will be letting consumers know what experiences are now available, getting the word out via locally targeted social media, content marketing, public relations and on CTvisit.com.

We know you've prioritized the health and safety of employees and guests above all, and we want to reassure potential visitors with those specifics, too.

So, please let us know if you will be opening this spring or summer, and:

- Tell us approximately when you'll be welcoming guests
- Describe what new safety measures you will have in place beyond the state-mandated rules
- Provide photos of your property with new safety measures in place

Please respond by email to Jean Hebert at [Jean.hebert@ct.gov](mailto:Jean.hebert@ct.gov).

Tell Us You're Reopening. Thank you for all you continue to do to support Connecticut tourism!