

COMMUNITY NEWS

EVENTS

REAL ESTATE

Vol. 1, Issue 3

Holiday Edition 2023

FREE

Holidays in Hooksett - Light Up the Village returns

By Tony LaCasse
Hooksett Bridge

HOOKSETT - Historic Hooksett Village will come alive for the second annual Light Up The Village event. The town is gearing up for its most anticipated annual event, scheduled for Friday, Dec. 1, from 5-9 p.m. at the town square adjacent to Robie's Country Store on Riverside Street.

The vision: Lighting up tradition and community

Light Up The Village is more than just a festive event, it's a visionary endeavor that aims to illuminate Hooksett's historical and cultural treasures while building a stronger,



The Lilac Bridge over the Merrimack River was lit for the holidays last year. (Courtesy photo)

more vibrant community. It all began in 2022 when Hooksett resident, local real estate consultant and Hooksett Heritage

Commission Chairman Tony LaCasse asked, "How cool would it be if all the historic buildings in the village square

could light up at the same time as the traditional town tree lighting?" Thanks to the blessing and support of the Robie's

Country Store Historic Preservation Corporation, LaCasse embarked on this mission in November 2022.

The Impact:

Fostering Community Spirit

In just three short weeks, LaCasse and his team brought the vision to life, lighting up the village on Dec. 9, 2022, during the first Hooksett Light Up The Village event. Over 800 people attended that night, experiencing the warmth of community spirit and fun.

But this event is about more than just lights and laughter. It's about creating lasting memories, fostering a sense of pride in Hooksett, and

See LIGHT Page 4

Hooksett Hero - Barb Brennan

There's a name that resonates with warmth and community spirit - Barbara Brennan, affectionately known as Barb. While the exact number of years she's resided in Hooksett remains uncertain, one thing is clear - Barb Brennan has dedicated herself to serving and giving back to the people of Hooksett



Brennan

since the day she first set roots in this tight-knit community.

Over the years, Barb has left an

indelible mark on Hooksett

See HERO Page 3

Bus depot being protested by neighbors

By Tony LaCasse
and Ginger Kozlowski
Hooksett Bridge

HOOKSETT - While the Hooksett School District struggles with providing bus service for students, some residents at the Granite Hills development on Route 3 are protesting the proposed use of property that abuts the development for school bus parking and maintenance.

Originally the lot off Thames Road was approved for a self-storage facility for cars, RVs, and boats back in the fall of 2022. That use was allowed under the town's performance zoning rules and was approved by the Hooksett Planning Board, as a passive storage facility for automobiles, boats and RVs. What surprised residents was discovering its use had changed to what they would later call a school bus depot or terminal

for this same site. This site is located in between the Granite Brook Mobile Home Park, Ambrose Equipment, Hooksett Fireworks and The Villages at Granite Hill condos. The site has a small amount of frontage on Hooksett Road with the only feasible access to the site being on a private road namely Thames Road leading to the private condo community The Villages at Granite Hill. Resi-

See BUS Page 5

Hooksett Food Pantry asks for food donations by Nov. 10

HOOKSETT - The holiday season is fast approaching! Did you know that the Hooksett Community Food Pantry provides holiday food baskets for clients of the pantry and also to those enrolled in the Hooksett Holiday Assistance Program?

As you are all aware, the price of food has skyrocketed! We have been as frugal as possible with our monetary donations from our amazing community. We are reaching out again for either monetary donations, or the following

food items for our baskets: boxed stuffing, canned cranberry sauce, canned pumpkin pie filling, pie crust mix, corn muffin mix, canned veggies (creamed corn and green beans), canned turkey or chicken broth, canned turkey gravy, boxed mashed or scalloped potatoes, small (14 oz) canned yams.

Please donate by Nov. 10. Your generosity is greatly appreciated.

*Barb Brennan
Hooksett Community
Food Pantry Chairman*

Riverwalk Trail is almost complete

HOOKSETT - The Hooksett Riverwalk Trail, Phase IV, is in the final stages of construction and will soon be open to foot traffic. This phase takes visitors to the Allentown border, where it meets up with the Allentown trail system and serves as a regional trail connector between the two towns. The complete trail provides nearly 1.5 miles of trails and 750 linear feet of bridges and boardwalks over streams and wetlands.

This exciting achievement began in 2016 with the opening of Phase I. Since then, two more phases have opened with the addition of the Brick Kiln Historic Trail Loop. This trail loop was named for the brick industry that took place on the property for more than 100 years, ending in the 1930s.

While part of the funding has come from Hooksett residents, who approved three warrant articles in the past eight years, the Conservation Commission was awarded funding through three state and federal grants of \$210,000. In addition, the land itself was acquired through gifts, with the town funding only \$114,692 for the 126-acre area (less than \$1k per acre).

This conservation area



The Riverwalk Trail. (Courtesy photo)

provides a beautiful landscape along the Merrimack River, while protecting state-endangered and threatened species, and is one of the last undeveloped areas of the Merrimack River in southern New Hampshire.

“Trails bring important socio-economic benefits to Hooksett by attracting visitors and businesses to the town,” said Cindy Robertson, chair of the Conservation Commission. “In addition, these great outdoor spaces are available for people of all ages and abilities to connect with nature and improve their overall health and well-being. We are proud of the efforts by the town and residents to make this trail system a reality for generations to

come.”

A grand opening of the Hooksett Riverwalk Trail is planned for the spring. Hopes are for a joint trail opening event with officials in Allentown and Hooksett if the trail system in Allentown is completed in time.

The end of the trail follows the old Railroad line that ends at Canal Street where the new luxury apartments are located on 25 Canal Street in the Suncook Village area of Allentown.

To learn more, contact JoCarol Woodburn, Hooksett Conservation Commission at jocarolg@gmail.com or Bridgette Grotheer, staff assistant, at bgrotheer@hooksett.org or 603-289-0279.

THE HOOKSETT BRIDGE

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Hooksett, Allentown and Pembroke*

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Oldest citizens in town honored at Hooksett-ites luncheon

HOOKSETT - The Town of Hooksett in conjunction with the Hooksett-ites held the 44th annual Golden Age Luncheon at the Derryfield Country Club on Sept. 28. This luncheon honors Hooksett residents aged 80 years and older.

There were town dignitaries represented at the luncheon as well as the Rev. Steven Lepine from the Holy Rosary Catholic Church in Hooksett, and Hooksett Public Library Assistant Director Mark Glisson. Hooksett's oldest residents were also in attendance.

The Hooksett-ites are a senior group open to all seniors in Hooksett.

people in her community have access to quality education within the town. Barb has also been a vocal proponent of higher education opportunities in Hooksett, striving to keep educational resources close to home.

Barb's service to her community is matched by her service to her country. Before dedicating herself to Hooksett, Barb served in the U.S. Air Force, a testament to her commitment to making a difference on both a local and national scale.

In addition to her more prominent roles, Barb has quietly lent a helping hand in countless other ways, many of which remain unknown to the community. This level of dedication and service has earned her the admiration and respect of her fellow Hooksett residents.

Barb Brennan's tireless efforts in coordinating food baskets for the holidays, in collaboration with the Food Pantry, scouts, and other volunteers in town, demonstrate her unwavering commitment to making the holidays a little brighter for those in need. She brings the community together during these special times, reminding everyone of the true spirit of togetherness and giving.

In recognition of her exceptional service to the community and her ongoing commitment to making Hooksett a better place for all, Barbara Brennan has been nominated as The Hooksett Bridge's Hometown Hero for the Holiday Edition. Her dedication, kindness, and selflessness are an inspiration to us all. Perhaps it's time we all sat down for breakfast with Barb, to learn more about her incredible journey and the countless ways she has enriched the lives of the people of Hooksett.

Barb's commitment to her community extends to the realm of local governance. For many years, she has been the trusted supervisor of the checklist during town elections. Her role is pivotal, as she ensures that voters are registered and well-informed about the voting process. When Hooksett residents step into the polling station, they can rest assured that they are in capable hands, especially if they're new to the voting process. Barb's warm and welcoming demeanor has provided comfort and guidance to countless voters, making the democratic experience more accessible for all.

HERO - cont.

Continued from Page 1

Barb's friendly face is a familiar sight throughout Hooksett, whether she's at the Food Pantry, Town Hall, the local schools assisting with elections, or helping with donation pickups. She's even been spotted ringing the bell for the Salvation Army during the holiday season. Barb's unwavering dedication to her community shines through in every role she undertakes.

However, one of Barb's most enduring and notable advocacy efforts has been her championing of a local high school in Hooksett. She's been a steadfast advocate for ensuring that young

people in her community have access to quality education within the town. Barb has also been a vocal proponent of higher education opportunities in Hooksett, striving to keep educational resources close to home.

Barb's service to her community is matched by her service to her country. Before dedicating herself to Hooksett, Barb served in the U.S. Air Force, a testament to her commitment to making a difference on both a local and national scale.



The oldest woman at the Hooksett-ites' Golden Age Luncheon was Gertrude Conner, shown here with her daughter, Karen Conner Yearke. (Courtesy photo)

This group now meets on the first Friday of the month at the Suncook Senior Center at 10 a.m., unless the center closes for various reasons. On the third

Friday of the month, the Hooksett-ites meeting is at the Hooksett Library for a presentation and meeting.

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*LIGHT - cont.**Continued from Page 1*

educating residents about the historical, cultural, and civic significance of the area.

The Mission: Reviving a Historic Landmark

LaCasse's mission is two-fold: to literally light up the village for a fun night for all during the holidays and shed light on the historic area. This area is Hooksett's charming downtown and has the potential to grow with small businesses, recreational activities, community events, and create affordable housing through revitalization efforts.

The heart of this mission, though, lies in the preservation and development of the old town hall. This historic landmark has been vacant since 2008. Sponsorships will allow this landmark to reopen.

A day of holiday cheer and informative fun

The evening begins with friendly faces from the Granite State Fellowship Church walking the village streets early in the afternoon, spreading holiday cheer and informing neighbors about the evening's festivities.

The event officially kicks off at 5 p.m. with the Holiday Craft Fair open for busi-

ness inside the Congregational Church of Hooksett's fellowship hall. The craft fair is a shopper's paradise, with 53 crafters offering a wide array of unique and handcrafted items. The ladies of the church also plan to host a bake sale inside the church that night to benefit the church.

This year, there's a new approach to the tree-lighting ceremony. A welcome ceremony will take place at the Hooksett Congregational Church at 5 Veterans Drive at 5:30 p.m. in the sanctuary. The ceremony will go over the schedule of events for the evening, then prepare for a procession from the church across the Lilac Bridge.

The procession will be led by 2023 Hooksett Citizens of the Year Sally and Wayne Gehris, who will ride on a lit golf cart, symbolically lighting the way for everyone to the town square. The tree lighting will take place at 6 p.m., featuring the Cawley Middle School band and chorus. Volunteers and staff from the New England Holiday Lighting Company in Hooksett will coordinate the lighting and will be captured with drone video and photos, thanks to Hooksett resident Josh Scheinman.

The event offers a plethora of family-friendly activities:

Story Time at the Arah Prescott Historical Library: All night long, the Hooksett Historical Society will provide storytime at the Arah Prescott Historical Library.

Festival of Trees: The American Legion Hall hosts 21 local businesses and the three local Hooksett schools have sponsored and decorated holiday trees for display and raffle that night.

Photos with Santa: Visit Santa for free inside the American Legion Hall.

Food vendors and food trucks: On Riverside Street, providing a variety of tasty treats. The NH State Grange Hall will be open as a cafeteria where people can sit down, eat, and stay warm if needed.

Hay rides: New this year are hayrides thanks to the community partner Tokyo Joe's. Two hayrides for the kids will be staged at the American Legion parking lot, providing a safe and scenic route down Riverside Street and back. The street will be closed to all traffic from 4:45-9 p.m.

Parking: The main event lot will be at the former Cigna at 2 College Park Drive, with room for 350 cars. A trolley



Miss America teens at last year's Light Up the Village. (Courtesy photo)

bus will shuttle people from the lot to Veterans Park all night long. The trolley will run every 10 minutes during the first and last hour, and every 15 minutes during the middle two hours.

Additional parking and overflow options will be available at Donati Memorial Field, Town Hall, Holy Rosary Catholic Church, and Old Town Hall. Handicap parking will be at the Hooksett Congregational Church.

Grand finale:

Holiday concert and awards

A new addition to this year's event is a holiday concert to be held at the Congregational Church starting at 7:30 p.m. Thanks to the Amherst Town Band, a 35-member band is prepared to wow you with a full holiday set.

The closing ceremony at the Congregational Church will take place at 8:30 p.m. The evening will conclude with the announcement of the lighting contest winners for Main Street homes and public buildings in the village. Homeown-

ers on Main Street in Hooksett are eligible to win a \$500 cash prize for the best holiday light display, thanks to our "Main Street Magic" Light Contest sponsors, The Main Street Man at KW Metropolitan Realty and The New England Holiday Lighting Co.

Supporting a community landmark

This event is not just a fun family event; it's a fundraising opportunity for the old town hall to get back up and running again and open to the public. It is proposed for community use as a meeting space and historical museum open to the public. If you can consider a sponsorship to support this cause, reach out to LaCasse at hooksettheritagecommission@gmail.com.

The Light Up The Village Committee is still looking for volunteers to help that evening, as there is much to do and set up. The committee is also in need of sponsorships to continue its mission of revitalizing Hooksett's historic treasures.

Fall leaf pickup is week of Nov. 6

HOOKSETT - Fall leaf pickup is scheduled for the week of Nov. 6. Please have bagged leaves at the curb on your scheduled trash pickup day.

Friday, Nov. 10, is a holiday, so Friday's trash and leaves will be picked up the following

Monday, Nov. 13.

No limbs, brush or plastic bags will be accepted.

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BUS - cont.

Continued from Page 1

dents and business owners who about this site where this change of use has been proposed express concerns for their safety, health, property values and overall quality of life.

Local Granite Hill resident and local leader in this fight for land use rights is Jarrod Williams, who has devoted hours toward research, investigation and analysis of the happenings at this property abutting his in Granite Hill.

“The condo association and the planning board were fine with this whole thing, until they turned it slowly into the bus plan,” said Williams. “Nobody was giving Grappone a hard time about this before.”

Williams referenced the change of use plan that David Grappone of Ridgeback Self Storage LLC, a resident of Concord, has brought before the planning board in Hooksett.

Other residents have expressed concerns regarding this change of use for this site.

Ridgeback Self Storage LLC received approval for the self-storage use in October 2022. Approximately a month later, SAU 15 Superintendent William Rearick updated the board with answers to questions they had in the past with regard to First Student, saying the landlord had owned the Hooksett property for nine years. The town had already approved this development plan.

Ridgeback had hired a contractor and the steel building was scheduled to be built on site in May 2023 according to the school board meeting minutes.

Granite Hills resident Tracey Adams said “There are so many issues. From the buses running, the noise problem, affecting property values etc. My biggest thing is safety. We

have so many people that walk through there and you’re gonna have all this traffic flowing.”

Williams expressed concern about the number of buses and residents trying to leave for work, and added, “You know, if Grappone had just left the buffer in place I wouldn’t have been a pain..., but it pissed me off. There’s rules and there’s stuff like that for a reason.”

The school board had been working on an agreement with the First Student bus service to provide transportation for students in Hooksett, Candia, and Auburn, and one of the stipulations in the school board’s contract was that buses had to be kept within the three towns according to a phone call conversation late October with James Sullivan, a Hooksett town councilor and planning board member.

“The contract with the school board said that First Student will have a location

within the district to hold their buses,” said Sullivan. “The last update when it was discussed at the school board was that they have a possible location that is still being discussed with the planning board.”

The time of last communication between the school board and First Student is undetermined at this time.

Due to the dispute, First Student has been keeping its school buses at a large parking lot in the Exit 2 area on the north side of state Route 101 by Dunkin’ and the Myles Travel Plaza gas station in Auburn. They are going to stay at Exit 2 until further notice.

“I think where they are now is where they are going to stay, said Sullivan.

Other locations were considered off of Hackett Hill in that empty lot on Route 3A and Exit 10 off I-93 near the old movie theater, according to Sullivan.

Because Sullivan lives in Granite Hills, he has recused himself from any planning board votes.

Concerns were also expressed at that meeting about the impact to the aquifer and disposal of oil from the maintenance of buses, and the lack of a retaining wall. Uses in the performance zone require noise limitations and that there be no adverse effects on adjacent properties. Normally, a noise and emissions study would be performed by a third party.

Sullivan said there is uncertainty about who is pay for such studies and the planning board is waiting for those to make a decision, hopefully by their next meeting on Nov. 6.

David Grappone has not commented on the situation for this report.



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REAL ESTATE

Property revaluations cause concern among public

By Tony LaCasse
and Ginger Kozlowski
Hooksett Bridge

HOOKSETT - Last month, Hooksett property owners received letters from the town informing them of their latest property values, and few were happy about the change. Many residents believed that the increase in assessed value equated to an increase in their property taxes. However, this may not necessarily be the case.

Some residents expressed their shock on the Hooksett NH Community Group Facebook page as they saw properties once valued around \$250,000 assessed at half a million or more. This surprise is understandable since the last time the Town of Hooksett assessed properties was back in 2018, a gap of five years. During this time, property values have experienced significant year-over-year increases, especially from 2020 to the present.

In response to complaints about the assessments, the town extended the deadline to make appointments for disputing property values until Oct. 17.

"The revaluation caused some angst, but don't panic yet," said Town Councilor James Sullivan. "Wait until the tax rate is set by early December through the NH Department of Revenue Administration. Then, you can understand your true property taxes and call town hall first if you have questions."

However, it's crucial to understand that one's assessed value is not the final word on one's property tax bill. Reassessments are conducted periodically to ensure that all



This home, valued last year at \$294,700, was assessed at \$509,900 this year. (Bridge photo)

property owners share the tax burden equally. In this context, it's essential to consider the impact of Hooksett's thriving real estate market.

Southern New Hampshire, including Hooksett, has experienced a hot selling market over the last three years. Houses have been selling for much higher than their listing prices due to increased demand and competitive local factors. The current market value has been determined during the past three years, a time characterized by peak pricing and high demand specific to the Hooksett area.

According to realtor.com, the Greater Manchester and Concord metropolitan areas have consistently ranked in the top 10 "Hottest Zip Codes" in the entire country. This phenomenon is not new, with these areas consistently being in the top 10 hottest zip codes for the past two years. Tony LaCasse, a local real estate consultant specializing in the Greater Manchester/Concord area, attributes this to the more affordable median home values in these New Hampshire metros

"The revaluation caused some angst, but don't panic yet. Wait until the tax rate is set by early December through the NH Department of Revenue Administration."

*- Town Councilor
James Sullivan*

compared to Boston and New York Metros.

For instance, the median home value for a single-family residence in Boston as of September 2023 is \$957,000, and in New York City it's \$797,000 as of August 2023. These high median home values, coupled with the increasing cost of living and remote work opportunities, have led many northeast city dwellers to consider the economical move to Southern New Hampshire. In areas like Hooksett, Pembroke, and Allenstown, prices are more affordable, and the quality of life is excellent compared to major cities.

Due to these dynamics, cash buyers have been acquir-

ing properties locally, which has skewed market values and created a strong, desirable, and competitive real estate market. Thus, when you see your property assessment, know that it's based on the current market value using similar homes that have recently sold. Vision Appraisal, a third-party appraisal company hired by the town of Hooksett, conducted these assessments.

If you believe your property has been wrongly assessed, you had until Oct. 17 to schedule an appointment to have it reconsidered. While that opportunity has passed, you can always reach out to a local real estate professional to better understand your property's value.

It's important to note that when revaluations are carried out, the tax rate is changed to reflect the higher value of the properties being taxed. Approximately a third of property owners see their taxes increase, another third see a decrease, and a third remain the same. The amount of money to be raised by taxation is determined by the budgets and warrant articles approved

at Town Meeting and School District Meeting.

According to Town Councilor Sullivan, the town and school district budgets for 2023-2024 approved by voters amount to approximately \$52 million. Residents' new property assessments will be divided proportionately by the town's approved budget of \$52 million to determine the new property tax rate. This new property tax rate will be reflected in your tax bills in early December. Residents should wait for the new tax rate to understand if their taxes have gone up, down, or remained the same.

For perspective, Sullivan notes that the last time the town assessed properties was in 2018. The tax rate the year prior to the assessment was \$26 per \$1,000 of property value, and after the 2018 evaluation, when property values went up, the tax rate dropped by \$5 per \$1,000 overall. The current tax rate in Hooksett is \$24.05 per \$1,000 of property value before the current revaluations.

Sullivan emphasizes, "Based on major developments in town, it is very likely that residents' property taxes will likely go down even more. Every town in southern New Hampshire is having similar conversations regarding property value and property taxes, and Hooksett is not the only town dealing with these issues."

Hooksett allows for some tax reductions for veterans, their widows, and the elderly. Those interested in disputing their tax bill should contact the Hooksett Tax Assessor's office.

REAL ESTATE

Proposed apartments at Cigna land denied by court

State Supreme Court declines appeal, rezoning possible

By Tony LaCasse
Hooksett Bridge

HOOKSETT - The saga surrounding the proposed construction of an 81-unit apartment building in a strictly no-residential zone in Hooksett Village on 2 College Park Drive has taken unexpected turns, culminating in a legal battle that has drawn the community's attention.

Initiated in late 2021, the initial application for a variance challenged the established zoning ordinance in Hooksett's MUD1 zone. This zone, intended for commercial and mixed-use purposes, explicitly restricts land use to retail stores, personal services businesses, business and professional offices, research and testing laboratories, hotels and motels, restaurants, indoor movie theaters, banks, and various other non-residential purposes.

The absence of residential development from the list of permissible uses triggered a series of proceedings as

Chelmsford Hooksett Properties LLC sought to obtain a variance, unleashing a legal whirlwind ever since.

The timeline of events commenced with the initial variance application in late 2021, followed by a request for a rehearing in 2022. In these proceedings, the Hooksett Zoning Board of Adjustment meticulously examined various factors, including public interest, the spirit of the zoning ordinance, the potential impact on the neighborhood's character, and considerations regarding public safety and welfare. Public input was provided by many residents in the area including one woman residing on Merrimack Street in the Village area who said she would likely move if this were to be allowed in her neighborhood.

The ZBA's denial of the rehearing propelled the case into further legal proceedings. It was during this phase that Chelmsford Hooksett Properties LLC, also known as Brady Sullivan Properties, brought the case before the New Hampshire Housing Appeals Board for further legal action.

The Housing Appeals Board, consisting of three members experienced in land use law and housing development, offered an accessible and expedited platform for addressing disputes relat-

ed to housing developments. The board was established in 2020 to provide an efficient alternative to the costly and time-consuming process of pursuing appeals through Superior Court.

The board's primary aim was to facilitate a quicker, more cost-effective method for appealing local rulings regarding housing developments. This board played a pivotal role in the ongoing case, serving as a critical channel for legal recourse.

The board's decisions could still be subject to appeal in state Supreme Court, maintaining the option for either party to pursue their case further in the traditional legal arena.

This intricate legal process, with multiple phases, deliberations, and appeals, reached a significant turning point on June 13, 2023, when the Housing Appeals Board reversed its prior decision, ultimately favoring the Hooksett Zoning Board of Adjustment. This favorable outcome at the state level rejuvenated the ZBA's position, suggesting that the initial denial of the variance application would remain in place.

Despite this setback, Chelmsford Hooksett Properties LLC, in their pursuit of the proposed apartment building, did not concede. The company filed an appeal with the state Supreme Court, aiming to challenge the Housing Appeals Board's decision. As the highest legal authority within the state, the state Supreme Court held the key to the

case's final resolution.

The recent decision from the state Supreme Court, which declined to hear the appeal, signifies the official conclusion of the legal process related to the variance application. This decision firmly indicates that the vision of an 81-unit apartment complex can no longer be pursued through the legal system as it relates to a variance request for that parcel located at 2 College Park Dr. Hooksett.

What's next? Brady Sullivan could contemplate a different course of action. This potential shift could involve a request to rezone the property, making it eligible for the proposed apartment building, but this would necessitate the approval of Hooksett residents through a town ballot.

If you are unhappy with any zoning ordinances in town you can make a difference and provide recommendations to the Hooksett Planning Board. You can also serve on a local land use board and make a difference. Hooksett is actively reviewing its zoning ordinances through a newly formed zoning amendment subcommittee composed of all land use boards in town. This committee is tasked with reviewing the zoning and amending the most important zoning ordinances as the town of Hooksett is likely going to deal with similar cases to this in the near future as more development continues.

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REAL ESTATE

Village residents eligible for tax break when renovating property

By Tony LaCasse
Hooksett Bridge

HOOKSETT - Hooksett is embarking on an exciting journey toward revitalizing its downtown and village area. At the heart of this transformation is the Downtown and Village Community Revitalization Tax Relief Program. This innovative program is set to breathe new life into the historic district of Hooksett Village, encouraging property owners to invest in the preservation and rejuvenation of their properties. The result? A win-win situation for property owners and the entire community.

The Vision of Revitalization

Under this tax relief program, eligible residents and property owners within the Hooksett Village district can enjoy tax relief over a specified period. This tax relief is a powerful incentive for property owners to embark on renovation or rehabilitation projects, ultimately driving the renewal and preservation

of this unique area.

One of the key goals of this program is to promote the active use and rehabilitation of underutilized buildings in downtown and village centers. By doing so, it serves two important purposes:

Boosting local economies: It stimulates local economies by encouraging investments in the heart of the community. As properties are revitalized, businesses and residents are drawn back to the area, leading to economic growth.

Sustainable growth: It promotes smart, sustainable growth, counteracting urban sprawl and aligning with the purpose and objectives of RSA Ch. 9-B (State Economic Growth, Resource Protection, and Planning Policy). Instead of expanding outward, Hooksett Village can grow inward, preserving its historic charm.

How the program works

The tax relief program operates as a partnership between property owners

and the municipality, fostering community development and preservation.

Property owners in Hooksett Village who wish to substantially rehabilitate their buildings, whether in the downtown or village center, can apply for a period of temporary tax relief. This also extends to owners of structures listed on the National or State Registers of Historic Places.

In certain cases, tax relief can also be applied to the replacement of buildings, not just rehabilitation.

If granted, the temporary tax relief encompasses a defined period during which the property tax on the structure will not increase due to substantial rehabilitation. In return for this relief, property owners commit to a covenant ensuring there is a public benefit to the rehabilitation.

Once the finite tax relief period concludes, the structure will be taxed at its full market value, taking into account the rehabilitation.

Community involvement and discretion

The legislation places a strong emphasis on community involvement and discretion, ensuring that the program aligns with the local community's vision.

Property owners seeking tax relief must apply to the Town of Hooksett. This application is accompanied by a public notice and public hearing, ensuring transparency and community input.

The governing body may grant tax relief if the application adheres to the program's guidelines and demonstrates a public benefit. However, the governing body has discretion and can deny the application if it doesn't meet these criteria, with the provision that such denial must not be based on bad faith or discrimination.

Such properties must meet certain criteria:

Location: The building should be sit-

uated in the community's downtown district or its equivalent. Municipalities may establish additional and stricter criteria for identifying qualifying structures.

Rehabilitation cost: The rehabilitation must cost at least 15% of the building's pre-rehab assessed value or \$75,000, whichever is less. Municipalities can set higher thresholds if necessary.

Compliance with Master Plan: The rehabilitation project must align with the municipality's master plan or development regulations, ensuring that it contributes positively to the community's overall vision.

If your rehab consists of adding additional housing units in your property you could be entitled to an additional two years of tax relief on top of the potential five-year tax relief granted for a substantial rehab project.

If you plan to add affordable housing units as part of your rehab, you could be entitled to an additional four years of tax relief on top of the potential five years, for a grand total of up to nine years of tax relief.

Historical places according to the U.S. Secretary of Standards for rehab are eligible for up to an additional four years of tax relief as well, for a total of up to nine years of tax relief.

Learn more

For those eager to learn more about the tax relief program or in need of assistance with rehabilitating historic structures in Hooksett Village, valuable resources are readily available. The community development department at Hooksett Town Hall and the Hooksett Heritage Commission are excellent places to explore for guidance and support. Feel free to reach out to myself as well if you are interested in learning more.



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REAL ESTATE

New apartments coming to Hooksett on Londonderry Turnpike

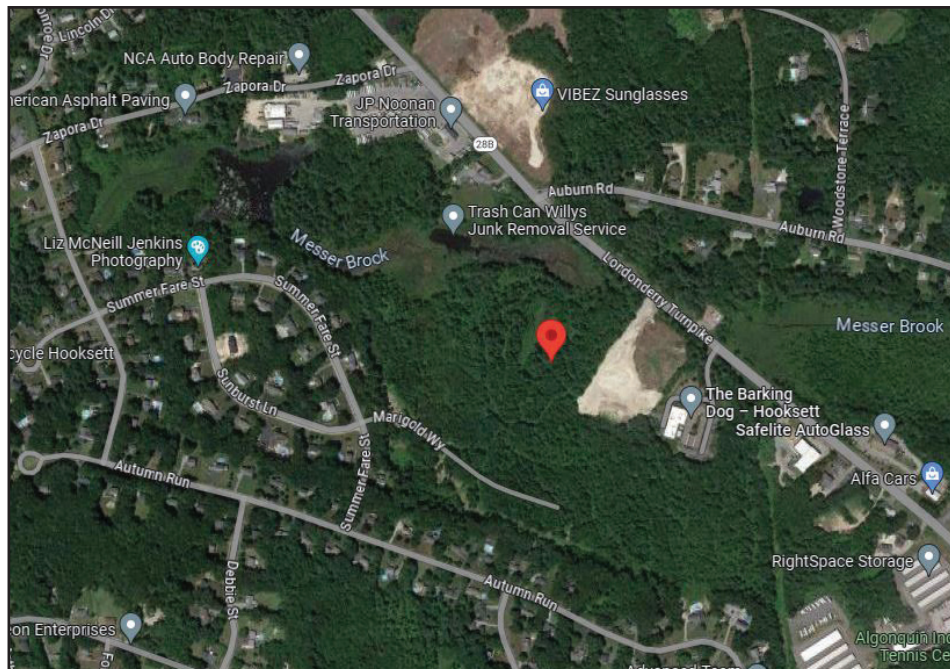
By Tony LaCasse
Hooksett Bridge

HOOKSETT – The Hooksett Zoning Board of Adjustment granted a variance months ago to local developer David Scarpetti so that commercial property could be developed in the front of his parcel on Londonderry Turnpike in South Hooksett, including apartments to be built in the near future.

The zoning board met to consider the application for a variance (Z21-18) from Article 10, Section A of the Zoning Ordinance. The variance sought to permit the development of 72 apartments in three multi-plex buildings on a remote portion of the property located at 214 Londonderry Turnpike, Map 35 Lot 7.

The applicant, represented by attorney John Cronin of Cronin, Bisson, and Zalinsky, addressed the board and provided essential details about the project. Mr. Cronin informed the board that a site walk had been completed and addressed concerns raised at previous meetings. The board had requested a traffic study, which was conducted, confirming that traffic generation was not a significant issue. An expert report on the site's traffic conditions was submitted for the record.

One point of contention during the meeting was the potential financial impact on the town. The board discussed whether this development would serve the interests of Hooksett and if it could alter the character of the neighborhood. Cronin argued that the project,



New apartment buildings are planned for 214 Londonderry Turnpike, which is next to The Barking Dog and behind the Autumn Run neighborhood. (Google Maps)

which includes both apartments and a commercial property, would benefit the town. He emphasized that apartments would generate approximately \$250,000 in tax revenue each year, significantly more than a commercial property, which would bring in approximately \$60,000 annually.

Additionally, questions arose regarding the impact on local schools. An analysis suggested that apartments of this type are generally not significant contributors to increased student enrollment. The calculation indicated a minimal impact on the school system.

The zoning board delved into the idea of preserving a commercial base in

Hooksett to keep residential taxes low. Attorney Cronin stated that the commercial real estate market had changed significantly, making it difficult to generate the desired tax revenues from commercial properties.

The issue of whether a smaller residential footprint could generate enough revenue to level the property for future commercial development was also discussed. The board considered the feasibility of requiring a commercial site to be brought to a certain grade before permitting occupancy of the apartments to ensure that the commercial development would eventually take place.

Ultimately, the board voted on the motion to grant the variance. Board members P. Denbow and R. Bairam voted in favor, while T. Stewart, A. Glennon, and A. Stelmach voted against. The final vote count was 3-2 in favor of granting the variance, allowing Doris Scarpetti to proceed with the construction of the apartment complex.

This decision reflects the board's evaluation of the project's potential impact on the community, the tax base, and the character of the neighborhood.

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REAL ESTATE

Home Appraisals 101: Things appraisers wish sellers knew

Home appraisals are a piece of the selling process where you may have to let go of the reins. Lenders often require the use of their own, FHA-approved home appraiser. That means you get zero say in who's determining the financial value of the home you've lived in, loved, and sunk your savings into.

Here are some things sellers can do—straight from the home appraisers' mouths—to navigate the process of home appraisals.

The appraiser won't know what your home is worth the second they walk in the door because home appraisals aren't magic.

"People think we know the value of the property as soon as we see it," says Michael Coyle, the founder of The Coyle Group in Lafayette Hill, PA.

That's simply not the case. A good understanding of the home appraisal process will go a long way toward comprehending how your home's value is determined.

First, a home appraiser will pull comparable listings

(called "comps") from the nearby area. These are homes similar in style, location, and square footage sold within the past few years. Then, they will come by your house to determine its condition and quality, as well as any other factors that would affect the cost of the home, and use that information — along with the comps — to make an accurate assessment.

Prep your space — and its occupants for the home appraisals

No, the home appraiser isn't coming by to judge the cleanliness of your homestead — but it's still good form to declutter, dust, and mop beforehand to show your home in its best light, according to appraiser Adam Wiener, the founder of Aladdin Appraisal in Auburn-dale, MA.

Home appraisals won't typically devalue your home because it's messy—but a neat, organized home might help you.

Also, make sure the occupants of your home are prepared for the appraiser's arrival, including teenagers who

tend to stay holed up in their rooms.

Get your paperwork in order before home appraisals

Before any and all home appraisals, gather all the information you have about the house and send it over. Most appraisers will ask for this upfront, either directly or through the lender or broker.

Coyle recommends having on hand a list of major improvements as well as detailed info about the age and condition of the roof, HVAC systems, and major appliances. For any DIY projects, make sure you have the original permits.

There's nothing worse than an appraiser pulling comps for a 1,200-square-foot 1920s Cape Cod-style house, only to realize on the day of appraisal that your primary bedroom addition adds an additional 500 square feet.

When that happens "none of my comps are any good and my values are off," Wiener says.

And that means more work—and more time before a final assessment can be reached.

So go the full-disclosure

route.

Don't put too much stock in home improvements

We're sure your brand-new kitchen is stunning but don't be surprised if it doesn't proportionally raise your home's market value when it comes to the home appraisals.

Home appraisers stress moderation in assuming how much your shiny, brand-new kitchen will add directly to the worth of your house. If you spent \$50,000, you're likely to see only a fraction of that returned in value. That goes double for a new pool, which "does not bring as much value as people think," Coyle says.

As for your finished basement: Sorry, but that's even less help. Most home appraisers use ANSI standards for measuring the square footage of a home, which excludes any rooms below grade. That doesn't mean your basement has no value, but it doesn't technically add space.

If you're thinking about adding a feature to your home before you have it appraised, ask your real estate agent if it's

worth the cost. Here's how to find a real estate agent in your area.

Before listing, make sure you and your agent take a realistic look at what your home actually offers. Are you including the basement square footage in the total? Are you hoping no one will notice your roof isn't new? Preparing yourself ahead of time with a pragmatic estimate will ease the appraisal process.

And above all else, make sure not to fudge the numbers.

"There's an epidemic of puffery," Wiener says.

This is particularly rampant in areas where the assessor's information isn't accessible online. When you know potential buyers have to actually, gasp, go in person to look up the sketches, it might be a lot more tempting to pad some square footage here and there.

After all, who will notice?

Here's who: Your appraiser—who's happy to go to the office and pull 20 or 30 comps. And they won't be fooled.

- Jamie Wiebe

Contributor with Realtor.com

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Ready to sell? Buyers ready

Looking to sell? The Main Street Man is looking for properties to fit these buyers' needs:

House Hunter #1
 -Single Family
 -Multifamily (duplex or 3 family)
 -Good sized yard/lot for entertaining
 -Hooksett, Manchester, Derry, Londonderry
 Budget: \$300,000-\$400,000

House Hunter #2
 -Townhome
 -Pelham, Salem, Hampstead, Atkinson, Derry, Wind-

ham, Plaistow area
 -Nice yard/outdoor space
 \$300,000-\$400,000

House Hunter #3
 -Luxury Condo/Townhome or single family
 -Amherst, Merrimack, Bedford, Milford, Nashua, Hollis, Windham, Mont Vernon
 -Move-in ready
 -Amenities
 -Close to a downtown area
 -Walkable area not secluded

\$400,000-\$600,000

Continued next page

REAL ESTATE

Local Market Update – September 2023

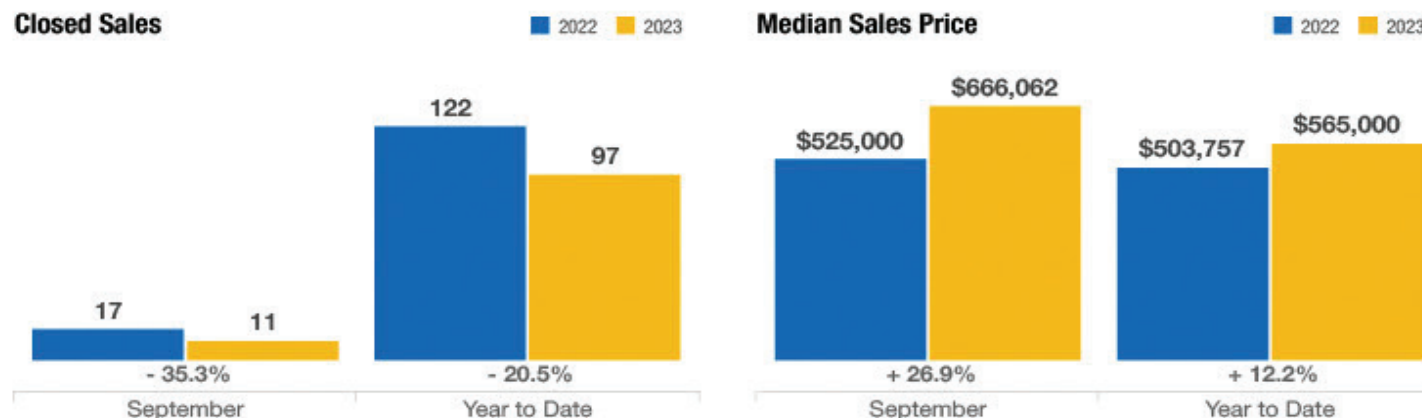
A Research Tool Provided by the New Hampshire REALTORS®



Hooksett

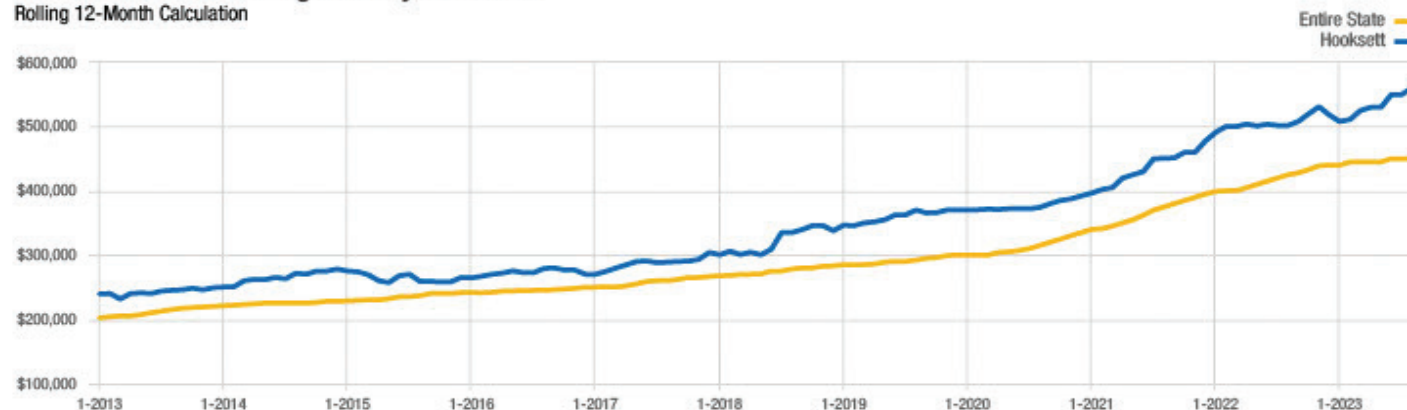
Single Family Residence Key Metrics	September			Year to Date		
	2022	2023	% Change	Thru 9-2022	Thru 9-2023	% Change
Closed Sales	17	11	- 35.3%	122	97	- 20.5%
Median Sales Price*	\$525,000	\$666,062	+ 26.9%	\$503,757	\$565,000	+ 12.2%
Median List Price	\$624,200	\$467,450	- 25.1%	\$510,000	\$522,450	+ 2.4%
Volume of Closed Sales	\$9,329,730	\$6,510,862	- 30.2%	\$63,832,867	\$56,404,745	- 11.6%
Days on Market Until Sale	17	15	- 11.8%	15	18	+ 20.0%
Pending Sales	22	4	- 81.8%	129	91	- 29.5%
Months Supply of Inventory	0.7	1.0	+ 42.9%	—	—	—
New Listings	18	6	- 66.7%	143	102	- 28.7%
Inventory of Homes for Sale	10	10	0.0%	—	—	—
Percent of Original List Price Received*	99.4%	103.3%	+ 3.9%	103.4%	101.7%	- 1.6%

* Does not account for sale concessions and/or downpayment assistance. | Percent changes are calculated using rounded figures and can sometimes look extreme due to small sample size.



Median Sales Price - Single Family Residence

Rolling 12-Month Calculation



A rolling 12-month calculation represents the current month and the 11 months prior in a single data point. If no activity occurred during a month, the line extends to the next available data point.

Current as of October 5, 2023. All data from New Hampshire REALTORS®, Inc. and Northern New England Real Estate Network. Report © 2023 ShowingTime.

Continued from Page 10

House Hunter #4
 -Condo or multifamily (open to all opportunities)
 -Prefers a 2 bed 1+ bath condo in Mount Saint Mary's (Under \$200,000)
 -Multi family property in Hooksett, Pembroke, Allenstown, Manchester area

House Hunter #5
 -Large Ranch style home (one level living)
 -Minimum 2,000 finished sq. ft
 -Within 15 miles of Manchester
 -3 bed 2 bath minimum
 -Garage (1 car minimum)

House Hunter #6
 -Ranch style home (no splits, one floor living)
 -3 bed 2 bath minimum (More beds and baths is preferable)
 -Minimum 2,000 finished sq. ft
 -Prefers to have an in-law suite/ADU attached to the house
 -Inground swimming pool
 -2 car garage (min)
 -South/Central Hooksett or North Manchester location
 -Potential to add an ADU is also ok if the layout and space for a pool is there in the yard
 -Up to \$900,000 for the perfect property

Rental Hunter:
 -2 bed 1 bath apartment
 -Must be in Hooksett
 -1,500/mo rent
 -First floor

Rental Hunter:
 -1 bed 1 bath apartment
 -Hooksett, Pembroke, Allenstown area
 -Must accept a cat
 -1st floor
 -\$1,200/mo rent
 - Will do house maintenance and yard work if needed etc.



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Hooksett Historical Society receives \$106,000 bequest

HOOKSETT - The Hooksett Historical Society has been recently gifted a large donation thanks to the estate of the late Kathie Northrup, former Hooksett Heritage Commission Chairwoman and staunch supporter of all things Historic Hooksett.

This comes at a time when the Hooksett Historical Society is gearing up for expansion plans in the future, and has seen progress regarding renewed interest and energy in the society recently after the town's bicentennial in 2022.

Hooksett Historical Society Vice President told board members "I am pleased to announce that

the Hooksett Historical society received a wonderful, if not overwhelming and joyous donation. The estate of the late Kathy Northrup has generously gifted our HHS \$106,000. What an amazing gift. I was shocked and moved to tears. Our dreams have come true and what a way to celebrate our pending 50th anniversary."

The Hooksett Historical Society thanks the estate of Kathie Northrup as her legacy continues to live on thanks in part to her philanthropy, and improves the opportunities for historic preservation in Hooksett for many years to come.

Town offices close for Veterans Day

HOOKSETT - The Town of Hooksett offices will be closed on Friday, Nov. 10, in observance of

Veterans Day. Emergency services will still be available.

<https://thehooksettbridge.com>

A birthday surprise for a neighbor

HOOKSETT - Hooksett's Harmony Lane neighborhood hosted a surprise birthday party for resident Arman Derian on Oct. 9.

The neighborhood organized a multi-day activity culminating in a neighborhood parade to celebrate his 82nd birthday.

Neighbors gathered together on Derian's front lawn to celebrate their neighbor and his favorite things including homemade signs, a large speaker playing "Happy Birthday," an ice cream cake, a mix of Armenian and American flags to wave, and a gift of an ice cream sundae basket made with unclaimed money found in the neighborhood.

Derian moved to Hooksett in 2021 to live with his son and daughter-in-law. He is an avid walker, walking up to four miles a day which translates into "12 loops" around the quarter mile neighborhood.

Marine Corps veteran Dennis Mitchell said, "He's my walking buddy. He brings joy to everybody he comes in contact with."

Derian carries a piece of paper with names of neighbors (including pets) with him at all times. Donald Penland, who walks with Derian almost every day, affectionately calls him "The Mayor of Harmony



82-year-old Arman Derian stars in a surprise birthday parade organized by his neighborhood on Harmony Lane to honor the avid walker. (Courtesy Photo).

Lane." Tanji Samson gave Derian a hat for his birthday that makes the title more official. In the summer months, she can be seen giving Derian rides in her VW convertible bug.

"I can't wait to see my dad get a ride around Harmony Lane in Tanji's convertible wearing his new hat," said Alec Derian.

Arman Derian was born in Bafra, Turkey, on Oct. 7, 1941, to survivors of the 1915 Armenian Genocide. They gave him the pseudonym Metin Nerses which translates to "Brave Speech" in Turkish. Like many Turkish Armenians, Derian grew up hiding in plain sight. Derian was sent to the very first Armenian parochial school called Tibrevank. It was built in Istanbul, Turkey, to educate the children of genocide survivors. It was there he learned to speak, read, and

write Armenian.

Derian says, "I don't know how I was able to learn Armenian."

Derian was a member of the inaugural class and the school continues to this day.

Supported by family with pocket money and plane ticket, he came to the United States to study electrical engineering at Northeastern University.

Now, he lives next door to Jerry Samson who works at Eversource and loves to talk to him about the electric company.

"I worked at Mass Electric for 36 years," Derian said with pride.

"I'm so glad to live in a neighborhood that cares about each other," said Giulia Nihan.

"I'm a lucky guy," says Derian, "I've been lucky all my life."

- Sarah Lambert Derian

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Chamber of Commerce News

The Hooksett Chamber of Commerce is proud to introduce Dawn Marie Perkins as the newly elected president of the Board of Directors. Dawn Marie's journey with the Chamber began in early 2019, and her invaluable contributions led her to become chair of the Events Committee later that same year. In 2021, she earned her position as vice president, showcasing her dedication to community development and exemplary business leadership. Beyond her role in the Chamber, Dawn Marie is the owner of Spotlight Print & Promo Solutions, a promotional marketing agency serving clients nationwide. When not immersed in her business or steering the Chamber's initiatives, she enjoys exploring business and motivational literature, nature walks, photography, and cherishing moments with her husband, children, and grandchildren.

Throughout 2023, the board's tireless dedication and forward-thinking vision have shaped a series of remarkable events. From insightful workshops to dynamic networking sessions, the Chamber has been a hub of activity, fostering connections and collaborations within our community. Among the year's highlights were workshops covering crucial topics such as SBA Programs and Services, leveraging Library Resources for business growth, Office Organization, Cybersecurity, and Human Resources essentials. Additionally, the Chamber proudly welcomed three new businesses with Ribbon Cutting Ceremonies at The Zoo Health Club, The Robie Country Store, and Hooksett's Best After School and Summer Camp. Networking events hosted by local establishments like Under Your Skin Massage & Bodywork,

Reliable Coatings, Dude's Barbershop, Unbound Dance Academy, and T-Mobile further solidified the sense of community within Hooksett. Collaborations with fellow community groups, including a Local Author Signing event, sponsorship of the 1st Annual Light Up the Village Festival of Trees, Hooksett Winter Carnival, and the Beautify Hooksett Earth Day clean-up, demonstrated the Chamber's commitment to collective progress.

In collaboration with Kiwanis, two new "Welcome to Hooksett" signs now grace the town. One stands proudly at the intersection of Pleasant Street and Route 3 South, while the other adorns 28 Bypass in front of the CMC facility. Plans are underway to enhance their appeal with vibrant floral arrangements, mirroring the charming "Welcome to Hooksett" sign on Rt. 3 North, beyond the I-93 overpass at Exit 9.

Since her inauguration after the 2023 Annual Meeting Election, Dawn Marie has wasted no time in setting an inspiring pace for the Chamber. Looking ahead to 2024, she has outlined key initiatives to fortify Hooksett's business landscape:

- Develop a Strategic Plan spanning 1, 3, 5, and 10 years.

- Implement Administrative and Digital Improvements.

- Curate a robust calendar of Networking and Educational events, including the launch of a Signature Event, in addition to the Annual Meeting & Dinner.

- Launch an Outreach Program targeting both business and residential sectors.

- Strengthen collaboration with Economic Development in Hooksett.

Along with Dawn Ma-

rie's election, we introduce the newly elected Board members who will work in tandem:

Immediate Past President: Tyler Halstead

Vice President: Vacant (but pending fulfillment)

Treasurer: Cody Tibbetts

Secretary: Christina Sayer McCullough

Board Member: Laurie Beebe

Board Member: Stephanie Whitney

Board Member: Tony LaCasse

Each of these individuals brings a unique set of skills and a shared commitment to advancing the interests of Hooksett's business community.

Under Dawn Marie's leadership and the entire Board of Directors, the Hooksett Chamber of Commerce is poised for a year of exponential growth, collaboration, and prosperity. We invite all members and partners to actively engage in our upcoming initiatives, as together, we mold a brighter future for our community.

For more information and updates, please visit our website www.hooksettchamber.org, follow us on Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram, and YouTube, or reach out to directly at director@hooksettchamber.org.



Participants in the Firefighters Challenge at Cawley Middle School proudly show off their certificates. (Courtesy photo)

Cawley School students meet the Hooksett FD's Firefighter Challenge

HOOKSETT - The Hooksett Fire Department hosted its annual Firefighters Challenge event at Cawley Middle School in October.

Every year, the seventh-grade homerooms get to choose a pair of boys and girls, each with a runner and an alternate. Then, the homerooms decided on a theme related to fire prevention and create costumes

and mottos which are used to win the best homeroom.

The course is designed to replicate the actions commonly found on a fireground scene, including jumping out of the fire engine, striking a stump with a sledgehammer, finding a "patient" made of fire hoses who they then carry in the stokes basket, among other activities.

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HOOKSETT LIBRARY NEWS *by Mark Glisson*

Library of Things

Here are just some of the latest additions to the library's growing "Beyond Books" collection:

Games: board games, Nintendo Switch consoles, yard games

Home: check engine light scan tool, kitchen knife sharpener, soil tester, stud finder, thermal leak detector

Musical instruments: bongos, acoustic and electric guitars

Party equipment: canopy pop-up tent, foldable tables, karaoke machine

Technology: mobile hotspots, trail cameras, radon detector

Tools: Dremel tool, metal detector, power washer



a proper cup of tea, regional specialties, their origins, and the particular parts of the UK they hail from. As it's the holidays, she'll focus on festive baking in particular. She'll translate the trickiest parts of British recipes for Americans so you can try them in your own kitchen. Pick up useful travel tips as well, just in case you'd like to create your own tour! See discover.hooksettlibrary.org/events.

The Great British Baking Tour: Holiday Edition

Ready to bake? Join UK travel/relocation consultant and former UK resident Claire Evans for a virtual culinary tour of the UK inspired by "The Great British Baking Show" on Wednesday, Nov. 29, at 7 p.m. Learn about making

"Make Your Own Mini" Wooden Flower Workshop

Join Brittany Rouleau, from White Birch Creations, for a "Make your own Mini" Wooden Flower Workshop! Choose from a variety of pre-dyed Sola Wood Flowers and design your very own mini arrangement. Christ-

mas minis, winter minis and everyday flowers will be available, so bring your creativity and get ready to be your own florist. Two workshops will be held on Wednesday, Dec. 6, at 5:15 p.m. and 6:15 p.m.

For more information about the event, fees, and registration, please visit discover.hooksettlibrary.org/events.

Hallmark and hot cocoa bundles

Looking for the perfect way to warm up on a cold winter night? Enjoy a cup of hot cocoa, popcorn and a Hallmark film with our Hallmark and Hot Cocoa Bundles! Bundles are available for pickup starting on Monday, Dec. 4, at the Patron Services Desk while supplies last. For more information, visit discover.hooksettlibrary.org/events.

Adult Take & Make craft kits

Get creative with our Adult Take & Make craft kits! In November, make a wooden chalkboard sign with your favorite fall saying, and in December, make a cozy flannel tree. Kits are available at the Patron Services Desk while supplies last. For details, visit discover.hooksettlibrary.org/events.

Upcoming tech classes for adults

Friday, Nov. 3, 11 a.m. to noon: All You Need to Know about Consumer Reports Online

Tuesday, Nov. 21, 2-3 p.m.: Safe &

Savvy Shopping for the Holidays

Friday, Dec. 1, 11 a.m. to noon: Finding Holiday Happenings to Make your Holiday Bright

Friday, Jan. 5, 11 a.m. to noon: Cutting the Cord: How To Ditch Cable TV & Save Big Bucks

Events in the Children's Room

As the weather gets colder, come in and enjoy our programs in the Hooksett children's room!

Nov. 4, 10 a.m.: Join us for a special storytime with local authors Pete and Rhiannon McHugh, featuring their children's book "Above the Clouds!"

Nov. 18, 10 a.m. to noon: Drop-in and making Thanksgiving crafts. Children ages 2-8.

Dec. 2, 10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.: Join us for the Hooksett Library's annual Santa Party! Children can write letters to Santa, make food for Santa's reindeer, make holiday crafts, as well as visit with Santa and take a special photograph. This party is open to all.

Dec. 16, 10 a.m. to noon 10: Drop-in and make holiday crafts! Children and their families can join us to make holiday crafts.

Dec. 18 at 6 p.m. or Dec. 19 at 10 a.m.: Join us for our Polar Express Pajama storytime. Come dressed in your pajamas and enjoy the classic holiday story, along with cocoa, crafts, and music. Registration is required.

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Donations needed for Christmas food baskets

HOOKSETT - Hooksett resident Carol Beauregard, a member of the New online group "Hooksett Kind," formed by Hooksett resident Chet DuPont, is collecting food for Christmas baskets for the Hooksett Community Pantry until Nov. 17.

Items needed are:

- Canned vegetables (corn and green beans)
- Boxed potatoes/scalloped and au gratin
- Jiffy pie mix
- Stuffing

Pie filling,
Canned pineapple, sliced
Cranberry sauce (jellied and whole)

Jiffy corn muffin mix,
Canned gravy
Chicken broth
Canned yams

Cream of chicken soup
Assorted beans in the can

Items can be dropped off at 38 Cross Road on the porch by the garage or at 1465 Hooksett Road, Unit 1019.

CLUBS AND GROUPS



Members of Boy Scout Troop 292 of Hooksett helped improve the landscaping at the state Fallen Firefighters Memorial by playing mums. (Courtesy photo)

Boy Scouts have busy fall

HOOKSETT - Hooksett's Boy Scout Troop 292 has had a busy fall so far, with lots more fun activities planned through the winter. The boys have participated in camping trips, learned new skills at troop meetings, and given back to their community through service projects such as a flag ceremony for the Kiwanis 5K race at Old Home Day, mum planting for the NH Fallen Firefighters Memorial, and supporting the PTA Spooktacular.

Upcoming events include a November campout where they'll cook a full Thanksgiving dinner in the woods, collecting food to support the Hooksett Food Pantry through Scouting for Food, a fun winter cabin trip and a four-day tour of Philadelphia.

The annual wreath sale is just wrapping up – if you hurry you can still order! These beautiful wreaths are locally produced in Franklin, NH, and stay fresh for months. You can order online through Nov. 4 for free delivery to your home by our scouts, or by Nov. 30 to have your wreath shipped. Visit <http://wreaths.troop292nh.com> to view the

selection available.

Once the Christmas holidays are over, what do you do with your tree? Hooksett doesn't offer roadside pickup anymore, but Troop 292 does! We'll pick up your tree for a donation on any date you choose, and deliver it to a local farm to feed to goats! Visit <http://trees.troop292nh.com> to sign up.

Troop 292, Hooksett's original boy-led scout unit, is open to all boys between 11 and 17 years old. They have weekly meetings where scouts learn leadership and life skills, go on monthly camping trips to put those skills into action while having tons of fun, and learn the value of volunteering through many community service projects.

The troop meets on Thursday evenings from 6:30-8:15 p.m. in the Cawley school cafeteria. Interested families are invited to stop by any troop meeting. You can also visit <http://troop292nh.com> or Facebook under Hooksett Boy Scout Troop 292.

For more information, email info@troop292nh.com.

Got socks? Donate them to the Lions Club

HOOKSETT - The Hooksett Lions Club's 14th Annual "Got Socks" drive is underway.

There is a need for new socks for all ages and sizes. The new socks will be given to Hooksett Family Services and other agencies in time for distribution for the holidays.

There are collection baskets throughout town, including Town

Hall, Underhill and Memorial schools, Hooksett Library, Grace Chapel Church, and Osborne's Farm & Garden Center. Look for the baskets with "Got Socks" signs!

The last day to donate will be Dec. 1. For more information, email HooksettLionsClub@yahoo.com or call Debbie Ithier at 603-548-0755.

Girl Scouts begin a new season of fun

HOOKSETT - Girl Scouts in Hooksett and surrounding towns have begun their new membership year, and encourage families to join in the fun.

Girl Scouts follow their own convictions, take the lead in their own stories, and explore all the extraordinary things they're capable of.

With programs in the outdoors; entrepreneurship; science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM); and life skills, girls have the space and support they need to grow so they can see themselves how we've always seen them. Bright. Perceptive. Powerful.

See www.girlscoutsgwm.org.

Your Year of Wonder

- ✓ Discover new worlds.
- ✓ Tap into a hidden talent.
- ✓ Get up close and personal with nature.

Be a Girl Scout.

Explore all the possibilities that await you this year. Join your local Girl Scout community today!

girl scouts
of the green and white mountains

CLUBS AND GROUPS

Hooksett Garden Club wraps up for the year

HOOKSETT – The Hooksett Garden Club continued through June, July and August with their garden parties for members, spouses and guests. The three parties were hosted by Karen Medeiros, Cindy Coburn and Bonnie Pierce at their homes. The August party included a plant swap. Also in August, the club was invited to tour Pleasant View Gardens in Loudon. Several members also attended the NH Federation of Garden Club fall meeting at the Fells in September. Throughout the summer the club tended its many beautification sites and the flowers on the bridge were beautiful. So a busy summer!

On Sept. 27, the club resumed its regular meeting schedule at the Hooksett Public Library. That meeting included a speaker, Bill Stockman, and his topic was “The Secret to Growing Healthy Houseplants”. Bill is the former owner of Spider Web Gardens in



The Hooksett Garden Club hosted several garden parties over the summer. Here members, spouses and guests gather at the home of Cindy Coburn. (Courtesy photo)

Tuftonboro and now spends half of the year on the island of Montserrat in the Caribbean Islands and talked about the plants grown there.

At this meeting, order forms were given out for the club’s annual holiday wreath sale where members sell wreaths, swags, and bows throughout

the month of October which are delivered the Saturday after Thanksgiving.

The club’s year runs from February through October. The final meeting, open to the public, on October 25 included speaker Harry Vogel of the Loon Preservation Committee. Members brought warm pajamas and books

to donate to the Kiwanis Kids Closet as they do every October.

Visit our website at www.hooksettngardenclub.org where you will find updated information on upcoming programs, photos of events from 2021-2023 and a membership application, or email hooksettngardenclub@gmail.com and an application will be sent to you. Membership is open to men and women – you don’t need to be a Hooksett resident or a gardener to apply. Also check out www.facebook.com/HooksettGardenClub.

The Hooksett Garden Club is a nonprofit organization and is a member of National Garden Clubs, Inc., New England Garden Clubs, Inc. and the New Hampshire Federation of Garden Clubs, Inc. which provide members with even more educational and social opportunities.

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Find The Hooksett Bridge at these convenient locations:

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The Spot Eatery
Merrimack County Savings Bank
Shaw's Market
The Cake Fairy
Tucker's
Sully's Superette Allenstown
Aubuchon Hardware Suncook
Big House Barbershop Suncook
Dude's Barbershop
Corey's Closet

Villages at Granite Hill
Webster Woods
Brook Ridge community
Hillsbrook Village Assisted and
Independent Living
Shirley's Kitchen
Merrimack County Savings Bank
Allenstown Public Library
Pembroke Public Library
Hooksett Congregational Church
Gibson's Bookstore

Or receive a PDF of the paper by requesting to be on our email list
at thehooksettbridge@gmail.com.

EVENTS

Hooksett heroes to be honored

HOOKSETT - In a show of heartfelt appreciation and community support, Tony LaCasse also known as The Main Street Man Realtor at KW Metropolitan Realty alongside his Vets Breakfast Committee members Kathy Jacques, Mary Ann Wells, Linda Bonney, Kim Lacasse of Hooksett, Carol Jordan of Concord and Jason Farina of Wentworth are set to host a Veterans Day event on Nov. 11 at 5 Veterans Drive. This event promises to be a morning of warmth, celebration, and delicious food, and the public is invited to join in the festivities.

The day begins with a complimentary gourmet breakfast buffet, thanks to the generous support of The Robie Country Store and LaValley Farms of Hooksett.

Several event partners are contributing to make this event truly special. The Dollar Tree, McLeod's Florist, Paradigm Plumbing and Heating, and the Vet Center have all joined hands to provide swag bags and beautiful flower arrangements to create a memorable experience for attendees.

Adding a dash of excitement to the event is a fuel raffle valued at around \$500, made possible through the support of Fairway Mortgage. Participants have a chance to win this fantastic prize, so bring your lucky charm!

The event sponsors include Lavalley Farms, Palmer Gas & Oil, Dunkin', Starbucks, Second Brook Bar & Grille, Shaw's, Hooksett residents and The Robie Farm. This collaborative effort showcases the strong bonds and support with-



Ken Easton, a Marine Corps veteran from Hooksett, smiles at a thank-you card written for him by a local student at the Hooksett Veterans Breakfast last year. (Courtesy photo)

in the community.

The day's schedule includes two seatings to accommodate the crowds, and there will be a special Veterans Day ceremony at 9 a.m., designed to honor the service of our veterans. The ceremony has as honorary guest and special speaker Roger Hebert, a World War II veteran who is now 97 years old.

A courtesy van will be available to transport them from the American Legion parking lot to the church, which will offer handicap parking.

The nonprofit veteran-focused Hero Pups will bring along a few adorable puppies to provide emotional support for the veterans in attendance. Free information will be provided for veterans interested in learning about the process of obtaining a free emotional support animal.

The event's color guard during the ceremony will be conducted by local veterans from the Hooksett American

Legion Post #37.

To RSVP, contact Tony LaCasse at 603-867-6907 by Friday, Nov. 3 with your preferred seating time and number attending.



You Are Invited!

To a Gourmet breakfast buffet thanks in part to *The Robie Country Store, Lavalley Farms, and The Robie Farm!*

Free to all Veterans and family! Your RSVP is requested. Please call Tony at 603-867-6907 by Friday Nov. 3rd

Saturday, November 11th, 2023

7:30-8:45am or 9:45-11:00am

Congregational Church of Hooksett - 5 Veterans Drive, Hooksett

*****Veteran's Ceremony to start promptly inside the sanctuary at 9am**

*****Parking for the ceremony will be provided at 5 Riverside St, Hooksett American Legion Post #37. A courtesy shuttle van will be provided to pickup and drop off veterans and there guests at the church entrance. Please park ONLY at the American Legion for the ceremony.**

Please thank our breakfast sponsors: The Main Street Man REALTOR, Fairway Mortgage, Palmer Gas & Oil, The Robie Country Store/The Robie Farm, LaValley Farm, Second Brook Bar & Grille, Dunkin', Starbucks, McLeod's Florist, Paradigm Plumbing & Heating, Dollar Tree, Carol Jordan, Mary Ann Wells & Kathy Jacques & our event partners the Hooksett American Legion, & The Congregational Church



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** We ask for donations to be dropped off before 3:00 pm during the hours we are open.*



SUNCOOK

New K-8 school construction is on time

By Michael Frascinella
Hooksett Bridge contributor

ALLENSTOWN - Allenstown's students can look forward to learning in their new K-8 school in the spring.

"The project remains on budget and 100% on time for an April 2024 handover, said Project Manager Gordon Bristol.

It all started back June 2, 2022, with a groundbreaking ceremony. About 100 excited school children exited from several school buses at the River Road site and gathered in a tight-knit bunch along with their teachers. Many parents and residents came to listen to the featured speakers, which included School Board Chair Jody Moore, Principal Shannon Kruger, and SAU53 Superintendent Peter Warburton. School officials picked up shovels and in unison tossed shovelfuls of sand for the Groundbreaking. Students then picked up stones that they had painted in class and build a cairn of "Stones of Remembrance" around a special post near the road.

During the fall of 2022, Eversource installed the Hendrix Covered Cable System on new 45-foot utility poles along River Road. The cables were run from Fiddler's Farm near Granite Street to the new school site near Dodge Road. This cable system would carry three-phase power to the new school.

Last May, the Allenstown School Board gave about 15



Allenstown's new school is under construction, with students expected to move into the building this spring. (Courtesy photo)

town officials a tour of the new school construction site. At that time, visitors walked on bare concrete floors through numerous corridors of tall steel studs. Runs of water and drainage piping, ductwork, electrical wiring, and sprinkler fixtures were easily visible overhead. During the tour, school board Chair Jody Moore honored Peter Warburton, the late school superintendent, who died on April 14 after a brief illness.

On Oct. 16, selectmen were given a private tour of the new school site. Select board Chairman Scott McDonald related very positive impressions of what he saw.

"The tour of the new school was very exciting -- just to see the progress since we last visited. Much of the upstairs is done with just flooring and some minor finishing touches left to complete.

"Downstairs still has plenty of work to do but, from what I could elicit from the Archi-

tect, Project Manager, and Principal, a February/March completion timeframe is not unrealistic.

"The building is completely enclosed and the heating system will be going online soon. The gym and stage area is beautiful, lots of room and we can't wait to see our new maple basketball floor.

"Outside, final landscaping is well under way, and the soccer field will be ready to seed soon. The masonry colors and pattern are beautiful and quite distinctive.

"All in all it's exciting to see the completion of our new school on the rapidly approaching horizon as the Town of Allenstown moves forward."

Gordon Bristol filled in more details about the status of construction and what lay ahead.

"Outside the building, curbs have been installed and the fields have been graded and seeded. The membrane rolled

roofing has been fully installed with edge work yet to be done. Insulated exterior panels are being installed. All windows have been put in place. And a new welcome sign is to be installed soon.

"Inside the building, all mechanical systems such as HVAC, electrical, and plumbing are in place. Crews are to start installing the suspended ceilings and flooring and painting drywall on the second floor. The gym is the last area to be completed. This work is to be done between November and January."

Bristol then talked about the end game for the school building project.

"February 2024 will be the 'shakedown cruise' for testing all systems, including security and making sure everything is working properly. In the spring of 2024, the playground will be installed and final road paving

and striping will be done."

When asked how will they transition students to the new building, Gordon had a ready answer.

"The school board has already formed a committee to plan for the transition of students and classroom equipment to the new school. The board has been doing an excellent job on their end and they have been a pleasure to work with. They have already purchased new classroom equipment for use at the existing schools. That equipment will be moved with the students to the new school. Bus routes have already been set up, especially for downtown students. At this time we are planning a moving date of late April 2024, during a spring break."

Bristol wrapped up the interview by reiterating, "And again, let me state that the project remains 100% on time and on budget!"

SUNCOOK - News of Allenstown and Pembroke

American Legion to host free dinner for vets Nov. 11

PEMBROKE - The American Legion Post 28 is hosting a Veterans Day dinner and food drive, which they expect to become an annual tradition.

Everyone is invited! Veterans receive a free meal. Non-veterans, family and friends may receive a meal with a donation of \$5 or any nonperishable food item. All food items will be donated to the local food pantry.

The potluck style dinner will be held on Veterans Day, Nov. 11, from 4:30 pm -7:30 p.m. People may bring food for dinner, but it's not required.

The American Legion also does raffles and other fundraisers.

Current fundraisers include:

- A 50/50 raffle with tickets pulled every Tuesday. You do not have to be present to win. Tickets can be purchased anytime at the Legion.

- A gun raffle for a Heritage Limited Edition .22 Winchester Mag FS Flame Heater revolver. Tickets are a steal at only \$10/each with only 250 tickets to be sold. The drawing will be held Saturday, Dec. 2, at 6 p.m. There will be

additional raffles, food, drinks and a DJ for a fun evening.

Currently, a large share of their fundraising efforts is being designated to their building as they need a new roof and other maintenance items to stay open. The American Legion is a charity organization and relies solely on donations. Any donation amount is greatly appreciated.

The American Legion is a veteran organization run by volunteers who are devoted to helping and advocating for Veterans in various ways. They are located at 43 Church St., Pembroke, and are open seven days a week.

For additional information or to learn how to become a volunteer, stop into the Legion or add them on Facebook by searching for Friends of Post 28. The Facebook page is constantly updated with new and exciting events and fundraisers! Address any messages to Kristopher Cicchetto, Commander of Post 28.

Thank you all for your help and continued support!

Explore Girl Scouts Nov. 7 in Pembroke

PEMBROKE - Girl Scouts follow their own convictions, take the lead in their own stories, and explore all the extraordinary things they're capable of. Girls in grades K-3 and a caregiver are invited to learn about opportunities to get involved in your community. Try out sample activities and see the many ways to get involved.

Come explore Girl Scouts Tuesday, Nov. 7, 6-7 p.m. at Pembroke Hill School, 300 Belanger Drive, Pembroke.

We host multiple in-person and virtual sign-up events throughout the year. You can also join anytime online at girlscoutsgwm.org. Walk-ins are welcome.

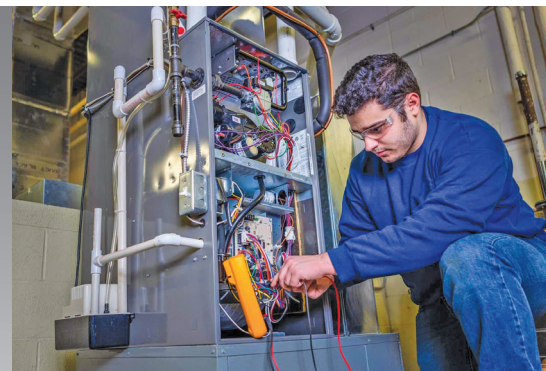
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SUNCOOK - News of Allenstown and Pembroke

Winter events planned

ALLENSTOWN - Soon after people take down their Halloween decorations, they set out all their Christmas decorations. Fast on the heels of the Halloween Lighting Contest is the Christmas Lighting Contest, hosted by the Allenstown Economic Development Committee.

This Christmas event invites residents to register and send photos of their home decorations between Nov. 17 and Dec. 3.

The Economic Development Committee, fire department, and police department will be the judges, and award trophies and gift cards will be presented at an awards ceremony on Dec. 16 at Allenstown

Town Hall.

Prior to the awards ceremony, Santa will tour the town on his sled accompanied by a fire and police escort.

Sometime in December, once the temperatures have cooled down sufficiently, the town ice skating rink will be installed in the field next to town hall. Depending on the weather, this 60x100-foot rink will be available for residents. Floodlights will allow night skating and signs will show rules and hours of operation. Volunteers will clear snow as needed and the Highway Department will use its own mini-Zamboni machine to resurface the ice.

- Michael Frascinella

Hillsbrook Village opens

By Michael Frascinella
Hooksett Bridge contributor

ALLENSTOWN - Hillsbrook Village, a brand new, four-story facility, has opened, offering 119 units suited for independent living, assisted living, and memory care living conveniently located on Chester Turnpike near Routes 3 & 28, close to shopping and services.

The facility started taking deposits on apartments back in July after construction and state safety inspections were completed. As of mid-October, all assisted living apartments had been rented, and few apartments remained available for independent living and memory care.

For residents and town officials, Everbrook Senior Living hosted a belated grand



The opening of Hillsbrook Village was celebrated with a ribbon-cutting and tours Oct. 27. (Courtesy photo)

opening on Oct. 26. The event featured formal words of welcome and a ribbon-cutting ceremony. This was followed by buffet style appetizers and

tours of the facility.

The facility is run by Everbrook Senior Living of Southhampton, Mass.

Suncook United Methodist Church: Join us for worship, games, more

SUNCOOK - Suncook United Methodist Church invites you to join us in worship and fellowship. We are located at 156 Main Street in historic downtown Suncook and we hope to be as welcoming as the town is beautiful. We are a family church and welcome anyone and everyone with open hearts, open minds, and open doors.

Regular Sunday worship is at 10 a.m., with Sunday School for kids preschool through middle school during the service. We also have a worship dance team for kids and an adult choir.

For more information, see

our website at www.suncookumc.org or on Facebook at Suncook United Methodist Church.

We are excited about the activities we have planned for November and December this year. We are having a public roast pork supper on Nov. 4, from 5:00-6:30 p.m. It will be served buffet style with roast pork, mashed potatoes and gravy, peas, carrots, applesauce, and rolls. The dessert will be assorted cakes. The cost is \$12 for adults, \$6 for kids 6-12 and kids 5 and under eat for free.

On Saturday, Nov. 11 from 5-10 p.m. we are hosting a free game night and potluck.

Come when you can, leave when you must. Potluck is provided by church members. Play our games or bring your own. We have cooperative and competitive games for all ages. Tabletop games available include Munchkin, Cribbage, Flux, Yahtzee, Castle Panic, Ticket to Ride, Trouble, My First Castle Panic, Super Kitty Bug Slap and many more. If you find games too stressful, we have coloring supplies on hand. Bring your appetites for food and fun!

On Sunday Dec. 3, Christmas in the Village will be using our building as usual. We will also have a self-guided Nativ-

ity Walk around the outside of our church building.

Sometime in December we will be hosting the Peace Light from Bethlehem. We have not heard when this year's light will arrive but our church has shared the light for the past several years. We will post on our Facebook page when it is available.

On Saturday, Dec. 9, from 2-6 p.m., we will be having a Crafty Christmas Make It & Take It. There will be Christmas crafts for all ages. We will also have photo backdrops so you can take a holiday family picture. We will be serving soups and bread. It is all free

and we hope everyone will have a lot of fun.

On Dec. 21, at 6 p.m., we will have a Blue Christmas service. Blue Christmas is a Western Christian tradition that happens on the longest night of the year, usually the winter solstice. It is about comforting fellow Christians who are grieving and struggling to find joy and hope during the season.

On Sunday, Dec. 24, at 6:30 p.m., we will have our traditional candlelight service.

There is a lot going on and we want to welcome new friends during this festive season.

SUNCOOK - News of Allenstown and Pembroke

Fire Station improvements will help provide ambulance service

By Michael Frascinella
Hooksett Bridge contributor

ALLENSTOWN - Improvements are being made to the Allenstown Fire Station, in preparation for becoming the primary ambulance service in the town next July.

Fire Chief Eric Lambert said, “The Allenstown Fire Department continues to move closer to the completion of its second floor. Our progress was catapulted by a donation that

will be announced in the very near future.”

The Allenstown Fire Department as it sits today was constructed in the year 2000, according to Lambert. Due to financial constraints, the second floor was left unfinished. Over the years some of the needed items were completed either through donations or by our members. Jim Cassidy, a local Boy Scout leader at the time, worked to complete two rooms of the second floor. Others did some framing and other

items.

“The goal is to have this completed for this coming spring,” said Lambert. “It has been an amazing journey so far and the pride in all the work is very strong. There is a great group of people working for the department and that helps us to grow with the community. We look forward to showing off the completion of this project, and announcing who has been a big help in donating to this mission.”



An ambulance sits outside the Allenstown Fire Department. (Courtesy photo)

Family Movie Night provides entertainment at fire department

ALLENSTOWN - The Allenstown Economic Development Committee and the Allenstown Fire Department enjoyed hosting a Family Movie Night on Sept. 30.

Allenstown firefighters pulled virtually all the fire engines from the equipment bay and covered the windows to keep out the late afternoon sun.

About 63 people signed up online for the event with 40-50 people actually attending, and with volunteer firefighters and EDC members, there were at least 50-60 people in house.

The featured movie, “Lightyear,” was an action-packed story about Buzz

Lightyear, the space ranger hero from the Toy Story movie series. The dinner, a mere \$4 per person, was enjoyed by all and some people came back for seconds.

Firefighters and EDC members pitched in to set up the giant movie screen and projection equipment, and set up the serving tables, supplies, and signage for the dinner.

Selectman and chef Keith Klawes did an amazing job designing the menu, calculating the best price, and ordering all the food and supplies. He was assisted this night by “Sous Chef” Ron Adinolfo, advanced level EMT and EDC member.



Many in the community enjoyed a Family Movie Night at the Allenstown Fire Department on Sept. 30. (Courtesy photo)

One snag that had the crew scrambling mid-afternoon was that the borrowed popcorn machine kept tripping

circuit breakers. A mad dash to Olympus Pizza and then to Aubuchon’s for a rental netted a functioning popcorn machine that people kept coming back to during the movie. Adinolfo said that he made about nine to 10 batches of popcorn during the movie.

A big thank you goes to Firefighter Austin LaDuke who set up and tested the projection equipment and operated it during the movie. An even bigger thank you from the EDC goes to Fire Chief Eric Lambert who offered the use of the Fire Station.

Support your community newspaper! Advertise in The Hooksett Bridge

The Hooksett Bridge will be published quarterly on the first of January, April, July, and October.

The deadline for ads and community submissions to be placed is two weeks prior to publication. Veterans are eligible for a 10 percent discount.

For details, reach Tony LaCasse at thehooksettbridge@gmail.com.

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