

News Bulletin

Serving Amston, Andover, Cobalt, Colchester, East Hampton, Hebron, Marlborough, Middle Haddam and Portland

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Dynamic Duo...East Hampton High School softball pitcher Allison Jacobsen and catcher Neha Sidana were both inducted into the National Honor Society, proving to be just as productive off the field as they are on it. Along with earning high honors, Jacobsen and Sidana are junior team captains for the Bellringers on the diamond this spring.

New Affordable Housing Funding in Hebron

By Michael Sinkewicz

State Housing Commissioner Seila Mosquera-Bruno this week announced \$300,000 in predevelopment funding to support Hebron's efforts to construct new affordable housing.

The grant, endowed to Commons Community Development Corporation — an organization formed to address affordable housing in Hebron — represents a significant boost for the town's initiative to tackle a widespread local housing issue.

Mosquera-Bruno, who also serves as board chair of the Connecticut Housing Finance Authority (CHFA), revealed the state funding during a gathering at St. Peter's Episcopal Church in Hebron. She cheerfully told the crowd gathered in the parish hall — which included a variety of state and local leaders — that the project was "very important."

"The opportunity to be here is very humbling because I know how much work you have to put into these projects," she said.

Robert Mangiafico, president Commons CDC, emphasized the importance and urgency behind the group's project, conveying that only 2.9% of local housing options are deemed affordable and over 25% of Hebron residents are cost-burdened — meaning they spend over 30% of their income on housing.

"Affordable housing makes it possible for people to stay in Hebron as they age and as their lives change," Mangiafico asserted, adding that new units would allow people not to be "priced out," as well as sustain local businesses.

More affordable housing, he continued, will "help increase the diversity of Hebron by enabling more families and individuals with less resources to live here, including those who've

been unable to accumulate wealth because of decades of exclusionary policies and practices."

Ron Kolanowski, Commons CDC vice president and rector of St. Peter's, described the injection of funding as a "milestone" moment.

"It's advancing the hopes of our young people who are telling us they want to see justice in their town," he expressed. "They want to see housing they can afford. They want to see their grandparents have housing that can be affordable. We're starting to hear their prophetic voice."

While the exact blueprints are being finalized, Kolanowski conveyed that Commons CDC is aiming for new 51 mixed-income units, with 80% of them ultimately being deemed affordable, that would be constructed on land owned by St Peter's on Church Street.

Throughout the day, Kolanowski gave the leader of the state housing department a tour through Hebron, showcasing the town's assets and highlighting the walkability of the community. For example, he explained that Hebron Elementary School would essentially be next-door to the new development.

"They really want to make sure this is a serious thing," he told the *Rivereast*. "That's the goal of today — to orient people who are going to be essential when we really need to move forward on this project."

In a follow-up interview, Mosquera-Bruno said she "loved the town," adding that "seeing the support of the community was just awesome."

She conveyed that predevelopment funding ideally allows projects to quickly advance
See Affordable Housing, page 31

Portland Resident's Concerns Addressed

By London Brazal

Residents of Portland have a wide variety of opinions regarding the Brainerd Place project on its way at the corner of Marlborough St. and Main.

On Monday, residents had the opportunity to ask questions to the developer, Dan Bertram. The informational session, which was slated to end at 9:00 p.m., had a goal to help people evaluate whether the proposed changes were consistent with fulfilling the town's strategic objectives. The chair of the Economic Development Commission (EDC) Michael Nadolski reminded listeners what their job was: "to help create a positive business environment in town which includes promoting new business investments consistent with Portland's Plan of Conservation and Development." Nadolski further explained two important priorities within that plan, including the want to enhance the town

center and support the Elmcrest Property's suitable redevelopment.

In early April, Bertram presented an application to the Planning and Zoning Commission regarding an amendment to change the zoning regulations to increase the allowable MUD residents to 350, increasing the ratio from 16 to 21 units per 5,000 sq. ft. of commercial space. By the end of that meeting, he withdrew the application to sort out more logistics. During his presentation on Monday, Bertram explained the new proposal for buildings A and B that were caused by poor market perception and a lack of pre-leased businesses. "We've created a building that we think will do much better for commercial leasing and make it a better amenity for the whole town," said Bertram. At the corner, the developers rendered a new building that they think is much more attractive. "I think it sets

the tone for coming into the town of Portland in a way that a CVS on the corner never really could."

The other building's changes include a rooftop restaurant that overlooks the Arrigoni Bridge with commercial space on the first floor. However, there are an additional 108 apartments than what they originally planned. "We're viewing that as a way to actually be able to deliver the commercial and the mixed-use experience that can be premium," added Bertram. The developer said Starbucks submitted their building plans last week with an anticipated opening in October. "We think that's a building block for the next customer and so on," noted Bertram. In the same building, he explained they were trying to target a Jersey Mike and or a Chipotle.

Some Questions Answered

See Portland Resident's Concerns, page 29

Inside...

Marlborough	
Budget Previewed	pg 8
Colchester	
Bacon Academy Honor Roll	pg 16
East Hampton	
EHHS Musicians Hits Road	pg 23
East Hampton	
Show Your Dog	pg 24
Hebron	
Fatal Accident	pg 25
Regional	
Obituaries	pgs 30-31

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Obituaries

Colchester

James Chrystal

James B. Chrystal Sr., 85, of Colchester, Conn., passed away peacefully with his family by his side on Thursday, April 25th 2024 at Middlesex Hospital.



He was born March 02, 1939 in Hartford, CT to the late Charles and Lillian Bartlett Chrystal. James was a retired Hartford Police Detective of 34 years. Although retiring July 17, 1996 from the Hartford Police Department, Jim pursued a career as a security officer, working for the Hartford Federal Building and the Willimantic Social Security Office for another 15 years. He was also a member of the Patrolman's Benevolent Association. Jim loved fishing and boating, he enjoyed bowling and watching his favorite UCONN Girl's Basketball. He loved animals and especially spending time with his beloved dogs. We will miss his great sense of humor and cherish him in our hearts forever.

Along with his parents, Jim is predeceased by his brother Charles Chrystal and his sister Barbara Merzwa. He is survived by his loving wife of 54 years Sandra; his daughter Angela Chrystal, his son James Chrystal Jr. all of Colchester, CT; grandchildren Dylan Dinsmoor of Colchester, Meleena Campisi of East Hampton, James Chrystal III of Portland and Taylor Chrystal of Tennessee.

The family would like to give a special thank you to Middlesex Hospital ICU and hospice for their care and compassion.

The family will receive relatives and friends Friday, May 3rd from 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. at Rose Hill Funeral Home 580 Elm St. Rocky Hill, CT. A Celebration of James's Life will be Saturday, May 4th at 11:00 a.m., also at Rose Hill Funeral Home. A private burial in the Rose Hill Memorial Park will be Monday, May 6th. In lieu of flowers, the family asks donations be made to St. Jude Children's Hospital www.stjude.org or 501 St. Jude Place Memphis, TN 38105. You may also choose Vested Interest in K-9's P.O. Box 9 East Taunton, MA. 02718.

For online condolences, memories or photo tributes, please visit www.rosehillfuneralhome.com

East Hampton

Barbara Maloney Warzecha

Barbara Maloney Warzecha, widow of Stanley G. Warzecha, Jr., of East Hampton, died on April 23, 2024. Born in Bridgeport on December 2, 1930, she was the daughter of the late Thomas and Sylvia Tiberio Maloney, and resided in East Hampton since 1952.



She was a graduate of Lauralton Hall (Milford, CT), the New York Institute of Dietetics, and Regents College SUNY. She was a dietitian at Lawrence + Memorial Hospital in New London where she met her future husband, who was a patient there, and they were married for 62 years until his death in 2013.

She was a Senior Analyst in the Office of Research at the CT Department of Labor, retiring in 1997. She was long active in civic groups. She was town treasurer for three terms (1967-1973); a director of the East Hampton Library and Library treasurer (1957-1973); a former secretary-treasurer of the East Hampton Chamber of Commerce; treasurer of the East Hampton Water and Sewer Authority (1967-1974); a former president of the Belltown Garden Club and East Hampton Little Theatre Guild; treasurer of the town's 1967 Bicentennial Committee; a former corporator of City Savings Bank and Farmers and Mechanics Bank; and chairman of the Republican Town Committee. She was a "stringer" for the Hartford Courant from 1963-1973.

She is survived by four children: Barbara (Thomas) Puffer (Guilford and Fort Myers Beach, FL), Kenneth (Kristen) Warzecha (Colchester), Stanley (Roberta) Warzecha (Hollywood, FL), and Sylvia (William) DeMore (Middle Haddam). She is also survived by six grandchildren: Jeffrey (Kimberly) Warzecha; William (Emma Weber), Michael (Krystal Fredette), and Nicholas DeMore; and Elizabeth and Jennifer Warzecha - and two great grandchildren: Jaxson and Beckett Warzecha. She is also survived by her sisters-in-law Barbara Clark and Cheryl Warzecha. In addition to her parents and husband, she was preceded in death

by her widowed step-father, William Johnson, whom she cared for until he was 101.

The family would like to thank the many health professionals who have treated her for their kindness and compassion, especially Mavis Osei, her wonderful live-in caretaker for the last two years, and most recently, Yvonne Heywood.

A funeral liturgy will be celebrated on Friday, May 3rd, at 11:30 a.m. at St. Patrick Church, East Hampton. Burial will follow at the State Veterans' Cemetery, Middletown. Friends may call at the Spencer Funeral Home, 112 Main St., East Hampton on Friday morning from 9:30 - 11:00 a.m. In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made to Lauralton Hall, 200 High Street, Milford, Conn., 06460 (www.lauraltonhall.org/support-lh/giving). To leave online condolences please visit www.spencerfuneralhomeinc.com.

Hebron

Lee C. Milligan

Lee C. Milligan, 81, of Glastonbury passed away on Tuesday, April 23, 2024. She was the widow of David G. Milligan.

Born in Philadelphia, PA, Lee was the daughter of the late Harry E. and Claire (Flynn) Carpenter. Lee attended the University of Rhode Island where she earned her bachelor's degree and met the love of her life, David. They were married for 46 years.

Her life was dedicated to raising her children and providing a loving and supportive home. She treasured time with her family, especially her grandchildren, and would enjoy having regular family gatherings at her home. Lee had a love for life that included many interests. She traveled to NYC once a month with friends to see Broadway plays, volunteered countless hours for many of her children's activities, and found joy in country-line and Zydeco dancing with Dave and friends.

Lee had a love of nature and enjoyed working long hours in her garden. She would drop everything for a trip to the garden nursery for new plants. She was a member of the Glastonbury Country Gardeners Club for 40 years and helped create and maintain local public gardens. She was also a member of the John Tom Hill Community Club in Glastonbury, where she began her interests with quilting. She enjoyed working with her hands and made numerous Christmas ornaments and quilts that she enjoyed giving out to family and friends. Lee was a member of the St. James Episcopal Church in Glastonbury, CT.

Lee is survived by her three sons; Ted Milligan of VA, Scott Milligan and his wife Ayana of Old Lyme, Daniel Milligan and his wife Bridget of MA, her daughter Amy Bush and her husband Chris of Hebron, her grandchildren Claire, Ryan, and Sophie Bush; Clara and Greta Milligan, her sister Fay Carpenter of Fairfield, and her sister-in-law Karen Carpenter of Florida. In addition to her husband and parents, Lee was predeceased by her brother Robert Carpenter and her brother-in-law Alan Weiner.

Funeral services will be held on Thursday, May 9 at 11 a.m. at St. James Episcopal Church, 2584 Main St., Glastonbury, CT with reception to follow. Burial will be at the convenience of the family. Friends may call on Wednesday, May 8 from 4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. at Mulryan Funeral Home, 725 Hebron Ave., Glastonbury, CT.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made to the John Tom Hill Community Club, JTHCC-Secretary, 19 Buck Rd Amston, CT 06231, Evergreen Country Gardeners 6 Brimfield Way, Rocky Hill, CT 06067, and the Watch Hill Conservancy 222 Watch Hill Rd., Watch Hill, RI, 02891. For online tributes please visit www.mulryanfh.com.

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Marlborough

Barbara Coleman Roberts

Barbara Coleman Roberts, 91, of Athens, Georgia, formerly of Marlborough, Connecticut passed away on Tuesday, April 30, 2024.

Barbara was born in Ellsworth, Maine on July 3, 1932. Her family moved to Marlborough in 1938.

Barbara graduated from the University of Connecticut with a BA degree in Education, specializing in Physical Education. She began her teaching career at Glastonbury High School in 1954.

She married Zane Linden Roberts in 1956. She took a break from teaching when her children were born. When both children were in elementary school, she returned to Glastonbury High School to fill an opening in the PE department until the end of the school year. The following year she helped set up a Physical Education program for the new Gideon Wells school. She taught there for the remainder of her career.

Barbara enjoyed teaching. A highlight was teaching gymnastics and working with her students to produce gymnastics shows.

She retired from teaching in 1979 to care for

two senior members of the family. After two years, with the family members stabilized, she accepted an Accounts Payable position with Cleary Millwork in Rocky Hill.

Upon her retirement from Cleary, she returned to volunteer work at the Marlborough Senior Center, the American Legion Post 197 and the Marlborough Congregational Church. In retirement she enjoyed her favorite activities: playing golf, watching UCONN women's basketball and cheering on the Boston Red Sox.

In 2015, Barbara and her husband Zane, moved to Athens, Georgia to be closer to their children and grandchildren.

Barbara is predeceased by her sister Louise Coleman Nichols and her brother Fred Coleman. She is survived by her husband, Zane Roberts. Her cousin, Elaine Bentley. Her daughter Pam (Mike) Ratti and son Zane (Cora) Roberts, Jr. Grandchildren Jenny (Shane) Martin, Heather (Manny) Diaz, Zane Michael Roberts and Rachel (Chris) Wheeler. Great-grandchildren Brayden, Jackson, and Caleb Martin; Bodhi and Raife Wheeler; Lola and Luca Diaz.

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Seila Mosquera-Bruno, commissioner of the Connecticut Department of Housing announces \$300,000 in state funding.

★ Affordable Housing cont. from page 1

through the preliminary phase, including architectural work. Then, the organization overseeing the project will likely make an additional request for money to help supplement the actual construction work.

Looking ahead, Mosquera-Bruno believes the project is in "good hands."

"They're working together," she said. "People are involved because they wanted to see their town conform."

Overall, the expected amount predevelopment funding required to move forward is likely close to \$1.5 million, Kolanowski explained, adding it was a "huge amount" to cover.

But the newfound grant, which Kolanowski emphasized was not a lease, would expedite the process.

"It's happening," he said. "This is going to happen here."

One of the persisting problems plaguing the project was the lack of an adequate water supply. There are waterlines, but they aren't plentiful, he said. Once that issue is fully addressed, Kolanowski believes additional monetary support will follow.

In August, Commons CDC was awarded a \$2.1 million grant through the state's "Connecticut Communities Challenge Grant" program, administered through the Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD). That funding was appropriated towards new town infrastructure, such as water wells, that benefits both the affordable housing project along with the entire Hebron town center. Current test wells, Kolanowski added, have shown promise that the land will be viable for housing units.

In the award letter, the DECD noted there is currently "insufficient water capacity to grow the Town Center."

"This infrastructure initiative is essential to Hebron's ability to develop a visually coherent Town Center that provides recreational activities, economic development opportunities, potential for job creation, and future developments including affordable housing."

Matthew Pugliese, deputy commissioner at DECD, said this week that the new wells and infrastructure were being built "to help facilitate

this great idea" by Commons CDC.

"This application stood out when DECD was reviewing it because it was coming from Hebron," he said. "We need housing and we need density in our small, rural towns."

He credited the spirit of the community for pursuing affordable housing initiatives, expressing that "it's inspiring to see a community where you all are doing that."

A crucial component of the project's completion will be town leadership. Peter Kasper, the chairman of the Board of Selectmen, applauded the work being done by Commons CDC, and recalled how Kolanowski had previously presented information at local board meetings.

"It has to start somewhere," he said. "And it has to start with someone willing to take a risk, someone willing to have a vision, someone willing to have the courage to bring that forward."

Kasper added that the group has the "courage to have Hebron be at the forefront of this important issue."

In October, the Coalition on Diversity & Equity (CoDE), which serves Hebron, Marlborough, Andover and Columbia, sponsored a panel discussion intended to explore affordable housing options and dispel myths associated with new developments.

During that discussion — also held at St. Peter's — residents largely expressed support for more affordable options in town. Panelist Brandon L. McGee, Jr., the deputy commissioner of state Department of Housing, conveyed at the time that "affordable housing isn't an issue."

"It should be considered a basic need that everybody has a right to," he asserted.

McGee added that the CHFA was allocating millions of dollars for local assistance on behalf of the department of housing, and there were many buckets of funding available.

"A community simply has to choose what they want to do and we can help you make that a reality," he said.

This week, Kolanowski was optimistic that stakeholders appeared to be rallying behind the project, conveying that more progress was hopefully on the way.

"There's huge momentum," he said.