



December 2013



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Watch Meetings Online



www.westfordcat.org

Dear Westford residents,

On December 4th Northern Middlesex Council of Governments (NMCOG) presented their draft Study of Town Center Parking at a public forum at the J.V. Fletcher Library, which was attended by many residents, local officials and town staff. Many concerns were raised about parking, traffic through the center, and the impacts to our common and surrounding streets. The Board of Selectmen is seeking public input on the report before asking NMCOG to finalize the report, and beginning moving forward with related projects. You may find the report at this link: [NMCOG Town Center Parking/Traffic Report.](#)

At their December 10th meeting, the Board of Selectmen voted to open the warrant for our March 22, 2014 annual town meeting. The board also announced the formation of a Hunting Policy Committee. Information is available on our website and interested residents should complete a Citizen's Activity form: [Citizen Activity Form.](#)

The board recently heard from our Communications Advisory Committee that Verizon had failed to complete the installation of FIOS to all residents by the due date October 31st. The board has agreed to extend the completion date until December 31st and revisit whether other action is necessary at their first meeting in January.

Princeton Properties, a 200-unit apartment complex located at 16 Littleton Road is currently under construction. This complex will offer 40 affordable and 160 market rate units when completed (photo page 9).

In keeping with the Board of Selectmen goals, the town and school building safety committee coordinated training with every town employee and interested board and committee members on ways to make our schools and other public building



Town employees and committee members attend safety training.

occupants safer. I would like to extend a sincere thank you to Police Chief Tom McEnaney, Detective Justin Agraz, and Bob Ware at the Westford Academy for coordinating these extremely informative and effective trainings.

(continued on next page)

I am pleased to announce that Westford received a grant for Phase II of the affordable housing units at Stony Brook housing. When complete this will add 36 affordable units for families, with 9 units reserved for households earning less than 30 percent of area median income. The first phase of Stony Brook contained 15 affordable units and was completed in 2006.

It is with great appreciation, coupled with sadness that I announce long-time Senior Center employee Mary Sudak retired after 19 years from the senior center. A wonderful celebration of her years of service was held at the Cameron Senior Center. She will be sorely missed, but promises to attend bingo from time to time.

The Board of Selectmen meeting is canceled for December 17th, with their next meeting scheduled for January 14th.

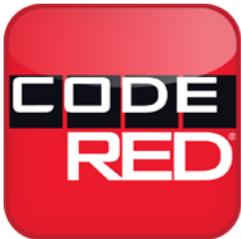
As we enter the winter months, please remember to sign up for Code Red alerts on our webpage to receive emergency alerts: [CodeRed](#). Also please be aware we offer utility information on our website to help communicate any issues with power outages or storm-related information: [Utility and Emergency Information](#). Our AM emergency radio station is almost completed and we will alert you when it is activated.

I wish you all the very best during this holiday season. The town departments' staff did decorate their office doors in celebration of this very special time of year. See you in 2014!

Sincerely,



Jodi Ross

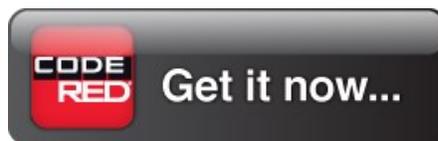


CodeRED is a Community Messaging System, used to notify residences of emergency, non-emergency and general information through an automated telephone dialing system, which sends a message automatically to thousands of targeted residences and/or contact databases.

Most residents will not need to take action in order to receive notification of events on their home telephone. However, **if you have recently moved into Westford, changed your home phone number, or have an unlisted phone number you will need to register your phone number.**

[Click here](#) to register additional phone numbers or email addresses.

Click the icon below to download the CodeRED Mobile Alert App for your smartphone.



Council On Aging - Coming Events

New Year's Eve Day Luncheon

Our Fourth Annual New Year's Eve Day Luncheon will be held on

Tuesday, December 31st at 11:30 AM at Cameron.

The luncheon will consist of ham, potato salad, vegetables, greens salad, rolls, and dessert.

Fee for luncheon is \$2.

Ring in the New Year with us by registering by December 19th at 978-692-5523.

Volunteers for food preparation and table set-up please arrive at 9:30 AM on December 31st.

Cameron Closet Volunteers Needed

Come join our Thrift Store team as a Volunteer Clerk.

Assistance is needed on Thursday mornings 9-12 noon.

Six month commitment requested.

Contact Mandi at 978-399-2330 if you would like to sign up or learn more about this position.

Lunch Served on Weekdays at Cameron Senior Center

The Merrimack Valley Nutrition Program provides anyone

age 60 and over with low cost nutritional meals at Cameron, Monday – Friday at 11:30 AM.

Please call 978-692-5523 a minimum of two days in advance between 8:00 - 10:00 AM to make your reservation.

The donation is \$2.00. If spouse/partner is under the age of 60, the meal cost is \$4.50.

Introductory Computer Classes

If you are interested in learning

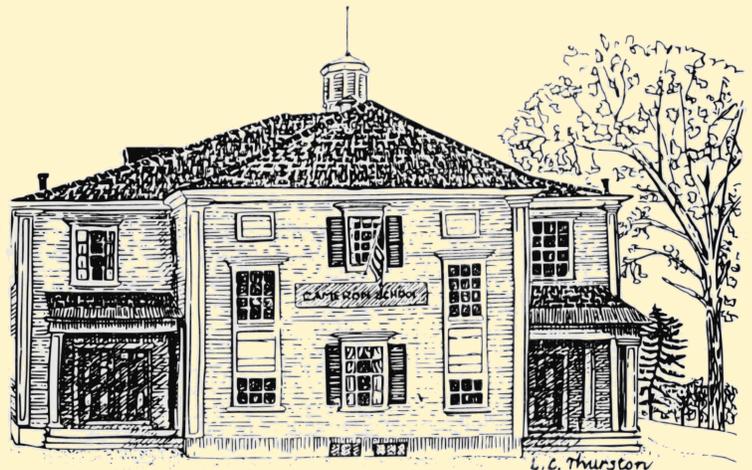
basic computer skills call 978-692-5523 to sign up.

You will be called by our instructor Mary Eve to set up a time

for your instruction. We have WiFi !

To view the complete Council On Aging Newsletter please visit our website at:

www.westfordma.gov/coa and click on [Newsletters](#).



Westford Senior Center

Westford Community Food Pantry

In Westford there is no reason that anyone should go without food. The Westford Community Food Pantry is located at the Cameron Senior Center, 20 Pleasant St. and open to the general public. The Pantry operates as an umbrella agency of the Friends of the Cameron Senior Center, a non-profit 501c3 charitable organization. The Food Pantry has been serving people since the early 1980's. It was originally located at the Town Hall and was run by the Kiwanis and Town Aide. Between 1984 – 1994 the food pantry was located at the former Tadmuck Senior Center.

Ninety families received Thanksgiving Food Baskets this year and ninety-seven Christmas Food Baskets will be distributed throughout Town. We have approximately 100 recipients of the food pantry per month. Home deliveries are made on a monthly basis to the homebound. The generosity of individuals, families, and businesses allow for these items to be available to those in need in our Town. The Food Pantry is open for distribution the first and third Monday 1 – 3:30 P.M., Wednesday 8:30 – 11:30 A.M., Thursday 8:30 – 11:30 A.M., and 6 – 8 P.M., and Friday 8:30 – 11:30 A.M. of each month. If you are in need of food please avail yourself to your local pantry. You may send a friend or neighbor to pick up groceries for you.

The Pantry is operated by a core group of volunteers who pick up food donations throughout the Town including the drop off boxes at the 2 Market Baskets and at Shaw's in Groton. Volunteers shop at the Merrimack Valley Food Bank for one third of our goods and shop locally for other items that we have a demand for. Many residents drop-in during their free time to stock the shelves or to be assigned one of ten shifts that the pantry is open for distribution throughout the month. If you are interested in volunteering please stop by and complete a volunteer and CORI application.

We accept all non-perishable items that are not in glass containers. The pantry shopping list includes fruits and vegetables canned or dried; soups, rice, pasta, and noodles, protein such as tuna, ham, shrimp, salmon etc.. Complete dinners: canned or microwave. Beverages including coffee, tea, cocoa, powdered milk or juice canned or boxes; cereals hot and cold, peanut butter and mixes for pancake, muffin, etc. potatoes, crackers, dessert items of pudding, jello, and cake mixes. Cleaning and paper products along with detergent are always in demand.

Did you know that approximately 450 people are served monthly, 85% of those who need the food pantry are employed, 96% of the families consist of 2 or more people and that 42% of the children are under the age of 18. Please visit the food pantry if you need help making ends meet in these difficult times. We all need help at some point. Food donations may be dropped off at Cameron Monday – Friday 8AM – 3PM. Checks are 100% tax deductible and made payable to Friends of the Cameron Senior Center and mailed to PO Box 2223, Westford, MA 01886. Please indicate on the check memo that the donation is for the "food pantry." Gift cards to area supermarkets are always welcomed and should be turned in at our registration desk.

-Thank you!



Westford Fire Department News

Simple Winter Heating Safety Tips

As the temperature continues to drop, Westford Interim Fire Chief Targ and State Fire Marshal Stephen D. Coan urge residents to take simple steps to ensure they stay warm and stay safe this winter. "As families plan for the winter months, it is more important than ever to practice safety first when heating your home," said Lt. Donald R Parsons of the Westford Fire Department Fire Prevention Office. "It's important to give furnaces an annual check-up because efficiently running furnaces save money and prevent carbon monoxide poisoning,"



he added, "Certified professionals should check chimneys for cracks in the mortar and clean accumulated creosote to prevent chimney fires." Heating is the second leading cause of fires in the home in Massachusetts. One of every 20 space heater fires in the past five years has caused a fire death. December through February are traditionally the peak months for house fires as the cold weather drives people indoors, heating systems are taxed, and there is more use of space heaters.

Heating is also the leading cause of carbon monoxide poisoning, so make sure you have both working smoke AND carbon monoxide alarms on each floor of your home. Test the alarms once a month and change batteries twice a year. Make sure to check on elderly neighbors regularly in the cold months.

"Tragedy frequently strikes in winter months where many fire deaths are caused by heating," said State Fire Marshal Stephen D. Coan. "We can't stress enough the importance of taking precautions with space heaters, keeping them at least three feet from anything that can burn, and properly disposing of woodstove ashes, as simple steps to safeguard you and your family this winter."

The Department of Fire Services, along with the Westford Fire Department, will educate residents about winter fire safety through the **Keep Warm, Keep Safe** public awareness campaign. Components will include radio and television ads, English/Spanish ads in public transit systems, multi-language flyers and brochure, and a grassroots outreach effort led by local fire departments.

Residents often turn to space heaters, pellet stoves, or their fireplace to offset the rising cost of heating fuel. For the most part, these alternative heating devices can be safe. However, there are simple steps you can take to safeguard you and your family this winter.

Space heaters can cause fires if they are placed too close to flammable materials such as drapes, furniture or bedding. Keep anything that can burn three feet away from the space heater and use only heavy-duty extension cords.

If you heat your home by burning *solid fuels* (coal, firewood, pellets), make sure to dispose of the ashes properly. Place ashes in a metal ash can with a secure lid and place it away from the house, garage and deck. A single ember can stay hot for days without being detected and easily fanned back to life. Do not place ashes in cardboard boxes or plastic containers, inside the garage, the breezeway, or under the porch. Have the chimney annually cleaned by a certified professional who can also check for cracked or broken mortar. Natural gas and fuel oil are both safe and efficient. Make sure to have a professional clean and tune-up your furnace and hot water heater every year. Gas leaks can be poisonous so the gas company adds something to make it smell like rotten eggs. If you suspect a leak, move outdoors and contact the local fire department immediately.

For more information on winter heating and fire safety, visit www.mass.gov/keepwarmkeepsafe.

Water Department News

As part of our ongoing maintenance program the Water Department recently cleaned out the Forge Village treatment plant clear well. What is a clear well? The clear well is an underground holding tank for treated drinking water. After water is filtered and chlorinated, it is pumped through an aeration tower to remove any naturally occurring radon, and sent directly into the clear well. This specialized tank which holds roughly 255,000 gallons of water, is equipped with baffles (looks like a maze) which are designed to increase the water's contact time with the chlorine disinfectant. In fact, when the plant is operating at near capacity it takes about three hours for the water to make it all the way through the clear well. This is a critical element of the disinfection process as chlorine must be in contact with the water for specified periods of time in order to achieve sufficient inactivation of pathogenic organisms such as Giardia (see Beavers below), viruses, and harmful bacteria.

Over time iron, manganese, and calcium hypochlorite (the source of chlorine disinfection) residues will accumulate on the floor and walls of the clear well and need to be removed. After draining the tank, Water Department workers meticulously removed this residue and it was pumped out. Once clean the clear well was rinsed, thoroughly disinfected, and tested for bacteria prior to being put back into service.

The Water Department is confident that our proactive approach to system maintenance not only provides superior water quality and protects the integrity of the distribution system, but saves money by reducing more expensive repair costs down the road caused by failure to perform preventative maintenance.

Beavers

It's hard not to admire the work of these furry little creatures – they can build a dam using simple raw materials better than any engineer. Unfortunately, their industrious occupation can occasionally become a problem for public water suppliers by affecting source water quality. Beaver activity frequently results in higher bacteria and Giardia concentrations in the water. Giardia, quaintly known as "Beaver Fever" is a gastrointestinal parasite that can cause rather unpleasant symptoms such as nausea, cramps, upset stomach and diarrhea.



As a public water supplier, the Water Department is responsible for not only treating the water, but protecting the source of supply. This preventative approach makes sense considering that it's better to keep contaminants out of the water supply than having to remove them later. When beaver activity affects Water Department facilities or threatens water quality we need to take action. Many times a strategically-placed device can successfully discourage dam construction while not harming the beavers.

Recent beaver activity at the Howard Road pump station. Falling trees can cause serious facility damage and even temporarily remove a well from service.



Clear well drained of water.



Crew cleaning clear well.

Westford Recycling Commission News

'Tis The Season – To Increase Your Recycling

Holiday season activities generate a large amount of recyclable material. Massachusetts state environmental regulations ban recyclables from the trash. As a reminder, the Westford Recycling Commission asks residents to recycle all they can. Recycling saves Westford money by diverting trash from the incinerator.

- Recycle your cardboard gift boxes, garment boxes, toy and game packing cardboard, and shipping boxes. All cardboard must be flattened and no larger than 3 feet by 3 feet in size.
- Recycle your gift wrap paper (except for foil-based wrap), tissue paper, and paper tags, gift bags, cards, and envelopes. Recycle your newspapers, ads, and catalogs.
- Recycle your holiday party cups – if plastic with a recycling symbol. Do not include your paper cups and plates, as these have a coating which is not acceptable.
- Save your burned-out strings of lights for used electronics collection day – they accept them there!
- On your recycling day, place your bins, boxes, or totes at the curb by 7 a.m. and separate them from your trash containers. All recyclables can be mixed together.



If you would like to purchase a wheeled recycling toter (this is optional), send a \$45 check made out to the "Town of Westford" to the Town Clerk, 55 Main Street, Westford. Or use any sturdy container with a "Recyclables" sticker. Get a free sticker at the Town Clerk's office.

Go to www.westfordma.gov/recycling for more information.

Happy Holidays and Happy Recycling!

Highway Department News

Westford's Snow Removal Strategy

When the Snow Begins

When a snowstorm begins, the Department responds by treating all roads with deicing chemicals. Treating the road surfaces serves two purposes — preventing snow and ice from bonding to the surface and to keep traffic flowing. Treating the roads takes approximately 2 1/2 – 3 hours. Please remember that our crews must travel on snow covered, slippery untreated roads to get here at any hour of the day or night. Please be patient as the crews will be out as soon as possible to begin snow removal operations.



During the Storm

Plowing operations begin when there is an accumulation of **2 to 4 inches of snow** on road surfaces. Depending upon the severity of the storm, town forces are assisted by hired contractors to expedite the process of snow removal. Each vehicle is assigned to a predetermined route and will remain there until the storm subsides unless an emergency occurs that requires reassignment of equipment from one location to another. The main objective is to keep all roads passable during the storm. Unfortunately, it is not possible to keep the roads free of snow without filling in many driveways; therefore, when you clean the end of your driveway, deposit the excess snow to the downstream side of your driveway. This will minimize the redeposit of snow into the cleared opening when the plow makes its next pass.

Please comply with the WINTER PARKING BAN (now in effect)

No on street parking longer than one hour between 1AM and 6AM from November 1st to March 31st. No on street parking of any kind during a snow storm, or following a storm while clean up is still taking place. Vehicles impeding snow removal \$25.00 fine, with the possibility of being towed. Throwing, dumping or leaving snow in the roadway is forbidden and can result in a \$50.00 fine.

Following the Storm

After plowing is completed, roads are given a final treatment of deicing chemical. In the days following a storm, scraping and treating of roads continues depending upon weather forecasts. If colder weather is forecasted streets must be scraped of snow and slush to prevent icing of the surface when the temperature drops and also to widen the road edge so that drainage structures are exposed if the temperatures rise and melting occurs. As time allows, snow is removed from intersections where sight distance is a concern.

Keeping the Town Right-of-Way Clear for Snow Removal

The town generally owns the land from the edge of roadway up to 15 feet back depending on the particular road. Snow is pushed back into this area after large snow fall events to make room for future snow fall.

For more information: www.westfordma.gov/highway

Westford Fire Department News (Continued)



Westford Firefighters and their families sponsored a children's Christmas party at Station 3, a recently revived tradition with a special visit from Santa Claus..



Forge Village Santa Late

Capt. Dave Balfour of the Forge Village fire department fills in for Santa during party held in the Franco-American hall in Westford. Although swamped with calls, Santa finally arrived by helicopter—better late than never. Left to right: Rose Ann Menard, Capt. Balfour, Edward Hodge, Richard Menard.

Projects Around Town



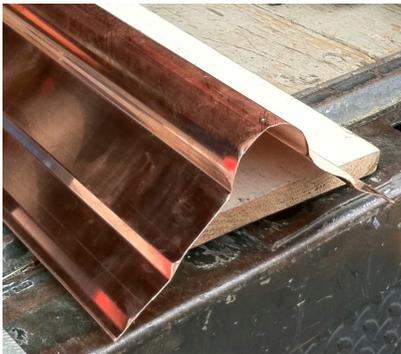
Construction is underway as Lowell based developer Princeton Properties builds 200 apartments (Princeton Westford Apartment Homes) off of Littleton Road near the Chelmsford line.

The project will include 40 affordable and 160 market rate units. There will be 1 and 2 bedroom units and a clubhouse, pool and play area.

Projects Around Town (continued)



An abandoned vent was removed during the roof replacement



The William E. Frost School Building undergoing roof replacement this fall.



A Historic postcard of Frost School Building.

Projects Around Town (continued)



Town Farm Road granite bridge undergoing repairs last week.



Completed repairs to the wall.

The J. V. Fletcher Library's Annual Staff Recommendations for holiday gift giving and/or reading for pleasure

Cuckoo's Calling by Robert Galbraith (a.k.a. J. K. Rowling.) It is finally here, a reason to pick up hardboiled crime fiction novel again. This book is beautifully written with a protagonist that is compelling and complex. Cormoran Strike is barely making ends meet as a private investigator. Then a new client walks through the door and Strike finds himself thrown into the world of the wealthy, the deceitful, and worse; while at the same time he is plumbing the depths of his very human heart. **FICTION**

The Signature of All Things by Elizabeth Gilbert. Gilbert's ambitious, gorgeously written, historical novel vividly depicts the life its heroine, Alma Whittaker. Alma, the daughter of an imperious, ruthless botanical explorer, is in her own right a brilliant botanist, scientist and student of ancient languages. "Its prose has the elegant sheen of a 19th-century epic, but its concerns--the intersection of science and faith, the feminine struggle for fulfillment, the dubious rise of the pharmaceutical industry--are essentially modern...." The New York Times Magazine.

Oleander Girl by Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni. Orphaned at birth, Korobi Roy has lived a sheltered life growing up with her grandparents. She finds a love letter in her mother's book of poetry and dreams of finding true love just like her parents had. She believes she has when she becomes engaged to Rajat. When a family secret shatters Korobi's world, she leaves for America to try and discover her true identity.

The Bully Pulpit by Doris Kearns Goodwin. Pulitzer Prize winning author, Doris Kearns Goodwin expounds on the remarkable friendship between Theodore Roosevelt and William Taft during the golden age of journalism. Their friendship is destroyed in 1912 when they launch a backstabbing campaign against each other for the presidential nomination. **NON-FICTION**

Bunker Hill: A City, A Siege, A Revolution by Nathaniel Philbrick. Relive history in this gripping book that explores the circumstances surrounding the Battle of Bunker Hill and the stories behind the heroes of the bloodiest battle of the Revolution.

On the Map: A Mind-Expanding Exploration of the Way the World Looks From the early explorers' maps and the awe-inspiring medieval Mappa Mundi to Google Maps and the satellite renderings on our smartphones, Garfield explores the unique way that maps relate and realign our history. He has a "knack for creating high-spirited, erudite and user-friendly books on subjects that may seem crashingly dull to all but a few fanatics. . . . Garfield is a terrific guide. . . . "On the Map" is a treasure: exhilarating, witty, compulsively readable and just plain fun." -"The Seattle Times"

Tap the Magic Tree by Christie Matheson. A beautiful and entertaining book that encourages interaction (tapping, blowing, etc.) to make an apple tree bloom, produce fruit, and lose its leaves. The author is originally from Westford. **CHILDREN**

The Chicken Problem by Jennifer Oxley. Peg and Cat are having a picnic on the farm with Pig. When the chicken coop is left opened, they must use their math skills to return all one hundred chickens to their coop.

The Day the Crayons Quit by Drew Daywalt. The crayons are revolting. Duncan comes to school to find letters from each of his crayons complaining of the way they've been mistreated.

Eleanor & Park by Rainbow Rowell. Life isn't easy when you're fifteen, especially when you are the new girl at school and are being bullied because you are overweight and like to wear unusual outfits. The only light in Eleanor's life is Park, a half-Korean boy who has lived in Omaha, Nebraska his entire life but never felt like he belonged. Their relationship turns from friendship to romance as they help each other face their troubles. **TEENS**

Rose Under Fire by Elizabeth Wein. Rose Justice, an American ATA pilot is captured by the Nazis while flying a mission from London to Paris. She is sent to a notorious women's concentration camp but finds hope and the strength to survive with the help of the other prisoners.

Splintered by A. G. Howard. Sixteen year old Alyssa is descended from the woman who inspired "Alice in Wonderland." She worries that she is mentally ill like her mother until she discovers the secret of Wonderland and perhaps a way to save her family.