

News & Updates from the Town of Falmouth
October 2022
Volume 4, Issue 23

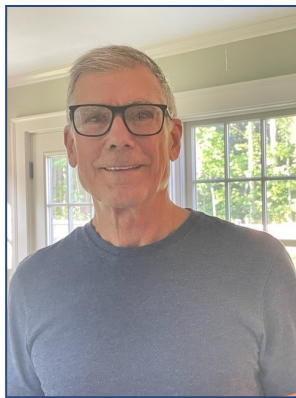
The Falmouth Focus

SPECIAL PRINT EDITION

FROM TOWN COUNCIL CHAIR, PETER LAFOND

Dear Falmouth Neighbors,

It's hard to believe October is already upon us and signs of Fall are everywhere. The Council was hard at work over the Summer. In addition to Town Council and Committee meetings, Councilors gathered on July 20 for our annual "work plan retreat" to establish priorities and set goals for FY22-23.



We have identified several objectives to address in the coming months, including ordinance and policy reviews, a new Climate Action Plan, and an updated Comprehensive Plan. To learn more about the work plan, please review the Council's September 12 meeting.

As most residents are aware, Falmouth just completed a full revaluation of all real property. Please take a moment to read the articles on pages 2 and 3 of this newsletter about the revaluation, the new mil rate, and several tax assistance programs and exemptions available to property owners and especially to seniors. There are several important dates to be aware of to take advantage of these programs.

I have been very pleased with the increasing engagement of the

community in the governance of the town. The Vision & Values project, expanded communications, and the switch to hybrid Council meetings (which allow for remote attendance) has allowed more residents to voice their opinions and share their ideas with Town staff and Councilors. From volunteer committee members to residents who write, call, and attend Town Council meetings, thank you for getting involved. I encourage all of you to review the current openings on several of the Town's boards and committees (see page 2) and to consider applying to fill a vacancy.

Finally, I encourage all of you to stay informed with what's going on in Falmouth by signing up for our E-Alerts (www.falmouthme.org/subscribe) and following our social media pages. This is the best way to get the most accurate and timely information about Town business. You can also reach out directly to the Council at any time. For contact information visit: www.falmouthme.org/town-council-town-manager

On behalf of the Council, I wish you all well and hope you have a pleasant Fall.



TOWN HALL HOURS

- Monday: 7:00am-4:30pm
- Tuesday: 8:00am-4:30pm
- Wednesday: 8:00am-4:30pm
- Thursday: 8:00am-4:30pm
- Friday: Closed

ONLINE SERVICES

www.falmouthme.org/home/pages/online-services

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VOLUNTEER BOARD & COMMITTEE VACANCIES

The Appointments Committee is seeking volunteers to fill vacancies on a number of Town boards and committees. If you are interested in getting involved, please consider the following openings:

Board of Sewer Appeals (2)

Community Wellness Committee (2)

Conservation Commission (1)

Climate Action Planning Committee (Ad-Hoc) (2)

Falmouth Memorial Library Board of Trustees (1)

Land Management and Acquisitions Committee (1)

Parks and Community Programs Advisory Committee (1)

Planning Board (1)

Recycling & Energy Advisory Committee (2)

To learn more about each board or committee, visit:

www.falmouthme.org/boards

For an application, visit: www.falmouthme.org/appointments-committee

Questions? Call 207-699-5329

FALMOUTH REVALUATION PROJECT

Falmouth completed its townwide revaluation in August. At the Town Council meeting on August 8, Assessor Ben Thompson presented an update on the revaluation, accompanied by David Cornell, an independent consultant hired to provide a quality review of the revaluation and analytics of the data collected. The analytics help to explain shifts in tax burden and market impacts on certain types of properties. According to Mr. Cornell, Falmouth's revaluation meets all industry standards for complete and accurate data and effective valuation models.

Through the revaluation, Falmouth's taxable assessments increased by approximately \$1.59 billion, an increase of approximately 61.7%. The bulk of that increase, approximately 66.45%, was in residential assessments. While commercial assessments increased, they



did not increase at the same rate as residential values.

The increased townwide valuation of taxable properties resulted in a decrease of the mil rate from 17.43 to 11.92.

While the informal appeals process has been completed, property owners who still disagree with the newly assessed value of their property have 185 days after the tax commitment to file an abatement with the Assessor's Office.

Property tax bills will be mailed out in late September and the deadline for the 1st payment is November 3, 2022.

**FY22-23
Mil Rate
11.92**

Calculating Your Property Tax

Multiply your new assessed value by the new tax rate.

New Assessment x .01192 = Property Tax
For example, \$500,000 x .01192 = \$5,960

Note: This calculation does not include exemptions for which you may qualify that could lower your bill.

NOVEMBER 8 GENERAL ELECTION

The Clerk's Office is accepting requests for absentee ballots for the November 8 General Election. Absentee ballots will be mailed out 30 days prior to the election. Any registered voter may cast an absentee ballot instead of voting in person on Election Day. There are four ways to request an absentee ballot:

- Phone: Call 699-5320 or 699-5308
- Online: Request your ballot at: www.maine.gov/sos/cec/elec/
- Mail: Print an Absentee Ballot Request Form at: www.falmouthme.org and mail to

Falmouth Town Hall.

- In Person: Request a ballot at Falmouth Town Hall.

The deadline to request an absentee ballot is November 3. The Clerk's Office will offer extended hours for absentee voting on Thursday, November 3.

On Election Day, voting will take place from 7am-8pm at the Falmouth High School Gymnasium, 74 Woodville Road. No voting takes place at Town Hall. The Clerk's Office will be closed on Election Day to facilitate the election.

PROPERTY TAX ASSISTANCE

Are you taking advantage of all the property tax exemptions, programs, and assistance available to you?

STATE EXEMPTIONS

Homestead Exemption—Provides a reduction of up to \$25,000 in property tax relief for certain individuals that have owned homestead property in Maine for at least 12 months and make the property they occupy on April 1 their permanent residence.

Renewable Energy Investment Exemption—Exempts renewable energy equipment, such as solar panels, from property tax beginning April 1, 2020.

Veteran Exemption—Available to Veterans 62 years or older; or, receiving 100% disability as a Veteran; or, became 100% disabled while serving.

Paraplegic Veteran—Available to Veterans who received a federal grant for a specially adapted housing unit.

Blind Exemption—Available to individuals who are determined to be legally blind.

Find more info on state property tax relief programs at: www.maine.gov or call the Maine Revenue Services at: 207-624-9784.

PROGRAMS FOR SENIORS

The Town of Falmouth offers **Senior Property Tax Assistance** to residents who meet the following criteria:

- Age 62 or older
- Household income below \$60,000 per year
- Current resident of Falmouth (owner or renter)

Refunds are determined based on the number of valid applications received. Recipients will be refunded a



proportional share of the available program funds based on income level.

Call Pete McHugh at 207-699-5311 for assistance with your application. **The deadline to apply is October 13.**

Property Tax Stabilization for Senior Citizens is a State program that allows certain senior residents to freeze the property taxes on their homestead. An applicant must be:

- Age 65 or older
- A permanent resident of Maine
- Owned a Maine homestead for at least ten years
- Eligible for a homestead exemption on the property they are placing in the program

Applications must be filed annually.

The deadline is December 1, 2022.

The law goes into effect in 2023. The property tax for your homestead will be frozen at the amount you were billed the prior tax year. **For applications**

received in 2022, this means that the amount that appears on the tax bill you receive in October 2022, which is your tax bill for July 1, 2022-June 30, 2023, will be the frozen amount going forward.

For additional

questions, contact the Maine Revenue Services Property Tax Division at: 207-624-5600 or prop.tax@maine.gov. You may also contact Falmouth's Finance Director, Pete McHugh at 207-699-5311 or pmchugh@falmouthme.org.

RECENT GRANT AWARDS

Fire-EMS: \$165,713.33
Federal Emergency Management Agency Grant for training programs for new recruits and current staff.

Fire-EMS: \$316,000
Federal Emergency Management Agency Grant for new Firefighter Breathing Apparatus and an Air Compressor System/Breathing Air Fill Station.

Parks & Community Programs: \$4,875
Access Improvement Grant to construct a parking lot and connector trail at the North Falmouth Community Forest Blackstrap Road trailhead.

Parks & Community Programs: \$5,000
Portland Water District Grant for water bottle refilling station/drinking fountain at Community Park.

Police: \$20,000
Maine Department of Public Safety Grant to partially fund the recovery coach program.

Police: \$2,800
Federal Byrne Grant to support equipment for patrol operations.

Public Works: \$125,000
Stream Crossing Grant from the Maine Department of Environmental Protection for a culvert over Suckfish Brook.

Sustainability: \$50,000
Community Resilience Partnership Community Action Grant to fund geomorphic data collection and quality assessment of several streams.

STAY INFORMED, GET CONNECTED



E-Alerts are sent directly to your email about the issues that interest you. To enroll, click “E-Alerts” on our homepage to select the bulletins you want to receive.



[Facebook.com/
FalmouthME](https://www.facebook.com/FalmouthME)



[Twitter.com/
MaineFalmouth](https://twitter.com/MaineFalmouth)



[instagram.com/
myfavoritefalmouth/](https://www.instagram.com/myfavoritefalmouth/)



[youtube.com/user/
FalmouthMaine](https://www.youtube.com/user/FalmouthMaine)

The *Falmouth Focus* is a bi-weekly digital newsletter of the Town of Falmouth. Special print editions are sent via mail to residents twice annually. Visit www.falmouthme.org/subscribe to subscribe to the digital edition. Newsletter feedback may be sent to: ecadigan@falmouthme.org

THE TOWN OF FALMOUTH

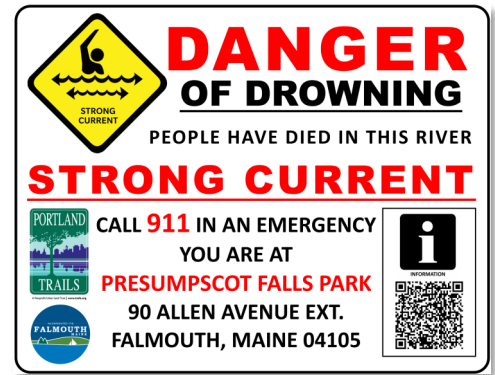
271 Falmouth Road
Falmouth, ME 04105

Phone: 207-781-5253
www.falmouthme.org

PUBLIC SAFETY ALONG THE PRESUMPSCOT RIVER

Falmouth Public Safety would like to remind residents of the very real danger of drowning to both people and pets in the strong currents of the Presumpscot River. While many people take advantage of the hand-carry canoe and kayak water access from Walton Park, the river trail access from Presumpscot Falls Park, as well as Portland Trails and private property fronting the river, users should be aware that the currents (including river and tidal) are strong and fast moving making it very dangerous, even for skilled swimmers, kayakers, and other recreationalists. The Town of Falmouth is working with Portland Trails to increase warning signage (see example at right) at several access points and to enhance education and outreach to the public regarding the dangers of the river currents.

The National Park Service advises us that swimming in natural waters such as

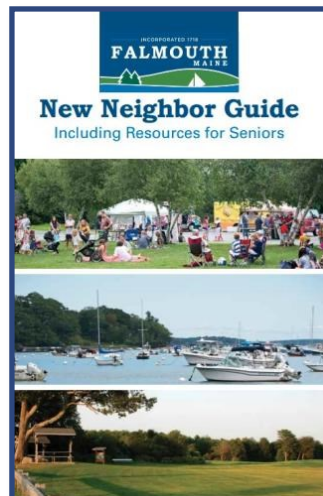


ivers is very different from swimming in a swimming pool. Currents can tire you out and sweep you away. Distance across water is greater than it looks. Cold water can shock your body and make it difficult to swim. Water depth can suddenly change to above chin level. Underwater hazards like trees and rocks can trap you and keep you from swimming back to shore. Residents are advised to keep this in mind and use caution when recreating along the Presumpscot River.

ROAD CONSTRUCTION UPDATE

Construction continues along Middle Road to the Woods Road roundabout as part of the West Falmouth Sewer Project. Work will then proceed up Woods Road and into The Woodlands. No additional road closures are anticipated during the project but travel will be reduced to alternating one lane north of Bucknam

Road. We appreciate your continued patience and caution when driving through the construction zone. Additionally, MaineDOT’s Bucknam Road Bridge Replacement Project is scheduled to begin this Fall. This will cause significant disruption to traffic. Updates will be provided via E-Alerts, social media, and our website.



NEW NEIGHBOR GUIDE

We are pleased to present the Falmouth New Neighbor Guide! The guide is intended to inform new residents of Town services and provide a directory of Town departments. Additionally, the guide includes a history of Falmouth, a listing of local non-profits and recreational opportunities, as well as resources for seniors. View the new guide online at: www.falmouthme.org/home/news/falmouth-new-neighbor-guide. New residents may request a print copy at Town Hall.

