

Shelburne Town E-Newsletter – January 2023



Happy new year! We've completed 2022 and 12 issues of this e-newsletter!

Here is the news for January 2023. This is the time of year when darkness turns to light in our little village, and the bridge to what comes next can only be seen in faint outline. We are a bit light on content this month. I think the holidays, travel and visiting took precedence over sending in news items. Help me spread the Shelburne e-news this year. Forward this newsletter to a few friends and encourage them to subscribe. Subscribers can join by sending me their name and email address to andrewbaker1959@gmail.com You don't have to live in Shelburne to subscribe, but please let me know what town you do live in.

My new year's resolution is to invite guest editors in to try out a month or more of newslettering. Let me know what month you want. Step one will be creating a town newsletter email address that we can use together for news gathering.

But for this month, send in your news items to my address above by Friday, January 27 for the February edition. If it is news about Shelburne and not too long, we'll print it! All the best,

Andrew Baker - Interim Newsletter Editor & Shelburne Select Board member

What's All the Hoopla about Heat Pumps? Shelburne Falls, January 29

Heat pumps are the primary way to get rid of the fossil fuels that most of us rely on to stay warm in winter. Great strides have been made in recent years to develop units (most commonly "mini-splits") that are efficient at even colder temperatures. They also provide cooling in the summer at a drastically lower cost than traditional air conditioners. New incentives from the federal and state governments are making heat pumps more affordable and they are becoming extremely popular in our area.

"What's All the Hoopla about Heat Pumps?" is a public event devoted to learning about heat pump technology and its applications for homes in our area.

When: Sunday, January 29 from 1:00 pm to 4:30 pm

Where: Buckland Shelburne Elementary School, 75 Mechanic St., Shelburne Falls

What: ☑ Presentation 1:15 – 2:45 pm. : "Heat Pumps: The What, The Where, And The How Much" by Mike Simons, the Training and Development Manager for Abode Energy Management, an independent company on clean energy.

Cost: Free

Mike is an expert on heat pump system design and trains installers to the highest standards. Learn what they are, the basics on how they work, what they look like, how a system is designed to meet a specific building's layout and existing conditions as well as the needs of its occupants.

Mike will share his insights from the industry as the heat pump installation wave continues to build. There will be plenty of time for questions and answers.

- Hear from your neighbors about what they think of their heat pump systems.
- Leading up to the event, the organizers will be researching the projected outlook for heat pump availability in our area. (There is currently a backlog.) We hope to organize a "Meet and Greet" of local installers and companies that service them.
- Learn how the state heat pump rebates fit in with the Mass Save home energy assessment program. Information will be available about assessments and how to sign up for one.

Sponsored by the Shelburne Energy Committee, Shelburne Senior Center, and Arms Library. The Town of Shelburne is a participant in the Community First Partnership, offered by Mass Save Sponsor, Eversource. You do not have to live in Shelburne to attend the event.

Do YOU have a heat pump/mini-split in your home? Would you be willing to informally share your opinions about it with participants at the above event? If so, please contact Cynthia Boettner with the Shelburne Energy Committee at Cynthia.boettner1@gmail.com or 413-325- 5564.

From your Emergency Management Director.... Preparedness

As we continue to deal with the events that winter weather can bring us lets be sure to keep in mind how to best be prepared for what may come our way. One of the best things we can do to protect ourselves and our loved ones is to be prepared for the loss of power during these frigid cold days and nights. I've been writing on how best to prepare for emergency events, especially if you need to evacuate to a community warming center. This month I'd like to address the topic of Individuals with Access and Functional Needs, or AFN. What is AFN? Persons with Access and Functional Needs are those individuals with function-based needs (related to a restriction or limited ability to perform activities normally considered routine) that may require assistance before, during, and /or after a disaster or an emergency. This may include, but is not limited to:

- People with disabilities
- People who live in institutionalized settings
- Elderly
- Children
- People from diverse cultures
- People with limited English proficiency/non-English speakers
- People who are transportation-disadvantaged

To be better prepared and depending on your specific needs or the needs of a family member consider adding the following to your basic emergency kit:

- Extra eyeglasses and/or hearing aids
- Battery chargers and extra batteries for hearing aids, motorized wheelchairs, or other
- battery-operated medical or assistive devices
- Extra medicine, oxygen, insulin, catheters, or other medical supplies you or a family member uses regularly
- Medical insurance cards, Medicare/Medicaid cards, physician contact information,
- list of any allergies and medical history
- Copies of medical prescriptions, doctor's orders, and the style and serial numbers of the support devices you or your family member uses
- Medical alert tags or bracelets, or written descriptions of you or your loved one's support needs, in case you are unable to describe the situation in an emergency
- Supplies for a service animal

You can find more in-depth information on AFN at MEMA's website at:

[https://www.mass.gov/info-details/emergency-preparedness-for-individuals-with-disabilities-and-access-and-functional-needs#who-are-individuals-with-access-&functional-needs-\(afn\)?](https://www.mass.gov/info-details/emergency-preparedness-for-individuals-with-disabilities-and-access-and-functional-needs#who-are-individuals-with-access-&functional-needs-(afn)?)

REMEMBER: Failing To Plan is Planning To Fail! Tom Williams - Emergency Management Director

Updates from the Town Treasurer/Collector

Here is my January newsletter submission. It can still be found on my page of the website:

<https://townofshelburne.com/p/24/Tax-Collector-and-Treasurer>

From the FRCOG Public Health Team: Home Heating

Staying warm in the winter is important! With rising costs, heating your home can be stressful. That's where homeowners and renters can use fuel assistance.

You are eligible for fuel assistance if your household income is not more than 60% of the estimated state median income. For a single-person household, that's \$42,411; for two people that's \$55,461. [For three people, it's \$68,511 and \$81,561 for four people.] These numbers, and more information on who can get help is available on the Community Action website: <https://www.communityaction.us/fuel-assistance>. Locally, Community Action is the agency that processes applications for fuel assistance; the program itself is called LIHEAP in Massachusetts. If you have not used fuel assistance in the last two years, you'll need to first apply and then have an intake.

Apply over the phone (413-774-2310) or online (website above). An application checklist and a list of necessary documents are available online, or you can call the phone number and an automated message will guide you to the list of documents. Community Action wants its participants to know:

- From Nov 15 – March 15, there is a moratorium in place that prevents shutting off your gas or electric if that heats your home.
- Fuel assistance can only pay for deliveries/heat usage from Nov 1 to April 30.
- Please plan ahead—it can take weeks to process an application.
- This is an assistance program; you are still responsible for your bills.

Separate from fuel assistance, Community Action has other programs for renters and homeowners, including free energy efficient and weatherization assessments, and programs for homeowners that have funding to repair/replace heating systems. They also have an Older Adult Modification Program to help eligible homeowners age in place. Please remember that state minimum wage increases to \$15/hr starting January 1 and may change income.

Editorial/content questions? Contact Maureen O'Reilly, community health educator/epidemiologist at moreilly@frcog.org

Additional COVID information that you may find useful:

- Curative testing sites are closed as of Dec 28th. The Shelburne Falls and Deerfield testing sites are is closed.
- With MassHealth, Medicare and private insurance, folks are eligible for up to 8 rapid tests per person each month. [Private insurance will need to check with your insurance company.] More information is available on frcog.org/covid under the "Testing" tab. Note: we are updating our flyer, which has instructions, and that will be posted online tomorrow (12/21).
- Another round of government rapid tests are available on <https://www.covid.gov/tests>

Volunteer Opportunities in Shelburne:

Looking for volunteers? Post your volunteer opportunity here! Want to Volunteer? Contact these folks:

Memorial Hall Association: Want to help renovate the Town's historic 400 seat Memorial Hall Theater, located on the 2nd floor of Town Hall? MHA is looking for board members eager to help launch a capital campaign. For more information, contact Jessica Murrow at murrjessica404@gmail.com

Shelburne Falls Porch Fest: Did you enjoy the 3rd annual Shelburne Falls Porch Festival last month? Want to help organize the 4th annual? Contact Paul Bennett at 4paulbennett@gmail.com

Shelburne Falls Women's Club is looking for new members. Contact Penny Spearance at 625-9639

Village Information Center: The center is open to visitors from 10am to 4pm Thursdays through Mondays from May through October and is fully operated by volunteers. The center hosts visitors who come from around the world, and more locally, who learn about what to see and do in western Franklin County and beyond. Many more volunteers are needed. Interested community members can drop in whenever the center is open, or leave a message of interest at 413-625-2544. Those who volunteer receive an orientation, learn about what the area has to offer, and get to greet and meet some of our interesting tourists.

Shelburne Finance Committee: Want to help shape and oversee the town budget? There are still two open seats on the Shelburne Finance Committee. Send your nomination to Town Administrator, Terry Narkewicz at townadmin@townofshelburne.gov Appointments to the FC are made by Town Moderator, Roland Giguere.

Open Space Committee News

Shelburne residents, land and business owners: The Open Space and Recreation Survey closes **January 31**. Taking it online is easiest: www.surveymonkey.com/r/ShelburneOSRP

Another option is to pick up and drop off paper copies of the survey at the: Town Hall entranceway; Arms Library; or, Shelburne Center Free Library.

Hiking in January (The Secret)

Hiking during the cold weather months is now easier than ever!

Trekking poles with ice point tips give all ages 4-wheel drive-like stability and can help power you up the trail. Two trekking poles can cost as little as \$35. Lighter weight and higher quality poles for serious hikers cost a lot more. For those who like to walk on dry pavement, but need more stability, rubber caps are available to cover the poles' ice tips.

Ice Cleats are amazing! Do you remember how slippery it used to be walking on icy or snow packed hiking trails? Tired of falling?! Trails are no longer slippery with the right Ice Cleats (also known as MICROspikes, traction cleats, ice crampons [but not the ice climbing type], etc.) Ice Cleats quickly stretch and slide onto your existing hiking boots.

Ice Cleats cost as little as \$20 and can open up a whole new world of winter hiking and adventure.

Other SF web sites and social media:

Find more news about Shelburne here:

<https://www.facebook.com/shelburnefallsvillagenetwork/>

<https://shelburnefalls.com/>

<https://the-senior-center.org/>

<https://www.facebook.com/MainStreetShelburneFalls>

<https://www.armslibrary.org/>

That's all we wrote. Send me news for January 2023 by Friday, January 27