

TOWN OF SUFFIELD

83 Mountain Road, Suffield, Connecticut 06078
www.SuffieldCT.gov

Melissa M. Mack
First Selectman
MMack@SuffieldCT.Gov
860-668-3838



September 9, 2020

Dear Board & Commission Members,

With our schools reopened, a number of boards/commissions asked whether in-person meetings would resume. The Board of Selectmen discussed the matter last week and unanimously decided to continue with virtual meetings for now and reevaluate the policy in one month.

To date, the majority of negative feedback received relates to resistance utilizing technology. IT support has been, and will continue to be made available. Additionally, some expressed concern about the recording requirement which may inhibit commissioners from speaking freely. While these factors were considered, the BOS' final decision took into account the following:

- Flexibility provided by Governor's extension of all Executive Orders including suspension of in-person meeting rules.
Note: This order does not require suspension of in-person meetings nor limits number of people in public places as long as public safety addressed.
- Public health advisors ongoing recommendation for certain age groups/those with preexisting conditions to stay home, stay safe.
- Need for boards/commissions to ensure inclusivity/access for all board members and public including those constituting potentially vulnerable populations.
- Additional time provides opportunity to evaluate COVID-19 rates given potential impact of school reopening and residents returning home from summer vacations.
- Desire to avoid reversing/dialing back progress and policies in event of COVID-19 increases.
- Zoom meetings enable unprecedented transparency and public participation.
- Town Hall renovation/addition presents current space challenges particularly given required social distancing for large gatherings/meetings.
- Additional expenses incurred due to required cleaning protocols before and after meetings.
- Hybrid meeting model (commissioners present, public virtual) requires additional investment/troubleshooting relative to technology.

Thank you to all our commissioners for your flexibility and continued service to the Town of Suffield under difficult circumstances. The BOS looks forward to revisiting this topic in October.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Melissa".